

Personally I find that the *Beowulf* poet was concerned to make his designs clear, not to encode them within a practically indecipherable scheme. When the dragon attacks for the third time, for example, I doubt that the poet was concerned about having him do so in a line whose number (2688) is determined by the following equation, if I follow Hart aright: $x = 3182 - (3182 - \frac{3182}{3\sqrt{3}}) \div 3\sqrt{3}$.

Perhaps I am insensitive to the beauties of mathematics, but I suspect that at this point the poet was not so much worrying about fulfilling such equations as striving, with all the literary art at his command, to communicate something about the nature of heroism in a world in which even heroes must die.

To correct one small point: in my article I did not explicitly exclude from consideration aspects of Hart's work that might seem relevant to my thesis. I did so implicitly and silently. Given this opportunity to clarify my views on the subject, let me now confirm explicitly and emphatically that I find nothing in the art of *Beowulf* that is illuminated by sophisticated numerical analysis.

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Scholarly Citations

To the Editor:

Concerning your recent Editor's Column (*PMLA*, 95 [1980], 3–4) I would call to your attention some newly published evidence bolstering your position on the frequency of citations for a limited number of authors. Eugene Garfield has compiled a similar but considerably more extensive list in a report on the *Arts & Humanities Citation Index (Library Quarterly*, 50 [1980], 40–57). Based on coverage of more than 950 journals he too discovered that Frye, Derrida, Barthes, Lacan, Merleau-Ponty, Kermode, Bloom, Abrams, Sartre, Heidegger, Husserl, Eliade, and Foucault were among the one hundred most cited authors. To these the list adds Julia Kristeva, Tsvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, Noam Chomsky, Richard Ellmann, Donald Davidson, Willard Van Orman Quine, René Wellek, Theodore Weisen- grund Adorno, Emile Benveniste, and some few others.

Interestingly enough, though Shakespeare finished a respectable third in total number of citations, he was surpassed by both Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Karl Marx, with Aristotle and Plato not far behind.

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The Phenomenological Approach

To the Editor:

In his article "A Phenomenological Approach to the *Theatrum Mundi* Metaphor" (*PMLA*, 95 [1980], 42–57), Howard D. Pearce proposes to examine from a phenomenological point of view those characteristics of the *theatrum mundi* metaphor that allow for its use in any era. While his analysis is indeed worthwhile, above all for the insight it affords into the way in which fundamental ontological questioning issues from within the metaphorical operation, it promotes a line of thinking about the phenomenological critical approach that is both confusing and inaccurate. Demonstrating the relation between the function of the phenomenological reduction, or epoche, and that of metaphorical activity, Pearce intelligently reveals the dimensions of mobility and potentiality inherent in the dialectical apprehension of reality in and out of the theater. And he offers an impressive discussion on the intersubjective relation of reader and playwright necessarily at work within the text. Despite these and other interesting considerations of those questions that most often concern the phenomenologically oriented critic, however, Pearce's article furthers a *paradoxical* misunderstanding of phenomenological criticism. The clarification of this misunderstanding remains crucial to the growth and acceptance of phenomenological literary study.

Early in his article, Pearce states that "my assumptions are essentially phenomenological, though I cannot claim the advantage of established methodology or tried systems" (p. 42). Both the philosophical and aesthetic phenomenological movements are founded on a *presuppositionless* attitude. This is to say that the very basis of the phenomenological critical orientation is, as it was for Husserl in a purely philosophical framework, the elimination of assumption. The claim that one's assumptions are phenomenological is meaningless, therefore, since it is a contradiction in terms. Moreover, phenomenological aesthetics can hardly be viewed as the *application* of a "tried" phenomenological "system," as the administration to literary study of "established methodology." In Husserl's work, and in that of Heidegger and Sartre, all of whom Pearce acknowledges as influences on his own thought, valid knowledge is gained by way of direct experience of the world through the intentional structure of consciousness, the primacy of perception, and the fusing of ego and world. Phenomenology is therefore not only presuppositionless but radically em-