of his subsequent works up to the present time"? A more disturbing example of "glossing" is the term "Mauthnerian" itself. What does it mean to be a "Mauthnerian"? What would a "Mauthnerian view" be? And, more confusing still, what could "Mauthnerian simplicity" indicate? There is nothing simple in either the form or the content of Mauthner's voluminous study.

I find the term "Mauthnerian" very disturbing, implying as it does a derivative position to Beckett and a definite oversimplification of Mauthner. Beckett's genius is too great to be subsumed under any one influence. In my article, I go to considerable lengths to indicate that while Mauthner is certainly important for Beckett studies, no one influence can be said to be overriding in Beckett's fertile mind. Beckett himself warns against the same "pigeonholing" when he invokes Mauthner's name in *Radio II* to parody those critics who seek to reduce his work—and by extension the works of all artists—to any one adjective that, to quote Beckett, "*may be it*, three words underlined." Skerl falls into just such a critical trap, a trap that Beckett also warns against in *Watt*.

As for Skerl's belief that Beckett only became a "Mauthnerian" when he wrote *Watt* in the early 1940s, again, I would have to argue that, at least in theory, he had absorbed the major ideas of the *Critique* as early as 1930. And here, Skerl provides me with the opportunity for "Wattnerian" addenda to my original study. At the time of writing, I believed that Beckett had first read Mauthner in 1932, as Richard Ellmann reported in his biography *James Joyce* ([New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959], pp. 661–62). After Ellmann indicated that he could no longer remember how he had arrived at that specific date, I queried Beckett directly; but his reply came too late for inclusion in my original study. Beckett reports that he first read Mauthner in 1929 or 1930, not 1932, as Ellmann believed. For Beckett studies the change of date is significant because it places the reading before, not after, the writing of *Proust* and possibly before his study "Dante . . . Bruno. Vico . . Joyce" (1929). The many examples of linguistic skepticism that Beckett displays in his two critical studies, examples I attributed to Beckett's already clear awareness of the limits of language, may well be connected to his prior reading of Mauthner. Beckett also positively corroborates the strength of the impression Mauthner's writing made by indicating that he recently found an old copybook in which he had copied verbatim a section of Volume III of the *Critique*. (See my article "Joyce/Mauthner/Beckett," *Journal of Beckett Studies* [Fall 1981], for a detailed discussion of this passage and for a discussion of the parallels between Beckett's early critical essays and Mauthner's *Critique*.)

Clearly, when Beckett wrote *Proust* in 1930 he had already accepted many of the major premises of Mauthner's theory of language, though he was not able to give them complete literary shape until *Watt*. Unlike Skerl, who gives Mauthner far more credit than I do, I would have to say, however, that Beckett did not need to read Mauthner to learn that "words fail." This insight is the inescapable conclusion that so many writers of the twentieth century have reached. What Beckett did get from the *Critique* was a model of the way that one can accept the limits of language and still use language, if only to indict itself.

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The Mysterious Stranger

To the Editor:

I have difficulty with the latter part of Jeffrey L. Duncan's essay "The Empirical and the Ideal in Mark Twain" (*PMLA*, 95 [1980], 201–12). Never in "No. 44" is "No. 44" referred to as Satan. I believe that Duncan has relied heavily on the Paine-Duneka version, which is not the authorized or approved version of *The Mysterious Stranger*. John S. Tuckey calls the Paine-Duneka the "fourth version" in his edition, *Mark Twain's "The Mysterious Stranger" and the Critics* (1968), and in *Mark Twain and Little Satan: The Writing of "The Mysterious Stranger"* (1963), he carefully points out the changes made in Mark Twain's work by Paine-Duneka.

The authorized version used by scholars is William M. Gibson's edition (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1969), but apparently Duncan does not credit this work to be the authority on the subject. I note that Duncan refers to Gibson's work in his notes, but I am puzzled that he does not actually use that edition for his comments. Duncan also seems not to differentiate among the three "Mysterious Stranger" manuscripts: "The Chronicle of Young Satan," "Schoolhouse Hill," and "No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger." Although Mark Twain died before he could revise the true "Mysterious Stranger" text ("No. 44"), it deserves to be considered among the best of Mark Twain's work and to be used in scholarly research.

Duncan would have found Sholom J. Kahn's *Mark Twain's Mysterious Stranger: A Study of the Manuscript Texts* (1978) helpful in his research, along with several other studies of the manuscripts, including Hamlin Hill's *Mark Twain: God's Fool*

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(1973). One final note: Theodor is consistently misspelled throughout the essay.

Dorys C. Grover
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Mr. Duncan replies:

I had hoped to be able to discuss *The Mysterious Stranger* without getting involved in the tangles of the textual problem. But as Grover has made clear, I should have addressed the problem in a note, if not in the essay itself.

The Gibson edition of *The Mysterious Stranger* is definitive, to be sure, but it leaves us with the integrity of Twain's fragments. The Paine-Duneka version is indeed fraudulent, but it is the only one that leaves us with a single coherent story, or at least a single story approaching coherence. For that reason I agree with James Cox that it is closer to Twain's intention than anything else we have, because I presume that Twain's intention was a single coherent story. The two editions are not satisfactory for different reasons, and we have to choose between editions according to criteria that are inconclusive. The textual problem is insoluble. Therefore I silently took the same liberties with Gibson's edition that Paine-Duneka took (also silently) with Twain's manuscripts, but I do not propose that I thereby solved the textual problem. I was just trying to deal with my problem—the empirical and the ideal—as simply as possible.

As for "44," I regard him (again, with Cox) as Satan by another name. As for "Theodore," I wish I had spelled him "Theodor."

Finally, in dealing with the problem of *The Mysterious Stranger* as I did—that is, by not dealing with it explicitly—I committed the very error that I constantly warn my students against. I took short cuts so short that I left the reader behind, guessing where I was. I take that sort of indiscretion very seriously and wish to apologize for it, and to thank Grover for making me aware that I need to.

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"Voice" in the *Canterbury Tales*

To the Editor:

H. Marshall Leicester, Jr.'s "The Art of Impersonation: A General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*" (*PMLA*, 95 [1980], 213–24) presents a provocative, in many ways attractive, but devilishly slippery argument. His initial target is Howard's formulation, "unimpersonated artistry," and I believe many Chaucerians would agree with Leicester that a principle that allows the critic to separate passages of impersonation from those of an authoritative Chaucer invites interpretative quibbling and textual dismemberment, and, at the least, is logically inelegant. (My apparent deviation, cited on pp. 214–15, results from an attempt, perhaps misguided, at a thematic assessment of the Knight's Tale independent of the *Canterbury* format.) Leicester wishes to free the "voice" of the *Canterbury Tales* from any hint of an authorial "presence," specifically, a Chaucer the poet lurking behind a Donaldsonian Chaucer the pilgrim. Yet Leicester ultimately finds it necessary to add that Chaucer's "voice" is also "an impersonator in the conventional sense"; the tales are "double-voiced"; and, whether "he gives them his life" or "he takes his life from them," this speaker mediates between the "fictional others" and us, his audience (p. 221). But we have been told previously that such impersonation of the pilgrim narrators "*precedes dramatization of the Canterbury sort*" (p. 218) and the "prological voice," after giving their portraits, "sets them free to speak" (p. 221). Do we not, then, still have two Chaucers here? The one is tied to the fiction of the pilgrimage and its narration and equally to the double voicing of the individual tales. The latter is only possible in Leicester's sense by virtue of the fiction of unmediated reportage (see the General Prologue, ll. 725 ff.); otherwise the specter of "unimpersonated artistry" within the tales would be logically inescapable. The second Chaucer would comprehend all the "voices," the "incomplete" one of the Prologue as well as the fulfilling ones of the various tales. But temporally independent of the fiction, ontologically distinct from any of its speakers, though only known through all of them, he is the voicer of all the voices, the total impersonation that Leicester himself refers to as "the personality of the poet" (p. 222). Even as we are told that the speaker's "art of impersonation" in the *Canterbury Tales* has as its telos self-impersonation, "to create himself as fully as he can in his work" (p. 222), do not Leicester's very words "create" and "work" reinstate a "presence," in distinction from which the text gains an autonomous status, a personality made or "worked up" by a creator?

The attempt to dispel the dramatic illusion in the Canterbury fiction hangs on Leicester's insistence on the fiction's "textuality," which he claims "the French have taught us always implies *absence*" (p. 216). There have been many French discussions of textuality in recent years, but Leicester's notes are only obliquely helpful here. He cites in other contexts two Frenchmen, neither of whom is, strictly

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