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*TIMOTHY J. REISS. *The Uncertainty of Analysis: Problems in Truth, Meaning and Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1988. Pp. xiv + 312 + 29. US\$ 29.95

Le dernier ouvrage de Timothy J. Reiss fait d'une certaine façon suite logique et chronologique à son magistral *Discourse of Modernism*. C'est cependant un livre d'une tout autre nature puisqu'il est largement composé d'une suite d'articles antérieurs (certains remontant à 12 ans), de discussions sur des pensées ou des thèses et paradigmes particuliers qui, de Peirce et Frege à la critique 'déconstructionniste,' témoignent de la crise de la raison discursive 'moderne,' sans que l'auteur cherche à couvrir systématiquement toutes les expressions de cette crise ni à poser, sinon en conclusion (mais on verra les difficultés que j'éprouve à cet égard) un diagnostic synthétique global.¹

On l'a fréquemment suggéré: tout chercheur ne poursuit sa carrière durant qu'une seule 'idée,' il avance dans une seule interrogation fondamentale dont il renouvelle les termes et les lieux d'application, creusant indéfiniment les mêmes intuitions premières. Ceci ne veut aucunement dire qu'une pensée développée n'est qu'une inlassable répétition, qu'il n'y a à y entendre qu'une sorte d'*Urmelodie* qui soutiendrait en basse continue la variation des 'motifs.' Au contraire, les moyens, les paradigmes qui se construisent, changent, au point qu'on trouverait des incongruences, des contradictions aussi bien que des progrès d'un ouvrage à l'autre, mais c'est comme le Couteau de Jeannot: on remplace la lame, puis le manche et c'est toujours le même couteau, c'est-à-dire cela sert aux mêmes fins lesquelles ne sont pas immanentes aux caractères des lames et manches successifs. *The Uncertainty of Analysis*, poursuit, développe certaines interrogations qui déjà revenaient 'hanter' son précédent *Discourse of Modernism*. On pourrait dire que l'ouvrage actuel est la suite d'un projet historiographique qui nous conduirait maintenant à étudier les avatars et la 'décomposition' du discours

1 Reiss l'indique dans sa Préface, l'ouvrage recensé ici n'est au fond qu'une partie de développements qui se complèteront dans deux autres livres à paraître: *The Meaning of Literature* et, ce qui devrait être une tentative de synthèse, *Discourse and Society*.

analytico-référentiel aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles. Il n'y a cependant chez Reiss aucune prétention à couvrir un jour encyclopédiquement les formes discursives du savoir depuis la Renaissance. Reiss demeure aux prises avec quelques notions: — la vérité, le langage, "l'individu, le sujet, l'analyse, la référence, le contrat et le conflit, le droit et l'obligation" (ix) — il cherche à voir dans quelle concomitance, quelle coïntelligibilité, ces notions labiles ont changé, se sont chargées de contradictions internes et d'aporées. Reiss avait suggéré que la pensée "analytico-référentielle" après avoir tenu une position hégémonique séculaire devait être progressivement érodée, dissoute, déclassée aussi à la fin du XIX^e siècle. D'où les questions qui traversent le présent ouvrage: *comment* s'est produite cette déstabilisation, à la faveur de quelle 'ère du soupçon' et *pourquoi*? La cohérence de l'ensemble, qui ne tient pas à l'homogénéité des objets étudiés, fait voir combien la pensée de Reiss ne cesse de revenir sur un noyau central de questionnements. On sait que Reiss a choisi d'appeler "discourses" tous les dispositifs créateurs de signification dans la société et non les seuls complexes modélisants appliqués aux langues naturelles. Sa thèse fondamentale est que, dans tout moment socio-culturel, un modèle cognitif hégémonique domine, immanent à ses multiples avatars dans les différents secteurs discursifs. "Immergée" dans cette hégémonie cognitive qui est celle de sa société et de son temps, la conscience connaissante est *sociale* et *historique*. Le modèle cognitif "moderniste," mis en place au XVI^e siècle posait axiomatiquement une homologie entre les structures du monde, de l'esprit et du langage. Le monde était conçu comme objectivement est exhaustivement connaissable, et la connaissance rationnelle du monde était, d'une certaine façon, plus exacte et vraie que le monde lui-même.

Le soupçon s'est fait jour au milieu du siècle passé que cette harmonie entre la réalité et la connaissance rationnelle pouvait être illusoire, que la prétention à connaître tenait du coup de force, de l'abus de langage. De grands penseurs suspicieux sont venus de partout contester l'ancienne évidence, de Nietzsche, Wittgenstein et Saussure, à Lacan, à Derrida. Ces pensées du soupçon n'ont pas poursuivi un plan cohérent, elles ne se sont pas développées dans la bonne entente (qui fut celle des rationalistes des Lumières contre l'obscurantisme) mais dans la polémique et l'antagonisme. Les penseurs du présent siècle que convoque l'érudition de Reiss ont mis à nu l'"impossibilité," le caractère intenable de la pensée analytico-référentielle, sans avoir eu à payer leur iconoclasme par la construction d'une "classe discursive" nouvelle. Les questions que pose Reiss ne sont pas d'abord de chercher à savoir ce qui s'est substitué ou va se substituer à la ruine de l'ancienne hégémonie désignée par lui comme "moderniste," et selon quelles fins; il s'arrête d'abord à la question "évolutionniste": comment la transformation a-t-elle pu se produire et en concomitance avec quelles

mutations socio-politiques? Reiss ne peut s'en tenir là. Il lui faut (ne serait-ce que pour donner un sens, une orientation à ses critiques) spéculer sur l'issue de ce grand bouleversement, alors même que cette issue nous demeure largement dissimulée. Nous pouvons interroger certaines conséquences visibles des échecs et des "pannes" subies par l'ancien dispositif discursif et interroger les apories et les dérives des critiques radicales des positivités d'antan, les pathos du chaos et le désespoir culturel dans lesquels elles baignent. Crise de la référence, crise du sujet rationnel, crise de la cohérence totalisatrice, ce sont sans doute des mots d'*avant* pour désigner un procès contemporain dont l'inquiétante étrangeté résiste à la saisie. Reiss fait du succès académique américain du "deconstructionism" un symptôme ultime du retrait de puissance explicative de la raison discursive: si toute référence s'est évanouie, je peux dire n'importe quoi....

Que l'"introduction" du présent ouvrage se termine par l'aveu que le féminisme contemporain ne sera pas abordé dans l'ouvrage alors que cependant Reiss lui accorde désormais — à lui seul — un potentiel actuel de rupture féconde et de réordonnement de la connaissance témoigne peut-être de la difficulté qu'il y a à juger de son époque. Sa réflexion ici et en d'autres passages implique qu'au fond une nouvelle hégémonie cognitive finira par se stabiliser, qu'il y a "un bout au tunnel." Mais n'est-ce pas ici un *prôtos pseudos* qui relève justement de la gnoseologie analytico-référentielle aujourd'hui proprement décomposée? Il y a dans la pensée de Reiss, il me semble, une sorte de confiance eschatologique que l'on sortira du scepticisme radical, de l'anaxiologie, du pathos relativiste, autrement s'il se peut que les pieds devant. T. Reiss prétend demeurer fermement dans la logique et la filiation peut-on dire de Foucault: il rappelle à bon droit — contre un certain syncrétisme alimenté tant par ses détracteurs que par des admirateurs mal inspirés — que la pensée — historique — de Foucault n'est pas de même nature que le pyrrhonisme ou illusionnisme absolus des Lacan, Derrida ou Paul Veyne. Sa critique exaspérée mais perspicace de Derrida et de ses zéloteurs américains, "déconstruction indéfiniment répétitive," désespoir, négation de l'histoire (272-73), — d'où provient-elle cependant, d'où tire-t-elle sa légitimation, de quel sens pratique ou de quel sens commun transcendants à la crise? Au nom de quoi, à partir de quels fondements peut-on se convaincre qu'il "ne saurait être possible que les fins poursuivies par le déconstructionnisme soient une itération indéfinie" de la destruction du sens (272). Il me paraît au contraire qu'en lui-même et selon sa pente, le déconstructionnisme poursuit bien un tel 'but,' si ce terme a encore un sens. Au nom de quelle éthique ou de quelle évidence qui aurait survécu aux naufrages des axiomatiques de discours peut-on qualifier le désespoir culturel, le *Kulturpessimismus* postmoderne des déconstructionnistes de "régressif" (272)? Si j'étais déconstructionniste, j'aurais beau jeu il me

semble de montrer ici une nostalgie des idées de progrès, de lien entre connaissance et éthique, de la raison raisonnante, réintroduisant subrepticement de telles catégories censées pourtant anéanties par la crise discursive même. Poser que Derrida "made sense" en 1967-69 (271) revient à dire qu'un premier élan nihiliste pouvait avoir du bon, mais qu'il eût fallu savoir s'arrêter à temps. Le maelstrom déconstructionniste exclut par nature cette exigence tactique.

Je suis frappé en outre par le reformement du propos qu'atteste la construction de l'ouvrage, le rétrécissement de portée de la réflexion reissienne. Partir d'une définition du "discours" comme de tout système signifiant — art, science, médecine, droit, histoire, mais aussi pratiques sociales, mode de production "and so forth" — pour aboutir au dernier chapitre à débattre de tempêtes byzantines dans le verre d'eau de la critique littéraire américaine, tempêtes qui semblent avoir épargné, sans chercher plus loin, les disciplines contiguës de la sociologie, l'économie, la science politique, c'est situer la crise en un secteur, un marché de production éminemment restreint. On peut au moins suggérer que ce sont les tensions internes à ce secteur restreint qui expliqueraient de la façon la plus adéquate la poussée de 'religiosité' nihiliste qui s'y est fait jour. Il me paraît difficile, sauf à travers de longues médiations, de rapporter ces débats sectoriels à une hégémonie discursive. L'importance que Reiss donne à cette philosophie littéraire américaine revient à *fétichiser* un secteur de la production discursive dont le nihilisme peut être un moyen paradoxal de se légitimer face à une déperdition de crédibilité et d'influence. Donner cette importance au déconstructionnisme, c'est à peu près comme si on cherchait à déceler la logique globale du *Zeigist* européen vers 1890 en s'attachant aux seuls débats abstrus et abscons des "petites revues" symbolistes et décadentistes. (Il n'a pas manqué de publicistes littéraires, il y a un siècle, pour conférer cette immense importance à ces minces disputes d'"esthètes," mais le recul du temps monte tout de même à l'évidence les limites d'un tel propos.)

Tout en suivant avec un vif intérêt les discussions perspicaces et les critiques vigoureuses que mène Reiss, je vais me permettre de centrer mon compte rendu non sur la *pars destruens* de son livre, la critique des apories, des non-dits, des faux-semblants² — mais sur l'implicite de ses propres analyses, c'est-à-dire sur les principes qui lui permettent, au-delà du repérage

2 Reiss dans un chapitre intitulé "Carnival and the Process of Order" démontre à bon droit que le carnaval ne peut être conçu hors de l'ordre des discours légitimes dont il se veut la subversion. Qu'on ne peut donc faire du carnaval un ordre autonome, une sorte de valeur en soi (v.p. 138 not.), qu'il ne peut être que momentané et relatif à l'ordre qu'il déstabilise momentanément. Ici comme ailleurs, le critique va à l'essentiel et met à nu avec beaucoup de justesse une équivoque récurrente.

d'équivoques et de contradictions internes, de critiquer et de rejeter certains paradigmes de notre époque et d'entrevoir une "issue à la crise des discours" — ce qui est l'objet de réflexion du chapitre final et qui forme aussi l'armature problématique de tout l'ouvrage. Du même coup, renonçant à formuler les éloges mérités par l'érudition et la pénétration dont Reiss fait souvent preuve, je voudrais plutôt exprimer mon malaise à l'égard de la façon dont Reiss dirige sa réflexion, des généralisations qu'il croit pouvoir tirer de ses propres présupposés, de la "morale provisoire" qui anime sa réflexion de chercheur au milieu de la décomposition de la "pensée analytico-référentielle."

Dès l'"Introduction," j'avais déjà trouvé un motif d'embarras dans le bref développement sur le féminisme (15-18):

au contraire du freudisme ... et au contraire de la plupart des marxismes occidentaux sinon de tous ... une certaine pensée et action féministes visent nécessairement et inévitablement à changer l'organisation des relations de pouvoir qui organisent notre milieu socio-culturel. (15)

C'est ici une thèse que nous sommes prêts à voir argumenter. Mais que fait Reiss aussitôt? Il va montrer — en une longue concession — que bien des variétés de féminismes peuvent être tenues pour "profondément régressives": "ceux de droite ... ceux de gauche ... et les féminismes qui se contentent d'arguments libéraux ..." Du seul fait que l'auteur lui-même établit un si grand écart entre le potentiel subversif et reconstructif d'un féminisme idéal et la fausse conscience, l'irrationalisme militant ou le lobbyisme réformateur des divers féminismes attestés, on est conduit à se demander quel est le statut de son analyse, si son objet est l'étude de pratiques discursives attestées, la conjoncture réelle ou la spéculation sur des potentiels, ou si encore sa visée est de construire une sorte d'historiosophie doctrinaire. Caractériser la condition des femmes, dans la société nord-américaine actuelle comme "l'exclusion d'une bonne moitié de la population des avantages tangibles de la culture et, de fait, l'oppression réelle et objective de cette moitié par l'autre" (18), crée problème. Cela ne me créerait pas le même problème si je lisais un tract ou un manifeste, mais l'organisation de l'hégémonie discursive est soumise à une division du travail (à moins que la crise ne l'ait emportée elle aussi) et un travail d'histoire culturelle et intellectuelle me semble soumis à d'autres exigences de crédibilité. Le diagnostic sur la condition des femmes américaines que je viens de citer me paraît relever d'un lyrisme irréfutable (au sens de 'non falsifiable') et ne m'éclaire guère la thèse formulée dans les pages précédentes sur le potentiel du discours féministe pour faire sortir le monde de la crise gnoseologique qui selon Reiss n'a fait que croître et se développer depuis un siècle. À la fin de son livre, Reiss répète cette thèse mais, encore un coup, ne la

développe ni ne l'argumente: "Je pense de plus en plus, réaffirme-t-il, qu'une certaine critique prétendument féministe est le seul discours de notre temps véritablement radical" (285). À travers les deux italiques (*certaine, radical*) de la citation ci-dessus, l'incertitude demeure quant à ce "certain féminisme" qui ne sera jamais illustré ou objectivé (et que Catherine Clément, p. 284, qualifie comme ne pouvant être "d'abord" qu'un *balbutiement*).

Reiss est-il un rationaliste nostalgique prêt à en découdre avec les irrationalismes à la mode ou, — ayant fait le constat de décès du rationalisme "moderniste," — perçoit-il nettement l'apparition d'un rationalisme nouveau, d'une *Aufhebung* dépassant les étroitesse et liquidant les taches aveugles du rationalisme ancien? Ceci ne suppose-t-il pas chez Reiss, l'idée d'une rationalité transcendante? Il écrit: "it seems urgent in our time to strive for debate and consensus, for we are threatened by another [en surcroît de l'irrationalité déconstructionniste] element of the irrational" (277). Passons sur l'idée à la mode qu'il faille chercher à la fois du débat et du consensus, c'est-à-dire le beurre et l'argent du beurre. Je veux épingle l'idée de 'menace de l'irrational'. Ce ne saurait être au nom d'un retour à Kant ou aux Lumières que Reiss veuille fonder, philosophiquement, l'idée d'irrationalisme comme menace, et menace à l'égard de quoi? Au nom de quoi protester contre le nihilisme gnoséologique radical et l'anaxiologie? C'est peut-être eux qui 'ont raison.' (L'expression n'a évidemment plus de sens). Je songe à la *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (1983) de Peter Sloterdijk dont on voudrait que Reiss ait débattu dans ses chapitres de conclusion parce que le philosophe allemand bricole avec une certaine théatralité joyeuse, mais loin des nihilismes exsangues, un "néocynisme" qui se présente bien comme "sortie de la crise discursive," esquisse, peut-être plagiaire, de très anciens courants libertaires, d'une rationalité anarchiste faisant place, dans les "Lumières" de la raison, à l'obscur, au bas, au pulsionnel, au carnavalesque, à la résistance et à la révolte. Certes, Reiss a raison dans ce qu'il critique et il a toujours de bons arguments. Ce n'est ni avec le "néolibéralisme" des démagogues politiques, ni avec le "néo-humanisme" de ceux qui redoutent *The Closing of the American Mind* (A. Bloom; mais aussi Ellul, Finkelkraut, etc.) en fétichisant des valeurs éternelles qu'on répondra au scepticisme irrationnel. Reiss le suggère plusieurs fois dans le livre et le répète dans la conclusion: tout ce *Kulturpessimismus* contemporain ne peut être perçu que comme la répétition névrotique, plus théâtrale et plus charlatanesque que dans le passé, de bouffées successives de vaticinations sur la "faillite des sciences," la "crise de la raison," du sens commun et des valeurs civiques qui se répètent depuis un siècle. Ceci donne raison à la périodisation établie par Reiss. Mais quand il parle à propos de certains érotismes universitaires de "discours qui a perdu tout contact avec la chose publique et le social" (276), il faut tout de même lui dire que, s'il en est

ainsi, l'étude de ces discours renfermés sur leur propre délire n'a qu'un intérêt relatif, si on n'essaie pas au moins de me décrire aussi ce qui se passe pendant ce temps-là dans la sphère publique et dans le monde social. Car ces discours s'autorisent de la conviction que le social et le public cela n'existe plus pour légitimer leurs propres avancées dans le n'importe quoi.

Pour conclure ces premières remarques: Reiss qui sait qu'il ne peut parler au nom de l'ancienne rationalité décomposée et vaincue ni au nom d'un nouvel ordre discursif encore chimérique, critique pourtant les irrationalités ambiantes au nom de quelque chose. Il a bien dit qu'il n'a pas dans sa poche un *novum organon* et nous ne le lui demandons pas. Mais je me demande de quel lieu il parle et je lui demande d'"objectiver" les principes, si tâtonnants soient-ils, qui le guident.

Un livre centré sur les "aporées théoriques, les contradictions et les faiblesses" (285) dans une période de crise de la pensée, à quelles conditions peut-il déboucher, comme Reiss semble l'espérer et en sentir les prodromes, sur une "nouvelle instauration" (285), un *novum organon*? En laissant un tel livre, on se demande à quel titre, selon quels préceptes se déploient ces critiques successives de Frege, Sartre, Barthes, Eagleton, Greimas, Derrida, Hartmann et al. Reiss qui sait bien ce qu'il rejette, avec fougue souvent et perspicacité, ne nous dit pas bien de quel point de vue il argumente. Si des arguments offerts on remonte aux présupposés de ceux-ci pour y trouver une axiomatique propre à l'auteur, je crains qu'on ne rencontre ce que lui même ne se lasse pas de déceler chez autrui, c'est-à-dire des contradictions et des taches aveugles.

Je crois voir dans l'ouvrage une autre impasse ou autre tache aveugle: les études de Reiss portent sur la décomposition d'une certaine gnoséologie, d'une conception de la connaissance, de la manière dont le monde est connu et objectivé en discours. Il ne semble pas retenir de la première phase (Nietzsche, Scheler, Weber) de la grande crise gnoséologique-discursive toujours en cours ce qui en était la contrepartie essentielle: la crise des valeurs, la crise du jugement de valeur à la fois distincte de la crise de la raison et pourtant intimement liée à elle. Nietzsche, Scheler, Weber, Tönnies et d'autres façons G. Sorel, William James n'ont percé la déstabilisation des fétiches de la vérité, du savoir, de la communication et de l'ordre cognitif que pour avoir les moyens de prendre position dans la "dé-valuation des valeurs," dans la crise civique-éthique et les rapports déliés de cette crise à la décomposition de la communauté en "foule solitaire," à la médiatisation et à la perversion de l'action et à la dégradation de l'individu dans le ressentiment. Tout le débat sur les 'formes' du cognitif, de la communication et de l'alexithymie, tel qu'il se déroule aujourd'hui et notamment chez Reiss, semble prendre soin de laisser dans l'ombre cette dimension morale et civico-axiologique. (Ceci présente un autre avantage, quand on s'appuie ou

qu'on cherche des arguments chez Nietzsche *et al.*, qui est qu'il est permis, en laissant dans l'ombre leurs idées éthico-civiques, de n'avoir pas à affronter le fait que ces messieurs, pour des raisons consubstantielles à leur pensée, ne conclurent aucunement en faveur du pluralisme de consensus, de la démocratie, du *Welfare State*, de l'égalitarisme; encore moins du féminisme, évidemment.) La disjonction, patente dans le monde intellectuel contemporain, entre la critique de l'ancien rationalisme et l'adoption d'une sorte de 'morale provisoire,' démocratique, hostile aux racismes et sexismes, mais qui 'reste en l'air,' qu'on est incapable et pour cause de fonder en raison, le fait que, des pensées de Foucault comme de Derrida, on ne puisse *ni* isoler une philosophie des valeurs, ou une morale pratique *ni* prétendre qu'il ne s'induit pas aussi de ces pensées un nihilisme éthique et social que personne cependant ne veut assumer, ce sont là, il me semble, des contradictions qu'on ne peut plus contourner. Elles reviennent hanter en effet les perspectives développées "for an end to discursive crisis."

Une fois encore, cette dimension axiologique et éthique qui connote toute la démarche de Reiss n'est pourtant pas prise en charge explicitement et globalement. Reiss qui discute de certains écrits de l'École de Francfort, d'Adorno à Habermas, sait bien que pour ces penseurs les questions épistémiques ne se séparent pas de l'esthétique et de la morale sociale. Sans doute est-il loin d'adhérer à la philosophie d'un Habermas. Cependant Reiss, selon sa propre réflexion, ne cesse de faire paraître le 'désespoir culturel' des philosophies à la mode, le mépris qu'elles portent à l'humain, à la liberté, à la collectivité, le rapport qu'elles entretiennent avec d'autres militantismes de l'angoisse irrationnelle dans la société américaine. Une fois encore, en posant la question de l'axiologie et de l'éthique, je n'attends pas que Reiss fournisse un *credo* pour les temps nouveaux. Je m'interroge seulement sur le fait que, constamment, des principes axiologiques, des règles civiques, des jugements moraux mêmes passent subrepticement, en fraude si l'on peut dire, dans son ouvrage et je lui dis: il faudra bien un jour expliciter tout ceci, ne pas limiter la crise discursive à une crise gnoseologique et ne pas prêter le flanc à des attaques faciles des pyrrhoniens professionnels qui exigeraient que l'auteur expose séance tenante les présupposés de ses jugements et les fonde.

Maintenant, je ne voudrais pas laisser entendre que Reiss ne soupçonne pas, ne connaît pas les apories et les lacunes de sa propre démarche critique. Il les connaît et *prend un risque*. L'aveu est dans le titre de l'ouvrage qui doit s'entendre ironiquement: l'"incertitude de l'analyse" englobe, non pas également mais antagonistement, l'analyste et les analysés. En effet de quel 'droit' décomposer, juger, rejeter ces pensées pernicieuses? Celui d'un impératif moral, 'tu dois donc tu peux?' Il n'existe pas de 'point d'appui' pour soulever le monde clos du déconstructionnisme et du scepticisme

radical. C'est pourquoi, je l'ai dit, le travail de Reiss dans toute sa complexité et sa justesse, porte surtout sur une *généalogie* du "post-modernisme"; comprendre comment c'est arrivé revient du reste à montrer le processus comme étant à l'origine une juste et inévitable mise en cause des apories et des fétichismes du mode de pensée analytico-référentiel. Ce qui semble se développer ensuite, c'est un emballement de la machine critique et un *enfermement* dans des mécanismes déconstructeurs et ironisateurs qui baignent d'autant mieux dans l'huile qu'ils tournent à vide. On doit donc chercher, à tâtons, à reconnecter le questionnement de la raison (et déraison) et le questionnement civico-éthique. Reiss voit bien (mais il reste à approfondir de ce côté) que la crise de la raison connaissant semble disconnectée aujourd'hui, mais qu'elle est historiquement inséparable de l'effondrement de divers ordres de valeurs sociales et de projets émancipateurs: progressisme, socialisme, anarchie, démocratie, libéralisme (ces deux derniers termes reviennent d'autant plus abondamment dans le discours social d'aujourd'hui qu'il se sont décomposés en cache-sottise du philistinisme ambiant).

Nous trouvons dans *The Uncertainty of Analysis* un ouvrage de transition, synthèse provisoire avec ses clartés et ses ombres qui est expressément annonciatrice de deux autres, *The Meaning of Literature* (à paraître en 1991) et *Discourse and Society*. Développant la question ouverte dans le présent ouvrage, — "How can New Meaning Be Thought?" — on doit attendre de ces prochains livres d'un chercheur éminent qu'ils dégagent, à tout risque, la 'partie constructive' et l'herméneutique sociale dont l'absence-présence dans le présent ouvrage me pose les difficultés que je viens d'exposer. (MARC ANGENOT, MCGILL UNIVERSITY)

*JAMES PHELAN. *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1989. Pp. xi + 238. No price

James Phelan treats reading narrative as a rhetorical transaction between an author and his hypothetical audience. His interest is consequently in the sequential and affective structure of narrative, and in how textual strategies build a purposeful internal logic within plot or progression. He analyses the affective structure of progression in terms of the temporal dynamics of the authorial audience's experience of narrative. By proceeding in this way, Phelan develops a comprehensive rhetorical theory of *character* which focuses on the communicative transaction between author and reader, as developed through narrative progression. Because the text is defined as the location of the rhetorical transaction, Phelan is able to examine purposefully the relationship between formal and affective structure. By establishing the

diverse relations between character and progression, he sets up a good correlation between narrative content and structure.

The express purposes of the study are to describe and analyze a variety of relations among the components of character, to study various principles of progression, and to view the interpretive issues involved in investigating character and progression from a rhetorical perspective. To this end, the mimetically-oriented study builds on discussions of characters as if they were real people, but validates those discussions in terms of the characters' narrative role/functions and relationships to three spheres of meaning — the synthetic (or artificial), the mimetic, and the thematic. Central is the idea that characters' dimensions only become thematic functions in accordance with the progression. Phelan's definition of progression as crucial in the developing relationship of characters' functions includes a discussion of literary dynamics as well as how plot centres on "instabilities" and their resolution. This process is linked closely with mimetic and thematic functions of character, which provide an appropriate means to judge the validity of thematizing and to set limits for the extent of suitable interpretive extrapolations.

In order to examine the nature and range of relations among the three components of character, and to investigate the various possible relations between character and progression, Phelan chooses a diverse group of narratives which follow a variety of principles of progression. Presenting concepts through an analysis of Browning's poem, "My Last Duchess," and Lardner's story, "Haircut," the introduction sets up clearly the foundations of the approach, defines terms, begins to establish the relationship of the writer's ideas to existing scholarship, develops fundamental theoretical priorities, and establishes the goals of the study. Part I is mainly concerned with the relationship between mimetic and thematic components of character. By considering the structures of *1984*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and "The Beast in the Jungle," Phelan questions various practices of thematizing in interpretation, and elaborates on the different ways in which characters can function thematically. Part II considers three narratives which foreground the synthetic component of character: *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Great Expectations*, and *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler*. The analysis of the different kinds of foregrounding prompts theoretical reflections about progression and audience, and necessitates a refinement of ideas about the relation between text and audience. Here Phelan builds on Rabinowitz's distinctions between authorial and narrative audiences and how these audiences relate differently to the foregrounded synthetic component of character. In order to facilitate understanding of Clavino's second-person, present tense narrative, he introduces the category of "characterized audience" as intermittently distinguishable from narrative audience. By

examining *A Farewell to Arms*, Part III demonstrates the extension of the reader's role in the rhetorical transaction beyond appreciation into resistance. In the concluding chapter the analysis is extended briefly to three different narratives in order to illustrate further applications of the principles. A large territory of narrative and applicable theory is thus surveyed within a carefully elaborated theoretical framework.

In order to develop his theoretical framework, Phelan engages in a series of metacritical discussions which serve to differentiate his analytical method from other modes of interpretation. By examining in particular the claims of Levin, Scholes, Brooks, and Fetterley concerning principles relevant to the transactions between authors and readers, Phelan is able to distinguish better his approach and to establish more precise particular claims of comprehensiveness and validity for that approach. This particular combination of comparative metacriticism and detailed textual analyses not only produces a refined development of insights about particular literary works, but also serves to demonstrate well the implications of Phelan's system for a whole range of significant issues in the interpretation of narrative.

More generally, Phelan establishes clearly situates his work and his argument in terms of other theories and other approaches to narrative. The study demonstrates a diverse expertise which allows for both the application of parts of theoretical models, as well as a contrastive development of ideas set against approaches not compatible with this study's objectives. Phelan provides a good list of relevant recent scholarship in characterization theory, but prefers to develop theoretical implications by considering the consequences of his technique for interpretive issues beyond the element of character itself. As a result, his study is substantially different from other available 'theories' of character, although some theoretical principles are shared. Springer, Chatman, Hochman, Higbie, and Docherty would seem to be the most relevant, although the latter does not share Phelan's interest in and affirmation of the mimetic component of character.

Because of Phelan's dominant concern with mimetic aspects, rhetoric, reader involvement, and the development of suitable interpretation, the study is not principally a structuralist approach. Instead of seeking an objective view of the text which foregrounds the text as construct, Phelan adopts the rhetorical view, which isolates the text as communication between author and reader. In this way he accounts for both the structure and effect of the texts under analysis. Nonetheless, he uses with considerable expertise terms and distinctions from narratology, and expands terminological applications.

Given the parameters of the study, it is particularly interesting that Phelan avoids the strategies developed by reader-response criticism. He

certainly refuses to enter the debate about the autonomy of texts. Although his approach clearly could benefit from the insights of reader-response criticism, particularly with regard to textual dynamics and the role of the reader in meaning construction, it is also clear that he avoids some of the pitfalls, ambiguities, and constraints generated by the usual terminology of that approach. Rather than focusing on a description of the reading process, Phelan builds analytical distinctions which explain the principles of *construction* of literary texts. The communicative transaction between author and reader is seen to depend on the textual elements which are designed to fulfill a particular purpose. This rhetorical method accounts well for translinguistic components like character and action.

The study effectively combines practical and theoretical criticism in order to develop a coherent system for analyzing characters and progressions. The double-focused examinations of *specific* characters and progressions serve to develop discussion of more general theoretical questions about the interpretation of narrative, and lead to the elaboration of principles and methods for analyzing narrative as rhetoric. This double focus also provides good ammunition against the tendencies of broad thematizing according to poetic principles not necessarily immanent in the narrative form. There is then a refreshing concern for the details of surface structures of narrative, and a refusal to escape into extended models for deep structures. By positing principles of analysis which correspond with the reading experience, Phelan develops not only valuable insights about the narratives under scrutiny, but also generates a flexible theoretical framework for examining a wide variety of narratives. The self-acknowledged limitations of the study are really more gratifying than disturbing. Phelan does aspire to comprehensiveness in the demonstration of theoretical categories and principles which should have predictive value and sufficient flexibility to be applied to many narratives. But in the final analysis he accepts the idea that flexibility is more important in a theory than the demand for predictive power. What the study shows best is that there are *diverse* relationships between character and progression. The categories established for examining character *are* useful, as are the general patterns of progression established, but the level of generalization developed by the approach severely limits *predictive* power.

The theoretical limitations are possibly less disconcerting because of the quality of study undertaken. The book shows exceptional clarity of argument. Phelan uses a down-to-earth but functionally accurate terminology. Although he has a self-admitted penchant for establishing "distinctions," these are not gratuitous, and provide valuable analytical results when applied to texts. The ideas progress logically to build a remarkably coherent argument and are coordinated into a comprehensive theoretical perspective. Since parts of the study had already appeared in articles, Phelan succeeds admirably in

synthesizing material into a coherent whole. The book tackles diverse problems in a highly co-ordinated way, mainly by introducing precise parameters, by establishing clearly the purpose of each separate textual analysis, by building later considerations upon the foundations established in earlier argument, and by recontextualizing the conclusions effectively as each new work is introduced. Although limited in theoretical development, *Reading People, Reading Plots* is a work of remarkable concentration and integrity. (MAY CHARLES, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*MARY SNELL-HORNBY. *Translation Studies. An Integrated Approach*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Johns Benjamins 1988. Pp. viii + 163. US\$17.95

In about 160 pages, Mary Snell-Hornby confronts us with a dazzling range of possible approaches to the phenomenon of translation, criticizing several of them and merging the remaining ones into her own "integrated approach," meant to cover translation training and criticism as well as descriptive studies. Throughout the book, her argument is based on the rejection of axiological thinking and positivistic typologies.

The first part opposes two "dominant" approaches to the author's own concepts. Her discussion of the German "school" (Neubert, Reiß, Koller...), though a bit reductive, provides that it is not only circular, but also either static or approximative to the point of becoming superfluous. The second group (Toury, Hermans, Lambert...), which she insists on calling the "Manipulation School," is criticized for its "over-insistence on its own dogmas," such as the rejection of evaluation, the dominance of descriptive work and the target-oriented approach. However, both the fact that Snell-Hornby does not discuss the necessary relations between these "dogmas," and the arguments and shortcomings of her own book, prove that she either underestimates or ignores much of the work accomplished within the framework of the "target-oriented approach," or in the many no man's lands between the so-called schools. She also tends to neglect the work accomplished in Eastern Europe and in Canada.

The notions of *prototype* and *Gestalt*, which Snell-Hornby presents as alternatives for rigid categorizations and axiologies, bring her to a two-dimensional diagram of which the horizontal axis comprises a prototypical text-categorization, while the vertical axis is a top-to-bottom construct of aspects relevant for translation. Thus Snell-Hornby's scheme ranges from literary translation (from biblical texts to "light fiction"), over "general language translation" to "special language translation" (technical texts), and from general text types to phonological micro-elements. The reader must realize that this scheme is developed strictly from the translator's point of view. Otherwise the hierarchy of text areas, text types, "extralinguistic

disciplines bound up with translation," criteria for the translation process, relevant areas of linguistics, and phonological aspects would be hard to understand.

The second part, "Translation as a Cross-Cultural Event," introduces translation into the whole of socially conditioned aspects of life. Again the author refuses to choose between a relativistic concept of language, leading, according to her, ultimately to the impossibility of translation, and a Chomskyan view according to which everything would be ultimately translatable. Translatability, says Snell-Hornby, depends on the degree to which a text is embedded in its own culture. Within this framework she discusses some recent translation theories (Hönig and Kußmaul, Reiß and Vermeer, Hölk-Mänttari) which she considers as the pioneers of "a new orientation in translation theory." They all envisage translation as communication within-culture and are oriented towards the function of the target text rather than to the model of the source text. Snell-Hornby then introduces the concept of *norm*, inevitable for any attempt to go beyond the static linguistic approach, and the notions of *dimension*, the linguistic orientation of a text which becomes a translation problem in cases like wordplay, and of *perspective*, the problematic when specific socio-cultural knowledge is presupposed. Both concepts are taken into account in a rather lucid discussion of metaphor translation.

In the third part Snell-Hornby focuses on the use of linguistic theories in translation studies, and criticizes transformationalism, as opposed to holistic, non-universalistic approaches, discussing *en passant* the problem of machine translation which relies precisely on those dogmas. Again, she introduces a load of 'new' concepts: scenes-and-frames semantics, speech acts, and the notion of "dynamic", that is socio-culturally determined meaning.

Finally she turns to literary translation, formulating some basic hypotheses concerning the relation between translation strategies and the text's position and function. According to Snell-Hornby, the more "specialized" or "pragmatic" the source text, the closer it is bound to a specific situation and function, and the more target-oriented the translation is likely to be. The more "literary" a text, the more situation and function depend on reader activation, and the more literary a translation, the higher the status of the source text as a work of art. Snell-Hornby then proceeds to verify these hypotheses on the basis of four short texts with their translation, ranging from highly pragmatic (publishers' guidelines for authors) to literary (a bilingual edition of a Dylan Thomas text). Though she concludes that the more literary target texts have a more "open" function, and their source texts a higher status, it emerges clearly from her own analysis that all four texts are equally target-oriented, and the "high status" of Dylan Thomas's original text is only justified by the fact that this is a *bilingual* edition, after all an

exceptional case in literary publishing. Snell-Hornby's conclusions therefore have to be related to the well-known *a priori* of the literary text as *opera aperta*.

The same problem arises when she goes on analyzing the "style" of the same texts, starting from a highly questionable distinction between "opaque" and "transparent" style and concluding that "the literary text had no element of non-linguistic constraint or convention" (128). Generally speaking, Snell-Hornby's discourse seems based on a rather dated conception of literature. First she seems to equate it (prototypically, of course) with fiction. Later on she defines "styles" as linguistic choice or deviation, and even as quantitatively measurable, using concepts which have been discarded long ago by literary studies. The distinction between opaque and transparent style is based on the illusion of the unmarked text, literariness is seen as free variation, and the concept of 'model' is totally absent here.

An important problem with this book is that, while explicitly rejecting dichotomies, its discourse modulates on one all-embracing opposition between 'old' approaches of translation and the 'new' ones, including Snell-Hornby's own "integrated approach." In reality, most of the hypotheses and concepts she presents here have been circulating in the field of translation studies for several years. It is quite amazing, for instance, to find Gideon Toury's *In Search of a Theory of Translation* (1980) in the bibliography after reading that up to now no substantial attempt has been made to specify the content of an independent discipline of translation studies (2)! While the credit for having systematically introduced the concept of "norm" in translation studies is generally granted to Toury, Snell-Hornby manages not to mention him at all in her chapter "System, Norm and Text." Snell-Hornby seems to ignore or to neglect the work of, among others, the group she calls the "Manipulation School": the rejection of rigid categorization is precisely a main feature of the polysystem approach. This rejection is an important element of this theoretical framework and all the basic ideas of Snell-Hornby's pioneers towards a "new orientation" have been defended and applied by this group for over a decade. Other approaches, such as speech act theory, also have been applied to translation studies before. And let us not forget that Umberto Eco in 1976 already called the notion of binarism "an embarrassing dogma," since "structure" for him means "opposition between an n-tuple of gradated entries, resulting from the conventional subdivision of a given continuum" (*A Theory of Semiotics* 176).

Snell-Hornby's book raises many conceptual problems as well. However welcome the attempt may be, her approach often looks more eclectic than integrated: notions such as norms, dimension and perspective, scenes and frames, speech acts, etc., appear and disappear, and many of them never come back. The abundant use of concepts such as prototype and *Gestalt*

often appears to serve as an alibi for a lack of definition. Thus Snell-Hornby never defines translation, and explicitly rejects the idea that "any text is to be accepted as a translation of another text if it is declared as such" (25), though this definition seems a natural implication of "prototypical" thinking. Therefore Snell-Hornby is unable to deal with translations which radically change the features of the source text, such as incomplete versions, adaptations, parodies. She never talks about non-contemporary translation conceptions either: the idea that a prototypical literary translation "is assumed to stand as a valid full-scale representative of the original in a foreign culture" (114), for instance, would have puzzled quite a few translators in seventeenth-century France. These weaknesses can be explained by Snell-Hornby's wish to integrate, at all costs, translation theory and translation practice, while remaining loyal to the translator's profession. This becomes clear when she starts deploring the low status of translation practice in language departments, or when she advocates a profile of the translator as a "highly trained and experienced expert." And this attitude becomes a problem when it keeps her from getting beyond purely normative conclusions. For instance, since she is not aware of any literary function a translated text can fulfill except the one of being "a valid full-scale representative of the original," a German publisher requiring short sentences and an easy syntax from his Dickens' translator can only make her wonder "how such instructions are compatible with the richness and sophistication of the original prose style" (114).

However welcome a renewed interest of professional translators in translation theory may be, this should never be allowed to determine the goals of the discipline. Still, that is precisely what Snell-Hornby does in the last part of her study, "Translation Studies — Future Perspectives." The only scholarly goal she reserves for translation studies seems to be the establishment of a theoretical model of the translation process. Except for that, translation studies has to take care that translation is "left to the specialists and not just any native speaker or dictionary owner who happens to be available," and therefore "must decide on optimally effective study programmes for the future members of the profession." Thirdly, "the standard of translation critique ... should be considerably improved" (132). If these comparatist pleas are what translation studies are all about, the reader is entitled to wonder what all the fuss was about.

Notwithstanding its eclecticism and some conceptual weaknesses, this ambitious and polemical book is a challenge. If Snell-Hornby is not aware of the more recent developments in literary theory, she knows very well what is going on in the field of linguistics, and her discussion of several theories and concepts and their possible use in translation theory will undoubtedly contribute to the development of a more critical and self-conscious

translator's training. On the other hand, among translation scholars, her provocative survey of older and recent problems will certainly lead to numerous discussions, even if it were only out of legitimate self-defense. (CLEM ROBYNS, BELGIAN NATIONAL FUND FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, LEUVEN)

*EVA L. CORREDOR. *György Lukács and the Literary Pretext*. New York: Peter Lang 1987. Pp. xviii + 225. US\$46.00

*ERNEST JOÓS, ed. *George Lukács and His World*. New York: Peter Lang 1987. Pp. xi + 195. US\$40.50

Today, the once considerable empire of the "spectre of communism" is on the decline. By the time this review appears in print, communism may still rule China and some Third World nations, or, it may not. One is inclined to believe that the different 'intellectual' variations on this political abomination are also retreating from academe. Not quite so. If not exactly as dynamic as they were just a few years ago, followers of Marxist ideology are still producing scholarly works.

As evidence of this, we have two volumes in hand, both published in the same year, by the same publisher, on the same person. From the back cover we learn that at the time of writing, Eva Corredor taught at the US Naval Academy, and Ernest Joós was professor of philosophy in Montréal. Their works are an attempt to revive Lukács, who offered the illusion of a coherent and somewhat comprehensible aesthetic system. Beside Lukács, numerous other cult figures of the past decades, notably Adorno and Goldmann, are revived, if briefly, on the pages of the two volumes.

Corredor's book is the epitome of radical neo-Marxism. Its intention was, as stated in the preface, to "provide the student of Lukács with the theoretical backbone of Lukács's literary theories" (*sic*) by analyzing "those works of Lukács which, over the past twenty years, turned him into a literary classic." In fact, Corredor's book is a survey of seven volumes from Lukács's works: one for each chapter of the book, and a few randomly chosen shorter pieces from other sources. Impressive as this selection may seem, the sum of Lukács's published writings that Corredor scrutinizes totals 2,000 pages, or about 25 percent of his collected works printed to date by Luchterhand. This puts the representative nature of the material in a different light.

Corredor states her opinion strongly on all controversial and ambiguous points of the Lukács oeuvre. She believes there is a continuity between the pre-Marxist and Marxist Lukács, that realism is a creative aesthetic method, that Lukács's obscure early works, written in contorted Hungarian, are significant, and that Lucien Goldmann was right in attaching enormous importance to Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*. She consistently

presents her arguments in a subjective and emotional manner, which excludes other interpretations. The author's field is primarily French literature and she shows a strong bias for French neo-Marxism. This orientation results in such anomalies as French spelling of Russian names ("Boukharine") and quotations from Brecht's and Mann's works in French (104 and 130).

It appears that for Dr. Corredor belief is stronger than argument. Let us see how successfully she presents her conviction. First, the documentation in the volume is in poor shape, for which the blame is not exclusively Corredor's. The publisher should have been more scrupulous with a submission from an author who was obviously inexperienced in manuscript preparation. The style of reference, even for the limited number of Lukács's works surveyed by Corredor, is unprofessional. Notes 38-71 in Chapter Six refer to one work, while in Chapter Seven only 7 notes out of 62 do not refer to pages in *Realism In Our Time*. Undergraduate students should be discouraged from submitting papers supported by such 'documentation.' Obviously, the inflated number of references should be integrated into the text. All in all, references fail to provide evidence sufficient to corroborate the author's conclusion. On page 86, we read that "critics accuse Lukács of inconsistency." The corresponding footnote makes only one reference to Paul de Man. Two pages later, Lukács's "critics" are mentioned again, with the same reference to de Man. On another occurrence of the "critics," not de Man but Demetz, is found referenced in the note. None of the above seem to justify the use of the term "critics" in each instance.

There are a number of instances where the interpretation of biographical and historical data is absurd. A glaring example is the reference given in a note on page 48 (and repeated almost verbatim on pp. 94 and 191) that Lukács's father "was ennobled for his distinguished services to the crown." Contrary to this neo-romantic myth, by the late nineteenth century the Hungarian titular nobility had become another negotiable commodity. Nor did Lukács grow up "in aristocratic circles": the social milieu of the *nouveau riche* was anything but aristocratic. On page 103 and in the index, there is a reference to a "Hungarian uprising of 1919." In reality, there was a Bolshevik *coup d'état* against a liberal regime, as there was in Russia two years previously — neither event can be called an "uprising." The manifested naive interpretation of Lukács's background makes the reader wonder just how well informed the author is about Hungarian literature, history, and culture which Lukács, incidentally, rejected. Let us leave unscrutinized the appalling state of the quotations in Hungarian, made incomprehensible by innumerable errors. This is the more surprising since the author's first language is Hungarian.

The style of the book is amazing enough. It abounds in English neologisms, such as "anti-establishmentism," "rightism," "modernistic." Convenient political labels facilitate a quick and easy assessment. There are "conservative" and "hostile" critics: those with whom the author disagrees. "Eastern" critics are those born on the wrong side of the Elbe River. Lukács turned from a "subjective idealist" into an "objective idealist," and finally, into an "objective materialist critic" which surely was quite an achievement: at least he did not get stuck with a "reactionary literary form."

Corredor's book gives one the impression of a very belatedly published and outdated dissertation which was not sufficiently edited for the purpose. It is about as anemic as neo-Marxism, rehashing much that was published previously, also in books not listed in the bibliography. Yet I fear that more is to come. According to the publicity caption on the back cover, the author is currently completing another manuscript on Lukács.

In comparison with Dr. Corredor's study, the collection edited by Dr. Joós is potentially more enlightening, although it offers very little material that is directly pertinent to Lukács's literary theory. The alternation between strong critiques and equally strong appreciative papers seems confusing at first, but eventually a non-biased environment emerges. But here too, neo-Marxism seems to be running out of steam. Its proponents (e.g. Louis Dupré and John O'Neill) appear not to have noticed that things have changed since the 1960s. Yet some discussions of Lukács's ideas (such as alienation, especially by Joós) and his controversies with others (such as Hegel, Marx, or Adorno) do a commendable job of providing orientation to an almost unmanageable field of theoretical literature. Most contributors emphasize the partisan character of Lukács scholarship — could it be otherwise? Hardly so, as this volume itself proves.

Perhaps the heterogeneous, amorphous, and quantitatively enormous volume of contemporary Marxist criticism explains why one has the impression of reading metacriticism, or interpretations of interpretations. A good example in this volume is Jean-Guy Meunier's paper. Based on nine very brief quotations by Lukács, the author arrives at his own interpretation of the novel. This interpretation does not contradict Lukács's, but neither is it entirely authentically Lukácsian. The original classic (if Lukács is one) becomes a pretext.

After an exalted profusion of writings on Lukács, the outpouring began to ebb in the 1980s. These two volumes are part of the rear guard and as such, slightly tired, no longer in the forefront, yet loyal to the retiring army. There will probably be very few or no similar publications appearing for a while. Time is needed to rest and sift through the extant material. Post-communism is a reality: it remains to be seen how much of the theoretical heritage to which Lukács belongs can be integrated into the culture of the

approaching millennium. At this moment, it appears that a few hundred million Europeans between the Elbe and the Ural doubt that it will amount to a sizeable legacy. (GEORGE BISZTRAY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO)

*BRUCE ROSS. *The Inheritance of Animal Symbols in Modern Literature and World Cultures: Essays, Notes and Lectures*. New York: Peter Lang 1988. Pp. 161 US\$31.50

*BORIA SAX. *The Frog King: On Legends, Fables, Fairy Tales and Anecdotes of Animals*. New York: Pace University Press 1990. Pp. 161. US\$29.00

These works were chosen to be reviewed together for the simple and superficial reason that they share a topic, that of textual approaches to animals and an academic approach, the broadest interpretation of comparative literature. Not surprisingly, the two nevertheless differ fundamentally; yet their similarities extend beyond those initially offered. Both are collections of more or less independent essays; both have abysmal titles which do them considerable disservice not only by misrepresenting their contents but also by disorienting the reader; and both also reward a closer and more critical reading, proving at least marginally better than they first appear.

Boria Sax's title *The Frog King* suggests that his book focuses upon figures in children's literature and/or folk literature; its subtitle *On Legends, Fables, Fairy Tales and Anecdotes of Animals* seems to confirm this impression. Read thus, the work seems no more than a shallow rehash of secondary critical materials on the representation of animals, in sources which reflect dated nineteenth-century evolutionist approaches.

However, Sax has hidden the originality and intrinsic interest of his material within the word "anecdote." In the Introduction, he comments: "The subject matter of this book is stories and anecdotes of animals. I have taken these from folklore and literature but, most frequently, from *old books of zoology*" (7. My emphasis). Sax never details his use of the distinction between "stories" and "anecdotes," only mentioning that "the anecdote is a preferred form for communication of information about animals from antiquity until at least the last decades of the nineteenth century" (9). However, Sax appears to distinguish the anecdote — a mode of narrative "scientific," factual or experiential discourse which is used to exemplify an animal's characteristics — from the fictional, "story" alternatives of legend, fable, and fairytale. Read with these issues in mind, the book becomes an exploration of the 'folkloric' qualities of 'scientific' discourse, and the extent to which both folkloric and scientific discourse alternatively converge and diverge. The reader may even discover ongoing themes, such as the tension between the anthropomorphic view of animals (which Sax identifies in

Chapter Four as pre-Darwinian) and the individualistic (Darwinian) view, as they are represented in the works he discusses. In these areas, the Sax work is as suggestive for further research as it is unexplicit about its own aims and ideas.

Bruce Ross's title *The Inheritance of Animal Symbols in Modern Literature and World Culture* suggests an encyclopedic approach and knowledge on the part of the author which is in no way borne out in his book. Even if the work promised were possible, it would surely comprise more than the 161 pages (including index) of this volume. The apparently immodest project impels the reader to a less-than-serious approach.

I have been less successful with *The Inheritance* than with *The Frog King* in divining an actual subject. The subtitle *Essays, Notes and Lectures* quite aptly describes the Ross work's fragmented nature. The author's understanding of the traditional genres of fable, myth, and ritual lacks the kind of sophistication that would satisfy a folklorist like myself. But his theoretical perspective is also somewhat flawed. For example, he identifies Claude Lévi-Strauss's approach to totemism in essentialist rather than structuralist terms.

Ross periodically makes broad general assumptions about society and culture with little or no theoretical or substantive backing. For example:

The long history of animal gods, numinous creatures, totemic images, fable characters, bestial figures, and beast hero epics as living symbols in world art, literature and culture would seem to have been eclipsed. Instead we have the vacant animal images of television puppet and cartoon characters, of the daily comic strips and of consumer products. What meaning inheres, for example, in the puma, alligator or tiger on one's polo shirt or tennis shoes? ... The striking animal epithet has all but left vernacular expression, except in the clichéd name-calling of the demotic. (ix)

His assumption that the reader will assent to his evaluation of popular, vernacular culture without further argument makes the writing seem arrogant. Unfortunately, the actual materials he discusses often mirror his lack of theoretical and analytical rigour. When anachronistic secondary sources are used in the absence of any unified argument or thesis, the reader is faced with the questions of why those examples were chosen, what the point is, and why the author bothered to address them in the first place.

However, as with the Sax work, a close reading of some selections may ferret out (sorry, bad pun) valuable elements. I found the literary essays, particularly on the poetry of Marianne Moore and on Kafka's "The Animal in the Synagogue," much more substantial than those which dealt with subjects nearer to my own area of expertise. For example, though it is not consistently argued, the essay on Kafka tellingly combines historical/biographical with symbolic/religious analysis.

It is probably clear that I prefer *The Frog King*; in addition to being more unified, it is more attractively designed and illustrated, and more approachable. Yet both books would have benefited immeasurably from some good editing. They now stand, or fall, in the 'flawed but not without redeeming features' category. (P. GREENHILL)

*MARGARET L. CARTER and ROBERT SCHOLES, eds. *The Vampire in Literature: A Critical Bibliography*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press 1989. Pp. 144. US\$39.93

Genre bibliographies can be useful scholarly tools, and the idea behind Margaret Carter's most recent vampire study is an excellent one. Unfortunately, while this bibliography will undoubtedly prove of great interest to the general student of popular literature, horror, and the Gothic, it does not ultimately display the polish, the detail, or the sophistication in research techniques which the specialist in vampire literature would expect to find in a book that, as Carter claims, "grows out of a lifelong enthusiasm for vampire tales and almost twenty years of systematically collecting such stories and information about them" (vii).

Three introductory essays, two by Carter, precede the bibliography. In the first, "The Study of Vampirism in Literature," Carter provides a succinct survey of scholarship on the literary vampire which will be of particular use to those beginning research in the field. There are some references to such early scholars as Wright, Summers, and Praz, and some discussion of vampirism in general, but, since most critics focus on *Dracula* and most criticism postdates 1970, this chapter basically summarizes contemporary historical, political, literary, and psychosexual interpretations of Stoker's work.

Carter's other essay, "An Anatomy of Vampirism," is of more interest. Here she lays out some of the primary features, both formal and thematic, of the vampire tale. Her discussion of narrative technique is suggestive; the frequency with which twentieth-century vampires narrate their own stories, adding problems of narratorial self-reference and metafiction, is certainly a topic calling for further study. But Carter's rather old-fashioned approach, her discussion of "point of view" and "viewpoint character," does not do the subject justice. The complexities of the issue would have been better served had Carter been able to appropriate the array of analytic tools that narratology provides. Focalization, for example, is a particularly useful concept for discussions of vampire literature since the vampire's strength of will so frequently imposes an alien vision upon an unsuspecting narrator.

The point of sandwiching Devendra P. Varma's "The Vampire in Legend, Lore, and Literature" between Carter's two essays escapes me. The only

useful function it seems to serve is to expand Carter's range by reviewing classic vampire tales of various cultures from around the world; Carter would have been wiser to have made the effort herself. First published as the introduction to the 1970 Arno edition of *Varney the Vampire: or, The Feast of Blood*, Varma's essay is still readily available and has not attained that status of a classic which might justify its inclusion here. The lack of documentation, the impressionistic and fanciful prose, and the almost sentimental view of the vampire make this piece seem hopelessly outdated; vampire studies have grown considerably more sophisticated over the past twenty years.

The bibliography itself is divided into six sections. Fairly comprehensive lists are given on "Nonfiction: books" and "Nonfiction: articles" — both of which concentrate on literature in English. There is a short section on "Anthologies of Vampire Fiction and Verse" which, rather surprisingly since Carter lists many other 1988 works, omits the *Penguin Book of Vampire Stories* edited by Alan Ryan, by far the best vampire anthology ever published. Under "Non-English Vampire Fiction in Translation," Carter deviates from her concentration on literature written in English and provides a selection of twenty-three works, available in translation, by such authors as Calvino, Capuana, Nesvadba, Sung-Ling, and Tolstoy. Carter would have done better to omit her rather confused and incomplete list of "Dramatic Works on Vampires in English" and concentrate instead upon expanding this more interesting list of translations.

"Vampire Fiction in English," the main section of the bibliography, is impressively comprehensive. In addition to the more traditional tales, Carter lists such widely varied works as Jan Jennings' awful romance, *Vampyr* (1981), Skipp and Spector's moralistic piece of black humour, *The Light at the End* (1986), and Jewelle Gomez's lesbian vampire tale, "No Day Too Long" (1981). Carter also plans to make available annual updates of this bibliography; this will certainly be a most welcome research tool for scholars in the field.

There are, however, two problems I would like to mention. First, Carter is too often careless in matters of documentation. The reader who discovers that Angela Carter's "The Lady of the House of Love" was first published in the *Iowa Review* would probably like to know the date of this original publication. And, contrary to what one confusing entry suggests, Le Fanu did not publish a new book called *The Vampire Lovers* with Fontana in 1970. In that year Fontana did, however, publish a collection of Le Fanu's tales called *Vampire Lovers and Other Stories* and the included "Carmilla" (1871) under the new title of "Vampire Lovers" — a clear ploy to capture the audience of the 1970 Carmilla-inspired Hammer film of that name.

The confusion caused by such entries leads to my second objection. More extensive annotation would provide, among other things, the opportunity to explain such details. Carter's simple code letter system of annotation (borrowed from an early work of E.F. Bleiler) badly needs expansion and revision in order to satisfy the demands of a contemporary audience. Sometimes it is indeed useful; to be able to see, from the code "Dis," which texts are concerned with vampirism as a disease is an advantage. But I wonder if it should be a priority to distinguish "A1" (Vampire as member of a separate species), "A1H" (Alien, humanoid vampire), and "A1N" (Alien, Non-humanoid vampire). I can think of a number of more relevant distinctions, formal and thematic, which could have been made. Carter certainly could have been more helpful to the audience of feminist critics, for example, if she had thought to include "W" (Woman as vampire).

Carter admittedly makes no claims to completeness, and hopes only that "this bibliography will inspire further research" (viii). With such provocative titles listed as "This Grand Carcass," "The Vampires Who Loved Beowulf," and "Looking for a Hot Meal," it probably will. But Carter could have been doubly effective if she had eliminated the rather musty air which hangs around this volume and paid just a little more attention to the needs and interests of the contemporary scholar. (GLENNIS STEPHENSON, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*DETLEV FEHLING. *Die Sieben Weisen und die frühgriechische Chronologie. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Studie*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang 1985. Pp. 159. No price

This work studies the development of the canon of the Seven Sages of Antiquity and its chronological implications. It is divided into three parts, the formation of the canon, the historical and historiographical traditions, and a discursus on chronology. These are followed by a conclusion, bibliography, two indices, and supplemental notes.

The usual view is that the canon of the Seven Sages arose in the late sixth or early fifth century BC, as evidenced in Plato, though the tradition did not become fully firmed up for some time. This is challenged by the author, who argues that Plato is the sole source for the whole idea of the canon (14). Much time is spent on tracing the credit for the attribution of pithy sayings to the members of the gradually congealing canonical list.

An interesting by-way leads into an investigation of learned forgeries in later Antiquity, that is the creation of spurious authorities as sources for equally spurious sayings, or the crediting of such material to known but obscure figures. A methodical cross-working of the material on each of the fifteen or so Seven Sages (48ff.) is most instructive.

The chronological section is as devastating to all early dates and to the attribution of any early figure to any early date as most of such studies usually do. *All* of them are unhistorical. There is, however, little new here that was not covered long ago in Forsdyke's *Greece before Homer*. In effect, any dates before about 520 are based on a complex and erroneous tissue of conjecture.

This is an interesting work, by a leading authority on Märchen-theorie, but primarily for students of historiography. (ROBERT J. BUCK, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*PAGE DUBOIS. *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1988. Pp. xv + 227. US\$29.95

This book is a feminist study of five metaphors of the female body in ancient Greece. They include woman as field, furrow, stone, oven, and tablet. DuBois believes that the presence of this well-defined system of analogy in Greek art, literature, and religion disproves the claims of psychoanalysis that the phallus is "a privileged symbol" and "a universal fact of culture" (187). Herein lies both the strength and the weakness of the book. First, I will give an overview of the methodology and then discuss duBois's findings.

In the central chapters on the metaphors (Section II 39-166), the reader expects a close analysis of texts in which artists present images of woman/earth as a means of interpreting or transforming their cultural inheritance. One also supposes that this imaginary world is informed by its creator's wit and sophistication. But duBois approaches literary texts as quasi-historical commentaries showing the effects, on women in fiction, of the change in Greek society from an agrarian to an urban economy (65-85). At the same time she asserts that the metaphors she has selected for examination follow no strict chronological order of development; instead "they coexist, comment on one another, replace one another..., and inhabit a contested site" (34). This perspective allows her to interweave brief passages quoted from such diverse periods and genres as those represented by Homer, Sophocles, and Plutarch. While there is some scattered discussion of Greek political and social issues, no attempt is made to place authors and works in any historical context other than duBois's. In addition, sub-divisions of the argument are blocked off under headings like "Fertilizing Blood" (70-71) or "Incest and the Tooth of Hippitas" (71-72), strange collections of information. Such a format implies a belief that metaphorical narratives are uniform, unambiguous, easily reducible to tags. Since the book begins with the caveat — "I will not explain feminism to classicists, nor antiquity to feminists" (1) — duBois becomes the privileged authority for reinscribing a history of the female

body in Greek literature and art. Significantly, she warns that her terms of otherness "may prove to be even more oppressive" than those of "psychoanalytic discourse" (17).

Section I (7-36; "The Woman As Classicist") is introduced by a definition of Classical civilization as "discontinuous with our culture" and as "fragmentary and contaminated by centuries of interpretation and loss" (4). Much of the blame for our misunderstanding of the Greeks is attributed by duBois to the influence of the androcentric theories of Freud, Marx, and Lacan, with particular emphasis on Freud: "[w]e are operated by the assumptions, by the ideologues, of our own world, devoured by habituation, unable to think toward change because we accept the categories of our own ideological location" (7). In spite of this dense and jargon-filled style, duBois brings out in a forceful manner Freud's habit of raiding (her metaphor refers to his "colonizing attitude" 19) storehouses of Greek myth in order to formulate paradigms supporting his own representation of desire. His alleged purpose in confusing or conflating the contemporary with the far distant past was "to deny difference" (19) and "to confirm, to find again in the ancient world, what we find in this one: the male child — his desire, his position in the family — as the exemplar" (21). Freud's "legacy" (22) is seen as an ahistorical perspective which, duBois claims, dominates even some of the best feminist thinkers in her own field. She alludes briefly to the "powerful and illuminating" (23) close reading of The Homeric Hymn to Demeter recently published by her feminist "sister," Marilyn Arthur. Rather than analyse Arthur's insights into the special "feminine sensibility" (*Arethusa* 10 (1977): 7) envisioned by the poem, duBois complains of finding resonances of Freud's tradition of "sameness," that is, the determination to "see the characters in classical literary texts as if they were patients in analysis," subjects offering an undisguised "earlier stage of our present psychic state" (23). Thus duBois's notion of "difference" is both the key to her polemic (36) on the metaphors, and, as we see here and again with Sappho (below), "difference" is also the means by which this book marginalizes women, ancient and modern, if they write from within the body of traditions enriching their own literature or literary scholarship. The first part of this chapter, entitled "Desiring The Greeks" ("removing the sire from?"), concludes with duBois's assertion of the importance of the "pre-Platonic world"; it "maps gender differently, not describing A and minus -A, man and defective man, that is, woman, but rather seeing difference, A and B, man and woman, almost as different species" (24). Hopeful rhetoric, but the next sentence posits the particular point of view of these ancient theoreticians of gender: "they are certainly no less *misogynist* than later thinkers" (24. My italics).

The automatic placement of the five metaphors of the female body "on a spectrum of alienation from the earth" (34) reflects duBois's basic suspicion of her primary literary material: "with the exception of Sappho, it is always the male speaking, describing the object in language which is always a detour, and never an innocent detour, but a detour motivated by the desire to know, to control, to name" (36). One assumes, therefore, that pride of place will be given to Sappho, since she was a "real woman of antiquity," with poetry belonging to the pre-Platonic corpus under discussion, an author able to write the experience of the female body without any "detour." Not so. Although Sappho is said to celebrate the metaphorical links between earth and woman (26) and, further, to "offer a parallel universe ... that refuses the aims of male culture" (27), her poetry is noted only to be placed aside. Like Arthur, she "still writ[es] within the categories to which culture names [her]" (29). With Sappho's creativity excluded, it is true that "we cannot know how [ancient women] named their namers" (36). DuBois prefers to guide the reader through her version of a detour, where "the analogies most often made by men [are] an ancient gesture of appropriation, of domination, of subjection."

In Section II the importance of the discovery in literary art of interrelated symbols of male-female tension caused by the dominance of male values is overshadowed by duBois's one-sided, literal approach. Beginning with the misreading of Homer's depiction of earth in the *Iliad*, the reader learns more about the psyche of the feminist author than about the complexity of ancient Greek metaphor. I will examine how she forces the symbols to mean what she chooses by integrating them under a biased conceptual structure of woman-as-vessel. She notes that the *Iliad* generalizes earth as "the giver of foods and the holder of the dead" (42). She then imposes the theme of autochthony upon the Trojan Glaukos's naive and misplaced confidence in the continuity between the cycles of human and natural reproduction (i.e., the generations of leaves image in Book 6) and upon the numerous similes comparing the death of a warrior to the fall of a tree. Autochthony enables duBois to transform her most positive archetype of the female body into "a sort of *promiscuous receptacle* that receives seeds and feeds all" (my italics), but which has "no part in the determination in the kinds of trees that grow." For her, it is inevitable to speak of "women's promiscuity" (43); it is a function of the "unfortunate necessity" men have "of planting seed in discrete earths, particular bodies" and of accepting the offspring of that seed as one's own. Because of duBois's determination to trace the emergence of a male sexual hegemony, she misses Homer's paradoxical portrayal of a "generation" (the Greek noun *genea* is feminine) of Greek warriors who die in pursuit of a flawed ideal of male honour. In so doing, they destroy the very home and sustenance that nature (many of her physical aspects are also feminine in

Homer) has so generously provided them. That is to say, Homer's diction in the *Iliad* associates any neglect or misuse of the female by the male with the penalty he pays: loss, deprivation, revelation of one's mortality. Similarly, despite original and valuable work on the connections between the feminine and ceramic (i.e., earthenware) body on pp. 57-58, duBois's view of Hesiod's Pandora, whose terra-cotta jar "contains evils better left buried" (47), is given precedence (as a negative figure) over his *Gaia*/earth (as a positive figure). And yet duBois admits that Gaia is the "origin of differentiated kinds" (57). Having left unexamined this positive contributor to Hesiod's representation of gender difference, duBois continues her story of the devolution of images of the female earth/vessel. Mention is made in passing of how in *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (and also in archaic/classical cult practise in Athens) the metaphor of the female-as-vessel is ennobled by the idealization of earth as divine, as "the body of the goddess" of grain. Nevertheless, the agricultural labour, Demeter's province, is quickly brought into question. DuBois reduces it, in almost Miltonic post-Edenic terms, to the status of a fallen act (59). She argues that through the representation of Pandora's action of opening the jar, Hesiod "displaces onto the female" (59) the burden of man's obligation to work. Any act of "cutting into" what was hitherto, for the critic, a parthenogenic and nourishing body is now to be feared: "[the act] may unleash dangerous substances, and it may anger the one opened, the female body who is thus split" (59). In this way, duBois ignores an alternative view of Pandora as an ambiguously-crafted gift, but the one which in Hesiod's narrative ultimately releases men (through the sacred character of their toil in union with maternal earth) from the divisive power-games of Prometheus and Zeus. We are invited instead to regard the literary activity of ploughing furrows and sowing crops as a symbolic historical record of "an attempt to appropriate to the male the powers of cultivation, reproduction, thesaurization" (57).

DuBois's most conclusive evidence for the final devaluation of the female body-as-vessel is Apollo's defensive assertion, in Aeschylus' *Oresteia Trilogy*, that woman "is not the source of life but, rather ... a receptacle, a temporary container for the father's seed" (71). The critic sees an ideology "of male parthenogenesis" being formed here. For her, the trilogy sets up an opposition between a "primitive" cult of blood rain, human sacrifice, and mother-right, and "the reason of the court of the Areopagus, the logos of the city [and] the masculinized, virgin goddess Athena," an opposition which ends in "a refusal of the old myths of patriarchy." Given duBois's reading of inequality in the treatment of the sexes in Aeschylean myth, the absence of a reference to Froma Zeitlin's prominent feminist study of the topic is

striking.³ The kind of argument both classicists advance concerning Aeschylus' misogyny deserve some reply. It is true that in *Eumenides* Apollo denies the dead Clytemnestra's right to be regarded by society as blood-kin of her son Orestes. Such a denial springs, at least in part, however, from his embarrassment at having been accosted by the Furies and Orestes in his own temple and made to answer for his role in authorizing an impious act of matricide. Apollo's sophistic approach to mother-right is thus as dramatically necessary for shaping his character as is the facile argument that Athena later uses about her birthright to defend an arbitrary acquittal of Orestes. Abuse of the Furies and avowals of contempt for women in general become Apollo's chief public means of rebutting the justice of their demands that a son be punished for kin-killing, just as a father was. So Apollo's only play at the trial is to override the terms of the women's disturbing logic; so Orestes in Choephoroi simply refuses to hear references to his dead sister Iphigenia. How deftly the playwright damns the subjectivity of males, human and divine, as they skirt the matter of gender! DuBois has perhaps forgotten Virginia Woolf's insistence that "the truer the facts, the better the fiction" (*A Room of One's Own*). Yes, Aeschylus fashions his mythic world out of binary oppositions (the *men/ide* syntax is basic to the Greek sense of balance) and he does conclude the trilogy on the apparent victory of Athena's masculinized concept of civilized justice. But this resolution neither convinces an alert audience, nor masks the cries of Iphigenia, Cassandra, the Trojan polis-as-female, the Furies, or Clytemnestra: they haunt; their rage has survived over two millennia.

Section III on Plato (169-88; "The Woman of Philosophy") begins with the image of woman as life-giving vessel replaced by that of woman as inanimate writing tablet (Aeschylus' *Suppliants*). Too much time is spent speculating on the sexual connotations of the Greek root *delto* (tablet) and on the dark riddling "ainigmata of writing" (142). DuBois passes over the creative, feminist ways in which the Suppliants subvert their father's image of them as a "blank page"⁴ in order to gain political asylum in Argos. Far from serving as a passive waxen surface on which the male "text/logos" is inscribed, the women publicly contest domination by men, whether kings or fathers. They reject marriage and the male bed, and devise their own revolutionary message of changed expectations for the female gender. For duBois, however, the women's spoken messages have less weight than the

3 Froma I. Zeitlin, "The Dynamics of Mysogyny: Myth and Mythmaking in the *Oresteia*" *Arethusa* II (1978): 149-84.

4 The bibliography should include reference to Susan Gubar, "The Blank Page" and the Issues of Female Creativity" in Elaine Showalter, ed., *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays On Women, Literature, Theory* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) 292-313.

"ephemeral writing" (141) of men: written words change "the female body into property, alienable, portable, and absolutely passive" (166).

More disappointing than the sameness of the findings when duBois examines Plato's sophisticated portrayal of a female persona in Socrates is her unnecessary criticism of the Lacanian feminists Juliet Mitchell and Jane Gallop. She claims that their theories of gender (summarized in two brief paragraphs) fail to "free us from the fascinated gaze at the phallus" (186). *Sowing the Body* thus opens and closes with the creation of intellectual divisions between women. Division, exclusion, blinkered seeing: such theorizing about the Greeks does not bring out the richness and diversity of their artistic representations of the female body. DuBois desires only a mutation of Freud's story: our castration has been exchanged for our alienation. (ROSEMARY M. NIELSEN, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*TONY M. LENTZ. *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press 1989. Pp. viii + 221. US\$24.95

For the specialist (or, indeed, the knowledgeable reader), the very title of this book arouses wariness. "Hellenic Greece" may have been thought to sound suitably elevated, but adding "Hellenic" to Greece produces a jarring redundancy that is socially and historically meaningless. This is not, however, simply a case of some cultural gloss intended to enhance the title of the work; Lentz refers constantly to "Hellenic Greece" and "the Hellenic period," which I presume are for him something roughly equivalent to "the Golden Age of Greek civilization" (178). And in this instance the initial misgivings provoked by the title of the work are regrettably substantiated by what follows. The author, a member of a department of speech communication, was originally "excited by the thought that a world so completely oral" (vii) had produced the glory of ancient Greece. The work addresses itself principally to the thesis, advanced by Harold Innis in *The Bias of Communication*, that culture flourishes from competition between different media. Lentz seeks to revise this thesis through examination of ancient Greek material. But although the term "revision" recurs in this book, which is notably repetitive in many aspects (each chapter is accompanied by a rather superfluous "summary"), Lentz does at one point refer to his work as an "extension" of Innis's thesis, and ultimately this may be a more accurate assessment of his achievement. The equivocation is important, since, while the book argues for a situation in which media "interact so as to complement each other," it could also be taken as support for the view that competition for dominance persists. Lentz's survey accommodates both mutual supplementation and attempted suppression in the relations between speech and writing. Lentz adopts Havelock's term "dynamic tension" for this

situation in which there is as much tension as interaction — a "tensive interaction" (91).

Much work in this area is now based on the general awareness that the duality of speech and writing is not a stable one and that the structure itself is the site of a struggle between forces of considerable theoretical investment. But for Lentz the "tension" of struggle is ultimately eliminated by his emphatic assertion throughout of the superiority of speech. To the very end of the period considered (and well beyond?) we remain in a world where the spoken word is always "the dominant force" (135) to which writing is always "subservient" (88). The work is heavily indebted to E.A. Havelock's various treatments of the subject, although here again there is "extension." For example, where Havelock has claimed that the date for a literate age in Greece should not be taken to coincide with the reintroduction of writing in circa 650 BC but advanced to 450 BC, Lentz moves it forward again to about 390 BC. One may question the significance of this tinkering with notional limits in an historically undefined "Hellenic" period.

There is, however, one unsettled boundary of great interest, and that is the limit which would distinguish indisputably between speech and writing. "Paradox" and "irony" are central concepts in Lentz's approach and one positive feature of the work is that he occasionally recognizes a necessary ambivalence produced by an inseparability of the oral and the written that overrides more simple distinctions and distributions of functions. But the use of irony is itself a strategy for recuperating any challenge to the superiority of speech. Evidence of exceptions is construed as interesting paradox. (By Chapter Nine the proliferation of paradoxes leads to a study of an "unlettered author" [144], a fourth-century orator at the limits of Lentz's new dating of the literate age who is presented as virtually an "illiterate writer.")

One could, I think, fairly object to Lentz's general use of evidence and his exploitation of arguments from silence. Sometimes it may be quite simply a case of ignorance: the author does not demonstrate a particularly convincing command of the primary literature. In terms of a possible audience, it should be noted that all Greek is translated but, apart from a few cases where the Loeb edition is specified, details of editions and translations cited are not given; the bibliography of primary sources does not meet the most rudimentary scholarly standards — some entries consist of no more than the name of the author. One of Lentz's initial sources of inspiration was the idea that the ancient Greeks never read silently. He himself has apparently not read Knox's important article on this question, "Silent Reading in Antiquity." Lentz's determination to press for the practice of reading aloud produces a process of argument such as the following:

No known examples provide unquestionable evidence that Greeks ever read philosophical discourse silently. Reading aloud is therefore more widespread than silent

reading of philosophical discourse. On the basis of available evidence, one can argue convincingly that such silent reading is entirely lacking in ancient Greece. (102)

Apart from rehearsing the usual arbitrary determinations of written and oral style (where the more "careful" and "polished" products of writing are privileged over the oral), Lentz manipulates Havelock's distinction between writing as "preserved communication" and writing as "composition" to deny most Greek authors the status of "writer." In similar fashion Lentz argues that, in so far as the Greeks referred to "making" rather than "writing" (where it should be remembered the Greek *poiēsis* is the origin of the English "poetry"), they themselves did not identify literary composition as a form or practice of writing. He maintains that it is "startling" that there is "no evidence" that the composition of tragedies and instruction of choruses employed writing. One might contrast the recent argument by Jesper Svenbro that it was precisely the use of writing in this process which explains the prominence of the metaphor of writing in the tragic texts. Moreover, the Greek plays themselves dramatize silent reading, and Lentz in his consideration of the evidence completely omits the notable example of Euripides, *Hippolytos* (856 ff). A number of famous passages are overlooked in relation to other questions, for example, Sophocles' *Antigone* in the context of discussion of "unwritten laws." In terms of the law, Lentz's unwarranted conclusion concerning the word *logographos* would render the entire Athenian legal system a procedure knowingly founded on what the Greeks themselves, it is argued, regarded as unethical and unacceptable practice:

The epithetic *logographos* also implied that unethical behavior was involved in writing a speech. ... When one person composed words, wrote them down for transmission, and gave them to another to speak as his own, the words became unethical. The measure of truth was in the mind of the person, and in the words spoken by that person to represent that knowledge. Putting words in the mouth of another was, to the Greeks, obfuscating the truth. (115)

Here it needs to be borne in mind that in judicial action Athenians depended upon professional speech-writers (*logographoi*) and not upon advocates as in modern practice.

In Havelock's evolutionary view of Greek culture, the polarity of the oral and the written is synonymous with the dichotomy between the concrete and the abstract, such that it is supposedly only with the attainment of literacy that the very question "What is justice?" can be formulated and contemplated. This questionable thesis provides Lentz with a platform for his ideological conclusions: "Literacy fosters the abstract ideals that make democracy possible, for example. Abstract ideas like justice make democracy

possible" (179). An "interrelationship between abstract and concrete is the core of Western progress, for it allows changes ... based on force of reason rather than force of arms" (180). In fact, the media supplant the military as the impending danger to the survival of Western culture, as Lentz warns in closing words intended to alert his audience. Particular vigilance is advised with respect to the visual media:

the results of this study suggest that serious examination of the impact of video and film on our culture be continued and extended; ... unless we consciously strive to balance the media's strengths ... the resulting accident may lead us away from the conscious, rational modes of thought that have made Western culture unique. (181)

The breadth of these conclusions is not justified by the scope and competence of the work which precedes them, in a book which has serious inadequacies even on its own terms. It is important to recognize, however, that these are not the only terms. Amid the recent spate of books in this area, J. M. Foley's *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (1988) elicited the following questions, which are now deemed crucial for both a Greek tradition that remains central as well as for the general theoretical foundations of any such endeavour:

What has been the fate of the theory more recently in the field of Homeric scholarship? ... What are the implications for the study of oral tradition of Jacques Derrida's (metaphorical) claims for the primacy of 'writing'? The time may now be ripe for a thorough-going critique of the 'oral formulaic theory' as a theory (Beaton 278).

(MICHAEL LYNN-GEORGE, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

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*EUGENE VANCE. *From Topic to Tale: Logic and Narrativity in The Middle Ages*. Foreword by Wlad Godzich. *Theory and History of Literature* 47 (1987). Pp. xxxiii + 131. US\$25.00. Paper US\$12.95

In his introductory discussion of critical approaches to medieval French literature, Vance chides the structuralists and post-structuralists for applying literary theories alien to the medieval cultural framework. He proposes,

instead, to examine Chrétien's works in terms of the latter's knowledge of dialectics. *Yvain* and *Erec* are to be the main object of his study, for in these two works he sees logic, rather than rhetoric, as the shaping principle and, whereas studies of rhetoric abound, logic is a relatively new area of study.

Vance's point of departure is the *Chanson de Roland*, briefly discussed because of the marble tomb (6-7, 99) or tombs (xxii) "presumably" to be inscribed (xxii, 99), in which "Roland and the twelve peers" (xxii, 7, 99) will be placed. He sees in this and other facets of the *Roland* the shift away from the oral tradition of the *canitène*, towards written works of fiction in the vernacular. This involves replacing the sign with the letter, the jongleur with the narrator, and reality as it is invoked in historically based narrative with alternate fictional realities. It also involves replacing intuitive knowledge with deduction, and contrasting Roland's wilful decision-making with Olivier's "more logical advice" (36).

Vance sees in the first two thousand-odd lines of *Yvain* a tale constantly perfecting itself and providing thereby an image of Chrétien in the process of judging, evaluating, and perfecting his sources, consciously bridging the gap between the two narrative types. Medieval vernacular poetry is seen in this way as "tending to fictionalize the process of its own begetting and to celebrate in its heroes cognitive processes which reflect the author's own" (6).

In the chapter on *Erec and Enide*, we are invited to consider Chrétien's characters wrestling with problems. Enide, for example, needs "to solve the problem of identifying and understanding true contraries before she can act responsibly" (35). She and the reader "must learn to discriminate between true loyalty to a person and loyalty which is only apparent because it is determined by changeable accidents of a person's extrinsic being rather than by that person's substance" (36). Erec's problem is one of a "cognitive inadequacy" (35) ultimately overcome, for unlike Roland and Charlemagne, heroes must now learn to "make decisions based upon the proper exercise of judgment" (36). However, logic may be merely rhetorical, its use ironic, as in Laudine's justification of her love for her husband's murderer. Thus Vance expects Chrétien's readers as well to use logic in assessing the validity of decisions arrived at by the characters. Indeed the reader is bound by a "hermeneutical imperative" (41) to do so. Yet we are dealing with fiction and, as Vance tells us, logic within a fictional context "may be seen as the art of marshalling sentences into a discourse whose truth does not depend upon what 'is,' but upon their *consignifying* coherently," within language which is referentially empty (19, Vance's italics). It would therefore seem that there can be no external imperatives of the kind Vance imposes on Enide unless such use of logic, rhetorical or otherwise, operates effectively within the context of the work as a whole. There is in Vance's slender

volume no demonstration of any character's systematic progress in the exercise of judgment. Nor does Chrétien chart such a development, so that Vance's premise that Yvain and Erec become exemplary knights is supported not by what the knights do, in terms of decision-making, but by what they are said to have accomplished by other romance characters, some of whom, like the narrators, may not be reliable judges. Yvain in particular tends to give up in the face of really difficult problems. Rather like Roland, in fact, he replaces reasoned response with a blind trust in God when he heads into battle with the odds against him.

Vance moves into his discussion of the *topos* or *locus* with a review of sources available to the twelfth-century writer: Boethius's *De topicis differentiis*, Cicero's *Topica*, Matthieu de Vendôme and Geoffroi de Vinsauf on rhetoric, and Abelard's *Dialectica*. Vance's thesis regarding Yvain is that from Boethius's *locus* or *topos*, *si est homo, est animal*, Chrétien creates a story "whose narrative surface is subtended by a deep relational truth bearing upon the generic animal basis of the human species" (60). Yvain in his madness is only marginally human. The herdsman encountered by Yvain and Calogrenant offers another example of the marginally human, although the herdsman speaks, and is willing to cooperate with the outside world in so far as he is able. Albeit monstrous in appearance, he is superior to the insane Yvain until the latter's speechless cooperation with the hermit moves him toward the proper differentiation of the species *homo*. With his return to sanity, Yvain's association with the lion, in all the various symbolic and emblematic ways that the lion can be understood at Chrétien's time, ultimately binds him in a new relationship with his animality, one by which his humanity is enhanced. Chrétien's portrayal of Yvain's recovery corresponds to Hugh of St. Victor's seven mechanical arts: "weaving, armament, commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, and 'theatrics,' or *scientia ludorum*" (60). Yvain sheds his clothes, and his weapons, and takes up hunting for food. His return to civilisation involves contact through the hermit with commerce and agriculture, being given medicine and clothes, and taking up arms.

Hugh of St. Victor writes, as well, about the theoretical arts of logic, mathematics, and physics, and the practical arts of ethics, economics, and politics. Vance suggests that Chrétien would not have wished to stress the theoretical arts because "Chrétien's noble patrons were probably, themselves, quite unversed in these arts as well" (60-61). We learn further, that by a conflation of texts with textiles in the "Pesme Adventure" episode Chrétien is apparently sending the reader "thinly coded" (94) political and economic messages bemoaning the condition of authors exploited by their patrons. In this way Vance tends to place Chrétien's work beyond the scope of an audience made up of patrons and their households. I think, on the contrary,

that Chrétien's rhetorical use of logic was recognized by that audience, always admitting that a fellow *clerc* might have appreciated Chrétien's subtlety more than did the patron, without there being any basic difference in the understanding of the work.

As was noted above in connection with the *Roland*, there are errors in Vance's book. During his discussion of medieval readings of heraldic signs (98), he forgets that Erec is in fact no longer wearing the armour loaned him by Enide's father, but his own, battered beyond recognition. Further Erec easily recognizes Kay precisely because Kay is not wearing armour. Erec also readily identifies Gauvain's horse, lance and shield which Kay borrowed without permission (Förster 3951-82). Turning to *Yvain* (Förster 53-60, Vance 9), there are, perhaps significantly, no ladies mentioned in the group when Calogrenant first begins his story, and no reason for Guinevere to think that a love story is being told. In the "Dame de Norison" episode, there is one damsel, not two, who returns to the sleeping Yvain and she does not apply "five full cestiers" of ointment to Yvain's body, which Vance sees for some reason as pale; she is not rewarded by her mistress (Förster 2987-3131, Vance 81). There are also mistranslations of Old French, for example: "Et après ce le roi pria" is "and afterwards [Yvain] begged the king...." (12); "qu'il a Erec vaincu ou mort" is "that he has defeated or killed Erec" (24); "filles de rois, gentes et sages" is "daughters of kings, noble, and wise" (31). There are numerous typographical errors in both English and French and occasional mistranslations of modern French. Lastly, there is an index which, as an index, is excellent, but as a replacement for a bibliography is cumbersome.

Douglas Kelly and Tony Hunt have both written on Chrétien's rhetorical use of logic. Vance, too, offers many new insights into Chrétien's work and the nature of medieval *topoi*. Despite the reservations I have expressed, I hope he will continue to make valuable contributions to this important field of study. (JOAN BRUMLIK, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*PETER M. DALY WITH LESLIE T. DUER AND ANTHONY RASPA. *Index Emblematicus. The English Emblem Tradition I*. Toronto-Buffalo-London: University of Toronto Press 1988. 483 pp. Can\$95.00

Modern iconographic indices can trace their ancestry all the way back to Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (Rome 1593). Handbooks like Ripa's were produced with a reader in mind who most likely was a practising craftsman interested in reading and seeing how to pictorially represent abstract concepts like 'faith' or 'virtue.' Other indices like those of Pincinello,

Boschius or Maksimović-Ambodik,¹ were meant for readers who were interested in finding out what *sensus spirituales* could be attached to things like swords, palm tress or lions, objects which were understood to be part of the furniture of the world viewed as a divinely created *mundus symbolicus*, and which, as such, were amenable to emblematic interpretation. Modern indices of emblem art no longer strive to meet the practical needs of the craftsman interested in decorating a goblet, or the person wanting to learn how to read the book of the world, the "universall and publick Manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the eyes of all,"² as Sir Thomas Browne called it. Instead, such modern indices are meant to help us decode as best as we can the bewildering masses of images which we encounter in sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century art and literature, and to which, as heirs of the Romantic Revolution, we have lost the proper "clavis interpretandi."

The *Index Emblematicus*, produced by a group of scholars associated with McGill University and being, after two volumes devoted to Alciato, the "emblematum pater et princeps,"³ the third volume of the series as a whole, and the first one of a sub-series devoted to the English emblem tradition, is undoubtedly the most ambitious effort undertaken to date to record and to systematically order the emblematic corpus in accordance with the needs of the modern user. Volume I of the sub-series on the English tradition is devoted to Jan van der Noot's *Theatre for Wordlings* (1569), Samuel Daniel's English version of Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'Imprese Militari et Amoroze*, and his selection from Lodovico Domenichi's *Ragionamento* (both 1585), and Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblems* (1586). This last work may have the best claim to being called 'English,' by some standards at least. Volume I of this particular sub-series — other sub-series, one hopes, are planned — thus contains four out of a total of "over fifty titles in at least 135 printings and editions [which] were published up to 1700" (xi). That last figure, it should be noted, is substantially higher than that of twenty-four mentioned by Rosemary Freeman in her still unsurpassed *English Emblem Books* (1948). Even with a rate of publication of one volume per year, it will thus

- 1 Philippo Pincinello, *Mundus Symbolicus in Emblematum Universitate formatus, explicatus, et tam sacris, quam profanis Eruditionibus ac Sententiis illustratus* (Köln, 1681); Jacobus Boeschius, *Symbologia, sive de Arte Symbolica Sermones Septem* (Augsburg-Dillingen, 1701; repr. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1972); N.M. Maksimović-Ambodik, *Emblemy i Simvoly* (St. Petersburg, 1788; repr. and ed. with translation and introduction by A. Hippisley, Leiden: Brill, 1989).
- 2 Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici in Major Works*, C.A. Patrides, ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) 78.
- 3 Peter M. Daly et al eds., *Index Emblematicus. Andreas Alciatus 2 vols.* (Toronto-Buffalo-London: U of Toronto P, 1985).

probably take more than a decade before the English sub-series will be completed, a sobering thought in view of the shorter and shorter lifespans of fads and fashions in the academic market place.

The emblems of van der Noot's *Theatre* and Whitney's, *Choice* are reproduced in facsimile form, slightly reduced at times, and reassembled whenever they occupy more than one page in the original. Access to an original edition, a reprint edition or an edition on micro-fiche is thus imperative for the reader who needs to know something about the actual layout of the indexed book. Unfortunately, this is also necessary for another reason: in quite a few cases the reproductions, especially those of marginal texts printed in small type, are barely legible; and in at least one case, a whole page (Whitney's "Silentium," 153) is illegible. The "imprese" of Gioivo and Domenichi which are not accompanied by illustrations are described rather than reproduced in facsimile.

Each of the four texts presented in this volume is accompanied by a very useful bibliographical note and by a brief introduction. In the case of van der Noot and Whitney, the introduction focuses, as it should, on the person and the work of the author, while in Samuel Daniel's Gioivo and Domenichi, it is devoted exclusively to a capsule *Forschungsbericht* on four publications published between 1968 and 1971, hardly the kind of information one is looking for in an introductory note to an index which, one assumes, is meant to stand for the next several decades.

Every emblem and impresa is accompanied by a description of the picture, a translation, where needed, of the motto into English, a list of flagged key words from the epigram, and, where feasible, information on its dedicatee and on references contained in the text. The volume is rounded off by a number of indices and concordances, notably a picture index and an epigram index which incorporate the flagged items of the picture descriptions and the lists of key word to the epigrams respectively. Other indices and concordances deal with mottos, commentaries, references, bearers and dedications, a triumph of ordering, if you wish, made possible by the employment of modern data-processing equipment. Discussing and presenting, as it does, the state of the art in indexing, Daly's "Introduction" to this volume (ix-xvi) deserves the attention of scholars, who are also less interested in emblematics than in the problems involved in indexing a large and variegated corpus of text.

One, hopefully only temporary, shortcoming of the *Index Emblematicus* should not go unmentioned. As Daly states in his introduction, "each emblem book is accompanied by its own set of concordances and indices, and the final volume of the series will contain cumulative indices to all the individual works" (xiv). In practice that means that no cross-referencing of flagged words will be possible as long as the whole series is not completed.

That, one assumes, applies to both the sub-series on the English emblem tradition, and to the *Index Emblematicus*, as a whole. Cross-referencing, however, will eventually without a doubt be the most cherished property of this index for the literary historian or the art historian who wants to trace the dissemination of an image or its variant interpretations. For that facility the user of the *Index Emblematicus* will have to turn for the time being to Huston Diehl's *Index of Icons in English Emblem Books, 1500-1700*,⁴ an index which cannot match Daly's for sophistication of data-processing and for richness of information, but which does indeed cross-reference the icons of all twenty-four emblem books indexed. In view of the magnitude of the project of the *Index Emblematicus*, and of the amount of time which it is likely to take to reach that final volume, one wonders whether it would not make sense to offer the indices and concordances of this and subsequent volumes on CD-ROM or on diskette, thus permitting the user to exploit in the meantime the search facilities of his/her own data-processing equipment, without having to wait for the final volume of the series. (BERNHARD F. SCHOLZ, UNIVERSITY OF UTRECHT)

*HANS KÖRNER. *Auf der Suche nach der wahren Einheit. Ganzheitsvorstellungen in der französischen Malerei und Kunstliteratur vom mittleren 17. bis zum mittleren 19. Jahrhundert*. München: Fink 1988. DM138.00

Near the end of his book (248), on occasion of criticizing the beloved exercise of treating Delacroix as the predecessor of impressionism, Körner turns against all those teleological models of history which take each historical period as preparatory to the following and the following as fulfilment of the preceding. But, in fact, the author himself did nothing else but follow the model of a step-by-step development from the classical Italian art theory to the romantic aesthetics of genius. The subtitle of the book, "Ganzheitsvorstellungen in der französischen Malerei und Kunstliteratur," describes the project exactly and 'unité' may indeed be the central term of any classical and postclassical art theory to which all further determinations are subordinated. Therefore, a monographical treatment appears to be more than promising.

In the preface, Körner explains his methodological orientation. Against the frequent tendency to stylize a general "organic unity" (whatever that may mean) as a fundamental condition of any kind of aesthetic concretion, Körner postulates the necessity always to ask about the particularity of the

4 Huston Diehl, *An Index of Icons in English Emblem Books 1500-1700*. (Norman/London: U of Oklahoma P, 1986).

respective unity concept. With this demand he turns against methods widely spread, especially in art history, in which grids of composition are used to describe varying aesthetic phenomena, without being examined for their historic relevance.

The author then examines the ideas of what should be understood by artistic unity by analyzing both paintings and texts. Yet, the interpretation of texts takes priority, so that non-art historical interests are also responded to. Like almost any other study in classical European art theory, here too the starting point is Alberti. Alberti regards composition, i.e. the level of the installment of unity, as the arrangement of human bodies: for the Renaissance, in general, pictorial order is not an abstract quality but the order of the picture objects. In the neoclassical theory of the seventeenth century the author perceives an understanding distinctively oriented towards the entirety of the picture. Félibien, Le Brun, and especially Depiles do not think of pictorial coherence as depending upon single objects but on the overall disposition of the whole. Such a theory appears to respond to developments of painting experience, especially to that of Poussin, who through the modal determination of the picture tends to subtract the power of expression from the figure and its gestic and mimic modulation and transfers it to the overall atmosphere of the picture.

The relativization of the traditional idea of imitation causes the pathos of Diderot's idea of unity. For the enlightened philosopher the model of nature is dissolved into an infinite number of relations. Art's foremost task is to reveal these relations in a transformed form. Due to its limited means art can only be "asymptotic approximation," never a copy. The unity of the work of art becomes a paradoxical form of autonomous reflexion. The relation to the model is no longer established through the objects that constitute unity but lies in unity itself. Here the objects are nothing more than the phenomenal expression of universal relation.

During French Neoclassicism the absolute of unity and the discredit cast upon representationalism lead to a point where unity not only comprehensively emphasizes the pictorial contents, but installs itself as a transfigural scheme. At this point Körner replaces text exegesis with picture exegesis: David constructs pictures into which figures are fitted. Pictorial order becomes all powerful and restricts the protagonist's activity. The idea of the vivid pictorial organism is dead. As Körner puts it trenchantly, the artist no longer wishes to order objects but to objectize order.

The Romantic movement indeed does without the compulsive character of neoclassical composition, but it takes on and even forces the relativization of figure and object. For once and all the unity of the work of art is kept in the subjectively created autonomy of the pictorial structure and is no longer based on the interaction of objects. With Delacroix, for example, colour

dismisses its function as "signifier" and becomes "significate" that receives all its dignity from the idea of artistic genius.

This short summary, which in an almost hazardous way narrows the width and differentiation of Körner's argumentation, shows clearly that we are by no means dealing with an example of positivistic factual research, but with the large scale attempt of a speculative presentation, that from a certain context of aesthetic theory reconstructs the development from the heterogeneous to the autonomous work of art and from the object-orientated to the picture-oriented artist. My following critique does not relate to the fascinatingly explicated basic postulate — which is unfortunately sometimes cluttered with too many names and texts — but is concentrated on single issues — which, for the sake of the evidential value of the step-by-step development, appear sometimes distorted.

I have no objections against the first Chapter dealing with the step from the arrangement of bodies to pictorial composition. Here Körner claims the idea of a super-representational pictorial totality for the entirety of French Classicism. Going back to the latest comprehensive study of French seventeenth-century art theory (Thomas Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art* (1985) one would rather tend to see this idea in connection with the first staunch Rubeniste Roger de Piles, whereas theorists like Félibien and Le Brun still interpreted pictures rather in terms of acting protagonists. Körner does indeed qualify his thesis when he claims, for example, for Poussin (30) (in contrast to David, with whom he deals later) that here super-representationality of composition must not be understood as being strange or even opposite to the objects. In spite of that the potential of pictorial autonomy assumed this seems to be clearly overestimated.

Even though the basic thesis that postulates a division of "Bildsumme" and "Bildkörper" is without any doubt correct and may still today need to be stressed, I encounter certain difficulties regarding Körner's interpretation of David. It appears questionable to me whether, in connection with David's pictures, one should indeed speak of an absolutely conclusive overall disposition, to which all figures are subordinated. Certainly, the linear structure Körner ascribes exemplarily to the "Sabbines" lacks plausibility. I think one should speak more carefully of a trenchant disintegration of figure and narrative context, of figure and space, in which the classical hierarchical construction of pictorial protagonist and assisting figures is lost. Nevertheless, especially in this chapter on French Neoclassicism it becomes clear that organic unity can be scarcely taken for an aesthetic constant.

The intellectual achievement of Körner's book is only marginally affected by this critique. The connection the author establishes between Diderot and David or between the usually opposed styles of Neoclassicism and Romanticism is sometimes of an originality of the highest order. It reveals

a commanding knowledge not only of the practical and theoretical aspects of art but also — and most of all — of the philosophical tradition. (HUBERTUS KOHLE, RUHR UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM)

*MARTIN BIDNEY. *Blake and Goethe: Psychology, Ontology, Imagination*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press 1988. Pp. xvi + 190. US\$24.00

Ever since the appearance of *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971), M.H. Abrams' valuable survey of English and German Romantic literature and thought, it has seemed desirable that another scholar of comparative literature would follow his lead and consider Goethe's *Faust*, to which Abrams devoted a suggestive chapter, within the context of European Romanticism. (It should be made clear here that this review is written from the point of view of a student of German literature.) Given the lack of consensus among *Faust* specialists on many issues of substance, might not a well-informed comparison of *Faust* with a major English work illuminate at least some of the former's intractable difficulties? Dr. Bidney, a specialist on English Romanticism, undertakes here a comparison between *Faust Part II* and Blake's massive unfinished epic *The Four Zoas*, as well as between selected lyrics of the two authors. Unfortunately, his study is marred by an inflexible psychologizing methodology and by a preference for *ex cathedra* pronouncement over argument. M.H. Abrams took as his focal point the Romantic revival of Neoplatonism, but he applied the Neoplatonic concepts with sufficient latitude and sensitivity to allow room for the individuality of the various authors and works of his authors as material to be cited selectively when it offered support for preconceived theories, usually the theories of C.G. Jung and R.D. Laing (who is quoted with approval on pp. 16 and 134). Moreover, since Dr. Bidney seems to subscribe to these theories himself, his writing takes on what can only be called a hortatory character. A reader who does not happen to be a Jungian may thus find this work of limited interest.

This is not to say that Jung's vision of man is irrelevant to Blake's or Goethe's. There is an honourable tradition of Jungian writing on Blake, and critics like Ilse Graham and L.A. Willoughby (neither of them mentioned in the bibliography of the present work) have written perceptive studies of Goethean themes based on Jungian concepts. It is Dr. Bidney's inflexibility that creates difficulties. Doubts arise as early as his introductory chapter, in which his conceptual framework is presented. Defining Romanticism as "chiefly a project of pioneering introspection, aimed at discovering the sources of visionary power, so that each poet could write his own mythology, scripture or testament" (xiii), a definition which is clearly biased towards a Jungian reading of the texts, Bidney distinguishes three aspects of this

Romantic quest which he believes to be common to both Blake and Goethe. These are: polarity, or the "creative tension between self-affirmation and self-transcendence"; negation, or the "self-assertive attempt to annihilate one's contrary"; and the transcendence of negation by the spirit of imaginative mediation (or "the Spirit of Imaginative Mediation"). Building on this foundation, the elements of which are classified as pertaining respectively to moral psychology, ontology, and the theory of the imagination (hence the book's title), Bidney goes on to claim that each author elaborated a "fourfold vision," the components of which he discloses later.

In stressing Goethe's theory of polarity, Bidney of course makes use of the famous conclusion of Book VIII of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, with its cosmic and anthropological myth. However, he is unfamiliar with Rolf Christian Zimmermann's two-volume work *Das Weltbild des jungen Goethe*, in which that myth is used as a hermeneutical device for understanding a group of Goethe's early works, including the *Urfaust*. It is the view of most critics that notwithstanding Zimmermann's brilliance and flexibility in applying this myth, the central concepts of "Verselbstung" and "Entselbstigung" do not form an adequate basis for understanding those works. Bidney could have profited from a study of Zimmermann, for, as his book takes us through the various moments in his conceptual structure, the material is subjected to a double "Systemzwang": the thought of both authors is made to conform to the critic's categories, and their works are made to yield up passages which can be juxtaposed as exemplifying a particular step of the argument. While some of the interpretations, notably that of "Kennst du das Land" (86-90) are striking and original, cases inevitably occur where the reader senses that the interpretation of a work is dictated, not by a desire to find out what it means, but by the critic's need to find an example to fit into a slot in the theoretical edifice. The most egregious example of this is the interpretation of Goethe's "Schleier"-symbol as being equivalent to the Biblical fig-leaf (60; the word "Kleeblatt," used by Goethe in the sense of a trio, is misunderstood in the same sense a few lines later.) More harmful to the overall argument of the book, however, is the author's belief that Goethe's intention in *Faust* is to "redeem" Mephistopheles, a view for which I can find no evidence at all.

Matters do not improve when Dr. Bidney identifies the elements of Goethe's "fourfold vision" as Faust, Mephistopheles, Homunculus, and the Eternal Feminine. These are stated to be the poem's "four major characters (99), and they are arranged, in Jungian fashion, to suggest a mandala of mental forces. But in what sense is the Eternal Feminine a *character*? One also notes the absence of Helena, the pursuit of whom occupies much of the action of the first three Acts of *Faust Part II*, but Bidney has excluded her on the grounds that Faust's quest for her represents "regressive yearnings for