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Showdown 1-30 Start your review of Radically Innocent: The Modern American Novel Of Ipek S. rated has amazing October 12, 2012 Moudifa Fifi rated it was amazing April 08, 2018 Denis appreciated he liked it January 08, 2017 Margaret rated it really liked March 21, 2013 Ellen appreciated it really liked November 13, 2009 Inna noted it as a k-read May 23, 2015 RD noted it as a k-read June 03/03, 2015 Matt tagged it as read on September 30, 2015 Martin tagged it as a k-read March 10, 2017 Anthony marked it as to read June 04, 2017 Samantha noted it as a k-read Sep 17, 2017 Kalyani S noted it as a k-read September 15, 2019 MOMENTUM BEHIND Ihab Hassan ambitious study of young American writers is admired , but the book he wrote Archetypal Criticism/Radical Innocence: Exploring in a Modern American Novel. Ihab Hassan. Princeton University Press. The impulse behind Ihab Hassan's ambitious research on young American writers is admirable, but the book he has written about this generation of writers is in many ways unsatisfactory. Mr. Hassan is a critic who looks at literature from a moral perspective, or, using a more fashionable phrase that he prefers, he is concerned about the existential meaning of literature. As a result, his examination of recent American novels reflects a commendable broadness of mind and a sympathetic desire to follow sensitive young writers through the underground windings of their various spiritual questings. And the humane spirit of Mr. Hassan's critical orientation is happily reflected in the freshness and spirit of his style. He has the gift of bringing the distinctive qualities of a writer into vivid attention through the liveliness of his own critical language. Thus, Mr. Hassan describes the night stage of Truman Capote's work: The liquid, dreamy density of proposals has absorbed the shock of action and the thrust of meaning. Or he deftly characterizes Oji Marfeth's language: At best, style circles around the dangling edges of poetry, refracting thousands of gay men and broken lights. But beyond such moments of local coverage, Hassan's book rarely reveals any new critical insights about the novels he discusses. What is mostly to blame, it seems to me, is the theoretical basis in which this study is couched - modernist American novel. The writer does not have a task but to establishing an approach to his subject, but the very usefulness of his originality lies in the fact that he does not. It is the same old story over and over again: the emergence of a new literary movement in modern European fiction. He then dips under to explore the distinct nature of the American novel from its beginning to Hemingway and Thomas Wolfe. Not exactly Wile. Mr. Hassan now presents a sociological view of postwar America in order to determine that zeitgeist. If we set ourselves such an incredibly big task, Mr. Hassan would have to say nothing about Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Kafka, Camus, Mark Twain and Henry James, the influence of Hiroshima and the growth of the organization of man, each of whom, in his opinion, cannot fight in the space of a paragraph or two. The differences it makes are usually clever and carefully articulated, but they seem to hang on free ends in the realm of familiar common and do not prove to be very helpful in linking our understanding of contemporary literature. The image of the hero in modern fiction, which represents this book, is, as the title suggests, a man in a state of radical innocence - radical because his expressions are extreme, even violent, and because he goes to the root of himself; innocence, because it is a state in which he stubbornly clings to some vision of an ideal existence. As individual encounters in the world around him are under enormous pressure to resist his own dream of perfection, one of two ways remains open to him: become a rebel or a victim. But of course, there is little novelty in that the dominant figure in today's serious novel is a suffering hero or holy criminal. The very titles of some of the widely read works of criticism of the past five years - The Outsider, The Vanishing Hero, the Picaresque St. show that familiar critical themes Mr. Hassan took for his central argument. The state of sacrifice or rebellion that seems inevitable by many heroes of our time is usually the most obvious fact about the novel in which he appears; and it is for this reason that the general concept of radical innocence is not particularly useful in the act of criticism. Since most of Mr. Hassan's novels are explicitly about insurgents or victims, criticism only function, once he has completed his admittedly expert retelling of stories, is a taxonomer name: the novel's protagonist is a genius, a rebel, a species, a growl; the protagonist of the novel B, the genus, the victim, the species, like Christ, and so on. To be fair to Mr. Hassan, I must say that he carries out this classification procedure with great sensitivity and precision; but, starting with the obvious, he is rarely able to move very far from the it.

The flaws, moreover, inherent in the theoretical scheme of Radical Innocence, exacerbated by the author's weakness for archetypal critics. He approaches American literature with a set of comprehensive mythological concepts: Eden and Utopia, Faust and Christ, the mythical American I and I (whatever they may be). One problem archetypes in literary criticism is that their versatility limits their usefulness in dealing with a particular work of literature, and as Freudian characters, they have a way of applying themselves to almost anything. This is true of the rigid categories of Jungian psychology, which tend to fit the slender wedge of the real world too tightly. In the case of archetypes, the danger is that they will be applied to a kind of Search of the Grail, or spiritual journey, process, an existential encounter. It is only natural that novels that are not taken into account by this rather specific definition are likely to be partially misinterpreted by Mr. Hassan. He writes, for example, from the Wapshot Chronicle that it seeks to capture the reflections of eternity in The Eyes of Harlequin. The creative persuasiveness of Mr. Hassan's prose almost makes us ignore the element of exaggeration in this statement. John Cheever's charming novel The New Yorker has something to do with meaning and value, because, like all novels, it's about people; but it seems a little far-fetched to present the Wapshot Chronicle as an existential quest in the comic key Mr. Hassan, troubled by this figure of a long-suffering existential man, not only reads it in novels where he cannot attend, but also sees an archetypal existential man where he is not present. His quasi-Jungian method clearly requires some kind of mythical prototype for an existential man, and as Adam, Christ and Faust will not do, Mr. Hassan settles on lov. Now, an existential person like Radical Innocence itself uses the term, a creature who is thrown into a completely meaningless world, and who fights boldly and desperately to create his own meaning. But there is not the slightest hint of a meaningless world in the Book of Job; On the contrary, lov is very confident in the sense that the world should get, and he protests (but does not rebel), because the only order he knows should exist should not have spread to his own experience.

In the view of Mr. Hassan's love for archetypes, it is not surprising that he must often use Northrop Fry complex, but also very complex Anatomy of criticism. Working with broad categories created by Fry, Mr. Hassan argues that nowadays, a form of fiction ... corresponds, more than anything, to the spirit and form of irony. We all have some idea of that spirit of irony, but the burden of proof on Mr. Hassan is to show that irony has form, detectable in literary form, and indicate that it is also. The contours of this form of irony must have the amoebic flexibility to in such diverse literary works as Malamud's Assistant, Carson McCullers's Reflections in the Golden Eye, The Capture of the Day of Bellow and The Book of Willow. In page after page, Mr. Hassan refers to the ironic form of novels he examines, but he is exasperated about giving a definition of irony, not to mention an ironic form, in a novel. Finally, in the epilogue to Radical Innocence, we discover a point that deals with the general nature of irony. The irony, as we are told, is intertwined between the poles of experience, unites the terrible and the ridiculous.... This may be useful, but not yet the definition. Then, after some interesting, albeit cryptic, reflections on the moral qualities of irony, Mr. Hassan finally defines his key term: Irony emerges as the answer of human intelligence to absurdity, and, beyond absurdity, to death. The definition itself is completely controversial, and as any reader of the history of ideas knows, it is hardly new. However, if we accept the definition, we can see how it might be useful. It is the ability to find an adequate link between its broad moral problems and the particular literary nature of the texts it seeks to illuminate. In many moments it felt that Mr. Hassan, precisely because he is looking for a moral template, does not see deep enough in novels as novels. The below fault, for example, in the Augie March curiously let down the imagination, since Augie leaves the compelling reality of Chicago Bellow for the Mexican never to land hairy with memories of D.H. Lawrence and hints of mystical quest. But for Mr. Hassan, the Mexican episode of Ogi is a significant and symbolic contrast to the Chicago scenes; In the compass of one action... Bellow revives ideas of love and death, illusion and reality, city and nature, social power and individual freedom. Mr. Hassan, unfortunately, insists on finding in fiction these impending categories of moral life: when they are not present, he will probably overestimate the novel in their search; when they are present, they have usually been made so explicit by the writer himself--for these are serious novels, not great ones, that the critic has nothing new to say

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