

Herbert L. Sussman. Fact Into Figure: Typology in Carlyle, Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Ohio State University Press, Columbus, Ohio. 1979. 158 pages, 40 black-and-white plates. With two appendices (The Germ versions of 'My Sister's Sleep' and 'The Blessed Damozel'). \$11.00. Hardcover.

This is an intelligent, fervid book which raises many questions without answering them. In this respect it may be thought to end suitably, as it does, with Hunt's Scapegoat in the salt deposits of the Dead Sea. The book concludes: "Once natural fact is no longer seen figurally, no longer felt to have an inherent or 'intrinsic' metaphysical correspondence to a specific spiritual fact, then any physical object can serve equally well to represent any general principle or emotional state and the way is open for the private mythologies and symboliste methods that characterize art and literature from the later nineteenth century to the present day." This recalls, to my mind, Northrop Frye's statement (The Whidden Lectures, 1967), "An open mythology has no canon."

Professor Sussman's approach is unabashedly exegetical; but it seems to be a kind of theosophy resembling that of Philo of Alexandria (born about 20-10 B.C.) that he has in mind rather than homiletics, although he uses the word "moral" throughout. The reader would benefit from having this word, in Professor Sussman's usage of it, defined to him. It appears to be identical with what Matthew Arnold meant when he described Keats' "For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!" as "a moral idea." This is bound to perplex some of us for whom stasis and meaningful conduct seem mutually exclusive. In any case, Professor Sussman, assuming that the reader is not in need of help, uses such staggering words and phrases as the following: "figure," "typology," "sacramental symbolism," "transcendental truth," "stream of historical life," "sacramental universe," "necessary divineness" (Carlyle, "Symbols," Sartor Resartus), "the transcendent manifested in historical time," "divine energy contained within the phenomenal world," "noumenous" (Kant aside, does he mean numinous?), "visual analogue," "an incarnation of Divine truth" (Auerbach, Mimesis), "mimesis," "formal correspondence with traditional symbols," "sacramental art," "from verbal expression to form," and, simply to call a halt to an overwhelming effusion, "a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit." Early on, Ruskin is called upon to second Carlyle, and he does so by way of the "Imaginative Penetrative" in Modern Painters II: "Such is always the mode in which the highest imaginative faculty seizes its materials. It never stops at crusts or ashes, or outward images of any kind, it ploughs them all aside, and plunges into the very central fiery heart, nothing else will content its spirituality." All this, to put it mildly, is very hymeneal, but it does tend to by-pass the