

In demonstrating their method of examination, the authors go to great lengths by way of numerous charts of computer analyses, which show time and again that the similarities between the style of Sholokhov's other works and that of *The Quiet Don* unmistakably point to the same authorship, while the same cannot be said of Kriukov. If one agrees that a literary style can be analyzed by a computer—and this reviewer does—the conclusion of the Scandinavian scholars must be taken seriously. How else can one explain the demonstrated similarities between earlier and later works except by the true fact that every writer develops mannerisms that are unquestionably his. If one disagrees with the computer method, he or she, of course, will persist in the conviction that Sholokhov plagiarized Kriukov's manuscript, and the controversy will continue ad infinitum.

The authors of this study are to be commended for their painstaking effort, which speaks for itself and which has to be studied to appreciate fully both the method and the findings. Those who still like to look at literature as a domain of art and not of science, have other, less scientific reasons to believe in Sholokhov's authorship. If he was unable to write *The Quiet Don*, how could he write his early and late stories, and his later novels? Granted, they are not on the same artistic level, but how often does an author write on the same high artistic level throughout his entire career? Very seldom indeed. Moreover, many stylistic inconsistencies that the disbelievers claim preclude Sholokhov as the author, were the work of the censors, not of Sholokhov himself. Finally, how could Kriukov, who died in 1920, have written the end of the novel, which goes beyond that year and which, in the opinion of some critics, constitutes some of the best pages of the novel?

As mentioned, the controversy will probably go on forever, especially now that Sholokhov has died without making a deathbed "confession." One is almost tempted to ask, does it really matter? Do we know who Shakespeare was and does that diminish our enjoyment of his works? We have *The Quiet Don*, one of the greatest novels in world literature, and we should look at it primarily as a work of art. In the meantime, the authors of the book under review deserve our gratitude and praise for their valuable contribution.

R. G. Collins, ed.

*CRITICAL ESSAYS ON JOHN CHEEVER*

Boston; G. K. Hall, 1982, Pp. 292

Reviewed by Frank R. Cunningham

In John Livingston Lowes's memorable 1933 MLA Presidential Address on the insufficient exercise of critical imagination upon the fruits of scholarly research, he cited Carlyle's account of Coleridge's rhetoric: "He would accumulate 'formidable apparatus, logical swim-bladders . . . and other vehicular gear for setting out'—and never arrive at a goal," and called for a more humanistic scholarly writing that would illuminate the understanding. In an era of comparatively little *experimenta lucifera*, it is refreshing to encounter Professor Collins's gathering of critical essays on John Cheever's career, fully a third of which provide significant critical insights and interpretations of probable continued value to Cheever scholars. Collins's introductory essay to his volume (part of a series, edited by James Nagel at Northeastern University, intended to reprint important past criticism as well as new essays on major American writers) appropriately treats Cheever's declared search for radiance and illumination in his over 150 published short stories and four novels. (Collins omits consideration of Cheever's final short novel, *Oh What a Paradise It Seems*, published just as his collection was in press.) Helpful in this regard are Cheever's own rarely granted statements concerning his artistic intentions in interviews with John Hersey and Annette Grant in which he speaks of his search for "the boundlessness of possibility" (p. 102) and of his conviction of humankind's universal drive toward "spiritual light" (p. 106), as well as his discontent with so much of contemporary fiction "littered with tales about the sensibilities of a child coming of age on a chicken farm" (p. 95), and his preference for Cocteau's idea that "writing is a force of memory that is not understood" (p. 97).

Among essays dealing with Cheever's themes of spiritual affirmation and renewal, especially revealing are those by George Hunt, George Garrett, John Gardner (the 1977 *Saturday*

Review essay) in praise of Cheever's "unsentimental compassion," George Greene, and Frederick R. Karl's essay on Cheever's continuities of American Romanticism and the pastoral tradition (though perhaps a consideration of Peckham's seminal article on Romanticism in *PMLA*, 1951, would strengthen Professor Karl's argument). Also useful are essays by Theo D'haen, linking Cheever with the romance tradition in the development of the American novel, particularly the myth employed by Cooper and Hawthorne of America as Edenic paradise regained, and by Samuel Coale (perhaps better represented by a selection from his fine 1977 book on Cheever), comparing Cheever with Hawthorne, although both might have considered H. T. Harmsel's 1972 article in *Studies in Short Fiction* on relationships between "Young Goodman Brown" and "The Enormous Radio."

Closely related to the work on Cheever's affirmative themes are articles discussing the theme of the relationship of America's past to its present by Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., Stephen C. Moore, Scott Donaldson, and Robert M. Slabey. Professor Burhans indicates the significance of the Cheever narrator who feels that "we seemed to be dancing on the grave of social coherence" (p. 116) as expressive of Cheever's statement that, by the mid-1950s "something has gone very wrong" in our culture; "I come back again to [the image of] the quagmire and the torn sky" (p. 110). Burhans finds particularly compelling Cheever's concern both with the vast changes characterizing the contemporary world and the frighteningly accelerated rate of such changes. Moore sees that though Cheever's characters are typically confronted with the loss of ideals and traditions, they persist in attempting self-definition as their only hope of meaningful life. In two closely reasoned and very well written essays, Professors Donaldson and Slabey consider such existential concerns in terms of the journey motif and (specifically in Slabey's important essay) the relationship between Cheever's "swimmer" and Washington Irving's archetypal Rip. Slabey writes, "Cheever follows in the line of fabulist and mythopoetic writers, participating in the chief business of American fiction—the creation of American Reality" (p. 190).

Professor Collins does not ignore the great later novels, *Bullet Park* and *Falconer*, although most essays in the volume treat either the stories or the Wapshot novels. Fine articles on *Falconer* appear by Gardner and by Joseph McElroy; Professors Donaldson, Waldeland, and John Gardner (in a second essay from the *New York Times Book Review* in 1971) explore the importance to Cheever's canon—and to American fiction—of *Bullet Park*. Gardner's insightful and provocative essay on witchcraft and chance in Cheever's most demanding novel both sends us back to Pascal and points ahead to further inquiry.

A few critics find Cheever sometimes guilty of "logical swim-bladders" of his own, notably Cynthia Ozick in an amusing 1964 article that takes Cheever to task for crudities in formal structure (convincingly countered, I think, in the essays by Hunt and Waldeland) and sentimentality. We recall Strothers Burt's 1943 warning that Cheever might stumble via "a hardening into an especial style that might become an affectation" (p. 24), and Ihab Hassan's cavils in his *Radical Innocence* of 1961; Ozick finds insincerity in Cheever's style in her memorable, "Oh, it is hard to be a Yankee—if only the Wapshots were . . . then Wapsteins—how they might then truly suffer!" (p. 66). Certainly more specific criticism is needed on Cheever's style, perhaps taking direction from Moore's careful differentiation between Cheever's language and tone and that of the typical *New Yorker* story, or Hunt's indication of the similarities between Cheever's style and modern poetry. (Joan Didion noted both humor and pathos, rather than sentimentality, in Cheever's Auden-like atmosphere: "Lost in a haunted wood, children afraid of the night who have never been happy or good"; p. 68.)

Most of these critics agree with Gardner that Cheever's "stark and subtle correspondences," his "uneasy courage and compassion, sink in and in, like a curative spell" (p. 261). Of Cheever's restorative humanism and of his major place in American fiction there seems no doubt; in the editor's words, "truly fortunate are those of us who read through his words of a brighter, deeper, more significant, more human, more passionate, and more visible world, of both chaos and of triumph over chaos" (p. 19).

Driss Chraibi

*MOTHER COMES OF AGE*

Translated from *La Civilisation, Ma Mère!* . . . by Hugh

Harter

Washington: Three Continents Press, 1984. Pp. 121

Reviewed by Saad El-Gabalawy

Like V. S. Naipaul, Driss Chraibi is intensely aware of the cultural dilemma created by colonialism, which engenders the schizophrenic sensibility of many enlightened individuals in the Third World, who are deeply rooted in the traditions of their native countries but fascinated by the brave new world of Western civilization. Born in Morocco, he is now considered a Francophile who has totally assimilated the culture of the colonial force which