

Martin Light's insight about Quixotism is helpful, but he tries to follow a formula, and while Babbitt momentarily dreams of being a romantic reformer, the formula runs into trouble with a character like Elmer Gantry, who is not a romantic reformer in any sense. The book is forced to concentrate not on Elmer Gantry but on his foil, Frank Shallard, who is a romantic.

One of the best essays on Quixotism in fiction is Lionel Trilling's "Manners, Morals, and the Novel." It points out that all novels follow *Don Quixote* in the simple "old opposition between reality and appearance," and that *Don Quixote* sets for the novel the problem of snobbery. "The characteristic work of the novel is to record the illusion that snobbery generates and to try to penetrate to the truth which as the novel assumes, lies

hidden beneath all the false appearances." In his dedication to the delusion by false appearances Elmer Gantry is "Quixotic," and it is this form of Quixotism that is at the center of the novel. Trilling goes on to say that "so creative is the novelist's awareness of manners, that we may say that it is a function of his love." It is Lewis's love for Babbitt and Elmer Gantry and their manners that creates them so memorably. And their manners are Quixotic in that like the Don they are wrong about what is really real; but "people change, practical reality changes" (again quoting Trilling) when they come into the presence of the Don or Babbitt or Gantry. Though it might have been more exciting if it had used Trilling's ideas *The Quixotic Vision of Sinclair Lewis* is a useful book.

Theodore Colson

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### *Correction to last issue*

The first paragraph on page 114 ("The Family in the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*") was set incorrectly. The first sentence of this paragraph should read:

Aristocracy is not at all important in *Ulysses*; its absence, given the Homeric parallel, is significant. Had Joyce wished to parallel the *Odyssey* more closely than he did, he could have made his hero an aristocrat, surrounded him with his peers, and placed the locale for his action in an appropriate rural setting. But Joyce . . .

We would like to apologize to Professors McDonald and McKendrick for this unfortunate error.

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