

Brady's wonderful photographs" (12). What Reynolds does not say—and surely should have—is that Hemingway also wrote of Crane's *Red Badge*, "[It is] the brilliant imagining of a sick boy who had never seen war but had only read the battles and chronicles and seen the Brady photographs." He also damns Willa Cather for doing precisely what Hemingway himself had done: based fiction on secondary sources. There is a 180-degree shift in judgment in the two statements; Hemingway has it both ways, apparently. Yet Reynolds does not mention Hemingway's earlier devastating attitude to people who based their fiction on secondary sources.

Reynolds has a central thesis for his book, and he makes it clearly. He overstates the argument, however, panning a great deal of earlier criticism in the process. It is unquestionably a useful book about *A Farewell to Arms*, but it is not a great one.

David Seed

THE FICTIONAL LABYRINTHS OF THOMAS PYNCHON

Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988. Pp. 268 \$25.00

Reviewed by Lance Olsen

Reading David Seed's often interesting if finally flawed chronological study of Thomas Pynchon's stories and novels is frequently like standing three inches away from a Seurat canvas. It is easy enough to distinguish a host of intricate and admirable colorpoints, but it is impossible to figure out exactly what they are all supposed to add up to. Seed never discusses the theoretical nature of his approach; he never states the goal of his book; and the closest he comes to a thesis is the hardly ground-breaking observation in his unfocused introductory chapter: because it is difficult to tie Pynchon down to a single viewpoint and because he combines popular art forms and abstruse information, Pynchon's reader is "often as entrapped within a labyrinth of reference as his characters" (11). A poor editing job which allows for an embarrassingly large number of typos, punctuation errors, and stylistic tics further undermines this study's overall effect.

At the same time that Seed is short on general arguments which might pull Pynchon's project into a new and provocative focus, he is long on details and close thoughtful local readings. His first chapter, for instance, intelligently explores how the themes and techniques found in Pynchon's stories prefigure his later work. Although sometimes heavy on synopsis and esoterica, Seed provides one of the most meticulous and complete readings of "Entropy" to date. In his discussion of *V*, he provides some fine interconnections among the historical sections and argues for the novel's unity on thematic grounds. His examination of *The Crying of Lot 49* provides an extended reading of "The Courier's Tragedy" and links the social dimension of the novel to "A Journey Into The Mind of Watts," Pynchon's little-discussed 1966 article. In his diffuse chapter on *Gravity's Rainbow*, Seed spends some worthwhile time with Pynchon's use of Norman O. Brown and with the novel's subversive comic impulse.

In an anticlimactic final chapter Seed attempts to place Pynchon in context by glossing all the novels about which Pynchon has made promotional statements, including Tom Robbins's *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*. In a brief appendix Seed reproduces Pynchon's 1969 letter on his use of Southwest African material to Thomas F. Hirsch who had written the author while researching a graduate paper on the Bondelzwarts.

No doubt Seed, a regular contributor to *Pynchon Notes*, is extremely familiar with Pynchon scholarship (although even here there are several notable exceptions, such as Steven Weisenburger's and Kathryn Hume's work on *Gravity's Rainbow*), and at its best *The Fictional Labyrinths of Thomas Pynchon* is a lucidly and level-headedly written theme and influence study which will surely serve both as a solid introduction to one of America's most important contemporary writers and as a strong shoring up of much of the most important criticism on him.

John F. Desmond

RISEN SONS: FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S VISION OF HISTORY

Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1987. Pp. 135 \$18.00

Reviewed by Melvin J. Friedman

Frederick Asals's *Flannery O'Connor: The Imagination of Extremity* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982) features words like "inherent dualism," "dualistic imagination," and "ironic duality" and goes to the point of suggesting: "Psychologically, at least, Flannery O'Connor seems to have been an inveterate 'Manichean.'" Five years later the same publisher issues a book which dissents from this dualistic view and Manichean vision. John F. Desmond's *Risen Sons* argues for "coherent wholeness" (13) and unity.

Desmond's title seems to suggest a play on the words "risen sun" from William F. Lynch's *Christ and Apollo* ("Thus Christ is water, gold, butter, food, a harp, light, medicine, oil, bread, arrow, salt, turtle, risen sun, way, and many things besides"). *Christ and Apollo*, along with Claude Tresmontant's *A Study of Hebrew Thought*, Brian Wicker's *The Story-Shaped World*, and David Tracy's *The Analogical Imagination*, are central texts and help determine the contours of Desmond's investigation. These, as well as other books by Maritain, Gilson, Voegelin, Eliade, and Jaspers, offer him the theoretical underpinnings for his readings of O'Connor's fiction.

The first chapter of *Risen Sons* wanders across the theological terrain as Desmond tries to set up a meeting ground between the aesthetic and the ontological. He does very little with literature in chapter one although he does manage an interesting confrontation between a passage from O'Connor's "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" and one from Faulkner's *A Fable*. In the O'Connor text "the action moves forward to dramatize meaning" (23) while in the Faulkner novel rhetoric takes over and seems to stand in for "concrete dra-