Les chapitres sur Voltaire, sur sa défense de Newton et sur son élection à la Royal Society of London, fournissent quelques descriptions saisissantes de l'esprit du grand personnage et de son époque. Un long chapitre est ensuite consacré à un autre newtonien, Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, un professionnel de la science cette fois, et à son long voyage de plus d'un an dans les terres du Nord, en Laponie, afin d'y faire des observations permettant de préciser les dimensions et la forme de la terre. Plusieurs échanges épistolaires entre Bernouilli et de Maupertuis y sont rappelés de même que les événements qui ont entouré la décision de ce dernier de travailler à la réorganisation de l'Académie de Berlin.

Le dernier chapitre souligne comment de Maupertuis a trouvé une oreille attentive en Diderot et comment s'est renoué un nouveau lien entre la science et l'écriture, parce que l'imagination est commune à l'une et à l'autre.

Le livre profitera sans doute à tous ceux, scientifiques ou littéraires, qui auront gardé cette touche d'humanisme qui a permis à son auteur de l'écrire, mais peut-être profitera-t-il davantage à ceux qui l'ont perdu.

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Max Bluestone. *From Story to Stage. The Dramatic Adaptation of Prose Fiction in the period of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. The Hague: Mouton, 1974. Pp. 341. \$21.00.

Max Bluestone's central thesis is that source study tends to ignore the artistic process of adaptation of narrative material to dramatic ends. Traditional source study of the Elizabethan Drama has also failed to provide us with any coherent theory of adaptation as it was understood by the creative theatrical talents of the time.

Bluestone thus concentrates upon the adaptive process itself, which he discusses under the headings of time, space, moral emphasis, gesture, exploitation of stage properties and dramatic reference to the figure of the actor. The book has a three-part structure: a general discussion of adaptation and means of imitation; change in the handling of space and time as "story" changes to "theatre"; and a final discussion of adaptation as it affects moral emphasis and intention. The main concentration throughout the book is on the amalgamation of language with sensory theatrical effects or "the amalgamation of percept and construct" in the plays. Conversion of prose narrative to drama involves a continual process of translation of comparatively abstract concepts into the sensory, concrete visualisations of drama.

The detailed treatment of this theme is often perceptive and interesting,

but Bluestone's work is least satisfactory in its exploration of theoretical problems. There is room for more adequate treatment of the Renaissance theory of imitation within the dramatic context. Shakespeare does not always present the amalgam of percept and construct within a totally existential context of phenomenal flux. He sometimes is concerned to present a Platonic view of the world which embodies the archetypal along with the particular.

The presence in Shakespeare of a medieval or Spenserian allegorical perspective is ignored in *From Story to Stage* because Bluestone leaves out of account the strength of a morality tradition in which drama expressed idea as much as it presented physical construct and in which action was formally shaped by established patterns of innocence, experience and repentance. Bluestone's discussion is based upon an entirely secular view of the Elizabethan stage. The world of Shakespearean tragedy loses much of its universal range if its engagement with a Christian view of the universe is left out of account. The continuing strength of the morality tradition is surely demonstrable in *Dr. Faustus*. Recent criticism has brought out the extent to which Shakespearean tragedy strives to assume the proportions of archetypal myth.

Praise must be given for numerous fresh insights in *From Story to Stage*. The creative process underlying Elizabethan dramatic art is certainly illuminated at least in so far as its explicitly theatrical aspects are concerned. In adaptation from prose narrative to drama the figure of the actor and the human body itself is brought to the fore. This is an emphasis determined by the correspondence between body and world in Elizabethan thought. Sometimes the figure is debased, intensified or dignified. Emphasis on the human body seems to be lacking in prose fiction but the references in the plays focus attention on the human body as the camera would in the cinema. It is interesting to note an example of the comparatively reticent treatment of the human figure: Helen, in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, is described primarily in terms of historical allusion and hyperbole.

Consideration of the handling of space and time is informed by the central thesis that the macrocosmic space of medieval tradition is replaced by an Elizabethan world of shifting mutability. Episodic looseness is said to reflect the secular imitation of change. The independent adaptation of time compression and the creation of off-stage space are illustrated in *Twelfth Night* and *Othello* where new ironies are created by time compression.

The discussion of moral emphasis and intention includes material which is the most controversial. Bluestone's approach results in an existential and secular interpretation of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* which stresses the struggle of Faustus with life and time as a pre-eminent theme. Surprising conclusions are drawn from the fact that Mephistophilis can summon Helen "in the twinkling of an eye" and that the glamorous Helen is juxtaposed with a distinctly unglamorous Old Man who is widely separated from the

Helen episode in the source. Can Faustus's guilt be really said to be diminished by this unfair competition and demonic virtuosity? Such is Bluestone's conclusion.

Other critical conclusions are developed from the fact that Shakespeare consistently expurgated his sources. He is thus allied with a "popular" as distinguished from a "coterie" world view. The difference between these perspectives is clarified by the treatment of areas of sexual conduct: "in the popular theatre sexual conduct is a fact of human life, in the coterie theatre, a bestial deviation."

Bluestone's general conclusions are the expected ones. They arise naturally from the special focus which comes from consistently comparing narrative and drama. Drama has to be more concrete, less discursive, and less abstract. There is a danger in failing to recognise that the Elizabethan Drama still preserves a potential for exploring the conceptual and rising to the universal at the same time that it presents the immediate in an arresting, concrete, and physical way.

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