

PMLA

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of America*

January 1971

Spring Stories and Criticism from Illinois

A SCRUPULOUS MEANNESS

A Study of Joyce's Early Work

By EDWARD BRANDABUR

Brandabur combines literary criticism and psychoanalytical perceptions in this study of *Dubliners* and the only extant play, *Exiles*. The style of "scrupulous meanness" Joyce used to deal with his characters' petty sadomasochistic behavior enabled him to express and control his attitude toward Dublin. This book offers every student and critic of Joyce a unique perspective. "Brandabur has dug deep and marshalled his evidence with vigor." March.

THE ETHOS OF RESTORATION COMEDY

By BEN R. SCHNEIDER, JR.

The author argues that Restoration comedy advocated positive moral values, not libertinism, by centering on the aristocratic notion of *generosity* (liberality, courage, plain-dealing, and love). The study is based on a survey of 1,127 characters in eighty-seven plays, and verified by intensive inspection of Congreve's *Love for Love*. "Clears away most of the cliché and mistaken attitudes about this genre." Spring, 1971.

IN THE HANDS OF OUR ENEMIES

STORIES BY DANIEL CURLEY

The author was adjudged an award recipient in the National Council on the Arts Selection Program for this collection of sixteen stories. He has been a member of the English department at the University of Illinois for fifteen years, and was, for five years, one of the editors of *Accent*, a literary magazine published at the University. He taught at the Breadloaf Writers' Conference in 1958 and has published, since 1947, two novels, a collection of short stories, criticism, poetry, and two plays. April.

THE COMEDY OF EROS

Medieval French Guides to the Art of Love

TRANSLATED BY NORMAN R. SHAPIRO. NOTES AND COMMENTARY BY JAMES B. WADSWORTH

The seven texts in this volume, for the most part previously published only in inaccessible, 19th-century dissertations, offer a sample of 13th-century vernacular instruction in the art of love. Here are Ovid's tips to the lover, according to Maître Élic, Guiart, and *The Key to Love*; down-to-earth poems on "the proper behavior of men and women in polite society"; and writings which cover the love of friendship. March.

AND IF DEFEATED ALLEGE FRAUD

STORIES BY PAUL FRIEDMAN

Eleven stories set in a contemporary urban background by a New Yorker who is currently assistant professor of English at the University of Illinois. Friedman won a writing fellowship to the Writer's Workshop in Iowa City, where he earned an MFA in creative writing. His stories have been published in *Quarterly Review of Literature*, *New World Writing*, and *New Directions*. Spring, 1971.

BRECHT AND IONESCO

Commitment in Context

By JULIAN H. WULBERN

This volume examines the polemics, the dramatic theory, and the theatrical practice of the two playwrights in a study of the extent to which political commitment or its lack influences drama. Wulbern first analyzes the play which makes the clearest statement of each playwright's particular viewpoint, then examines the later plays of each, drawing heavily on his direct experience of the plays as performed in the original languages, as well as on his work with the Berliner Ensemble and on personal contact with Ionesco. February.

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Metacommentary. FREDRIC JAMESON 9

Abstract. Although instinctively formalistic, modern criticism has avoided the basic problem of interpretation: not what a universally valid method should be, but why there should have to be any interpretation in the first place. Whence the first principle of metacommentary: each interpretation must account for the necessity of its own existence. Russian Formalism is the model of a criticism which refuses to interpret: it is unable, however, to deal with diachrony, and in particular with the novel as a form. The second principle of metacommentary: the fact that a work needs no interpretation (as in the novel of plot) is itself something to be explained. Thus, the possibility of plot reveals a wholeness in the society that produces it. To the evolution of the plotless novel corresponds the structuralist hermeneutic, with its reading of the work as a single sentence or as a system of binary oppositions. Structuralism can be transcended by the realization that its abstract mental categories are in reality historical moments. The ultimate model of metacommentary is one which, distinguishing the manifest and latent contents of the work, then seeks to account for this distinction (or repression). Since the latent content is an experience, the elaboration of the work corresponds to a question about the possibilities of Experience itself, and the disguises of the content to an attempt to conceal the causes of the limitation of experience in the social situation. (FJ)

Galdós' *Doña Perfecta* and Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*: Two Interpretations of the Conflict between Generations. VERNON A. CHAMBERLIN AND JACK WEINER 19

Abstract. Scholars have long noted the influence of Russian writers, particularly Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, on the novels of Benito Pérez Galdós. However, in an interview granted to the Russian journalist Ia. Pavlovskii in 1884 (only recently published in the West) Galdós acknowledges an indebtedness to an earlier Russian master, Ivan Turgenev, referring to him as "my great teacher." A close reading of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* and Galdós' *Doña Perfecta* suggests that the Russian masterpiece may have inspired the well-known Spanish work. The novels share a common theme (the conflict between generations), and in each the hero is a young man trained in science who makes an extended visit to the provinces. In both works the protagonist dies a tragic, untimely death. There are other important similarities between the two books, but significant differences as well, particularly in the authors' attitudes toward the conflict itself. Galdós believed completely in Pepe Rey's cause, while Turgenev was ambivalent about the forces his hero represented; thus, in tone and structure each novel reflects its author's feelings. There appears to be no doubt that Galdós knew *Fathers and Sons* and made use of certain of its ideas in creating his own independent and highly personal interpretation of the conflict between generations. (VAC and JW)

Chaucer's Merchant's Tale: Another Swing of the Pendulum. NORMAN T. HARRINGTON 25

Abstract. Despite a recent tendency to consider the Merchant's Tale outside the dramatic context of its prologue, and to read it primarily as a broadly humorous, if discordant, piece of anti-feminism, the tale is actually unified by a consistent narrative point of view that successfully accommodates the apparently incongruous themes, tones, and styles of the poem. The final effect, moreover, is not comic at all, but rather sardonic, a dark and unsettling view of an aspect of man's experience. The Merchant's Prologue, though probably written after the tale, is carefully adjusted to the climate of the tale, and must be considered in any critical account, especially since it is through the strong, viable presence of the narrator that the tale is held together. Two features characterize this narrator, one tonal, the other attitudinal. The first is the cool, acidulous voice we hear narrating the story, the expression of an ironic intelligence deeply at odds with the world. The second is the narrator's heightened awareness of sex, particularly in its more grotesque and violent forms, which gives the tale its unsavory atmosphere. These marks of a single unified

narrator, together with the ironic finale of the plot, result in a literary mode that is not finally comic, but which suggests comparison with the so-called "problem comedies" of Shakespeare. (NTH)

From Delusion to Illumination: A Larger Structure for *L'Allegro-Il Penseroso*. DAVID M. MILLER 32

Abstract. The virtues of *L'Allegro* are incorporated into *Il Penseroso*, and both mirth and melancholy serve the progress of the soul. The activities of *Il Penseroso* complement those of *L'Allegro*, but at each point they are nearer to the contemplation of God. The progress of the poems culminates in the final section of *Il Penseroso*, which has no parallel in *L'Allegro*. This vertical structure encompasses image patterns that range from humor psychology to music, and from hermeticism to topology. These patterns are further organized into parallel thematic units. Chief among these are the education of a superior mind, the subordination of flesh to mind and of mind to spirit, the syncretic nature of Christian vision, and the progress of the mind and soul through the complementary disorders of black melancholy and vain deluding joy. The delights of *L'Allegro* are real and valued, but they cannot stand against the ecstasy of Christian contemplation. (DMM)

Samuel Johnson and Traditional Methodology. JOHN W. WRIGHT 40

Abstract. An important and currently relevant statement about the role of methodological discourse in literary criticism is contained in the writings of Samuel Johnson. Johnson's relationship to the mainstream of western methodology is examined with particular reference to one of his main sources, Sir Isaac Newton's account of the method of analysis and synthesis. Central concepts of the tradition Johnson received are illustrated from various other writers who shaped the discourse he adapted to the purposes of his literary investigations. It was Johnson's achievement to bring the fruits of this discourse about method in science and philosophy into the arena of literary criticism and to show as no other English critic before him had the importance of rigorous attention to the complicated relationship between phenomena and received opinion in literary inquiry and what the requirements were for knowing something in critical discourse. (JWW)

Wuthering Heights and the Limits of Vision. DAVID SONSTROEM 51

Abstract. Interpretations of *Wuthering Heights* often focus upon the grand passions of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw, and the striking bond between them. But full and detailed consideration of the novel discourages the assumption that Emily Brontë is wholeheartedly endorsing their point of view, or any other. She consistently presents all her characters, Heathcliff and Catherine included, as blind to the world as others see it, and consequently as holding views that do not do justice to the fullness of things. Largely because of their myopia, all are ever at odds with one another, often physically, but usually conceptually, engaging in indecisive wars of words, benighted battles of too limited views. The battles occur as well within Catherine and Heathcliff, whose divided hearts reflect the confused divisions in the world at large. And the reader is fully implicated in the inconclusive conflicts, for his formulations and sympathies are repeatedly betrayed. *Wuthering Heights* provides him with no standard of judgment that comprehends the restricted ones of the characters, no privileged point of view to relieve his uncertainties. Whatever her intentions, Emily Brontë is clearly not just throwing her being vicariously into the lives of Heathcliff and Catherine. She possesses strong critical impulses and many contrary views, only one of them being that of Heathcliff. (DS)

The Death of Masterman: A Repressed Episode in H. G. Wells's *Kipps*. HARRIS WILSON 63

Abstract. The article brings to light from the University of Illinois Wells Archive a substantial repressed episode from *Kipps*. In the episode, Masterman, the dying socialist,

visits Kipps and his wife, Ann. In the course of his visit, which ends with his death, Masterman expresses his socialistic and utopian views of society. Masterman finds practical application of his views in the house Kipps is having built. But a single house proves too confining for Masterman's utopian visions and, by the time of his death, he has designed a plan for an entire utopian state. Masterman's views were to bring Kipps to an increased social and self-awareness that he never achieves in the published version of the novel. The episode is of literary value in itself, but more valuable in terms of what its omission means to the tone and structure of *Kipps*, and of still wider value as historical testimony to the nature of Wells's struggle to reconcile the claims of art and of propaganda in *Kipps* and generally through his major novels in the years from 1900 to 1910. (HW)

Huckleberries and Humans: On the Naming of Huckleberry Finn. JAMES L. COLWELL 70

Abstract. Mark Twain's choice of Huckleberry Finn as the name (or nickname) of his best-loved character has been virtually unexamined, yet its uniqueness and effectiveness make that choice worthy of further thought. A suggestive precedent was his use of Mulberry Sellers, but Twain knew the huckleberry only by hearsay until he encountered it in Hartford in 1868. An American word, "huckleberry" originated about 1670 and appeared in some common expressions with connotations of insignificance and rusticity, both qualities appropriate for Huck. The real-life model for Huck was Twain's boyhood friend, Tom Blankenship, like Huck the son of the Town Drunkard. "Finn" came from another Hannibal alcoholic, and was suitable both phonetically and because it was Irish. The appropriateness of huckleberry is underlined by a quality of the berry itself. As Thoreau and others tell us, it does not submit to cultivation and tastes best when picked wild. Twain's Huckleberry, too, resisted domestication. (JLC)

Notes on the Antecedents of *Anna Christie*. CLAUDE R. FLORY 77

Abstract. A letter from O'Neill to John Rogers, an actor in Tyler's production of "Chris," refers to the play as "a frank experiment in dramatic construction." Jordan Y. Miller alleges that elements of "The Ole Davil" were subsequently "combined with 'Chris' to become the final 'Anna Christie.'" However, an examination of the manuscripts discloses that there was really nothing "experimental" in "Chris" and that "The Ole Davil" is virtually an alternate title for *Anna Christie*, with at least ninety-five percent of the text of "Davil" being identical with the published text of *Anna*. O'Neill complained of Tyler's cutting "Chris" during the productions in Atlantic City and Philadelphia, but this was apparently greatly exaggerated. When the playwright himself reworked "Chris" into "The Ole Davil" and finally *Anna Christie*, he deleted nine of the seventeen original characters and reduced his manuscript by ten thousand words. But Paul Anderson of "Chris" is a much closer antecedent of Mat Burke than most critics have indicated. There are many verbal parallels between the first Christopherson play and the last. A comparison of the manuscripts is an enlightening study of O'Neill's maturation. (CRF)

Adam's Lobectomy Operation and the Meaning of *All the King's Men*. JAMES C. SIMMONS 84

Abstract. The brief scene in which Jack Burden observes the prefrontal lobectomy performed by his friend Adam Stanton is crucial to the novel's meaning, allowing Warren an opportunity to gather economically together most of the major themes of the novel. On one level Warren intends an analogy between Jack Burden and the anesthetized patient on the table who is in a very real sense Jack's double, a grotesque reflection of certain crucial aspects of his own character. And by forcing the confrontation, Warren achieves in a brilliant stroke a parody of portions of the novel's larger action, allowing himself the opportunity to recapture in symbolic form Jack's life and attitudes to date while simultaneously offering implicit criticism of that life and those attitudes. Warren further utilizes the scene to illuminate the meaning of Jack's flight West and the subsequent adoption of the mechanistic theory of the Great Twitch. In addition, the scene, by the nature of the operation, is a symbolic representation of the theme of division so pervasive throughout

the book and may be viewed in retrospect as one step toward the resolution of this conflict. (JCS)

Dancourt's Regency Plays. SPIRE PITOU 90

Abstract. All but one of Dancourt's extant regency plays remain unexamined and unappraised despite the acknowledged importance of this author's contribution to the French classical theatre. An inquiry into the nature of his last comedies reveals that, despite his imminent retirement from membership in the royal troupe, his talents continued to prove effective in the enthusiastic atmosphere accompanying the revival of the dramatic arts in Paris after the death of Louis XIV and the closing of Versailles. *Le Prix de l'arquebuse* (1717) reflects the gay spirit of the era in the provinces and re-creates events attendant upon a rural shooting meet. *Les Dieux comédiens* (1717) is inspired by Plautus' *Amphitryon* but relies for its comic effects upon the wit and ingenuity of the French playwright. *La Déroute du pharaon* is largely a satire on gamblers, and it holds up to ridicule a recent decree against gambling by the government. Dancourt's work continued to be popular and timely after 1715 because of his ability to adjust to the demands and tastes of regency audiences, but the bulk of his work and the best of his plays were written during the reign of Louis XIV, despite the persistent tendency of literary historians to consider him an eighteenth-century personage. (SP)

Madame de Staël, Rousseau, and the Woman Question. MADELYN GUTWIRTH 100

Abstract. In 1814 Mme de Staël published a curious second preface to her *Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de J.-J. Rousseau* (1788), her first important published work. In this new preface she shuns all discussion of Rousseau and simply restates her own ideas concerning woman. In her youthful work, despite occasional differences with Rousseau on other matters, Mme de Staël had espoused his idea of woman, abandoning all claims to feminine achievement for a Rousseauist enchantment with love. Her conception of woman, basically conservative, derived from a deep need not to diverge from the prejudices of her beloved father, whose notions paralleled Rousseau's. Mme de Staël's life departed radically from the conservative mold, however, and she experienced great difficulty in evolving a personal stand that could reconcile her confidence in her own gifts, emphasized in a passage from *De la littérature*, and her ideal of marital love, most explicitly stated in a chapter of *De l'Allemagne*. The second preface recapitulates these conflicts, but as an oblique reply to Rousseau's strictures on the woman of letters it is both an apologia for having lived the literary life and an understated espousal of the principle that the use of one's faculties is a positive good for all women. (MG)

Paul Celan and Martin Buber: Poetry as Dialogue. JAMES K. LYON 110

Abstract. From similar titles (*Gespräch im Gebirg* by Celan, "Gespräch in den Bergen" by Buber) to the common concern with engaging in dialogue with a "Thou," the poetry of Paul Celan reveals strong affinities with the writings of Martin Buber. This originates in part with the common tradition of Hasidic Judaism from which both drew. But beyond this, Celan also owes a debt to Buber. His quest for a Thou, the underlying dialogical impulse, and the tone of the language of his poetry echo much that is found in Buber's work. Structurally, seventy-five percent of his poems address themselves to a Thou and try to effect an encounter with this object of address. But whereas Buber finds his Thou in God, for Celan there is often no respondent. He seeks through poetic language to establish or create an ultimate poetic reality of words, though in contrast to Buber his desperate attempt often fails. The large number of objects addressed as "Thou" in the internal landscape of Celan's poems confirms that essential reality can be perceived only through creative poetic dialogue, however anguished and inadequate. In this sense, Celan defies a dogma that proclaims modern poetry to be essentially monological, since a dialogical impulse underlies his entire work. (JKL)

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