

fessor Levine shows, by quotations from the King James Bible. In its use of Meredith, however, MS. B reveals a distance between Fielding and Forster and tells us something about the significance of Meredith in Forster's development.

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Notes

¹ "An Analysis of the Manuscripts of *A Passage to India*," p. 286.

² "Modern Love," *The Poetic Works of George Meredith*, ed. G. M. Trevelyan (London: Constable, 1912), p. 138.

³ *Howards End* (London: Edward Arnold, Pocket Ed., 1947), p. 336. Forster also alludes explicitly to Meredith through Cecil Vyse in that most Meredithian of his novels, *A Room with a View*; Cecil claims Meredith is right, the cause of comedy and of truth are the same, though he does not yet realize just how funny the truth is going to be. See *A Room with a View* (London: Edward Arnold, Pocket Ed., 1947), p. 142.

⁴ *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Edward Arnold, Pocket Ed., 1949), p. 85. Forster's attitude does not seem to have changed later; in 1949 he found "Lucifer in Starlight" inadequate: "The heavens and the earth have become terribly alike since Einstein. No longer can we find a reassuring contrast to chaos in the night sky and look up with George Meredith to the stars, the army of unalterable law, or listen for the music of the spheres." "Art for Art's Sake," *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London: Edward Arnold, 1951), p. 100.

⁵ *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith* (London: Constable, 1906), p. 143.

⁶ "The Woods of Westermain," *Poetical Works*, p. 197. The poem originally appeared as the first work in Meredith's *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of the Earth* (1883).

⁷ *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith*, p. 163.

⁸ *Poetical Works*, pp. 201–02.

⁹ *A Passage to India* (London: Edward Arnold, Pocket Ed., 1947), p. 156.

¹⁰ Something of Fielding's experience in the cave remains with him in the finished novel. A view of the caves from a distance acutely depresses him and he wonders "whether he was really and truly successful as a human being"; he feels somewhat insanely that "we exist not in ourselves, but in terms of each other's minds, . . ." *A Passage to India*, pp. 199 and 259.

Metacommentary

To the Editor:

Mr. Jameson's, and Susan Sontag's, argument ["Metacommentary," *PMLA*, Jan. 1971] can be summed up as follows: since life—and its portrayal in great art—is whole and attempts to seize it are partial, don't interpret: be. This is like the perfectionistic despair of a Mallarmé. But whereas he went on despite the desperate odds to make marvelous art anyway, they abandon what could be a comparably noble effort in criticism. Even humble interpretation at least represents a naïve fidelity to its better half, art, a sort of juggling before Notre Dame. But this disdainful turning away leads to what: to cold abstractions, a far worse calumny of life than even the humble interpreter's.

Thus a Robbe-Grillet's perfectionism (*le degré zéro*) leads him to abandon the imperfect but richly human or personal (i.e., rooted in the sacred, however remotely) schemata of symbolism in favor of a quasi-scientific "impersonality"—which is really another set of all-too-human schemata, alien to art—and eventually the movies. Susan Sontag too passed over to the structuralists and then the movies and social commentary. So it is not surprising that Mr. Jameson ends his piece with a "metacommentary" on science-fiction movies plus an invocation of Marcuse. Some of us prefer to just keep juggling and adoring—like Mallarmé, who told the tinkering René Ghil: "On ne peut pas se passer d'Eden"—while the faithless go about "trashing" the past.

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On the Naming of Huckleberry Finn

To the Editor:

James Colwell in his "On the Naming of Huckleberry Finn" [*PMLA*, Jan. 1971] overlooks an obvious origin for Huck's name. The boy was a "hick" who loved to have "fun," or a "fun hick." The transposition of letters would not be that difficult, especially for a writer like Twain, who loved playing with names.

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