

occupation relevant to the style of the book. In the middle of a snowstorm Jack decides to walk the ten miles home from his downtown office and Chicago becomes the white quilt on which the pattern of his life is worked out. Fragments of memory, observation, chance encounters, sudden impulses, fears and momentary pleasures are sewn together. It is an endeavor neither heroic nor mock-heroic. It has the quality of Bloomsday without all the formidable literary machinery. Dostoevsky gave us fools and grotesques trying to survive in the spiritual desert of the modern world. Following in his footsteps Saul Bellow and others have given us a tribe of isolates tacking along the coasts of despair. The underground man and the antihero have had a long innings. Shields suggests that they often give us a false image of society. She has concentrated on people whose lives usually go unrecorded in history. They came together by happenstance and with the recognition that in modest determination they can help to shoulder each other's burdens.

Anthony S. Brennan

MARIA DIBATTISTA

Virginia Woolf's Major Novels: The Fables of Anon

New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980. Pp. 252.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

Virginia Woolf

New York: Columbia University Press, 1979. Pp. 270.

The need for a book like Maria DiBattista's has long been felt by serious readers of Virginia Woolf. Too much has been written in terms of the personal and psychological syndrome, too little about Woolf's "narrative identity." DiBattista redresses this imbalance, seeing that Mrs. Woolf's *impersonality* springs from a "fable of androgyny and a philosophy of anonymity." She goes on to demonstrate her thesis in each of the major novels, starting with *Mrs. Dalloway* where she feels that the creative mind effectively absents itself from the novel it was creating, thus providing the reader with an "insubstantial narrator."

To the Lighthouse is viewed by DiBattista as Mrs. Woolf's interpretation of her own family romance, her mother and her father, as "a parable of creation, a fable of knowledge." It becomes an artistic "rite de passage" as Lily, victimized like Virginia Woolf by a "tyrannical . . . yet beloved old man" finishes her painting and "a vision of renovated order" as James reaches the lighthouse at the tiller of his father's boat.

Furthermore, *Orlando* may be seen either as satiric fiction pursuing the aim of general improvement or as psychological fiction describing the quest for integration, an allegory of the "multiple selves composing the modern ego." The anonymous poet in *The Waves*, according to DiBattista, makes reason of it all. Anon expresses the common thought and feeling, and at the same time speaks in one fluid style, *on an*, as DiBattista points out, meaning "in one or together." The larger movements of "historical and natural order" subsume in *The Waves* the singular movements of *one* life.

In *Between the Acts*, DiBattista sees reenacted in the relation of Isa and Giles "that primeval war between man and woman." And in Miss La Trobe's obsession with "getting things up" a Nietzschean *self-forgetfulness*. She is the Woolfian artist who becomes "slave of her audience," and her triumph is in her realization of "art as gift, mere gift, free gift."

DiBattista's work successfully traces the "vanishing of the writing 'I'" in the major works of Virginia Woolf. It is a book worth reading not only for its important insights into the Woolfian method and for its refreshing point of view, but for its own technical virtues and for its grace of style, especially appropriate to a discussion of the novels of Virginia Woolf.

Michael Rosenthal's *Virginia Woolf* also eschews personal and psychological critical norms. Like DiBattista's study, it is a useful and well written discussion of Woolf's novels, presenting them from the point of view of the "primacy of form." Introductory chapters on the life and on Bloomsbury serve as background for the critical material to follow, although in the author's own words, they make "no claim to original research." This reviewer wonders if they are essential to Rosenthal's argument, reviewing as they do, well-known facts of Woolf's environment and appearing thereby somewhat extraneous to the critical posture of the book as a whole.

Chapter 3 on "The Problem of the Fiction," introduces the author's central thesis and could, then, perhaps have served as Chapter 1. Rosenthal rejects interpretations of Woolf's novels as seen through the feminist lens, stating that this politicized focus tends to distort the fiction. He dispenses also with the "androgynous vision" emphasized by other critics. Rather, he sees Virginia Woolf's work as radical in the sense that it is dissociated from the "story-telling tradition." As an artist, writes Rosenthal, "Woolf was obsessed with what we call formal rather than thematic concerns" and "absorbed primarily in creating shapes." Woolf's "reality" has to do with the "texture of human life" and the effort to "orchestrate" the quality of personal relationships. Like Woolf, her characters (for example, Lily Briscoe, Bernard, Miss La Trobe), are trying to form coherency from the chaos around them. This chaos is the "overwhelming sense of personal relationships, the intractableness of language, the fact of death." With Lily Briscoe, Woolf is saying, "I have had my vision."

The succeeding chapters deal with each of the nine novels, the biographies, social criticism, and literary criticism in the light of the points of view summarized in Chapter 3. Rosenthal, of course, sees *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* as traditional novels, written in the spirit of her favorite Edwardian villains: Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy. *Jacob's Room* represents her first attempt to break from this tradition, but in Rosenthal's opinion it does not entirely succeed, being filled with discontinuities that are absorbed in no central patterns. With his judgment that *Jacob's Room* is thus a "sterile form," I take some issue, believing that a coherence stems from the sense in it of the Joycean *recorso*, as I argued in "Joycean Structure in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway*" which appeared in the July 1977 issue of *IFR*.

Rosenthal sees *Mrs. Dalloway* as Virginia Woolf's first achievement of formal coherence, spatially and temporally, with Big Ben punctuating the thoughts of the characters (Cf. Joyce's *Ulysses* and again my article). All Woolf's best fiction takes place, according to Rosenthal, at least metaphorically, within a day. (*Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, and *Between the Acts*). Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway* creates form by means of the party, "a kind of ritual celebration of life," thereby manufacturing "moments of order in the face of chaos." In *To the Lighthouse*, the coherence achieved by

Mr. Ramsay and echoed by Lily Briscoe represents order and fulfillment, a final symmetry. Mr. Carmichael, like a pagan deity, extends his benediction over these personal triumphs. At the end of *The Waves*, it is the rhythm of the continual rise and fall of life, represented symbolically by waves, that formulates Bernard's acceptance of his own mortality, resulting in "harmony and completion." And in *Between the Acts*, the power of individuals to create art, relationships, and life out of disorder, that is, Miss La Trobe's ability to create, paralleled by Giles and Isa's creative struggle to renew their love, is the key whereby Virginia Woolf affirms her vision.

Michael Rosenthal's book is valuable in many ways, among them as a consistent development of a new point of view toward the novels; as an exemplar of that very point of view, making coherency and harmony from the chaos of the life, fiction, biography, and criticism; and as a useful teaching aid, for which purpose I would concede that Chapters 1 and 2 are probably more necessary (although much of the material in them might have been integrated within Chapters 3-15.) The scholar will find the book good reading; it is a fine addition to the flood of material produced recently on Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group. As Rosenthal remarks, "Virginia Woolf is very hot literary property indeed."

Margaret Church

REED MERRILL and THOMAS FRAZIER, COMP.

Arthur Koestler: An International Bibliography
Ann Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1979. Pp. 199.

This bibliography, in two parts, takes its basic organization from the categories used in the definitive Danube Edition (London: Hutchinson, 1965-78, 31 volumes): Fiction and Drama, Autobiography, and Essays and Symposia. Compiled by Reed Merrill, "Works by Arthur Koestler" (335 items),