

## Book Reviews

Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*. MacMillan Co. 1965.

Danto's widely read study of Nietzsche has assumed the status of a classic since its publication over 20 years ago. In the Anglo-American philosophical world, only Walter Kaufmann's *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Anti-Christ*, appealed to a scholarly as well as a lay audience. Danto's book had the signal merit of commanding the attention of academics, not only in philosophy but in literary studies as well. After a generation, his work remains the point of departure for the growing body of contemporary Nietzsche studies.

Danto's Nietzsche is not the poet of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, nor the logical successor of the German philosophical tradition from Kant through Hegel to Schopenhauer. Instead, Danto views Nietzsche as a precursor of contemporary analytical philosophy, despite the strongly existential themes which pervade Nietzsche's thought. Thus, Danto's first chapter, "Philosophical Nihilism," sets the stage for the remainder of his interpretation. According to Danto, nihilism for Nietzsche is the view that the world has no meaning, value, or sense in its own right (pp. 32-3). From this insight, Danto

claims that characteristic Nietzschean doctrines follow: perspectivism, master and herd morality, anti-Christianity, the will to power, the overman and eternal recurrence. Succeeding chapters are devoted to each of these Nietzschean themes. Danto is at his strongest in the areas of epistemology and philosophical psychology. Accordingly, his discussions of perspectivism and philosophical psychology are the most celebrated in his study. Here he puts his analytical skills to the task of showing convincingly how Nietzsche's perspectivism, his insistence that "there are no facts but only interpretation", issues from a rejection of the correspondence theory of truth and results in a radical relativism in which "man is the measure of all things" (Protagoras). Danto's equally adept in elucidating Nietzsche's philosophical psychology. Nietzsche's reductivism-his attempt to show that the subject distinction is fictitious, his attack on the Kantian thing-in-itself and the very notion of "substances" independent of a human context as illusions, are very much in the spirit of Hume and other predecessors of analytical philosophy. Even more importantly, Danto illuminates Nietzsche's employment of "genealogy" (so influential on post-modern

thought) to dismantle theological and philosophical notions which held sway in European philosophy since Plato.

Danto is at his weakest, however, in his account of the will to power, the overman, and eternal recurrence. He has considerable difficulty in reconciling these metaphysical and axiological notions with Nietzsche's forays into the areas of psychology and the nature of knowledge. In this respect, Kaufmann's earlier study serves as a useful counterpoint to Danto's "perspective." Nonetheless, Danto's stimulating interpretation continues to exercise a profound influence on the present generation's community of Nietzsche scholars.

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Yrjo Sepanmaa, *The Beauty of Environment: A General Model for Environmental Aesthetics*, Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedakatemia, 1986, pp. 184.

Man's aesthetic sense originated in his perception of beauty in Nature: the environment outside his mental world. Any cursory glance over the Vedic hymns, man's first verbal reaction to the external world would find the statement self-evident. The sky, the fire, the seas,

forests, hills, rivers, villages, towns, planetary bodies all are the objects and dawn, morning, noon, evening and night the points of time and different seasons are all the phenomena that aroused his sense of beauty, stimulated the zest for living beautifying the living itself. He sang the glory of the creation in the hymns relishing the honey of life itself that oozed from the environment. If poetry is the first art that man created then it is all for and about the environment. But when art or *techne* in the Greek sense of the term originated in the representation of Nature, aesthetics or theory and criticism of the arts neglected the analysis and interpretation of the physical environment, the very source of the artistic creation. Aristotle's *poetics* is the first and last example of this practice. Even with the Romantic philosophers and critics of art, it is the artist's mind, and not Nature, which is the focus of analysis. But in the recent years a genuine need for the cultivation of Nature has been realized after a random deforestation and pollution of water and air all over the world due to massive growth of population, heavy scientific experiments and disaster brought by several wars. It is now very sincerely realized that environment is not merely a background of man's life, it is rather the very basis of

common civilization and therefore thinkers of various branches such as natural sciences, archaeology, anthropology and sociology have given urgent slogans for preservation of environment and simultaneously aestheticians have started formulating the principles of studying the beauty of Nature not as the source or background of art works rather as an art work in itself.

The present work is an attempt at such a formulation : "a systematic outlining of the field of environmental aesthetics beginning from the basis of analytical philosophy". Environment is defined as the physical milieu and the basic distinction between the environment as a natural state and that altered by man is drawn and only that part of the mental environment which regulates a person's reaction to the physical environment is dealt with.

The author's concern is with two groups of questions : ontological and metacritical - what is the nature of environment as an aesthetic object and how this object be interpreted and evaluated along the direction of the paradigm of art. Finally there is a movement from the theoretical to the applied research dealing with the practice and benefits of environmental aesthetics.

In the presence of a lot of materials on the subject the merit of

the present work is its presentation of the subject in its totality. It is perhaps the most systematic of all the works written on the subject so far. On the theoretical side Sepanmaa has been extremely successful in building up an environmental aesthetics with its field of research, central questions and methods and materials of research along the line of traditional aesthetics with its three major wings - philosophy of beauty, philosophy of art and philosophy of criticism (or metacriticism).

If aesthetics is a part of philosophy, environmental aesthetics is also a part of environmental philosophy. In the second chapter the objects, categories and paradigms of the environment are elaborately dealt with. Similarly, while building up an environmental aesthetics, the function of general aesthetics i. e. philosophical criticism is also demonstrated in answering to the questions such as what is environmental criticism, who are the environmental critics and what are the components of environmental criticism - description, interpretation and evaluation. The third chapter deals with the application of environmental aesthetics distinguishing between the environmental education in general and aesthetic environmental education in particular and considering the searching of the means

of description, interpretation and evaluation. Suggestions are also offered for influencing the ideals both privately and communally. The author correctly comments : "the understanding of the aesthetic nature of the environment creates a basis for nature protection and for the protection of the built environment for when value is seen in something there is a willingness to protect it." But the use of the phrase "preservation of habitability" (p. 138) does not suit to the ecological principle where it is better to use "conservation of habitability", because preservation restricts the use whereas conservation permits use of habitation up to optimum level.

Apart from the wealth of information contained, the book is highly persuasive in its presentation of arguments in such a lucid way that far from being merely technical, it provokes even the general reading public to rethink about the environment. It seems that the author has followed two eminent American aestheticians John Hospers and late M. C. Beardsley (whom he quotes frequently) both for their style of argument and presentation of the materials. The result is that the work is greatly useful for both the specialists in the field and even for the beginners who want an introduction to the subject. It projects the author's sincere involvement with

the field he studies, clarity in understanding the problems convincing the readers to get themselves involved in the problems and finally compelling them to work out their own projects for possible improvement in their taste for and active cooperation in the rebuilding of the environment that is highly necessary in the fag end of the present country that has caused disastrous injury to both the environment itself and our attitude toward it.

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Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari *Anti - Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Viking Press, New York : 1977. Preface by Michel Foucault. Trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane of *L'Anti - Oedipe : Capitalisme et Schizophrenie*, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris : 1972.

A schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on a couch.

*Anti - Oedipus*

In view of the dozen or so books on Nietzsche which have come out during the last couple of years, *Anti-Oedipus* deserves another look. Deleuze knows Nietzsche well, having published in 1962 his

*Nietzsche et la philosophie*, a very congenial and sensitive work, even if his remark that Nietzsche must be understood as an anti-Hegelian is overstated and inaccurate. Deleuze obviously uses the things he had learned from Nietzsche about positivity and the dangers of representation as the basis for his autoproductive unconscious; and the use and misuses of the desiring machines reflect rather precisely the joyous uses and the desperate abuses of the Nietzschean will to power, whether we consider the will to power an individual psychological event or the later cosmological impetus to transformation of energy centers, etc. (Here are a couple of subjects for books or dissertations) *Anti-Oedipus* also contains a strong flavor of surrealism. These remarks should appear clearer and more valid at the end of this review.

*Anti-Oedipus*, in a convincing but ferocious jargon, purports to found a materialist psychoanalysis on the concept of the autoproductive unconscious, which is manifested in its libidinal investments as a desiring-machine in a universe of desiring machines. The autoproductive desiring-machine is a contentless, nonmoral force (like the Freudian id), whose products are always already also and immediately social production - thereby, it would seem, handily solving the problem of the

relation between the self and the collective, that collective which according to Michel Serres is a "black box and a white noise".

The desiring-machine is a flow which is broken, deformed, interrupted, by breaks - flows, by the flows-schizzes. It reminds the reader of the clinamen and of Bohm's idea of fragmentation theory in which it is the combinations of vortices, of deformations of a continuum, which are perceived as the reality. I suggest this to emphasize that the desiring-machine, as a materialist event, is a phenomenon of physics, not metaphorically, but really, as a materialist psychoanalysis would demand. As such, psychoanalysis becomes a branch of physics. Since desiring production is also social production, a materialist psychoanalysis becomes likewise a materialist theory of sociology, history, and economics and allows the authors of *Anti-Oedipus* to describe the evolution of humanity in three stages, which sometimes overlap or at least retain "vacuoles" or enclaves of a previous stage. These are the stages of (1) primitive territoriality, (2) the barbarian Urstaat, and (3) capitalism. Each of these states has its own way of engraving itself on the body of its citizen, and capitalism is the ultimate stage in which "the capitalist social formation... mobilizes [previously coded] flows that are effectively decoded ... by substituting for the

codes a quantifying axiomatic that is even more repressive" (p. 176).

Although capitalism does not invent Oedipus, it exploits it cynically and mercilessly, supported by modern Oedipalizing psychoanalysis, in order to forch onto the autoproductive unconscious the triangular structure of the Oedipus, to define and limit the autoproductive unconscious to a familiar concept which effectively breaks it away from the larger cultural and socioeconomic framework, and in order to deform and replace its productivity by representation, by the despotic signifier. What had been real and productive is deformed by representation and the metaphysical atmosphere of idealism, rationalism, capitalism, and neo-idealist psychoanalysis.

Anti-Oedipus will replace the paranoid, molarizing, capitalist, neurotic, Oedipal psychoanalysis with schizoanalysis: a molecular, schizophrenizing point of view that sets free the autoproductive unconscious. That is, it will provide a point of view from where the desiring-machines may be identified before their deformation by Oedipus and seek the dissolution of egos. The first positive task consists of discovering in a subject the nature, the formation, or the functioning of his desiring-machines, independently of any interpretation" (p 322). 'In this regard,

the first thesis of schizoanalysis is this: every investment is social, and in any case bears on a sociohistoric field" (p. 345). 'Libidinal economy is no less objective than political economy..' (p.345). "Schizoanalysis would come to nothing if it did not add to its positive tasks the constant destructive task of disintegrating the normal ego: (p.362). Here we have a basic theory for psychoanalysis and politics, whose adherents Michel Serres recently sarcastically referred to as "les psyches-et-pos" (la psychanalyse et la politique).

*Anti-Oedipus* has a curious surrealist quality, which comes from its heavy reliance on "privileged" mental states and on the primacy of the unconscious, not to mention the shocking literary style. For *Anti-Oedipus* it is not so much a matter of the unconscious outside any concern for the moral or aesthetic," as Breton's *Premier Manifeste* had it, as it is of freeing the desiring-machine of the unconscious for an authentic desiring-production-which-is-the-equivalent-to-social-production. The mere expression of the autoproductive unconscious would deny it its productivity by replacing its productivity with representation, represented by Oedipus. Breton's view of the unconscious was not as broad as that of Deleuze and certainly his analysis of the problem

was not so deep, so scientific, or so well thought out in its relations between the individual desiring-machines and the socio-economic sphere. Nevertheless, the freeing of the unconscious has the same goal for both surrealism and *Anti-Oedipus*: an expression-production freed from preconceived ideas, most particularly capitalist-bourgeois ideas.

Both *Anti-Oedipus* and surrealism require a destructive posture in relation to bourgeois capitalism, and both look to abnormal (privileged) states of mind for insights. In *Les Vases communicants*, Breton and Eluard sought to imitate the states of the various mental affliction, and *Anti-Oedipus* does specify the difference between schizophrenia as a critique and schizophrenia as a disease: it becomes a disease when it is frustrated as a process by oedipalizing psychoanalysis and by capitalism, which cause the process to take itself as an end. "So the schizo is effectively neuroticized, and it is this neuroticization that constitutes his illness" (p. 363). Still, Deleuze tracks Artaud about in much the same way Breton tracked Nadja, expecting to find and finding in mental illness some insight, and even a greater sanity than in the world of bourgeois normalcy, and drawing further material from the diary of Nijinsky, from *L'Art brut*,

a periodic series of reproductions of art works done by residents of psychiatric hospitals in Europe. "There is never a delirium that does not possess [ a strong politico-erotic content ] and that is not originally economic, political, and so forth, before being crushed in the psychiatric and psychoanalytic treadmill" (p. 274) "Why does it [capitalism] confine its madmen and madwomen instead of seeing in them its own heroes and heroines, its own fulfillment?" (p. 245).

The problem of a similarity in the concept of representation between surrealism and *Anti-Oedipus* is somewhat more complicated, given the great theoretical emphasis placed on the signifier by structuralism and post-structuralism, a concern which largely post-dates Breton. In the stage of the barbarian Urstaat, however, Deleuze sees the despot establishing the practice of writing: "It is the imperial formation that makes graphism into a system of writing in the proper sense of the term" (p. 202). Referring to the studies of Leroi Gourhan, Deleuze remarks that "primitive societies are oral not because they lack a graphic system but because, on the contrary, the graphic system in these societies is independent of the voice" (p.202). When, however, the graphic system begins to mirror the spoken word, tends to supplant it. Writing, as

Derrida has often pointed out, takes its origin in the priestly class and has its roots in power, the age of the sign being essentially theological.

Surrealism was notorious mutilator of language (V. Tzara's poems made by cutting, shuffling and pasting), a mutilation done in the name of a graphism which had been appropriated by bourgeois power. This dislocation of language is more easily done with poetry, since poetry is "nearer" the "aesthetic phenomenon" than prose. Sartre no doubt thought thus when he opted for prose over poetry as a form of commitment, fully accepting the metaphysics of presence and its basis in power, making of prose a form of action which acted on the external world and rejecting the word-for-the word's-sake. Sartre saw language as an order forced on a formless world of objects and would have wanted nothing to do with desiring - machines. He rejected surrealism as well--ironically putting himself in the bourgeois camp, at least from the point of view of an autoproductive unconscious. Seen from this angle, surrealism's assault on phonocentric bourgeois writing is consistent with its expectation that primitivism may provide a purified view of things. Nevertheless, Deleuze would have to see the anti-bourgeois linguistic mutilations of

the surrealists as ineffective : "Writing has never been capitalism's thing. Capitalism is profoundly illiterate" (p. 240). "Electric language does not go by way of the voice or writing; data processing does without them both, as does that discipline appropriately named fluidics, which operates by means of streams of gas; the computer is a machine for instantaneous and generalized decoding of the flows" (p. 241). Modern hackers and computer terrorists are neo-surrealists.

Besides the role of the unconscious and the automatism recommended in the *Premier Manifeste* the second major principle of surrealism (*Second Manifeste*) is the unification of opposites : male and female, good and evil, subjectivity and objectivity, etc. Deleuze deals with the opposition between male and female in his criticism of anthropomorphized sex and in general his concept of the desiring - machines does away with these oppositions. "Everything is objective or subjective, a one wishes," he writes. "That is not the distinction : the distinction to be made passes into the economic infrastructure itself and into its investments. Libidinal economy is no less objective than political economy, and the political no less subjective than the libidinal..." (p. 345). Those who, like Reich,

tried and failed to create a materialist psychiatry were confined to the duality of the subjective and the objective because they did not understand "how desire was part of the infrastructure" (p. 345). Such ideas of unification seem more methodological in the *Anti-Oedipus* than mystic and in any case the problem is solved by the desiring-machines. Yet, as Habermas frequently points out (*The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*), mysticism seems to be lurking about in any post-modern who tries to resolve the Hegelian diremptions - and the desiring-machine is certainly an omnivorous concept, unifying everything (like Serres' parasites).

Breton traced the concept of "amour fou" as a transforming phenomenon back to the omnipresent desire of the Marquis de Sade. But for Deleuze, desire "does not take as its object persons or things, but the entire surroundings that it traverses." (p. 292). "In a word, the social as well as biological surroundings are the object of unconscious investments that are necessarily desiring or libidinal. The libido as sexual energy is the direct investment of the masses, of large aggregates, and of social and organic fields" (p. 292).

We must be careful in claiming that *Anti-Oedipus* provides a much

wider definition of desire than that which Breton traced back to Sade. Considering the importance Breton gave to the unconscious and to desire, I am convinced that if Breton did not go as far in extending desire as to have conceived the desiring-machine, he would certainly have found this Deleuzian concept congenial. "The truth is", writes Deleuze, "that sexuality is everywhere: the way a bureaucrat fondles his records, a judge administers justice, a businessman causes money to circulate, the way the bourgeoisie fucks the proletariat... Hitler got the fascists sexually aroused. Flags, nations, armies, banks get a lot of people aroused" (p. 293).

This last quotation naturally brings up the style of *Anti-Oedipus*. The book is an abstruse, jargon-ridden piece of work, interlarded with poems by, quotations from and references to Artaud, D. H. Lawrence, Nikinsky, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Henry Miller, Samuel Beckett, etc, with a use of vulgarities unexpected in a difficult essay on philosophy. The style is that of a surrealist shock-treatment, as if the sudden impact of the language would drag you out of your capitalized, Oedipalized, molarized, paranoid stupor and make you realize the truth of the autoproductive desiring-machine.

*Anti - Oedipus* rather surprisingly, has little regard for the usefulness of dreams, and certainly not that fascination the surrealists had. Dreams are Oedipal. "and this comes as no surprise since dreams are a perverse reterritorialization in relation to the deterritorialization of sleep and nightmares. But why return to dreams, why turn them into the royal road of desire and the unconscious, when they are in fact the manifestation of a superego, a superpowerful and superarchaized ego ... ? (p. 316).

At last, let us return to the parallel between the will to power and the desiring-machines: Neither the desiring machine nor the will to power guarantees a liberation of the individual or humanity, neither promises a basis for revolution or any kind of final utopia. Just as Nietzsche's will to power may be abused by the herd-man, so the desiring-machines may desire their own domination (to the dissatisfaction of J-M. Bernard in *La Revolution structurale*). Deleuze does not allow any place for a concept such as the *Urbemensch*, much less the eternal recurrence, so that there is no moral dimension to Deleuze's vision as there is in Nietzsche's Overman.

Finally, in my opinion, the translators deserve a lot of credit

(even gratitude) for putting into English a work by one of the major modern French thinkers, many of whom needlessly mar their work by an overly great admiration of the aesthetics of hermeticism they inherited from the 19th century. Whether *Anti-Oedipus* gives us a basis for a useful problematic to approach the analysis of cultural institutions remains to be seen, but my recommendation is to bear up under the difficulty of the style because it is worth the effort.

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David Patterson *Literature and Spirit: Essays on Bakhtin and His Contemporaries*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1988, pp. 166, ISBN 0-8131-1647-3.

Mikhail Bakhtin can certainly be counted among the literary thinkers responsible for the present state of maturity of novel theory. His concept of heteroglossia in the novel has revolutionized the interpretation of fiction by making the critic aware of the interplay of different ideological voices in the word. In this context it is appropriate that David Patterson in his latest work, *Literature and Spirit* takes him up for a comparative study with some of his

contemporary thinkers. In the Introduction the author claims to have put the thinkers as well as the different chapters in a dialogic relationship with one another. But it is difficult to assert that he has really succeeded in achieving that kind of a dialogism.

The work begins with a comparative analysis of the ideas of Bakhtin and Foucault and a working out of their relation to literature. Bakhtin's concept of laughter is shown having a close parallel in Foucault's idea of madness, and both are said to be contributing substantially to the dialogical dimension of literature. Laughter, it is claimed, frees us from the prison of the prevailing categories, and madness challenges the monological authority and paves the way for the dialogic word. Thus laughter and madness are aberrations by virtue of which they have an affinity with truth which is always the other.

In the second chapter Patterson shows how Bakhtin, Berdyaev and Gide deal with the spiritual aspect of Dostoevsky and of literature at large. To be precise, he discusses here 'a poetics of spirit'. According to Patterson, Bakhtin emphasizes the point that a discussion of the polyphonic form of the novel involves a consideration of the spatial and not the temporal aspect of its structure. This pronouncement he

makes keeping in view the novels of Dostoevsky saying that the latter's apprehension of the world is spatial rather than temporal, and that he always creates characters facing a crisis or interacting with the other. Bakhtin observes that the primary task of the novel is to challenge the false and conventional elements of human relationship. As for Gide, he looks upon convention as a force that suppresses truth and undertakes a large scale production of falsehood. His truth or reality is a result of the interaction of the author with the world, and that of a penetration of the personality of the self which is a source of the conventional. This he illustrates through a study of the characters of Dostoevsky. Bakhtin would further say that the idea is created through an interpersonal relation. It is pursued in a process of development and not reached in a state of inertia. Berdyaev, for his part, reads in Dostoevsky the statement that the inner being cannot find expression in the stability of the day-to-day life, but is revealed through an outburst of a certain kind which marks a complete annihilation of the lifeless forms of a decadent society. All the three maintain that the idea is something that is enacted in the polyphonic form. According to Patterson, Berdyaev and Gide look at it as an existential problem, but Bakhtin perceives it also in an

artistic context, Berdyaev observes that in Dostoevsky man is shown having to sacrifice his freedom and to surrender himself to necessity and compulsion. This, he adds, is nothing but a strangulation of the selfish individuality in response to the voice of the other. All of them are said to believe ultimately in the view that novel asserts the dialogic nature of truth.

In the third chapter Patterson compares Bakhtin with Lacan and in the process argues that the writer's relation to his own self is mediated by the other i.e. the hero. Bakhtin and Lacan believe that the hero issues from the author's wound which thereby becomes a womb. This creation of the hero, who is the other, is a dialogical process whereby the author becomes self-conscious. They also have a concept of the Third or spirit which Patterson sometimes describes as the implied reader. In only one condition can the author be said to be representing some purpose or meaning within the literary framework, that is if the implied reader becomes a Third with the advantage of watching and judging every human act, whom it is impossible to name or thematize.

The fourth chapter compares Bakhtin and Levinas and brings out the interconnections their thinking traces among signification, respon-

sibility and spirit, and shows how it establishes their importance. To them signification is some sort of meaning beyond what is conveyed by the signs. It is 'the open-endedness of saying' which includes both the past and the yet to be. It is an answer to a cry of pain. The language of signification and responsibility is the dialogical word. Subjectivity also means responsibility as the former can be understood as making oneself vulnerable through the wounds received as a consequence of one's response to the other. Both Bakhtin and Levinas understand spirit as a totality and soul as a manifestation of that totality. They maintain that spirit originates in the wound, which the self in its response creates for the other to pass through and come into the same.

In the last chapter Patterson examines the opinions of Bakhtin and Heidegger on Word and Being. Bakhtin, he argues, sees the space between the speaker and the listener as the polarity of dialogue and its substance as discourse. Similarly Heidegger considers language 'the house of being' which exists in the between. Both regard the between as a wound, which is cut open by a passionate determination, and where being takes its birth. They bring in a concept of the Third whom they call the builder of 'the house of being'. The Third, they say, is

nearer to us than even our own inner selves. The I is related to the Thou through the Third who communicates with the I through the Thou and whom the I answers by responding to the Thou. At the end Patterson concludes that spirit transforms literature into life and life into literature in the sense that the spiritual word or the dialogic word turns every I into a literary text which starts living the moment it finds utterance and gets enriched being heard.

Patterson's analysis of the intricate ideas of Bakhtin and his contemporaries in a very simple and natural style is almost effortless and hence commendable. But the simplicity is sometimes overdone which betrays a reduction of the dialogue to the barest minimum and a mere juxtaposition of the ideas of the given thinker. Anyway the work appropriately creates condition for further dialogues on the subject.

Dennis A. Foster, *Confession and Complicity in Narrative*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 146.

Dennis Foster writes this book with an awareness of the post-structural literary theories. He rather uses the ideas derived from the

latter to analyse some of the confessional writings such as Augustine's *Confessions*, Kierkegaard's *Diary of a Seducer*, James's 'Figure in the Carpet', Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Beckett's *The Unnamable*. Particularly the idea of the loss of the author or the authority of the text is brought forward to be related to the Freudian concept of the loss of the primary experience that comes in handy for his study. Foster says that the primary experience, according to Freud, is an inertia. All our struggle for perfection is motivated by a desire to go back to the inanimate state once again. It is the gap between the satisfaction desired and that achieved that keeps the struggle going. To extend the argument Foster invokes Lacan and says that the primary experience of satisfaction is always beyond the power of language to express. That, he adds, results in a sense of alienation, a sense of being lost from ourselves. So we try to produce ourselves through language. And we produce not the self but an 'I', which belongs not to us but to the language. The 'I' is only a signifier, the signified of which is absent. Thus we lose the self and get the language, the signifier the subject of which is another signifier. This happens with 'the fall into desire, into the dualism of subject/object', which coincides with the introduction

of language and the sublimation of language and the sublimation of narcissistic libido'. The consequent sense of loss and guilt gives rise to a desire to return to that primordial paradise, a desire to find the truth which is selfevident. This necessitates a confession, the sin being a violation of the divine totality synonymous with the lose of self. Sin takes away the capacity of the sinner to comprehend himself. So through confession the sinner makes an attempt to understand himself, his state of being prior to sin. But he can conceive it only as 'the opposite of sin, the negation of a negation'. Only by repeating the sin can he refer to innocence. The confessional text is an expression of a sense of loss, guilt and desire, a desire for meaning and presence. It does not serve as a mediator of truth, as a sign of the writer's potency. It is so due to the perverseness of language, which leaves scope for interpretation. Consequently the listener is drawn into the production of meaning. The history that the listener tries to understand turns out to be his own. In order to understand the text the listener has to be complicit with the motivation of the speaker. But the complicity with the speaker or the interest in sin ultimately becomes an involvement.

The confessor needs a listener,

who would confirm his alienation from God and legitimize his sin as sin. But it is found that the listener or the reader of the confessional text makes the story his own as he himself is also a sinner and sees the possibility of his own redemption.

In his efforts to comprehend the individuality or his self, which was equal to the entire world before the fall in to derire, the speaker of the confessional text has a desire to possess the 'I', which belongs to God, as his own. And the listener imitating the struggle of the speaker tries to appropriate the discourse of the speaker, when the speaker strives to perpetuate his discourse. Because 'the only final escape from sin is to become God'.

Foster conceives narrative as confession rather than expression, and translates the struggle for power between the confessor and the listener into that between the writer and the reader in the narrative. He says that the individual subject, being alienated from the divine totality, falls into a world of dualism and so requires an objective world to be conscious of or the 'I' requires a 'not I' against which to define itself. But the absence of an objective world from the narrative reduces the writer's 'I' or his word to an empty signifier devoid of meaning. So the writer requires a reader to validate his meaning, to accept the

fact of his being in control of his meaning or to be complicit with his motivations of writing. But in his turn the reader appropriates the text to produce his own meaning or to find in it his own discourse.

While trying to show the complicity of the reader in the aforesaid confessional writings Foster reveals some of his assumptions about the meaning in narrative. In fact he vacillates at one point between the intention of the author and the interpretation of the reader as a determinant of meaning. He invokes Nietzsche to stress the role of the reader, as Nietzsche points out that we can see only the effects (response of the reader) in the world, and not the causes (intention of the writer). Moving from cause to effect is a false reasoning and is an attempt to justify the effects that we see and feel. But at the same time Foster finds it too cruel to admit that the text does not reveal the consciousness of the author but invites the

reader to attempt a representation of the writer.

Ultimately his ditherings are settled in the idea of complicity which not only means an acceptance of the writer's mastery over meaning by the reader but also suggests a power struggle between the writer and the reader. Because the reader becomes complicit with the writer or shares his discourse only subsequently to make it his own.

This book is a landmark as a critique of confessional writings and at the same time an important contribution to reader — response criticism. The economy of its style, far from making it sketchy, adds to the pleasure of reading. Foster's ability to achieve precision in the face of a difficult content is rather commendable.

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