

Penn Warren) considered literary works in terms of their "tensions," "paradoxes," and overarching "unity." Thus, the ground was laid for the most recent theories, which try to make the criticism into a kind of neutral, "scientific" analysis. A good explainer, Eagleton points out connections between European literary theories and other intellectual currents and disciplines (e.g., existentialism, linguistics). Structuralism and semiotics, for example, borrow techniques from formal linguistics and treat a poem or story as a system of signs in which "meaning exists only contextually, governed by sets of similarities and oppositions." Eagleton, a Marxist, faults formalistic approaches for dismissing questions of readers' and authors' beliefs and of ideology. One can agree with his conclusion that literary criticism should be seen as a value-laden activity. But only Eagleton's fellow Marxists will agree with him that all real critical values are tied to class conflict.

**MONTAIGNE'S  
TRAVEL JOURNAL**  
by Michel de Montaigne  
translated by Donald Frame  
North Point, 1983  
208 pp. \$10.50

Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) may not have invented the essay, but his short prose pieces have become models of the form. Shortly after publishing the first two books of his *Essais* in 1580, Montaigne set off from Bordeaux on a journey to Rome, a city he already knew from Seneca, Juvenal, and other Roman authors. The journey took 17 months; as he reminded his impatient travel companions, "he was not going anywhere except where he happened to be." Travel, like the essay form, was a prod to his powers of observation and self-examination. In his journals, among notes on food and lodging, are comments on theology, Jewish ceremonies, local sights and manners, and, always, the effects of baths and waters on his kidney stones, whose painful presence often led to more general reflections upon suffering, illness, and death. Little of Montaigne's skepticism emerges directly in his accounts of his meeting with Pope Gregory XIII or other churchmen. But everywhere his comments recall the religious and political turmoil of the 16th century. (His copy of his *Essais* was seized in

Rome and inspected for heresy; when changes were suggested, he graciously refused.) The reader traveling with Montaigne shares the author's melancholy sense of the vanities of prelates, kings, and travelers alike.

**THE AENEID**

by Virgil  
translated by  
Robert Fitzgerald  
Random, 1983  
403 pp. \$20

Some translations seem so "right" as to be set forever. John Dryden's 286-year-old "Arms, and the man I sing . . ." stands as the classic English rendering of the opening words of the *Aeneid*, announcing straight-away the poem's central conflict: between the iron demands of war and the more "human" demands of love, family, and comrades. Fitzgerald's "I sing of warfare and a man at war" comes as a rather lackluster successor translation. But despite the inauspicious beginning, Fitzgerald's handling of Virgil's poem proves to be as sure and (to the American ear) as natural as his earlier versions of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. This is no small feat, since, in an epic, naturalness must not be gained by sacrificing the necessarily elevated tone. The epic, after all, speaks for a whole people, a nation. Readers must be made to feel the full weight of Aeneas's sacrifice when he leaves the beautiful Dido to get on with the brutal but necessary business of founding Rome: "*Duty-bound, / Aeneas, though he struggled with desire / To calm and comfort her in all her pain, / To speak to her and turn her mind from grief, / And though he sighed his heart out, shaken still / With love of her, yet took the course heaven gave him / And went back to the fleet.*"

*Science & Technology*

**FROM ARISTOTLE TO ZOOS: A Philosophical Dictionary of Biology**  
by P. B. Medawar &  
J. S. Medawar  
Harvard, 1983  
305 pp. \$18.50

Anyone who confuses meiosis with mitosis, believes theories and hypotheses are virtually the same thing, or simply savors odd bits of scientific arcana, such as the fact that the king crab, belonging to the *Arachnida* group, is closer to the spider than to the blue crab, will be well served by this unusual "dictionary." It is also a pleasure to read. Written by a husband-wife team, both Oxford biologists, the short-essay entries reflect the authors' un-