

does not deliver: his method is neither responsible, nor systematic, nor scholarly; rather, it is willful, self-indulgent, almost careless. There are two major problems.

First, Adams leaves "influence" undefined—and therefore unlimited: "Let the word 'influence' mean whatever its various appearances will justify, for us it is more sinuous and various than six titles will encapsulate, or sixty" (p. xii). The key term means anything or nothing. It is a semantic blank under which Adams loosely and briefly (only Beckett, Gadd, and Nabokov are treated in more than twenty pages) comments on writers whose work "reminds" (e.g. pp. 178, 187) him of Joyce. Influence is not properly traced or analyzed at all. In some instances it is not even claimed: between Joyce and Virginia Woolf there is "congruence, perhaps, not influence" (p. 77); with Broch there is "affinity" (p. 145); with Borges "it's a left-handed, third-cousin kinship, defined as much by antithesis as by sympathy" (p. 193). In others, "influence" is so minimized one wonders why it was raised at all: with Döblin and Broch, Joyce's "influence is heavily diluted with other thematic and technical considerations; one sees it quickly, but comes almost as quickly to the end of it" (p. 134); neither Durrell nor Burgess is more than a "fringe-Joycean" (p. 166); Borges "is no more a real descendant of Joyce than he is a proper writer of fiction" (p. 190). Or a delicate, protective game is played, with "influence" asserted, qualified, and finally withdrawn: José Lezama Lima's *Paradiso* is an undoubted instance of Joycean influence" (p. 179), but Lima's "relationship to Joyce, however close or distant, makes itself felt chiefly as an afterthought" (p. 180), and ultimately "transcends all questions of influence and even inspiration, but can only be intimated under the loose formula of affinity" (p. 184). The effect of these maneuvers is to bewilder the reader, and to leave the whole issue unresolved because not seriously explored.

The second problem follows from the first. Unwillingness to define the key term leads to refusal to justify selection of subject: ". . . I have not tried to draw this sprawling, disorderly subject into a proper historical straight line, but simply freed the subject to take its own shape by flowing where it seemed to want to go. On the other side, the principle of economy also applies; all discussions of 'the modern novel' begin perforce by discarding 90 percent of the specimens, and there is no

reason to multiply them when all perceptions are tentative" (p. xiii). The "shape" the subject assumed in "flowing" includes Joyce in relation to Woolf, Faulkner, Beckett, Gadda, Döblin, Broch, Nabokov, Durrell, Burgess, Pynchon, Lezama Lima, Barth, O'Brien, and Borges (with some the connection admittedly tenuous, even non-existent). Why these and not other writers in whom Joyce's presence is clearly discernable, for whom his work was decisive, perhaps formative, such as Farrell, Bellow, Roth, John Gardner, Donleavy, David Jones, Cummings, James Plunkett, Muriel Spark, Stoppard, Behan, Böll, Grass? The answer is that the "principle of economy" evidently justifies "discarding" them. In short, Adams blithely touches on writers who remind him of Joyce and ignores those who do not—or writes about those he wants to and dispenses with those he does not.

In *Afterjoyce* the soul of Robert Martin Adams meanders among masterpieces, near-misses, or works peripheral. The critic chats about them in a "hasty and superficial way" (p. 36—the book is replete with such self-protective admissions). The Guggenheim Foundation provided the "leisure to assemble" this "wildly oversimplified" and "very perfunctory discussion" (pp. xiii, 9, 57), and the Oxford University Press has published it. But surely readers indebted to Adams's earlier work, which aroused their respect and admiration, rightly expect much more than impressionism masquerading as literary history.

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## CHARLOTTE F. GERRARD

*Montherlant and Suicide.*

Madrid: Studia humanitatis, 1977.

Pp. 68.

The theme of suicide, a thorny question at best, be it in literature or psychology has pursued us for time immemorial. Montherlant has proved himself an author worthy of literary interpretation and criticism, but often obstreperous to the critic. To tackle the question of suicide, and Montherlant—both as an author and as a

twentieth-century figure—is indeed a daring undertaking. Miss Gerrard begins with a brief but competent general philosophical introduction to suicide, and then proceeds to examine the works of Montherlant and the leitmotif of suicide. She supplies a selected bibliography, and this critic was somewhat unpleasantly surprised by the omission of *Les Célibataires*, a work which I feel is crucial to the understanding of most of Montherlant's literary endeavors. Indeed, the portrayal of the elderly, and the tribulations of the ill and isolated, go far in explaining the possible motivations behind Montherlant's own suicide. In fact, Léon de Coantré dies alone, sadly, in great psychological pain, at a time and under circumstances not of his own choosing. Can one not well compare him to Montherlant? Can one not say that Montherlant, aware of the possibility of a similar death, opted for suicide?

Miss Gerrard then passes on to Montherlant the man, and it is here, somehow, that this study fails. It becomes a repetitious apologia for Montherlant's suicide. We are told that he did not commit suicide out of great despair, but rationally, lucidly, and in possession of all his faculties. All his life, Montherlant vacillated between an eloquent elevation of suicide and a severe criticism of the same. Miss Gerrard's comments in this domain, *post facto* do not add very much. Perhaps it would have been better to stay with suicide as a literary theme.

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#### GUSTAVO A. ALFARO

*La estructura de la novela picaresca*  
Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo,  
1977. Pp. 145.

*La estructura de la novela picaresca* is a collection of eight essays on the Spanish picaresque novel. Two parts of the longest study, "La trayectoria del pícaro," were published separately as articles, as were three of the other essays. Some of

the Spanish picaresque novels examined by Professor Alfaro are deservedly famous (for example, *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, the picaresque novels of Cervantes, *Guzman de Alfarache*, *El buscón*) whilst others (for example, *El donado hablador*, *Periquillo*, *Bachiller Trapazo*, *La desordenada codicia*) are little known outside that limited circle of critics who specialize in the Spanish picaresque. Much controversy surrounds this term; and Professor Alfaro admits in his introduction (pp. 17-22) that it is not easy to define the picaresque, especially when definitions are based on Wellek and Warren theories of extrinsic, rather than on intrinsic, approaches to the genre.

In fact, Professor Alvaro suggests that the structure of the picaresque novel is much more developed than many critics suppose. In his first study, "La trayectoria del pícaro" (pp. 23-76), the longest and probably the most important in the book, he demonstrates that most Spanish picaresque novels have three basic structural elements in common. These are (1) "La genealogía del pícaro" (pp. 24-42); (2) "El despertar del pícaro" (pp. 42-57); and (3) "El castigo del pícaro" (pp. 57-67). In "La genealogía del pícaro" the whole question of bloodlines and genealogy is debated and the *pícaro's* lot is shown to be determined both by his family tree and by the society around him. This determinism contrasts effectively with the emphasis on *libre albedrío* (free will) which frequents the theater of the period. In "El despertar del pícaro" the moment of the *pícaro's* awakening to the harsher realities of existence is shown to provoke the more or less philosophical reasonings to which the genre is prone. Finally, in "El castigo del pícaro" the author shows how the *pícaro's* punishment is fitted to his crime.

Professor Alfaro is devoted to the tripartite division. He distinguishes between three types of protagonist: the "auténtico pícaro," the "antipícaro," and the "pícaro abufonado" (p. 42); there are three important moments in the *pícaro's* narration; and, in the epilog to this first study, there are three types of picaresque structure: "lineal, digresiva y mixta" (p. 67).

Of the remaining six essays ("Cervantes y la novela picaresca," "El diablo cojuelo y la picaresca alegorizada," "La anti-picaresca en el *Periquillo* de Francisco Santos," "El cuento intercalado en la novela picaresca," "Los perros de Cervantes