

pretend to understand. This is an ambiguity of scale. Since he habitually works out every detail of a large composition in advance in line, in color and *in petto*, this is important. It has always seemed to me that there are essential differences between studies and final works that are easily recognizable and therefore readily explainable. With Meredith this is usually but mysteriously not so. It is virtually impossible from a photograph, for example, to know whether a work under examination is eight inches wide or eight (or 18) feet. Normally this would matter to a disruptive degree. With Meredith it doesn't usually matter at all which means, again paradoxically, that the natural scale of his highly introspective art is monumental and that the physical size, be it no more than a thumbnail, is irrelevant. This should be a comfort for those of his non-corporate admirers who do not have unlimited wall space.

A final word. I respect Meredith and his deep need for privacy too much to have sought an uninvited interview, for which reason everything said here is external and subjective on my

own part alone. Two people who know him well have done all that need be done for the present. What they have to say about this fine painter and beautiful man is printed in the exemplary AGO catalogue produced for the travelling exhibition. Here may be found the essay at once factual and critically sensitive that appears too modestly over the initials of Marie Fleming and a group of eight remarkable poems that appeared unsigned a year ago in the quarterly coldly called *exile*, together with color plates of eight paintings. These poems read like dazzling bursts of self-awareness and oblique bits of autobiographical revelation and seemed at the time to be by the artist. They are in fact by Barry Callaghan, who clearly knows him profoundly. They have the insight and weight of a Hazlitt for once un-prolix and writing poetry instead of only occasionally winged prose. I urge anyone interested in Meredith and the springs of his exceptional if occasionally unsteady sensibilities to read them and the essay before next looking at his paintings. He remains a seeker and his best is still to come.

