pause to remember that *Antonio's Revenge* comes very early in Marston's career and that in this case the dramatist may have been the one to learn from the imaginative experience of revenge, since the morality of *The Malcontent* and *The Fawn* cannot be faulted.

From the discussion of *Hamlet* I take only the question of Ophelia's madness. G.B. Harrison is quoted as saying, "let the poor girl go mad; we always have a mad scene in a Revenge Play." The authors counter this by arguing that it is the revenger's madness that is obligatory, others are only incidental; that Ophelia's madness is static whereas the revenger's evolves with, and as, the action of the play; that Ophelia's mind is totally gone but the revenger's remains capable of ordering a world. This distinction strikes me as quite conclusive.

The "purest" revenge tragedy is undoubtedly *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and here the authors make an initial point of high value:

In an extremely subtle study of the revenger's psyche, he makes the world of the play itself a projection of the maddened mind of Vindice. So successful has he been in presenting, through Vindice's eyes, a world bereft of all decency, all human feeling, a world full of a 'loathing and disgust of humanity' as it would have existed in the obsessed imagination of the revenger, that commentators have taken Vindice's vision for Tourneur's and deemed Tourneur mad. (80)

Their subsequent discussion of the "sealed-off room" of Vindice's obsession carries the argument further and is perhaps the most useful critical observation in this useful, agreeably written and often illuminating book.

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Dorothy G. Coleman. *Rabelais: A Critical Study of Prose Fiction*. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, First paperback edition, 1979. Pp. ix, 241. \$7.95.

Rabelais, like Proteus, escapes the grasp of those who attempt to seize him from one single angle or perspective. The essential significance of his work eludes critics, whether they be the so-called 'Ancients' who explain it through exhaustive research into the sources both ancient and contemporary of each of his statements and allusions, emphasizing content at the expense of form, or the 'Moderns' whose studies limit themselves generally to a careful and often penetrating analysis of the text. Taken together all such studies contribute enormously to our understanding and appreciation of Rabelais; separately they have a tendency, however, to diminish the vast scope and depth of his knowledge, wisdom and artistry. The essence of Rabelais's work is a dynamic dialectic in which, without cancelling each other out, opposites coexist, arousing in his readers a constantly-evolving and ever-changing response. What is truly great in his work is distorted by a single unified approach.

An example of such a work which, while indeed significant and contributing greatly to our appreciation of Rabelais, is weakened by an attempt to find in Rabelais a unified focus which explains his work, is Dorothy G. Coleman's book

Rabelais: A Critical Study in Prose Fiction, first published in 1971 by Cambridge University Press in its Companion Studies Series and issued more recently in paperback. Dr. Coleman's study in general and her close examination of Rabelais's text in particular make the work come very much alive for the reader, and one is indebted to her for that. One wonders, however, at times exactly which reader she is addressing, the young university student meeting Rabelais for the first time and needing rather general statements about him and the Renaissance to guide him (pp. 17-22), or the scholar, familiar enough with Rabelais to appreciate comparisons between the partial 1548 edition and the complete 1552 edition of the *Quart Livre* with only passing references to the text (pp. 69-73).

Literary form, for Dr. Coleman, is the key to a true understanding of Rabelais, for as she states "... Rabelais's intentions were not philosophical nor religious but literary" (p. 140). His stance, she claims, is aesthetic and not moral (p. 203). In this study, therefore, moralizing and serious thought are almost totally subordinated to considerations of aesthetics and form. According to Dr. Coleman, the means used to make the reader see the ridiculous are much more important than that which is being satirized. One must thus approach Rabelais's work through form and not through content, according to her.

In choosing to write, the difficulty for Rabelais was to find "what kind of fictional form (would) be suitable to contain his irony, parody, satire, philosophical range and finally, and probably the most important, his linguistic inventiveness" (p. 77). It was in Menippean Satire that he found the fictional form most suited to his talents. Basing her study on Northrop Frye's definition of Rabelais as a Menippean Satirist, and adapting it loosely, Prof. Coleman defines Menippean Satire as "... a mixture of verse interludes, of prose in different styles, parodies of epic, encyclopaedic erudition, serious episodes, humour, and satirical criticism of topical events" (p. 85). Such a definition which emphasizes primarily formal considerations does little more than describe Rabelais' work. It does, however, provide Dr. Coleman with a point of departure from which to study the rhetorical techniques of satire, parody and burlesque, which rather than content, represent for her, the true essence of Rabelais's literary production.

The *Tiers Livre*, studied in Chapter VI, is analysed to prove this basic hypothesis. Dismissing both Abel Lefranc's and Prof. Screech's interpretation of this book as relating essentially to content, Dr. Coleman asserts that "the form of the *Tiers Livre* provides the pattern into which fall the comic, the serious, the farcical, the grotesque threads which run through it" (p. 111). The *Tiers Livre* is basically, for Prof. Coleman, a social comedy in which Pantagruel provides the norm, much as Molière's *raisonneurs*, and Panurge the comedy, with his linguistic inventiveness. The moral concerns of this book are almost totally subordinated to the rhetorical brilliance of Panurge. Such profoundly significant scenes as Panurge's consultations with the theologian Hippothadée and the judge Bridoye, for example, are viewed as purely comic episodes and only "potentially serious" (p. 134), since "Rabelais has no moral message to deliver" (p. 140). If A. Lefranc's and Prof. Screech's analysis of the *Tiers Livre* may be said to have erred on the side of content, it may equally well be said of this study that it goes perhaps too far on the side of form, almost totally excluding considerations of content. Since Rabelais is at one and the same time a humorist, delighting in satire, parody and

comedy, and a man profoundly concerned with moral issues, an analysis of his work must take into consideration both content and form.

A crucial element of Dr. Coleman's analysis, and indeed one of the most fascinating aspects of her work, is her examination of the author / reader relationship. In Chapter III, "The Prologues" (using material previously published in an article for *The Modern Language Review*, 62 [1967], 407-19) and in Chapter IV, "The Olympian Author," Dr. Coleman examines the way in which Rabelais establishes between the reader and the "created author" a relationship which ultimately throws the entire work into a unified perspective, that of literary form. "This presence of the author is the conscious adoption of a point of view through which a created author sees his story and directs his envisaged readers to view the story in the same light" (p. 46). Like many other critics, Dr. Coleman insists that Rabelais, the historical personage, must not be confused with the *persona* or mask which he assumes in order to become the highly self-conscious author who creates the work. This self-conscious author – at other times he is referred to as the Olympian author or the created author (Dr. Coleman's terminology is at times less than absolutely clear) – uses two basic techniques, the disruptive technique or conscious, first-person intrusion, and the creation of the pseudonymous Alcofribas Nasier, who participates in the action. Dr. Coleman analyses how the created author sets up between himself and his envisaged readers a fictitious dialogue as together they enter the game of creating fiction. The inevitably passive reader, however, is obliged to adopt the author's point of view. As Prof. Coleman states, "... the intrusive *I* technique compels the reader to identify himself with the editorial commentary, whether by the straight authorial *I* form or through the use of the second person in addresses to the reader, or in the indirect conspiratorial form of *nous*" (p. 56). Since the editorial commentary is almost exclusively ironic and comic in nature, the reader remains emotionally detached from the characters and the events narrated, admiring and concentrating on the rhetorical techniques, which, rather than content, become the almost exclusive focus of attention.

In Dr. Coleman's study of Rabelais's characters (Chapter VII), we find again that form, and more particularly language and syntax, are the most important element. Linguistic exuberance and inventiveness, for example, define the essence of the character of Panurge and of Frère Jean. How they say something is of much greater significance than what they say. For Panurge particularly language is the stuff of magic rather than an instrument of reason (p. 206). Although his fondness for rhetorical technique has a tendency to dehumanize him, the reader, according to Dr. Coleman, focussing on his use of language rather than the meaning of his words, finds him *sympathique*.

The giants (studied in Chapter VIII) also define themselves by language. They use a mixture of several styles – academic and natural, high and low – to express themselves. Not having "a unified whole in which the readers can believe" (pp. 191-2), they are considered "jerky," by Dr. Coleman. Through them, however, Rabelais the real man, as opposed to Rabelais the created author, expresses his serious ideas. Whenever Grandgousier, Gargantua or Pantagruel use a hypotactic sentence structure, they are speaking seriously and thus echoing the legal, philosophical, religious and moral preoccupations of Rabelais himself. Panurge

and Frère Jean, on the other hand, "hardly ever use hypotactic sentence structure (except to parody it)" (p. 167) – their primary function being comic.

The final chapter of Dr. Coleman's study (Chapter IX) deals with poetic prose. Rabelais's use of language, how he borrows, expands, imitates and creates words, and his use of repetition, enumerations and rhythms are all examined. The final section of this chapter for no apparent reason turns to deal with a definition of Pantagruelism. A rather puzzling diagram on page 227 is intended to illustrate the total picture of Rabelais' world vision, only partially expressed in his famous definition of Pantagruelism given in the Prologue to the *Quart Livre* ("c'est certaine gayeté d'esprit conficte en mespris des choses fortuites").

Basically, Dr. Coleman's study of Rabelais suffers from an attempt to view his work from the almost exclusive perspective of literary form. To deny the importance of literary form for Rabelais would be foolish, but it does not provide the only clue to understanding him, as Dr. Coleman's study might lead one to believe. A sense of the seriousness of some of Rabelais's legal, philosophical, religious and moral preoccupations is lost. In the same way as to ignore literary form is to diminish the significance of the work of Rabelais, to neglect such serious and profound considerations is to distort his intentions also. A true understanding of Rabelais's work can be achieved only when one respects the essentially non-unified, unfocussed dialectic nature of this most profound and complex of books.

In spite of these reservations concerning Dr. Coleman's study, there is much here that is a distinct contribution to our appreciation of Rabelais's work. Dr. Coleman's incisive textual analyses are a refreshing antidote to the works of scholars who focus almost exclusively on content and sources. Her study of the Olympian author and of the almost conspiratorial author / reader relationship, in which both author and reader enter into the game of creating fiction makes Rabelais come alive in a delightful manner. One may have some reservations about Dr. Coleman's book for only partially explaining Rabelais, but then the book which explains him totally has yet to be written.

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Steven Urkowitz. *Shakespeare's Revision of "King Lear"*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980. Pp. x, 170. \$13.50

P.W.K. Stone. *The Textual History of "King Lear"*. London: Scolar Press, 1980. Pp. viii, 280. \$82.50

In Borges's story of "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," the title character sets out at the beginning of this century to write *Don Quixote* just as Cervantes wrote it, but without direct reference to Cervantes' text. He succeeds: "Cervantes' text and Menard's are verbally identical"; but, says the narrator, Menard's text is "infinitely richer." It is richer because its anachronistic style and substance constitute such an utter departure from the spirit of its age – the early twentieth century – whereas in the seventeenth century the same sequence of words was perfectly conventional. The tale argues Borges' belief that context is crucial.