

BOOK REVIEWS

ANITA OBERMEIER. *The History and Anatomy of Auctorial Self-Criticism in the European Middle Ages*. Amsterdam & Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999. Pp. 314. US\$ 80.00.

This wide-ranging book will be welcomed by comparatists with an interest in the Middle Ages, by medievalists with a comparative bent, and by all those interested in the kinds of interactions that take place among authors, texts, and readers. Professor Obermeier examines more than seventy authors writing over a period from classical times through the Middle Ages in order to illuminate the literary topos of auctorial self-criticism, which has been strangely neglected until now. What she finds, in its broadest expression, is that an author's self-criticism may seem superficially to be an expression of remorse, but, when scrutinized, can be seen to be "a strategy that perpetuates writing" (166). That is, by deprecating earlier works, whether on the ground that they are immoral, insulting, literarily inferior or whatever, an author can create a personalized invitation to himself/herself to keep on writing in the hope of some form of "improvement." It is an insight that is at once profound and delightful.

Professor Obermeier's first chapter is subtitled "Authorship and Authority," which helps explain why she prefers the Latinate (or, for that matter, Middle English) form "auctorial" to the expected modern English "authorial." Because in many cases the author wishes to claim authority or to deflect it to another author or even ascribe it correctly to God, the form "auctorial" permits her to keep the word's potential constantly in the reader's mind. More specifically she notes that she perceives "great manipulative powers in the authors I discuss. Therefore, another modern critical concept that could help illuminate auctorial self-criticism is 'interauctoriality,' which means that a literary work depicts its author's contact with the 'author personality' of a previously-read literary text, presenting two authors simultaneously" (20). Her notes indicate that the phrase comes from Ina Schabert's article, "Interauktorialität." This first chapter has a very good treatment of Salman Rushdie's forced apology for his writings, which sets the stage for a look much farther backwards in time.

While it is impossible even to list all of the authors studied in this volume, nevertheless a sketch of

its contents may be useful to the potential reader. Because all quotations from primary sources are given in both the original language and in translation, the book is easy to use. Professor Obermeier begins her historical survey in Chapter Two with the classical tradition and Stesichorus. Not a writer whose name is on everyone's lips, but essential both because of his antiquity and because of his accepted influence on Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*. The longest entry in this section is on Ovid, who "implicates the reader along with the author" (38) in literary understanding, noting that how his works are interpreted will depend to a degree upon whether or not the reader has an upright mind ("recta si mente legatur"). Chapter Three, on the early Christian tradition, has an important entry on St. Augustine, whose *Retractions* are re-workings of earlier writings from both a literary and religious viewpoint. Chapter Four, on the medieval Latin tradition, treats eight authors. One of them, Peter of Blois, wrote in Latin at the English Court of Henry II and his French wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine — a comparatist's dream. He was fond of disparaging the lasciviousness of his youthful works, which, as Professor Obermeier wryly points out, permitted him "to keep working on them without reprimand" (88).

Chapter Five, on the German tradition, treats Hartmann von Aue and five others. Chapter Six, on the French tradition, takes up eight authors, giving the most space to Jean de Meun. Professor Obermeier observes that Jean de Meun styles himself not only as the author of a text, but also as a compiler of the texts of other authors. By so doing, he creates "an almost post-modern effort to dislocate the narrative centre of the text" (119). In Chapter Seven, on the Italian tradition, there are essays on Dante and Boccaccio, as well as a substantial entry (the second-longest in the book) on Petrarch. Those who do not find Petrarch to be "the most ambivalent of the medieval Italian writers" (141) may have difficulty in accepting Professor Obermeier's assertion that he wavers "excessively between self-criticism and self-justification" (141). However, she is in good company — she cites Charles Singleton, who considered Petrarch to have recanted in the last poem of the *Canzoniere* and in the first, while leaving in between "a vast array of love poetry" (143).

Chapter Eight, on the English tradition, includes the book's longest entry, on Geoffrey Chaucer. Chaucer's well-known "Retraction" at the end of *The Canterbury Tales*, Professor Obermeier argues, "is neither an isolated incident in European medieval literature nor in the whole of Chaucer's canon, but an integrated one" (185). This well-earned placement of the "Retraction" in both an authorial and historical context leads to a later, more sophisticated insight into the kinds of games a self-conscious author like Chaucer plays: "Hence, there is a triple apology structure in *The Canterbury Tales*: The Nun's Priest excuses himself and blames the rooster; Chaucer excuses himself in the General Prologue, Miller's Tale,

and Tale of Melibee and blames the tale tellers; Chaucer excuses and accuses himself in the Retraction" (210n).

Chapter Nine, on the Spanish tradition, includes eight authors, of whom Ramon Llull and Juan Ruiz, the Arcipreste de Hita may be the best known to non-specialists. The final chapter, number ten, contains essays on seven female writers who employ authorial self-criticism, including Hrotswitha von Ganderheim and Hildegard von Bingen. This chapter is more polemical than the others and will consequently provoke more dispute. Professor Obermeier's sweeping claim that "the prevailing medieval theological view was that Adam possessed a rational mind and Eve did not" (252) is symptomatic of her difficulties here. Adam was often associated with *sapientia* and Eve with *scientia*, but that is scarcely to deny her rationality. Here and elsewhere Professor Obermeier's references to the antifeminist tradition seem a little over-simplified and almost shrill. Chapter Ten also includes a section called "General Ruminations," where she justly notes that "the sheer number of self-critical examples demonstrates that this literary tactic strikes at the heart of medieval language and literature" (264).

The great strength of this book is its impressive sweep. Just to have located authorial self-critical passages in this many classical and medieval authors is quite an achievement; to have analyzed each author's particular usage of the trope is evidence of great critical stamina as well as scholarly industry. The analyses, however, are necessarily perfunctory. Given that the bibliography contains almost 550 *secondary* works, it is apparent that Professor Obermeier has done an enormous amount of background reading. But when these studies are divided by the number of authors treated we see that she can only consider a few main critical strands in the abundant literature surrounding all of the major authors. By trying to say something about everything an author always runs the risk of saying too little to please every reader, not to mention the risk of saying something insufficiently grounded or insufficiently informed.

Anita Obermeier has done us all a great favour both by pulling this widely scattered material together and by analysing it. Those who come after will benefit enormously from her ground-breaking endeavours. (CHAUNCEY WOOD, affiliation?)

ANNE WILSON. *Plots and Powers: Magical Structures in Medieval Narrative*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville, 2001. Pp. 256. US\$ 59.95 cloth.

Medieval romances, lays, and folk tales can admittedly leave modern readers as perplexed about their sense

and purpose as about their enduring power, particularly when it comes to unravelling the peculiar logic of traditional narratives that lack what moderns think of as the hallmarks of mimetic realism — a familiar kind of causality, motivation, and description. Examples are not far to seek. Why should Gawain go so far as to confess to covetousness and treachery, given his apparent misdemeanour in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*? Why, too, in Marie de France's *Lanval* is Arthur more anxious over Lanval's quite harmless boast than the same knight's alleged sexual advances on Guinevere? And what could explain so much ostentatious verbal and structural repetition in *Emaire*? This is but a sampling of the astute questions Anne Wilson raises and then attempts to resolve by employing an understanding of the way so-called "magical structures" inform texts and form reader response. Wilson's sensible assumption is that the blatant incongruities and illogicalities of certain narratives can betray the covert workings of irrational, but powerfully functional, systems of thought.

Wilson's book marks the final stage in a three-part study concerned with what might best be called the deep structures of texts. In her latest effort — clearly situated in the traditions of Frye with respect to myth and Propp with respect to the morphology of folktale, and drawing broadly on psychoanalytic assumptions about the unconscious — Wilson attempts to unravel the weird logic of medieval narratives by dividing them into three kinds of plot, the purification plot, defended plot, and sovereignty plot, to which correspond unique magical structures. What is "magical" about any such plot according to the critic is the way a plot provides its audience with "a useful model of unconscious activity" (7), as a mechanism of defense, trigger for personal change, or means to self-empowerment. Magic in this usage has little to do with the paranormal, and much to do with psychology — though, again, not with any psychokinetic phenomena. Not all plots lend themselves to magic, and Wilson brings forward non-magical structures for the sake of contrast. Only magical plots "make provisions for audiences, to bring about in the mind an enhanced sense of self and to dispel guilt and fear" (8-9).

The key terms and categories Wilson uses remain vague, and definitions of them are not always forthcoming. This reader finds it difficult, therefore, to provide detailed explication of Wilson's three kinds of plot and their psychological benefits. Part of the reason is that, as the critic rightly senses, plots do not fall neatly under generic categories — one must always recount a particular story to establish general claims about story structures. She tackles the problem, honestly and ambitiously, by employing an empirical method and arguing inductively towards her general claims from a set of particular plots. Wilson thus produces a series of case studies, each accompanied by a chart and anatomized plot summary, taking an approach which has important implications for the subject: for case study itself indicates that it is not

something numinous, but rather the salient structures of textual phenomena we can analyze, that presides over magical thought. The mystery of magic, it would seem, is thus deliberately dispelled by the methods used to observe it. However, mystery remains in the method, on which more below.

The chapters of the book are arranged around discussions of types of folktale — Princesses in Exile and Accused Queens, The King Lear Stories, Cinderella Stories, Hamlet Stories, and so forth — that will be of particular moment to comparatists interested in the structural permutations of traditional narrative. While the focus is on medieval story types, Wilson also considers some post-medieval variations and so broadens the relevance of her study still further. Addressing the continuity of magical structures over time, the critic offers remarks on nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction. Much space is devoted to the recounting of plots and analogues in this book. Over twenty charts are appended at the end (taking up sixty pages of the lean monograph), each detailing the events in specimen plots and charting changes relevant to the analysis of magical structure. Here Wilson sequences series of plots by dividing them into quadrants or “moves,” of which certain important ones are italicized and segregated to indicate the parallels and antitheses marking magical thought. If the diagrams do not make compelling reading, they nonetheless serve to illuminate many structural congruities which might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Notwithstanding the empirical cast of the book and accumulation of evidence, Wilson’s argument lacks a certain lucidity, and so, perhaps, potential utility. Her inductive method is, she insists, intended to tie a general theory of magic to specific texts, responding to the fact that magical structures are unpredictable and need to be discovered anew in each case. In observing the necessity of grounding theory in practice, Wilson’s efforts are commendable and should result in better historiography and greater clarity. Yet in practice the focus on plots and their divisions — all in the absence of adequate definitions of magic, guilt and fear, purification, sovereignty, and so forth — results, paradoxically, in highly abstract and esoteric argumentation throughout. Too, the amount of variation Wilson admits into her analysis is enough to throw in doubt her general theory or, at least, the capacity for anyone to predict magical structures in new cases. What rules the critic follows to discover the salient “moves” in a given plot is never clear, nor is the problem of methodology given due attention. Wilson only remarks that “the thought system of magic does not inherently belong to a type of story, but to a particular text” (9), and then goes on to conjure divisions in particular texts, without fully explaining her magic.

If Wilson’s method remains by and large mysterious, some of the implications of her explicit arguments have not been fully reckoned with either. A significant problem here is the fact that little attention is given to the concrete conditions of reader response that constitute the very possibility of magic

— of exorcism, empowerment, self-improvement — for medieval readers *or* modern critics. In Wilson's analysis the power of magic has to do with the resolution of "guilt and fear." But of what kind and degree? And for whom? The imprecision of her formulation recalls the question over where exactly *catharsis* of pity and fear takes place in tragedy according to Aristotle: within an audience or in the action on a stage? Wilson's meaning is as elusive when she speaks about magic "operating at a deep level in the texts," though she tries to clarify things by specifying that "magical texts contain highly organized structures in which audiences can invest power for particular purposes within the narrative experience" (xii). Yet in another place she writes: "the entire operation of the magic is in the thought of the user" (10). How does that psychological observation comport with the importance assigned to the highly organized text? Does the thought of the user just amount to the structure in the text (or vice versa), and if so why distinguish sharply between them? For all the apparent specificity of Wilson's analysis of the reading experience, the coordinates of reader response are never fully mapped out, and indeed specific questions about specific readers are on one occasion openly dismissed. Speaking of the way an audience will assume the "heroine role" by identifying strongly with a female character in one sample text, Wilson avers: "I am considering how the narrative might be used magically by anyone identifying with it, and male participants would be included here. 'Heroine' refers to the sex of the chief character, the sex of the participant being irrelevant for a study of the text" (61). One is encouraged to infer, then, that the structure of the text is synonymous with magical thought — i.e., structures (not practitioners) are central. Yet surely sex and other individual characteristics are relevant to the study of magic, the "entire operation" of which "is in the thought of the user." The question *Who?* seems indispensable to analysis of something so peculiarly psychosocial as magic, and indeed the picture emerges that the user must at least be a believer. Magic requires "total identification, engaging in an inner, private performance . . . and investing power in the devices provided by the narrative" (9). Sound reasoning to be sure, but the effect is to throw us back on questions about who does the identifying, performing, investing. Given the fascinating psychodramatic dimension of magic, the audience plays a central role in its performance. If only Wilson had spent as much time on the particularity of reader response as she has on the specificity of plots.

Lastly, Wilson insists that it has been possible to articulate the phenomenon of magical thought by taking on the role of the audience — adopting the stance of a real "participant" (9). Failing to notice the gulf that separates academic analysis (of deep structures) from any actual use (the vanquishing of private fear and guilt), and neglecting the significant historical divide separating modern from medieval, the critic perhaps overestimates her powers. Were the book to delve into the subconscious intrigues of the critic's

own mind it might be more persuasive, if less scholarly, but as literary criticism the “plot” of the book is finally less than “magical.” (ALLAN MITCHELL, UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL)

KATHRYN JACOBS. *Marriage Contracts from Chaucer to the Renaissance Stage*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001. Pp. 192. US\$ 59.95 cloth.

Much recent scholarship has concerned itself with interrogating the rigid demarcation between the medieval and early modern periods that has traditionally characterized literary and historical investigations. While such categorization can be practical and even productive at times, an uncritical acceptance of it can be both limiting and misrepresentative. Kathryn Jacobs's book *Marriage Contracts from Chaucer to the Renaissance Stage* is one of the latest works to attempt to, in her words, “break the artificial wall” (vii) that has arisen between medievalists and early modernists. Where Jacobs's approach differs significantly from other influence studies (for example, Theresa M. Krier's edited collection *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance*¹, or Anne Thompson's *Shakespeare's Chaucer*²) is that rather than examining the influence of one author upon another, she employs an interdisciplinary approach to compare and contrast the ways in which actual law and marriage practices in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance had a very material influence on contemporary literature and drama.

The study considers the fluxuation fluctuation/fluxation? in marriage law from the thirteenth century to the Hardwicke Marriage Act of 1753 and focuses primarily on “popular” literature (defined in this case as the works of Chaucer, medieval mystery plays, and secular dramas of the Renaissance) because Jacobs asserts that it is here that the literary effects of marriage as an institution are most evident. As the title of the book suggests, the works of Chaucer — principally the *Canterbury Tales* but also to a lesser extent *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Legend of Good Women* — figure prominently. Also under consideration are two of the so-called “trailing spouse” medieval mystery cycles featuring Joseph and Mary, and Noah and Uxor. The sections on Renaissance drama are far less particular and touch on a multitude of

1 Krier, Theresa M., ed. *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998.

2 Thompson, Ann. *Shakespeare's Chaucer: A Study in Literary Origins*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978.

plays from the requisite Shakespearean works to *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Roaring Girl* and *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*. Jacobs looks first to the literary texts in order to compare the very diverse treatments of marriage laws, then turns her attention to the law books and work of historians in order to explain those treatments — a methodology which is clearly explained in the Preface

The book is organized into two primary sections: “Chaucer” and “Religious and Renaissance Drama,” each of which is subdivided into chapters as follows: “Rewriting the Marriage Contract”; “Adultery in the Canterbury Tales”; “Marriage Ceremonies and Property in the Canterbury Tales”; “Extramarital Contracts in the Canterbury Tales”; “The Legacy of the Marriage Contract: Chaucer’s Widows”; “Entr’acte: When the Law Changed”; “Under Stress: The Marriage Contracts of the Mystery Cycles and the Trailing Spouse”; “Unlawful Unions on the Renaissance Stage”; and “Remarrying Widows on the Renaissance Stage.” This is an effective and cohesive arrangement and, true to Jacobs’s intent, while the larger sections ostensibly divide the book into very distinct categories that reflect the artificial division of medieval and Renaissance that she is attempting to dissolve, the Entr’acte serves as a bridge between them and creates a sense of fluidity. The Prologue provides a very brief but helpful outline of contract law up to the fourteenth century, nicely elucidating its potential social and legal repercussions and providing a meaningful context for the investigation that follows.

Certainly one of the greatest strengths of the book is Jacobs’s detailed readings and thorough use of the literary texts. She does not assume complete familiarity on the part of her audience with even the more popular works, and does a fine job of providing engaging and pertinent contexts without falling into the trap of tedious plot summary. Ample textual evidence is given to support her points, and any lengthy Middle English passage is accompanied by a modern English translation to aid the reader unfamiliar with the language or the specific connotations of certain words. These considerations, combined with her lively and lucid prose style, makes the book easily accessible to the student as well as the professional scholar.

The crux of Jacobs’s argument is that an awareness of contemporary marriage law and contracts is essential to an understanding of the relationships between men and women in these medieval and early modern works. Marriage law was first codified by Gratian in 1140 in his *Decretum*, a legitimate marriage being defined as oral consent plus consummation. By the thirteenth century Pope Innocent III decreed that a verbal contract alone was sufficient. Things changed again in the mid-sixteenth century when the Church and ecclesiastical courts assumed an increasingly centralized role and insisted that a church ceremony was necessary to render a marriage licit — an ordinance which was in conflict with the written law of the land. Literature both reflected marriage practices and provided a means of working out anxieties created by this

fluxuation in marriage law and custom — anxieties not only about what precisely constituted a valid marriage, but about the legal and moral aspects and repercussions of marriage itself.

Medieval marriage law treated marriage as a sexual contract (witness the conception of sexual relations as the “marriage debt”), and Jacobs contends that *all* personal relations between men and women in the *Canterbury Tales* are contractual to some degree. However, unlike business contracts, the law offered no provisions for exceptional circumstances: what happened, for example, if the “sexual supplier” failed to pay the “debt” that was owed? In certain circumstances could adultery be justified? As the law made no allowances for those who failed to live up to their part of the contract, Jacobs argues that people took it upon themselves to look to business solutions as a model for remedying this. Chaucer was interested in examining the possibilities of the law’s shortcomings, particularly in the way that he treated adulterous relationships. She makes the important observation that the same language and features used to negotiate licit verbal contracts in the *Canterbury Tales* are also employed to establish illicit relations (for example, Nicholas and Alisoun in *The Miller’s Tale*), and asserts that Chaucer was among the first to employ the use of such accords between men and women who had no intention of marrying.

Based on this observation and her subsequent interpretations of the texts, it would be tempting to cast Chaucer as a radical challenger of the status quo; however, Jacobs resists this impulse and offers instead an ultimately more productive portrait of the author as a keen observer and commentator: “Chaucer does not critique the marriage law of his day; instead, he embraces the intent of the law, and uses it to critique accepted moral standards” (27). In addition, Jacobs makes a crucial connection between church ceremonies (which secular courts deemed necessary to vest property and dower rights) and wifely independence, prosperity, and economic security. She asserts that it is not so much character traits which determine the vastly different outcomes of, say, the successful Wife of Bath and the impoverished Griselde, but the fact that the Wife was married “at chirche dore” while Griselde’s oral contract left her with no legal claims to a financial settlement when her marriage failed.

Some of the most engaging and profitable sections of the book deal with the portrayal of the widow figure. While the stereotype of the “libidinous widow” is generally associated with Renaissance drama, Jacobs demonstrates that it has medieval roots: for example, the Widow of Ephesus Tales, the *Decameron*, and some fables, fabliaux and romances. It is in relation to widows that she does posit Chaucer as a more progressive figure, asserting that he purposefully addressed the “widow problem” and sought to challenge the stereotype of the libidinous widow by casting her in a more sympathetic light. He did this in a variety of ways, such as allowing her to speak from her point of view (e.g. the Wife of Bath) and by emphasising that

in many instances widows are victimized by their sexuality rather than profiting from it: the majority of the widows in the *Canterbury Tales* are not only poor but are encumbered by a large number of children. While Jacobs occasionally borders on the overly-speculative — for instance in her unequivocal assertion that Chaucer found the traditional widow stereotype “inaccurate and artistically restrictive” (80), and in the practice of attempting to divine the past of literary characters through what she believes an audience member would or would not assume — she ultimately does provide a well-developed and convincing argument.

The consideration of widows on the Renaissance stage receives an equally lively treatment, pointing out that the “lusty widow” was really more a continuation of literary tradition than it was a social reality. The widow was a manifestation of the social and economic prosperity the audience longed for, and Jacobs puts forth the idea that because stage widows existed to make the fortunes of the young, she functioned very much as a “this could be you” fantasy figure. She also provides a compelling context for such Renaissance stage conventions as the “bed-trick” and the frequent contestation of marriage contracts, arguing that they were both a means of testing and of working through anxieties occasioned by the new marriage laws that were in conflict with traditional marital contracts.

The simultaneously most provocative and problematic section of the book is that on medieval mystery plays, which Jacobs posits as a bridge between the relative stability of marriage law in Chaucer’s time and the upheaval that ensued in the sixteenth century. She points out that some of the plays (in particular the Noah plays and the episodes of “Joseph’s Doubts”) paid close attention to the problems that ensued when the expectations of a marriage contract were not met: both Noah and Uxor become “trailing spouses,” forced to take second place when their spouses are called to God’s service. While this is an enticing argument, it doesn’t quite live up to its potential. It tends towards the repetitive in that it dwells overlong on certain texts — though to Jacobs credit, she does point out that there are very few texts of this nature to choose from — and her case isn’t made as strongly as it perhaps could be. Nevertheless, this is an intriguing idea and certainly warrants further investigation.

Overall, this is a small but satisfying volume which succeeds in prompting the reader to look at even the most familiar literary works with fresh eyes and a more nuanced understanding of the social, sexual and economic dynamics between the male and female characters. Jacobs has provided a new, meaningful perspective that will surely invite further research into an understanding of the ways in which marriage law figured in other works of “popular literature” — and perhaps even other genres — in late medieval and early modern England. (ALLYSON FOSTER, UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY)

HEATHER J. JACKSON. *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001. Pp. 334. US\$ 35.00 hardcover.

In this well researched and fascinating study, Heather Jackson looks at the way books have been annotated with handwritten notes. She comes at this work from a variety of directions – the history of annotating, common types of annotation, the way one book is annotated by a multitude of annotators, and at the way one annotator marks up a series of books. Considering the quantity of the material Dr Jackson has worked over (vast even if mostly limited to English writing, usually in canonical or quasi-canonical literary works, c1750 to the present), the book is wonderfully clear, intelligent, and entertaining — an accomplishment considering the obscurity of some of the sources and the abundance of the evidence. On just about every page there is some new bit of information or a fascinating new combination. We read about Elizabeth Bishop annotating Boswell's life of Johnson or Max Beerbohm's wacky notes in Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*— there are some two hundred such combinations discussed directly (thousands more must have been seen to cull out these examples). One leaves the book impressed with the persistence of the author in following up a multitude of leads and in trying to account for such variety of approaches.

Marginal annotation calls attention to its moment of enunciation in a way that the published book does not. Whereas the printed page gives material evidence of the intervention of an elaborate process of text production that emphasizes the spatial and temporal distance between writer and reader, the trace of the pen in the margin gives an air of proximity and immediacy, along with spontaneity, eccentricity, and authenticity. The central text appears to have been absorbed into its margin in a momentary and highly singular act of interpretation. Motives for annotation are usually obscure (few marginal writers attempt any kind of self-analysis or self-justification) yet seem to call forth a second guessing that rarely solves the mystery of their origin. In other words, it is highly tempting to annotate the annotations, to look for them signs of their context, their meaning, to construct a personality or a theoretical program for the annotator. Dr Jackson yields to the temptation, but is cautious in her conclusions: she is aware how little we know about the extratextual context that is driving the annotations.

There are two chapters that deal most closely with contextual discussion. "Object Lessons" gives close readings of Hester Piozzi on Johnson's *Rasselas*, Rupert Brooke on Alden's *Introduction to Poetry for Students of English Literature*, a pseudonymous "Scriblerus" on Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, and T.H. White

on Jung's *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. I found the last of these to be the most interesting. White, who became famous for *The Once and Future King*, was a self confessed flagellant, pederast, and sadist (139). Like many conflicted individuals, his reading of Freud and Jung was driven by a profound longing for self-understanding. And, also like so many such readers, his reading of the book is selective, intensive, and incomplete. He stopped annotating on page 48 of his 280-page edition of 1928 edition (now in the Humanities Research Center in Austin). The longest note, at the back of the book, shows that he as lost interest in the Jung, he returned to Freud, and began to write free associations which take him on some curious paths: "Circumcision. Rum made me circumcised. Milk did. Liquids did. My penis was cut because I had liquids. Having liquids results in being cut. Ostracised. Dead end" (143). There is much more. Dr Jackson provides an excellent introduction to the context for these notes (most importantly, White's parallel reading in Freud). She shows how White's obsessing over "Rum-Bum. Bum Rum. Queer bum" became transformed later into a play called "Rather Rum" — about a mad psychiatrist who becomes a pirate (148). For those who are interested in biographical criticism, spontaneous annotations can provide important insights into the author's creative work. And into the way Freud is used in the early years of the public fascination with analysis.

The second chapter that was most strongly oriented to context was "Two Profiles" — a closer look at Coleridge as annotator and a survey of many annotated copies of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. The material on Coleridge is fascinating (Dr Jackson is well known for her work on this author and this book comes out of her work on his marginalia). Coleridge's massive production of annotation could be interpreted by the uninitiated the same way we come at White — as the private outpourings of an individual. But they are actually evidence of a profound sociability. His notes are often written in books that were passed around amongst his friends, even books that others asked him to annotate. He would sometimes give annotated books as presents, a brilliant way to personalize a mass-produced article. Coleridge's annotations became well known within his circle, and in some ways helped to maintain the circle.

Despite the apparent singularity in annotations, Dr Jackson is able to show that there are consistent methods of annotating that developed over time. Her historical argument is that there is an increasing shift from public to private annotation. Even by the time of Coleridge, the public annotation, for a circle of readers, is anomalous. Annotators tended to become increasingly private about their responses (White is a good example for the twentieth century). An example of an early annotator that would help to support her thesis is Gabriel Harvey, the Elizabethan scholar and controversialist. His abundant annotations (in some 130 extant books) have been known to scholars for centuries, and have by many been treated as signs of

near lunacy (these readers have been guided by the extremely hostile and amusing portrait of Harvey found in the writings of Thomas Nashe). But, as Lisa Jardine and others have shown, there is a community of readers for which his annotations are often destined. Harvey's annotation seems to fit in with public scheme that Dr Jackson has identified as the earlier approach used by annotators. I think on the whole she is right. There is a lot of personal material in Harvey, but this is often a dramatized presentation of self that to us seems programmatic, impersonal, and non-revelatory of personality. Of course, the split between public and private is not clear. Adorno in *Minima Moralia* is only one writer to insist that the division collapses into paradox on close examination. What is public is an acting out of private interest, what is private is an internalized set of norms taken from the public sphere. But as a general characterization of the drift in the way people annotated from the early modern period to the postmodern, her description seems to work.

Certainly there is some kind of shift over time in the methods of annotating. The rise of journal writing and an increasing conceptualization of the self as a source of valuable insight follows a parallel shift. But there is also another, related consideration. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century books become cheaper, and I suspect that one finds a greater proportion of new books in private libraries. A new book is *de facto* "my" book. The economics of private ownership of new things encourage uses that would have been unthinkable in earlier times, when certain books would have been immediately recognized as too valuable ever to be "mine" alone. There was a stewardship involved. Early printed books have owner after owner registered on the fly leaves or title pages. The knowledge that a book will be passed on encourages one to think of the object, and what one does to it, as public. Under this condition, certain kinds of annotations are not only permissible, but even make sense (the correction of a typographical error, or a date, and so on) — later readers can only benefit from the intervention. But when the book is seen as a private object of consumption, anything goes. My great-aunt used to cut her books up and paste the cutouts in notebooks: the *missing* lines in her copy of Yeats' *Oxford Book of Modern Poetry* are the ones she really liked, a truly radical form of annotation. New books become more readily subject to such bizarre forms of annotation. At the same time, because of the increase in the collection and library ownership of older books, these older books become protected from annotation, first by collectors who increasingly value the clean copy, and then by librarians who forbid any marks, first in their older books, then in the new ones. For us, now, a public book is never to be annotated.

Present-day annotation is never far from Dr Jackson's discussion, and the way she uses history to answer our pressing questions makes her book readable by non-specialists. There is certainly today a taboo

against writing in books. Collectors, libraries, schools (with their year-long loans of copies) all insist that the book be left as it is found, never written in, etc. Even the older style of factual or typographical correction is seen to be wrong. And many modern books (especially mass market paperbacks) lack the margins for any extensive marking. We tend to absorb the library and school injunctions — the state apparatus is working quite well in this regard — and if students do mark up a school or library book, it is often an act of rebellion. We are never taught how to annotate a book, how to extract, how to index — all basic skills by the late middle ages and thoroughly enforced and refined by humanist educators whose curriculum reigned until the early part of the nineteenth century.

The absence of clear guidance on how to mark up books leads Dr Jackson to attempt the only part of her book that I found unsatisfactory — her attempt at a “Poetics” of annotation. One can see the urge to do this. If you say that annotation is an art or even a skill, you may wish to determine value. And to determine value, you need to establish norms. Dr Jackson uses the word “should” to tell us what good annotation consists of — “notes should be intelligible,” “notes should be relevant to the work they appear in,” “marginalia should be honest” (205-06). We can even read a sentence beginning “Among the universally recognized signs of good writing ...” (209). Macauley in his annotations “goes too far sometimes” (215). “Humour is generally welcome in marginalia” (219). Samuel Parr on *Poems by Mrs. Pickering* (1794) is said to be “relevant, witty, and justifiable” (222). Keats on Milton is “good criticism” (224). Nabokov on Kafka provides “a helpful note” (226). These comments made me nervous. Is it not possible that the words “good” or “helpful” or “welcome” could actually distract us from a poetics? I didn’t see a poetics evolve in this chapter so much as a set of criteria for judgement that are closely tied to Dr Jackson’s own taste which is resolutely academic and correct. I happen to share her views on some of these issues, but I felt the attempt to universalize her very local criteria was a perilous thing to do. Ironically, what might be called a poetics — a theoretical program that could analyse formal characteristics of marginalia — had already been implicitly provided earlier in the book, and evolved quite naturally out of the consideration of the individual case studies. There is the Piozzi style, the White style, the Coleridge style, and so on, and these were good enough to alert me to very different styles and even to offer interesting models for annotation. I think we could have done without the judgments in chapter 7, though I would have missed the short case studies there (Lewis on Moore, Palgrave on Wallace, Bouwsma on Adams, Dockray on Godwin, Keats on Milton, Gibbon on Herodotus, Sharp on Estwick, et al.). Even when she is passing judgments, Dr Jackson never neglects the telling details.

Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books is a wonderful discussion that has appeared appropriately at

a time of anxiety over the “end of the book,” a phantasy that we are still trying to work through. Annotation reminds us that reading is profoundly active and engaging. The notes are part of the process. In the book to come, annotation must have a place — annotation that is retained for the annotator, and is recoverable by later readers. The history of reading and reception is part of our experience of texts, and Dr Jackson’s book shows how rich and surprising that experience can be.

(WILLIAM BARKER, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND)

DORE J. LEVY. *Ideal and Actual in The Story of the Stone*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. Pp. 256 US\$ 70.00 cloth; US\$ 22.00 paper.

The Story of the Stone (also known as *Dream of the Red Chamber*) is a literary monument on a par with *Remembrance of Things Past*, *Faust*, and *Don Quixote*, among other masterworks. Like its Western counterparts, it is inclusive, comprehensive, an encyclopedia of traditional Chinese culture — in Professor Levy’s words, “the larger subject of *The Story of the Stone* is life itself” (8). The scholarship on this masterpiece in the West has greatly contributed to our appreciation of its literary intricacy, and is still growing in scope, complexity, and quantity. Levy’s book on the *Story of the Stone* grows out of a conviction that she shares with her colleagues and the reader: “*The Story of the Stone* should be part of *any* literary education, East and West” (x). This book is a most welcome endeavor responding to an increasing number of readers of this masterpiece, many of them in the masterful translation by David Hawkes and John Minford. The book’s purpose is twofold: “Although the book is intended as an introduction for first-time readers of *The Story of the Stone*, the method of analysis detailed in the first chapter should suggest new ways for more advanced students and scholars to approach the text” (4).

The book is divided into five chapters. After the introduction, the author goes on to lay the theoretical foundation of her study, “Ideal and Actual, Real and Not-Real.” Levy bases her book on a sociological analysis of the Chinese family structure by Marion J. Levy, Jr. Dore Levy emphasizes the tension between the “ideal and actual” as defined by social standards. Indeed, this book revolves around certain social issues, and rightly so, since traditional Chinese culture is socially-oriented, centered around the family, and since the masterpiece is set in an extended traditional aristocratic family. Speaking reductively, *The Story of the Stone* is about members of the family coming together and dispersing. Interactions among members of this family figure prominently in the novel, manifested in family

celebrations — seasonal holidays, birthdays — and feasting on the one hand, and illness and death of many members on the other. The novel also delineates the trajectory of Bao-yu's spiritual growth and his progress toward enlightenment. Levy is sensitive to the novel's metaphysical dimensions, manifested in an interplay between the "real and not-real." "In a novel that self-consciously proclaims that its fiction is no fiction," writes Levy, "analysis of the gap between ideal and actual patterns, and the struggles of various actors to bring them into coincidence, mirrors the interpenetration and inseparability of real and not-real" (19). Her discussions are informed by her perceptive reading of the famous couplet at the threshold of Land of Illusion: "The paradox of the first line . . . pivots on the word for 'time' (*shi*), the second on the word for 'place' (*chu*). Truth and fiction interpenetrate in time, real and non-real in space" (15). Levy, furthermore, notes the quality of "ineffability" associated with the novel's metaphysical dimension: "The couplet . . . signifies not a hard and fast division between truth and falsity, reality and illusion, but the impossibility of making such distinction in any world, fictional or 'actual'" (15).

In chapter 2, the author addresses "Patterns of Authority and the Subversion of Family Structure," contextualizing the novel within the Chinese traditional family. Drawing on the traditional commentator Zhang Xinzhi (fl. 1828-50), Levy situates the family's decline in the failure to educate the younger generation on the part of its elder members: "so many members of the elder generation are known not for their attention to business and their strong management but, rather, for negligence and avoidance of responsibility" (48). In this family, ideal social relationships have been subverted, particularly by the Grandmother and the imperial concubine, among others; the author discusses the tensions between the matriarch and her son Jia Zheng. Levy sees the tragedy of Bao-yu and Dai-yu as one "of the consequences of internal mismanagement and negligence that determine the larger family debacle" (58). She adumbrates the relationship between enlightenment — the metaphysical dimension — and the individual, family, and society. As she states, "It is only when emotional attachment and romantic longing are systematically thwarted by the imperative of social convention that spiritual aspirations become a conscious alternative" (64).

Chapter 3 discusses the significance of illness in the novel. "Cao's description of illness and medical practice are by no means incidental or generic," Levy convincingly argues. "Each disorder is matched to its sufferer on his or her deepest organic and spiritual levels, which means that Cao's astonishingly detailed and accurate clinical profiles mesh perfectly with the allegorical imperatives of the individual characters" (67). The illness of the characters — diagnosed according to Chinese medicine, complicated and intensified

by the Buddhist notions of karma and retribution — serves as a means of characterization. Among the author's discussions are the case of Jia Rui, a pathetic character that does not usually receive much attention from scholars apart from his allegorical function, and some of the major characters with regard to their disorders. For Dai-yu, the author has noted "the cumulative effect on the psyche of growing up with a chronic, incurable disease" (81). Her analysis of Bao-yu's disorder is strongly colored by modern medicine of the West. One might wish that the author had provided more contextualization to her suggestion that Bao-yu — and Cao Xueqin himself — suffers from A.D.D. (attention deficit disorder). In the traditional Chinese novel, there is a gallery of characters of such types — impetuous, petulant, impatient, yet extremely capable in their own sphere of expertise and extremely considerate of those of kindred spirit, and Bao-yu might as well be one of them. The leap from Cao Xueqin's procrastination to A.D.D. seems to be a hasty one.

Poetry constitutes the subject matter of the last two chapters. Chapter 4 concentrates on poetry that serves as a medium of social communication, particularly among the denizens of the garden. "The evolution of Bao-yu's poetry appreciation is actually the history of his self-awareness. As his appreciation matures, so does his worldview" (106). In the garden, poetry "is a mode of existence and a way to prepare for life in practical and intellectual terms" (112), and "the poets' contributions mirror their personalities and preoccupations" (117). Chapter 5 focuses on poetry as a vehicle of spiritual illumination and growth. "Poetry, then, contains a potential for enlightenment that, while different from immersion in Chan [Zen] practice, is a legitimate vehicle in its own right" (140).

Levy's book includes many insightful analyses of the masterwork's sophisticated characters, intriguing episodes, and multiple dimensions. The author's deliberations are subtle and nuanced. These chapters discuss issues that are potential subjects of monographs, such as the literary significance of family and illness. The author's efforts will shed light on such aspects in other traditional novels, hopefully leading to monographs on Chinese literary sociology and pathology as manifested in the novel genre. The book is passionately argued; one cannot help being affected by the author's conviction and enthusiasm.
(QIANCHENG LI, LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY)

DAVID WITTENBERG. *Philosophy, Revision, Critique: Rereading Practices in Heidegger, Nietzsche and Emerson*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001. Pp. 288. US\$ 45.00 cloth.

David Wittenberg's new study *Philosophy, Revision, Critique* sets itself the task of thinking through a

post-hermeneutic theory of textual revision. This entails a number of things which Wittenberg's text attempts to articulate, not the least of which is the necessity of bracketing concerns about what might be called the "fidelity" of the revision to the "source" text. These concerns are bracketed because Wittenberg's object is something else: "the peculiarly constructed space that simultaneously connects and distinguishes ... two thinkers" (10). In short, what Wittenberg proposes initially is a *phenomenology* of revision. His study is thus less a critique of specific criticism (i.e. he isn't interested in questions of how Heidegger — his main exemplar of revision — gets Nietzsche "wrong") than an attempt to give a general description of philosophical production itself. This is no small task, and his study has the chief merit of focussing itself around a main example (the Heidegger/ Nietzsche relationship) even as it attempts to invoke a methodology that would chart a view of revision that is beholden to neither hermeneutics in general nor to reception theory in particular. Wittenberg's task is to articulate what he calls a "rhetorical" understanding of revision, and by "rhetoric" it is clear that he means by that word something closely linked to Aristotle's notion of it as an art of persuasion irrespective of the "truth." While, I would argue, the combination of a "rhetoric" and the attempt to articulate a *phenomenology* of revision runs into problems insofar as the rhetorical features of revision can not always be reduced to phenomenal, *visible* features of a given text (one might argue, for example, that a major relation between two thinkers is one of *blindness* rather than *re-vision* — something Wittenberg's book only deals with in the last chapter on Heidegger), Wittenberg's study on the whole constitutes a compelling new theory of revision insofar as it attempts to articulate a theory that understands revision as a historical phenomenon that is not necessarily chronological.

Wittenberg's major example of a "revision-encounter" (the term he uses to distance himself from any negative connotations to the word revision) is Heidegger's confrontation (*auseinandersetzung*) with Nietzsche. His first two chapters attempt readings of specific sections of this vast work (notably the section on the "raging discordance of art and truth"). Wittenberg is good at quickly getting to the stakes of the articulation of his "revision encounter." The place that Nietzsche holds for Heidegger as the "last Metaphysician," for example, means that what we are dealing with in Heidegger's "revision" of Nietzsche is nothing less than the attempt to move towards an uncovering of the oblivion of Being by the History of Metaphysics — Heidegger's project *as such*. But using the term "revision" as a replacement for confrontation (*auseinandersetzung*) causes some problems for Wittenberg's interpretation, and even runs the risk in some places of misconstruing Heidegger's interest in Nietzsche. For "revision" in the traditional sense (in the sense of a corrective) is certainly *not* necessary, or even desirable, for Heidegger. Rather, what

Heidegger explicitly insists takes place in his reading is an attempt to uncover what is left unsaid *in what is said*. Wittenberg is aware of this, and his entire reading revolves around characterizing how Heidegger is able to read a certain de-limitation in Nietzsche, a limitation that makes Nietzsche the last metaphysician, and which makes it possible for Heidegger to read him *as* the last metaphysician. But what Wittenberg seems to overestimate in places is Heidegger's commitment to an *independent position* in this regard. Wittenberg writes, for example that "Nietzsche *is* essentially, proleptically, perhaps prophetically, Heidegger. And Heidegger is thus more essentially Nietzschean than Nietzsche himself through or because of Heidegger's own reading" (54). This characterization certainly seems correct. Yet, if one were to say too quickly that what Heidegger delimits in Nietzsche's overturning of the Platonic conception of truth is the oblivion of another concept of truth, namely aletheia, one must not be too sure that this constitutes something like Heidegger's "position." Truth as aletheia can't be a "position" outside of Nietzsche's "definition" of truth since this would mean, among other things, having reinforced rather than displaced the notion of truth as adequation. In short, truth as adequation and truth as aletheia *must occupy the same space*. Heidegger, fundamentally, cannot be "beyond," on the hither side of Nietzsche's position, and he knows this. It is not always clear that Wittenberg does, however, when he writes for example that "... the thinker is limited because, in his own peculiar way, the thinker fails to *end* metaphysics, fails to recuperate the concealed whole of which his thought is only a part, and thus fails to be the postmetaphysical thinker"(94). Two senses of "limitation" are at work here, as Wittenberg points out, one which is intrinsic to Nietzsche's text (and to Nietzsche as the "last metaphysician") and one which is extrinsic, that is, one which is dependent only on the activity of being read, on the act of another thinker who "completes" or at least is capable of reading the limitation of the first. Where Wittenberg is least convincing is in the seeming conflation of these two senses of limitation, and thus in the use of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as a specific type of "revision encounter."

Where he is at his best, however, is in his characterization of the inherently *proleptic* nature of the revision-encounter, such that one can no longer draw the exact borders between the source and the revisionist text. In the "interlude" on Jauss, and later in the chapters (five and six) on Bloom and Emerson respectively, Wittenberg begins to sketch his more "rhetorical" theory of revision. The rhetorical theory that Wittenberg sketches prioritizes the necessity of the act of reading, over and against the (hermeneutical) interpretation of the first text as what must be "understood." In short, on Wittenberg's characterization, there is no text, only the interpretation that it makes possible. Wittenberg writes: "The rhetorical version

not only reverses the ordering of the 'steps' of hermeneutical interpretation — "understanding" results from the application of interpretation and not vice versa — but it calls into question entirely the status of an "understanding" of the text as anything potentially independent of the rhetorical situation in which textual rereading arises and is disseminated" (109). This is perhaps Wittenberg's major assertion concerning the rhetorical theory of revision he is trying to sketch: the revision encounter treats the text which is its object as *paralepsis*, that is, as a text which gives a secondary "message" which must be received by the philosophical reader (if read according to the proper context, as Heidegger does with the place Nietzsche occupies in the history of Metaphysics as the history of the forgetting of Being). What Wittenberg does by insisting on the reversal of the order of understanding in the revision encounter (a text is "understood" only in terms of the rhetorical force of the re-reading) is offer a forceful, and essentially convincing account of the historicity of a philosophical text or texts (such as Nietzsche's). The text, in short, *is* nothing but the history of its re-readings and, even more, the *future* of its readings. Wittenberg sketches the basic picture of this theory of revision through a close reading of Emerson's texts on history, and finally draws the conclusion that in the revision encounter, "... the 'historical' is a product of persuasion, of the rhetorical process of the reader and writer of history, but in the more crucial sense, that the reader and writer of history becomes its interpreter by *resisting* the fatalism of the past, resisting *understanding* the (historical) determinism of texts whose completedness tends to persist into the future" (153). While Wittenberg's main account of this future-directed description of the revision encounter is necessarily concise, it does open up a radical conception of this process which, even if a little sketchy in its detail or its examples, is significant nonetheless.

This reviewer is therefore of two minds about Wittenberg's study. The book is divided between an extensive reading of Heidegger as an exemplary instance of the revision-encounter which is perhaps a little too quick to reduce the (phenomenological) description of this encounter to one which is of the "hermeneutical" sort that the book moves against. On the other hand, the chapters of the book on Bloom and Emerson which more directly sketch the rhetorical account of the revision encounter, are clear and develop a theory of revision (and of the history of the philosophical text) that is highly provoking. The chapter on Emerson in particular, which presents extremely close readings to flesh out this theory, is the highlight of Wittenberg's book, as it offers a detailed interpretation or "revision-encounter" of its own to highlight its description of this process in others. In short, where Wittenberg is least "phenomenological," and most "rhetorical" in his readings he is most convincing. It is to be hoped that the latter methodology (or focus) will win out in the extension of Wittenberg's project. (KIR KUIKEN) (AFFILIATION?)

MALCOLM BOWIE. *Proust Among the Stars*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. Pp. 352. US\$ 70.00 cloth.

Malcolm Bowie's introduction to *A la recherche du temps perdu* provides new, thought-provoking pathways through the frequently challenging terrain of this novel. In his preface, Bowie acknowledges that he wrote this book in order to prevent his own "non-reading knowledge" (xiii) of real places such as Cabourg from diluting his understanding of the work. The result is an intricate study of the pleasures and puzzles contained in "the dazzling procession of Proust's paragraphs" (xiv). He skillfully discovers their idiosyncratic logic by investigating moments of difference, multiplicity, contradiction, transformation, and evolution that spring from the language of the text, oftentimes independent of the plot and the characters' commentaries. He also elucidates the central place that desire occupies throughout the novel.

Bowie organizes his book around principal themes in the novel; of the seven chapters, earlier versions of four ("Self," "Time," "Politics," and "Morality") have been published previously. In each section, he reveals how Proust's language, cited in both the original and the English translation, plays a key role in shaping a core concept. In the first chapter, "Self," Bowie documents the author's attempts to show selfhood's "integrative and centralising force" (13), but quite a different notion emerges from Proust's work. Projecting "an impatient desiring optics, intent upon multiplying the opportunities for human sight and enlarging the field of vision" (13), the narrator's self pushes him to seek new knowledge, which reveals new systems of morality. These differing views of right and wrong persuade him that "[n]o act of judging can be final, for the continuous gradations of conduct and character flow on" (26). In keeping with that logic, Bowie suggests that the narrator's self at the end of the novel may represent simply "one momentary geometry among many others" (29) rather than his culmination as an artist.

In "Time," Bowie gives voice to the tension sensed by many readers between the abstract temporality evoked by the novel and the use of everyday time to structure the plot. Within the verbal play of the text, he uncovers a more complete account of the way Proustian time functions. He explains how complex syntactic patterns, which contain "outrageous embeddings, suspensions and redundancies" (32), permit the author to manipulate time by simultaneously giving the reader backward and forward glimpses of characters' actions. The narrator's own retrospective view of past events, for example, allows him to reinvent the circumstances surrounding those events: the initial meeting between Charlus and Jupien

makes sense to him only after he becomes aware of their sexual orientation. On the other hand, memories, such as those of the narrator's childhood in Combray, serve to foreshadow events in later volumes. The temporality of the novel, which, for Bowie, maps "the time of human desire" (64), resists linear chronology, creating an unsettling gap that neither the plot nor the theoretical claims in the book can bridge.

In his reflections in "Art," Bowie shows that Proustian art is firmly rooted in the everyday world. His insightful discussions, which include a comparison of Vinteuil's septet and his sonata, underscore Proust's emphasis on the process of making art rather than on the art object itself. Bowie then examines the works of several writers, such as Dante, Madame de Sévigné, and Hugo, which the author incorporates in different ways into his book. Of particular interest is Homer's influence in the text, especially given that Proust changes the Homeric pattern, opting for "[h]igh art" that "must always begin low, be prepared to plunge from its summits back into the trivial and the everyday, and do this even as it reaches its moment of epic culmination" (105). Contrary to the notion of art as a form of redemption, which Proust seems to promote throughout the novel, Bowie cites repeated examples of creativity associated with breakdown and death. This alternative view of the artistic process anticipates "an era in which the noise of art will finally have been stilled" (124), an idea to which Bowie returns in his final chapter.

The novel's system of class relations, its hierarchy of sexual intimacy, and the importance of style in socio-political positioning are analyzed in the fourth chapter, "Politics." Perhaps the most striking aspect of Proust's presentation of this topic for Bowie is that it seems nearly impossible to identify which political systems the author advocates or condemns. The "egalitarianism of desire" (152) coupled with the inherent inequalities of class seem to be among the only elements that remain constant in this odd political world, and together these dynamics generate fundamental sources of motivation: sexual excitement and the drive to improve one's standing in society. In this light, Proust's uncharacteristically conservative treatment of class issues is easier to understand, as is the narrator's desire to become an artist. For the latter, distinctions between social classes serve as a "powerful source of erotic stimulus" (152); moreover, through the transformative work that art will require of him, he longs to gain entrance into the aristocratic world of wit and self-confidence.

If Proust deftly addresses issues such as time, memory, and desire, in "Morality," Bowie contends that his handling of the questions of right and wrong are less than skillful. In the Proustian world, "values are created, maintained, and defended without benefit of divine guidance or arbitration. Judgements are ungrounded, [and] 'right conduct' has no external guarantor" (178). Furthermore, the narrator's tendency to show sympathy for vice as well as his abstract discussions of moral failings become a kind of "seduction"

through which “a massive transvaluation of values may occur” (181), especially in the realm of sexuality. With this in mind, Bowie leads the reader on a fascinating tour of the narrator’s interest in the “hybrids, androgynes and polymorphs” (187) that thrive in spaces lying in between categories; for Proust, these areas of ambiguity pose the most engaging questions. Rejecting the morality of his time, Proust draws on his “sense of common mortality” (207) and the selfless character of the Larivière in order to redefine virtue as the altruistic act of simply “let[ting] others be” (207).

In “Sex,” Bowie underscores the ubiquity of erotic desire even in seemingly non-sexual contexts. He highlights the seductive power of language throughout the novel, such as in the description of Vinteuil’s septet, where the density of notes moves from “the solid state to the liquid state” (217). Both heterosexual and homosexual desire in *A la recherche du temps perdu* is subject to displacement, and Bowie argues that the syntax of the author’s sentences facilitates this type of transferal. If the situations that produce pleasure for the narrator are accompanied by a certain danger, it may be because a large part of the plot revolves around such danger. Bowie calls the work an enumeration of “the accidents and misadventures that befall the sexual appetite” (252) and feed desire, which thrives on risk and the threat of failure. Proust’s struggle to protect desire from “the banality of satisfaction” (254) may stem in part from a sense that sex leads inevitably to pain and disappointment.

Bowie’s earlier discussion of art lays the groundwork for his final chapter that addresses the “all-pervading awareness of death” (272) in the novel. He explores the incongruities characterizing the final stage of life, such as “the uneasy co-presence of Proust’s generalising death-haunted textual music and what could be called the social comedy of dying” (309). Language here not only communicates powerful emotions, it demonstrates the disintegration loss brings by “allow[ing] itself to be assailed and broken apart” (277). The tensions created between the inevitability of death and the human desire for permanence shape the entire work, but they appear most insistently in *Le Temps retrouvé*. After the passing of his grandmother and Albertine, the narrator realizes that the only kind of life possible after death comes from memories based on his relations with others, even if those memories eventually disappear. Proust’s novel rests on this fundamental contradiction: he uses his “knowledge of mutability” of life and therefore of art to construct a book “held up and held together by an active sense of its own impermanence” (287). Bowie understands that *A la recherche du temps perdu* is “haunted by the dream of art as a supremely efficacious mode of knowledge” (314), which death renders impossible. In the end, Proust does not reconcile the separate notions of the redemptive power of art (the notion that it provides our only means toward a communication of souls) and the vanity of art (the belief that human life is not destroyed by death).

In his epilogue, "Starlight on Balbec Beach," Bowie revisits his concerns about losing his literary understanding of *A la recherche du temps perdu* to a more worldly knowledge of the book. He suggests that because Proust's fictional resort town does not appear on any map, it differs significantly from any real-life counterpart and therefore can give us clues to a new kind of reality that literature makes available. Bowie shows that the author's mapping of a place, a person, or a phenomenon can be more rewarding for readers than experiencing these things first hand. Textual accounts of transformation and evolution permit the charting of these changes, allowing us to better comprehend them. Although Bowie targets his book for a general readership, the quality of his analysis makes it of special interest to the scholar as well. A list of further readings, including other writings by Proust, texts by contemporaries and soulmates, biographies, and critical works, will permit further exploration of the Proustian world. In *Proust Among the Stars*, the trail that Bowie blazes not only leads us through a deeply satisfying interpretation of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, it also rekindles our fascination with this novel and renews our delight in reading Proust. (HOLLIE MARKLAND HARDER, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY)

EDWARD MO_EJKO. *Socialist Realism: Theory. Development. Downfall*. Krakow: Universitas, 2001. Pagination, price and format need to be checked in copy of the work

Over twenty years ago, Edward Mo_ejko's book was one of the first substantial publications devoted to socialist realism and discussing this problem in such a detailed way. It appeared simultaneously in Germany, Denmark and Norway in 1977. The author, a Polish emigrant, after a short stay in Denmark settled down in Edmonton, having taken up a new job as a Slavic and comparative studies scholar at the University of Alberta. As the editor-in-chief of "Canadian Slavonic Papers", he has contributed to the development of the Slavic comparative studies. Additionally, he used to work at the Silesian University and recently at the Jagiellonian University. Undoubtedly, it is due to resuming of the relations with Polish Slavic departments that one of his most important dissertations, the study on socialist realism, has appeared in the Polish version.

This problem has been discussed in Poland for a long time and the abundance of significant works on it is great (the evolution of Polish researchers' views is discussed in my article *The Russian Socialist Realism in the Polish Academic Research (a Survey)*. In: *50 Years of the Russian Literary Studies in Poland*.

Ed. P. Fast, B. Stempczyńska. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2000. 78-86). Nevertheless, Możejko's book analyses some aspects that have not been discussed so far or exist only in a limited amount. The author characterizes the aim of his book in a following way: "[...] first of all, it is an attempt to give a possibly complete explanation of these socio-political processes that brought about the rise of the concept of art and literature called socialist realism, and secondly, it tries to explain its theoretical rules" (19-20).

The first of these tasks seems to be fulfilled only marginally, but the second makes up the most significant part of the dissertation. And indeed, except for some brief fragments, Możejko's thesis is devoted to the description of theoretical self-awareness of socialist realism, so maybe the Author should have entitled his work "Theory of Socialist Realism, Origins, Development, and Downfall." The first chapter, taking up the issue of the origins of socialist realism, illustrates the situation in art and literature in Russia after the revolution — but the author characterizes it from the perspective of theoretic and critical literary disputes. He presents a disagreement between Bogdanow's point of view — defending, on the basis of Proletkult, the principle of literary autonomy — and those politicians who, having been in power, tried to place literature under the influence of the ruling party policy. He also describes the literary disputes of 1920s; official reactions to activities and theoretical theses of Proletkult expressed by the party members, activity of RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers) and eventually the abolition of literary groups. The author claims that the most significant discrepancy between the cultural policy in Russia in 1920s and the period of socialist realism lays in assuming a different thesis of Marx's philosophy for their foundation (23). Considerable fragments of the first part of the dissertation accurately prove this statement. The argumentation provided by the author covers the ideological aspect of cultural life at that time but it does not reach the purely literary sphere. We will find here neither any description of literary processes nor the interpretation of literary works of art. Możejko concentrates entirely on the analysis of both theoretical disputes and ideological and aesthetic declarations, overlooking the reality of literary works. The analysis brings the author to the following conclusion: "The acceptance of socialist realism shattered the chance of literature, because, among many things, it was not an effect of spontaneous writers' manifestos or enthusiasm necessary for this kind of undertakings, but a result of a carefully planned programme, worked out for the needs of the national cultural policy. As one may observe, the literary elements played a marginal role in shaping of socialist realism. This doctrine was not brought into life on the grounds of any specific aesthetic programme, but it was constructed in virtue of some theses of Marx philosophy. And this,

of course, was against the very essence of literature" (63).

The author's conclusions should be accepted to a great extent, but they should also be argued with. It is widely known that the concept of socialist realism was shaped at the end of April 1932 after the publication of the Central Committee's declaration *About the Reshaping of Literary and Artistic Organizations*. The formulation of a precise set of ideological and aesthetic assumptions concerning the newly born "creative method" had lasted up to the moment of its adaptation, by the First Congress of Soviet Writers (August - September 1934), and its basic definition formulated in the Statute of The Union of Writers. At that point the elementary articles of socialist realism were defined and passed in the form of legally binding aesthetic doctrine of the Russian nation. Nevertheless, some literary phenomena that today are associated with socialist realism had appeared a few years earlier. And I do not have in mind the tradition socialist realism applied to, but the works of literature that fulfilled — as it turned out later — all the conditions stated by this doctrine. These works appeared in 1929, when the so called second revolution started — a process of industrialization of the country and collectivization of Russian agriculture. In this context, it seems to me that Mo_ejko, correctly evaluating the role of "formulated poetics" of socialist realism (in this case the meaning of formulated ideology), does not appreciate the significance of literary achievements in the process of shaping it despite their artistic insignificance. In my opinion, the fact of applying the complete significance to the role of theoretical discourse, accompanied by the lack of understanding of the role of these new variations of literary genres that had been shaped before the introduction of socialist realism, constitutes the weakest part of Edward Mo_ejko's thesis. The amount of productive and kolkhoz novels that appeared between 1929 and 1934 was, beside the disputes connected with national aesthetic, a constitutional element for the literary movement that was in the process of framing.

At this point we come across the second problem that should be commented. The author of the book constantly describes socialist realism as a "creative method." By doing this he assumes the immanent, for this phenomenon, point of view. Mo_ejko, tracing the history of this term and the disputes around it which lasted for several decades — seeing heuristic futility of this attempt — cannot find a solution which could describe socialist realism in a way enabling to depict its essence in theoretical, aesthetic and artistic aspects. He writes: "the definition of socialist realism as a method, as it stems from the soviet literary criticism discussions, is a source of several difficulties and in fact it is still an unsolved problem" (116). The description of theoretical foundations of this 'method' leads to the conclusion that "socialist realism definitely was not an artistic movement in a sense known to us from the history of culture, because its

official and unofficial supporters were not able to work out neither their specific means of artistic expression, nor their own literary genres" (118). And it looks as if the basis of this emphatic assertion was by no means the subject of the Author's analysis. The dissertation does not include any descriptions of literary works (and genres), nor any elements of the literary process. Mo_ejko formulates conclusions which do not concern the material described in the thesis. They are the manifestation of author's 'pre-scientific' views, but not a result of a research conducted especially for the reader.

For the last two decades Polish literary criticism has been used to describing socialist realism (especially, when we talk about its existence in Russian literature) as a literary trend (see: Henryk Markiewicz, Stanisław Poręba and others). This depiction enables to describe this phenomenon from both: its self-conscious perspective and ideological and artistic consistency of literary works and genres; it also allows describing the development of its basic rules. According to Mo_ejko's dissertation, which treats socialist realism entirely as a cultural policy programme and perceives only its theoretical aspect, the strict literary meaning of the phenomenon disappears along the way. And I am not intending to ascribe the significance of important literary phenomenon to the socialist realism. I just share the common belief that it is bad literature, which resulted in more bad than good. Nevertheless, for more than twenty-five years, it had a significant influence on the development of literary processes in Russia and it defined its future for a couple of following decades.

To recapitulate my opinion: Mo_ejko's assumption that socialist realism is a creative method is more detrimental than beneficial to the dissertation. Mo_ejko means something else, he perceives this movement (although I disagree to call it like that) only as a political (or politically motivated) doctrine and as a set of rules of literary life. But he rejects the peculiarity and specificity of the whole "literary line." It would be best for the author to stick to the term "doctrine." For in my opinion, the socialist realism, as a literary trend, is ruled by a specific aesthetic doctrine that was dominated by politics. All elements shaping the trend (although marginal in this case) are based on these assumptions and, adding to all these, the whole set of literary works is correlated with their model and individual features. And the fact that these works are only pseudo-literary is beside the point.

The next two chapters of the dissertation present disputes around the theoretical concepts of socialist realism in countries of Western and Eastern Europe. Mo_ejko characterizes their theoretical and critical awareness by showing its source bound with socialist realism in Russia and differences concerning critics' views and standards that were enforced in particular countries. It seems to me that these two chapters together with the last one, devoted to the relations between socialist realism and the notion of

socialist literature, are the greatest value of the presented dissertation. We are dealing here with some considerable factual materials. The author's argumentation is clear and very instructive. The description of views on socialist realism, uttered by the most famous representatives of it in different European countries and in the USA, presents valuable material to analyze this trend around world. The situation profile in this field in the countries of "people's democracy" allows seeing the similarities and differences in both: the views as well as attitudes concerning the cultural policy.

Sometimes certain assertions, which apply to literary works as such and describe their poetic features, appear marginal in these considerations. Probably this is the weakest part of the author's thesis. This kind of assertions stem from approximate knowledge only, without any analytical evidence. For example, Mo_ejko writes about the fact that a narrator in a socrealistic novel is endowed with the absolute knowledge, while the publications a long time ago enable us to reject this thesis. His comments on the structure of characters and plot in socrealistic novels are also not proved — they are simplified. Additionally, it seems to me that the thesis about the educational role of socrealistic works is not clearly and sufficiently exemplified (the author mentions it, for example, on page 228). This feature, beside the ideological content, is the most structuring element of socrealistic works. The commonly accepted thesis about the persuasive and affirmative elements of socialist realism — treated as the basic factors shaping socrealistic works is also worth mentioning.

It is not difficult to imagine that all the accusations I formulate against Mo_ejko's work call only for a description of what is not mentioned in the book. But it is impossible to write one book about everything. It should be remembered that the book was written almost twenty-five years ago, when the most significant books on the subject did not yet exist. Additionally, I believe the book is a perfect completion of those studies which described the theoretical premises of socialist realism only to a marginal extend, concentrating on the features of its poetics.

From the cognitive point of view, Mo_ejko's dissertation is a great source of knowledge about one of the most symptomatic phenomena of the 20th century literature. This is a valuable book, which will definitely become a part of the obligatory reading list for the subject it deals with. Unfortunately, it was not prepared carefully enough by the publisher. Similarly to other books translated from the English language, the bibliography here is worked out applying to the rules of English (but still not consistently) and it is therefore alien to the Polish rules. The decision of transcription (or maybe rather transliteration, for again, it is difficult to trace any consistency) was also unfortunate since the Russian names and titles are at variance with customs accepted in the Polish literature of Russian studies. Unfortunately, there are some

factual mistakes in the text accompanied by stylistic mistakes — Russian or English borrowings nonexistent in the Polish language.

The last paragraph is addressed to the famous publisher — more careful editing could bring only benefits and protect the reader from moments of impatience. Still, this impatience takes away only a speck of satisfaction from reading this scrupulous and absorbing book. (PIOTR FAST, *Affiliation?* Trans. Magdalena Barczewska)

PETRA FACHINGER. *Rewriting Germany from the Margins: "Other" German Literature of the 1980's and 1990's*. Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001. Pp. 176. US\$ 75.00 cloth.

Predictably, the initial goal of criticism on minority literatures in German has been to simply mark the presence of the marginal work. While a necessary first step, this approach carries obvious risks: the reception of the work can easily impose a simplistic interpretive model of referentiality, whereby the minority author is taken to be and valorized as the "voice" of the given group. Even in its more polished variants, i.e. those inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, or Jameson, the anthropologizing tendency isolates the minority work: it is either studied alone as an authentic document of the minority culture or juxtaposed only to others from the same or similar marginal spheres of cultural production. Petra Fachinger's *Rewriting Germany from the Margins* aims to go beyond this initial stage in criticism and to focus on the new modalities necessary for reading minority literature in its contemporary German context. Her by-now uncontroversial claim is that the diversity of German culture and letters renders "traditional approaches to contemporary German writing inadequate" (xii). Even though she does not spell out what precisely "traditional approaches" might entail, her monograph generally targets the reductive tendency towards reading both canonical and minority works as closed and mutually-exclusive semantic systems. In her view, the anthropological approach, once possibly inevitable and even desirable in order to render visible the literary production of a minority, is incommensurate to the diversity of both the center and the margins.

Fachinger, then, targets the isolation in which the minority work is read. However well-meaning or celebratory, criticism that approaches the text as an uncomplicated representation of the heretofore-silenced or under-represented minority culture reduces it: it acknowledges neither its literariness nor its worldliness, both of which call for a comparative framework that goes beyond the ethnic or national culture. Fachinger's emphasis is on the latter characteristic, the worldliness of the minority text.

As she puts it early on, “[t]he question that needs to be addressed is how one can read this literature through a pluralistic and cross-cultural framework without obscuring the specificities of particular cultural situations. A pluralistic approach needs to be fundamentally comparative” (xii). Even though this statement is somewhat formulaic, Fachinger’s conceptualization of the problem is significant as it foregrounds as the first step of a new critical approach to the customary predicament of the minority text: a certain hermeneutic isolation bolstered by the suspicion that the rules of literariness (however defined) don’t quite apply in its case because we are concerned with the “degree-zero” of representation.

The structure of Fachinger’s book, therefore, foregrounds connections: out of the seven chapters, six are devoted to two writers each. Only Feridun Zaimoglu, one of the most exciting and contrarian young Turkish-German writers, is granted a chapter all to himself. The first chapter on Franco Biondi, the venerable representative of the first generation of minority writers in German, and Akif Pirinçci, a Turkish-German writer known for his inventive detective fiction, reflects both the potential and the limitations of Fachinger’s analysis. In an example of what she calls counterdiscursive modes, Fachinger investigates here how the two writers in question write back to the canon by rewriting the classics: Biondi rewrites in *Abschied der zerschellten Jahre* (*Farewell to the Shattered Years*, 1984) the “German “national genre”” (11), the *Novelle*, in particular Gottfried Keller’s *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (*Romeo and Julia in the Village*), while Pirinçci resorts to a more circuitous route in his *Tränen sind immer das Ende* (*Tears are Always the End*, 1984): he builds his narrative on the East German writer Ulrich Plenzdorf’s *Die Neuen Leiden des jungen W.* (*The New Sorrows of Young W.*), which itself rewrites Goethe’s classic *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*). Fachinger’s attempts to unearth specific correspondences between the canonical and the recent texts can be tedious, but her insight overall in emphasizing this sort of agonistic model of rewriting in minority letters is an enormously useful one. By juxtaposing minority and canonical German writers and studying the tense and productive exchange between the two, Fachinger breaks the isolation of the marginal text. She demonstrates skillfully that the minority text is a highly literate one in its formulation of an oppositional stance: it inserts itself into a tradition and claims a place for itself at that center. Claiming that place is in this sense the minority work’s way of calling the very notion of the “center” into question.

The importance of Fachinger’s theoretical framework lies in her identification of the multiple contexts to which minority text belongs: as in the example above, it is embedded not only in a specific historical and cultural context, but also in a literary tradition. Moreover, it not only converses with the canonical works, but also displays structural similarities with other marginal works: Fachinger

demonstrates well, for example, the affinities between Jewish-German (Barbara Honigmann) and Turkish-German (Renan Demirkan) writers in their ambivalence about the term *Heimat*. In short, Fachinger foregrounds informatively both the synchronic and diachronic affinities, and the embeddedness of the marginal text in multiple contexts.

In her close-reading of the texts, however, Fachinger can be frustratingly circumspect. For example, she notes astutely that Pirinçci's Turkish-German protagonist, Akif, consistently uses a provocative and incongruous vocabulary in reflecting the world around him: the discotheque where he meets his girlfriend is a "joint packed like Dachau" (31) or he refers to the "final solution" ("Endlösung"; 31) that he hits upon as he contemplates the end of a relationship. After the spotlight on these highly suggestive anomalies, Fachinger tamely concludes that "[b]y repeatedly, *apparently innocently*, referring to concentration camp atrocities, Pirinçci, through Akif, not only demonstrates how language can be abused but, more importantly, also hints at the possibility of history's repeating itself in Germany" (31; *emphasis mine*). If he (Pirinçci? Akif?) is indeed demonstrating the potential of language to be abused and hinting at such grave possibilities, all within the German minority context, then he is presumably not doing it "innocently." A similar reluctance to fully articulate the conclusions her analysis leads to marks her approach to both Pirinçci and Zaimoglu, neither of whom accepts the traditional liberal and humanist expectations of the minority artist. Fachinger notes, but doesn't do nearly enough with Pirinçci's refusal to be regarded as a "Turkish-German [i.e. "minority"] writer," or with Zaimoglu's impatience with the pieties of the liberal discourse about minorities. Her placement of the latter writer alone at the very end of the study demonstrates her awareness of the significance of Zaimoglu's challenge to the obtaining cultural and critical discourses, but the repercussions of that challenge are not satisfactorily delineated.

Fachinger's pairings throughout the monograph occasion productive comparative readings *within the scope of the given chapter*: East German (Kerstin Jentzsch; Thomas Brussig), minority (Zehra Çirak; José Oliver; Renan Demirkan), Jewish (Barbara Honigmann; Lea Fleischmann; Richard Chaim Schneider), and women (Barbara Frischmuth; Hanne Mede-Flock) writers appear as various significant "marginal" artists whose works demand a comparative framework. Fachinger provides that framework by relying productively on postcolonial theory, as a sophisticated conceptualization of the relationship of the center and the margins has already been realized there, especially in the Anglophone context. Importing this theoretical framework is not, however, free of risk, as Fachinger herself points out. Indeed, she is not only aware of the danger, but also possibly self-conscious about it:

... I therefore ... compare and contrast “marginal” writing in Germany with “marginal” writing in Canada, the United States, and Australia, but I also emphasize similarities across ethnic and cultural borders without either glossing over the differences or losing sight of dominant, as opposed to “marginal” writing. (xii)

I apply methodology developed by Australian and Canadian critics to the German situation without, however, undervaluing national and cultural specificities. (5)

Here ... I discuss texts by two writers ... without, however, ignoring the differences in their conceptualization. (8)

Despite her awareness of the necessity and the risks of the theoretical grounding, her double goal of holding onto a historical and cultural specificity while creating an all-encompassing theoretical framework proves elusive. The result is an erasure of specificities, programmatic statements to the contrary notwithstanding. The reliance on the term “postcolonial” to describe the situation in the former GDR (and its writers) constitutes one such instance: others have made the same leap, as Fachinger points out, but the assertion of a peremptory resemblance does not a comparative framework make. The point is not that the term “postcolonial” cannot or should not be used to describe works by East German writers; it can and, I think, it should. But if that usage is to amount to something more than the assertion of affinities and resemblances between works from different contexts, the connection cannot be a foregone conclusion; it has to be argued in detail so that the specificity that Fachinger so rightly emphasizes not be lost.

The cumulative effect of the various constellations of writers in this book is unfortunately a flattening one: as more and more examples of marginality appear, the very term “marginal” loses its sharpness. In fact, Fachinger almost always uses this keyterm in scare quotes, thereby avoiding the necessity of deciding how precisely to define it. When she refers to Hanne Mede-Flock as “a ‘marginal’ West German writer” (17), the term stops describing a specific positionality. It is conceivable to argue, of course, that Fachinger wants to call into question those very terms (center vs. margin), but doing so obliges one to come up with a new critical vocabulary. When so many texts so easily seem to be “marginal” and “subversive”, the critical endeavor needs to question its central terms and therefore the premises its vocabulary represents.

In spite of these problems, this, in its broad outlines, is a necessary, informative and useful text that will deservedly serve as a blueprint for a fundamentally comparative conceptualization of minority/marginal writing in German. It is clear on the evidence of this and Azade Seyhan’s sophisticated

coeval work, *Writing Outside the Nation* (2001), which uses a fundamentally similar, but more detailed and convincing international comparative framework to read minority writing in German and beyond, that the “isolation” of minority literature in German is coming to an end. (AHMET BAYAZITOGLU, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY)

SANGEETA RAY. *En-Gendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives*. Durham, NC: Duke university Press, 2000. Pp. 208 US\$ 64.95 cloth; US\$ 19.95 paper.

Though the concept of country-as-mother is common to many cultures across geographical and historical spaces, it takes on political hues of emotional blackmail and imperial possessiveness in colonial and postcolonial narratives.

In this volume, we see how India has been “en-gendered” by various hands from 1857 to 1997, from colonial times when the writers of the Bengal renaissance enshrined the country as goddess in order to whip up nationalistic fervour, to our own times when the fiftieth anniversary of India’s independence from British rule saw multinational corporations exoticizing India in much the same way as colonial writers did. One notes that the images of woman as goddess and exotica are also related to the identity of the writer, Indian or non-Indian, Indians raising woman on a pedestal and non-Indians delineating her as exotic possession. But in both cases, women end up as pawns in a “preponderantly masculinist ideology that propagates itself through a heavy reliance on feminine ideals.”

The cover of this volume depicts the fractured identities and ambivalences in the positioning of women as goddess and as exotica by fracturing a woman’s face, the left half, coloured, showing Goddess Durga, and the right half, black and white, showing a lithograph reproduction of a submissive-looking Hindu woman.

There are four chapters between the twenty-two-page Introduction, where Ray maps with scholarly thoroughness the manipulation of gender politics in the exercise of national rule, and the eight page Epilogue. The first two chapters deal with novels written around the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857. The third and fourth are likewise paired; the third is on two novels by Indian writers that revolve around the Partition of Bengal in 1905 — Rabindranath Tagore’s *Home and the World* (1915) and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain’s *Sultana’s Dream* (1905); and the fourth is on novels written around the Partition of India in 1947 — Anita Desai’s *Clear Light of Day* (1980) and Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India* (first published in 1988 as *Ice Candy Man*.) This structure opens up other possible comparative studies, such as the role of historical events

elsewhere in the Empire with the British writers forming an axis, or the similarities/contrasts seen in the colonized writers' gendering of nationhood in different countries or ages.

The first chapter studies two novels by Bankimchandra Chatterjee — *Anandamath* (1882) and *Devi Chaudhurani* (1884.) Bankimchandra's generation endorsed the idea of literature being in the service of society, and there were many historical and social novels written between 1850 and 1930 whose motivation seemed to rest in the building of nationhood through reinterpreting the past and present. The effeminate Bengali male, who is "now part of the lore of colonial discourse," was a creation of a political ideology of nationalism that was closely meshed with the worship of Durga Shakti, feminine principle of the Universe. Man receives his powers from Shakti, and so it was a natural extension to embody Shakti in human females, which led to inhuman pressures being placed on women to be more than human in terms of morality, purity etc. Bankimchandra recognizes the pressures, but in the final count affirms the domestic ideal as the *raison d'être* of woman's existence. Thus, though Bankim's women are strong characters who defy social norms — Shanti, in *Anandamath*, lives as a man and a warrior, Prafulla, in *Devi Chaudhurani*, is made a goddess by a rebel bandit who defies the British — at the core, they wish to conform to the domestic role. As Ray says, both novels "illustrate Bankim's desire to exemplify 'woman' as the metonymic ideal or the disembodied feminine that helps generate a particular Hindu masculinity, while marking 'woman' as the signifier of a sacrosanct traditional domesticity."

The second chapter deals with three British-authored texts written around the Rebellion of 1857, and the "production of a colonized space as a 'savage' page on which British desire may be written." Harriet Martineau's *British Rule in India* (1857) is a retelling of history for the lay reader in Britain. It is written by one who had not set foot on India, one who dispenses with the usual requirements of history in that she cites no sources or documentation, and one whose blatant goal is to justify British rule and the "white man's burden." Meadows Taylor's *Seeta* (1872), on the other hand, is written by one who lived in India from the age of fifteen and married a Eurasian who was the granddaughter of "a princess of Delhi." He, too, writes with the Mutiny as a reference point, but his novel is more ambivalent. Cyril Brandon marries Seeta in a Hindu ceremony; Seeta is an ideal wife, eager to learn and follow her husband's culture and religion. She proves her loyalty by firing at her own people during the Rebellion. Once Grace Mostyn, fresh from England, enters the scene, Brandon is caught between two loves, and both seem genuine for he loves each in a very different way. Because Taylor does not want Indian women to be dismissed as mere mistresses and prostitutes, he has Brandon marry Seeta. Because he has made Seeta so loyal and courageous, he cannot now have Brandon abandon her without lowering him and the British. Thus, woman and India, man and

empire, get as intertwined as in Bankimchandra, and personal relationships get dictated by political ideologies. Whereas in Bankimchandra, Man had to resist Empire, in Taylor, Man has to uphold Empire; however, in both, the Indian woman becomes the sacrifice. Taylor resorts to killing off his character, and Seeta becomes a frozen, framed image to be hung in the ancestral halls of Brandon's home in England. "The culture of colonialism demands a strategic containment of the other for the narration of a distinctive English familial topography." In India, Seeta becomes a goddess-figure, an exemplar of "sati," to whom married women and virgins pray. Taylor's ambivalence regarding his own positioning reminded me of Kamala Markandaya's ambivalence in *Some Inner Fury* (1955), where the author, caught between her own love for both Britain and India, makes a third party (a mob in her case, as death is in Taylor's case) resolve the problem of a potential miscarriage of justice by the British.

In the final chapter, with the novels by Desai and Sidhwa, Ray wishes to "open up a space that would allow us to question the homogenizing tendency inherent in the discursive realm of nationalist politics that sets itself up as representing a nongendered ethnic majority."

As a Diaspora scholar, I was struck by the potential connections between the works of diasporic writers, and the brief Epilogue. In the Epilogue, Ray speaks of the expatriate idealization of India as currently articulated by members of the Diaspora, and the "caustic critiques" of post-Independence India in Diaspora novels. The contrast opens up possible comparisons in Cultural Studies.

Insightful textual analysis and a comprehensive range of secondary criticism make this volume an indispensable addition to postcolonial and feminist criticism. (UMA PARAMESWARAN, UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG)

JO MALIN. *The Voice of the Mother: Embedded Maternal Narratives in Twentieth-Century Women's Autobiographies*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000. Pp. 160. US\$ 35.00 cloth.

In her preface to *The Voice of the Mother: Embedded Maternal Narratives in Twentieth-Century Women's Autobiographies*, Jo Malin establishes the impulses that shape her analysis of twentieth century women's autobiographies and the format and voice in which she presents her analysis. Realising that she is writing her "own autobiographical text" as she forms her analysis of other women's autobiographies, Malin acknowledges that both the personal and the professional are "caught fast in the constant questioning, sorting, and connecting that the process has become" (x), a process that she likens to Mikhail Bakhtin's

dialogic exchange. Arguing that the maternal narratives she examines counter a traditional, unitary and historically specific Enlightenment presentation of the individual, Malin contends that these texts use a “hybrid, conversational practice” (4) through which to examine their constructed subject(s). Because Malin is “fascinated with, even fixated on, the mother/daughter relationship and its evidence in a woman’s text” (ix), she is pulled both critically and personally to investigate the interweaving biographical and autobiographical narratives of mothers and daughters and seeks to understand the conversational grounds upon which these narratives are fashioned. Building on a recent trend among feminist scholars to acknowledge and give voice to their multiple subject positions and working in counterpoint to her focus on women’s emerging narrative voices, like the authors she studies Malin constructs a dialogic discourse throughout her text. While the life stories Malin addresses layer the maternal biography with the daughter’s autobiography, causing the mother to become an “intersubject” in the daughter’s text, Malin interweaves the critical bulk of each chapter with a personal reflection that closes the chapter, merging the subject/object relations of critic, biographer, and autobiographer. As well, the brief preface and coda enfold the critical text within a miniature enacted autobiography. Malin details the rationale of including her own narrative in this critical work as she notes that “it would be an artificial act to separate my own autobiography from my work on the texts of Woolf, Suleri, Rich, Moraga, Lorde, Nestle, Steedman, Allison, Modjeska, and Chernin.... The texts prompt the personal telling” (ix).

Malin’s investigation of the development of the autobiographical subject(s) and her/their voice(s) in maternal narratives suggests the importance of including all domains of one’s lived experience in an autobiographical text and the impossibility of separating the personal from the professional. She suggests that the ten autobiographical texts she reads in *The Voice of the Mother* problematise notions of separation, individuation and autonomy found in many traditional autobiographies. As exemplars of a new literary form that hybridises biography and autobiography, they stress relationship and communal development instead of the evolution of individuated development; as the daughters author their own autobiographical stories, they also relate their mothers’ embedded biographies. Theorising a structure in which the mother is “a true subject rather than an object” (10), Malin argues “there is a blurring of who is the author and who is the hero of the text” (10). The overlapping of mother and daughter life stories, in which the mother becomes an “intersubject” in the daughter’s autobiography, results in texts in which there are “two heroes as subjects” (10) rather than an opposition between subject and object.

Malin interprets these texts through a schema of conversation or dialogue and focuses on the mode and origins of the voices of mother and daughter. Grounded in “feminist cultural and psychoanalytic

theories of maternity, the problematic of motherhood, and the mother-daughter relationship" (2) and Philippe Lejeune's notion of the autobiographical pact, Malin's study foregrounds the "hybrid, conversational practice" (4) of daughter's autobiographies as diverse as Virginia Woolf's *Moments of Being* and Carolyn Steedman's *Landscape For a Good Woman*. The organization around conversation and dialogue is both the strength and weakness of Malin's text, for while she identifies and explicates the conversational elements in the mother/daughter texts, she does not thoroughly develop the implications of the dialogic practice for identity formation. Malin maintains a focus on the referentiality of texts as established by Lejeune in his two versions of the essay "The Autobiographical Pact" and suggests that the author's name on the title page "governs the reading of the texts as autobiographies" (6). Although Malin proposes a model of maternal narratives, based on the texts she reads that "marks a breakdown of subject/object categories as well as auto/biographical dichotomies of genre" (11), throughout *The Voice of the Mother* she could spend more time distinguishing between the two forms. In fact, polarising the texts into autobiography and biography, Malin disregards recent scholarship that probes the limits and boundaries of a range of life writing categories that include but are not limited to biography and autobiography. A notable exception occurs in Chapter Three, "Conversations About Intimacy, Bodies, and Sexuality" where she explores texts by Adrienne Rich, Cherrie Morage, Joan Nestle and Audre Lorde through Sidonie Smith's designation "autobiographical manifestos" (36) and Rita Felski's notion of feminist "confession." To escape the overly referential aspects of Lejeune's theory and the attendant impulse to dichotomise texts, Malin could fruitfully begin with the theoretical framework of Smith and Felski instead of Lejeune's model.

While Chapter One establishes the critical and structural framework of *The Voice of the Mother*, Chapters Two to Five engage in a series of "conversations" about dominant elements in women's maternal narratives. "Conversations About Space and Houses" locates the mother's voice in domestic origins — the protected and intimate space of the home. Drawing on the philosophical and psychological theories of Gaston Bachelard, as presented in *The Poetics of Space*, Malin suggests that unconscious experiences, like the maternal absences articulated in Virginia Woolf's *Moments of Being* and Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days*, are located within interior domestic spaces. To understand these experiences, the authors must examine their selves as located within their particular domestic spheres. Following Bachelard, Malin explores the "maternal features" of the house and its poetic images: the "vacated space" of Woolf's text and the elegiac tone of the embedded narratives as they invoke the absence of Woolf and Suleri's mothers respectively. Malin notes the extraordinary power of autobiographies that "often begin with a narration of the writer's

childhood in the first house that sheltered intimate daydreams" (17) but needs to explain how autobiography as form offers the same force as poetry to move readers at such "an unimaginable depth" (Bachelard in Malin 17). Malin juxtaposes the highly directed Victorian life as lived by Woolf and organized by rooms that separate and divide men from women, intellectual work from the domestic, and public from private to the more narratively experienced life of Suleri. Instead of the regimented and classed spaces of Woolf's domestic experiences, Suleri's *Meatless Days* represents a domestic environment of colonised margins, borders, and storytelling that integrates inner and outer spaces through such architectural structures as courtyards and rooms that blur notions of personal and public space. The conversation Malin initiates between the two very different worlds and spaces of Woolf and Suleri leads the reader to consider variations in domestic space and the impact of physical space on maternal and filial narratives.

Malin probes the depths of mother/daughter intimacy in Chapter Three, "Conversations About Intimacy, Bodies, and Sexuality," through narratives of bathing, grooming and bedsharing. Written in the 1970s and 1980s, the chosen texts are tied to an emancipatory political agenda and the expression of lesbian sexuality. Although not addressed in this volume, an interesting question that should be raised is whether there are other maternal narratives sharing the same intimate and erotic images that operate out of a stance other than a politicised lesbianism. One of the strengths of this volume is its attention to the structural organization of the texts it examines and the manner in which the author's use of structure and image develops the voice of the narrative "intersubjects." For instance, Malin's noting of the "brevity" of the mother's narrative and the evident silences and telling textual gaps reveals the "uncomfortable ambivalence" Adrienne Rich exhibits toward her mother and the maternal narrative in *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*.

In her personal response to the erotic and bodied lesbian texts she studies and to the quotations she selects from Helen Cixous' work, Malin feels compelled to insert her own bodied self into the text. However, uncomfortable with revealing intimate, sexual experiences, Malin devises three different versions of her dancing life, which began as a child of five. One of the versions invites a mini-biographical reflection of her mother's part in Malin's dancing life via the making of costumes and the economic strain imposed by dance classes. Through the three versions of this aspect of her personal life, Malin enacts the conversational praxis that she proposes as a model for embedded maternal narratives. And, as in earlier chapters, Malin implements her model but does not couple her reflections to her theoretical model. Is this lack of connection a failure of the text or its most potent success?

In a subtle way, Malin seems to respond to this question in “Conversations about Material Things, Longing, and Envy,” in which she explores the “economic realities of memory for the autobiographical subject” (56). Malin interrogates the economic factors that pressure women from low economic strata to barter their selves and their bodies in gendered acts of exchange, acts that can invite violence and betrayal not only against the mothers who bartered themselves for economic security but also against their daughters who are ancillary commodities. In Carolyn Steedman’s *Landscape for a Good Woman*, though the narrator’s mother betrays her by refusing to privilege the mother-daughter narrative over the wife/husband text and thus fails to protect her daughter from a brutal step-father, Steedman evades facile categorizations of “good mother” or “bad mother.” Malin continues the conversation begun by Steedman between aspects of class, gender and bodily relationships and addresses the role of the man and father in embedded maternal narratives. As she reflects about the Steedman text, “The father is both the cause and object of the distortion of sexual desire for the girl-child” (66). Expanding the narratives of both mother and father-figure beyond flat hero/villain plots encourages readers to accept Malin’s formulation of mothers and daughters as intersubjects and in turn prompts the reader to consider her own multi-layered autobiographical narrative.

A project that addresses mother/daughter subjectivity through a focus on conversational practice would be incomplete unless it grapples with the issue of voice, and this Malin does in her final chapter, “Conversations About Storytelling and Voice.” Beginning with the notion of voice and its “fixing and unfixing in a written text, and storytelling” (70), Malin connects the transmittal of maternal narratives, via oral or written forms, to oral storytelling practices, domestic work and bedtime nursery stories. Connecting the narrative experience to Kristeva’s imaginary/semiotic language based in “women’s time,” Malin suggests that a woman’s autobiographical voice is powerfully and intimately grounded in the space, time and relationship of the telling. Recovering one’s voice, as did the maternal subject of Drusilla Modjeska’s *Poppy* after a long illness in which she remained mute, lends a “narrative framework” and hence some control over one’s story and one’s life. Malin thus prepares the way for the presentation of her autobiographical self and voice.

While it would be preferable for Malin to make a more explicit connection between her interpretative strategy and Bakhtin’s dialogism that grounds her text, there is value in forcing the reader to make the links. The final chapter is a logical place to address polyphony and multi-voicing, for instance, and the opening up of possibilities that occurs when such polyphonic cadence is welcomed into a text. However, although Malin does not frame all the connections critically, she does so autobiographically,

finishing the book with a coda in which she “take[s] the next logical step . . . and question[s] the emphasis on the daughter and her text as the only vehicle for writing a mother’s story” (89-90) by setting down her autobiographical narrative, “Babies and Books: Motherhood and Writing.”

The questions which are raised throughout this volume — voice, separation, autonomy, the divisions and augmentations brought forth by motherhood — are, in the end, left unresolved, not because Malin refuses to deal with them but because she does confront them and, finally, leaves them in dialogue with each other. The coda is a polyphonic variation on her dialogic model of maternal narrative as conversational practice, with her autobiographical selves pitted against each other in the cool reasoned tones of the academic theorist and the impassioned, lively fervor of the mother writing in solitude. At the last, Malin’s voice is given the space, time and opportunity to weave itself into a narrative of its own, resulting in the most powerful portion of the book. This reader hopes to read, in the future, more of Malin’s work that includes the critical voices as she has established them, but that surpasses the theorists to utter in a voice that is uniquely and unapologetically hers. (TARA HYLAND-RUSSELL, *Affiliation?*)

UMBERTO ECO. *Experiences in Translation*. Trans. Alastair McEwan. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2000. Pp. 135 CDN\$ 19.95 hardcover.

The first volume of the University of Toronto Press new series, named the Goggio Publications Series after the Emilio Goggio Chair in Italian Studies, is devoted to translation. The two essays are based on three lectures delivered by Umberto Eco in Toronto in 1998. The book is well-edited and well-translated with a short but useful bibliography for those interested in the link between semiotics and translation. The first essay is entitled “Translating and Being Translated” and gives a fresh perspective on old problems as experienced by Eco as a translator and as a translated author. The second essay, entitled “Translation and Interpretation,” is more theoretical and calls for establishing clear distinctions between the categories found on the continuum of the semiosis of translation and interpretation.

After apologizing in a brief introduction for relying on common sense — “but *common sense* is not necessarily a bad word” — Eco reviews some basic concepts and problems associated with equivalence in meaning. True to his promise of common sense, he quickly contrasts Benjamin’s idea of a *reine Sprache* with the necessity “to elaborate a logical model for the perfect language” (11). As a result, he insists that the

metalanguage, produced by a *tertium comparationis* and currently called Mentalese, must be expressible in formalized language. Using relatively simple examples, such as Jakobson's famous discussion of propositional meaning based on "I like Ike", and borrowing from Peirce's discussion of interpretation, Eco proceeds to demonstrate how the translator, imbued with not only linguistic competence but intertextual, psychological and narrative competence, must make a *textual abduction* in order to explicate inferences. Every practising translator will immediately recognize the process he or she follows in interpreting the source text without necessarily being conscious of every step while aspiring translators and their teachers will find the discussion useful as a guide into the complexity of the act of translating.

Broadening his discussion to larger issues of culture, Eco dismisses target-oriented theories as beyond the purview of translation, since, for example, evaluating the impact of Luther's German translation of the Bible upon the German language does not require knowledge of Hebrew. Instead, he stresses that the best way to study the process from a source text to a target text is to go back to considering the source/target dialectics from the perspective proposed by Humboldt and Schleiermacher: should a translation lead the reader to the text or lead the text to the reader? The debate has by now become well-known as the opposition between *foreignizing* and *domesticating*. In his discussion Eco introduces an additional distinction between *modernizing* the text and *keeping it archaic*. Using examples from the translations of his own novels and from translations of the Bible to illustrate this double opposition, Eco shows himself to be resolutely on the side of bringing the text to the reader. The rest of the essay deals successively with issues of possible changes to the story line, rhythm, loss and compensation.

Weaving together semiotic and literary theories — the Russian Formalists' distinction between *fabula* (story) and *sjuzet* (plot), the difference between content and expression, the rhetorical device of *hypotyposis* — into his analysis of translation problems, Eco provides an entertaining account of his experience of having been translated and of translating. This perspective is insightful on the process of translation and, here and there, on the process of writing fiction while appearing somewhat prescriptive at times about translation strategies and solutions. The reason for this normative tone becomes clear in the second essay which reveals Eco's intention to formulate what constitutes translation apart from other forms of interpretation.

To make his point, Eco revisits Jakobson's definition of the three types of translation (intralingual or rewording, interlingual or translation proper, intersemiotic or transmutation) and the influence of what he calls Peirce's protean language on Jakobson's thinking about translation. In his conceptualization of the

universe as perfuse with signs, Peirce did indeed use translation as a synecdoche for interpretation but Eco insists that, contrary to Steiner's theory of language, neither Peirce nor Jakobson lost sight of the specificity of the phenomenon of translation as distinct from the many other modes of interpretation. Thus the concept of translation cannot and should not be extended to the entire realm of interpretation and interlinguistic translation should be examined separately from other forms of interpretation. Eco illustrates his position in regards to *rewording* by submitting an English translation of Baudelaire's *Les chats*, whose poetic function was so brilliantly analysed by Jakobson, to the vagaries of automatic translation. The initial result is that the text's semantic level and even a hint of its poetic function are preserved but, when dictionary definitions are used to replace individual words and fed back into the computer, the text becomes a joke. Eco concludes that intralingual translation cannot be considered a form of translation and that "translation is a species of the *genus* interpretation, governed by certain principles proper to translation" (80).

The subsequent sections focus on elaborating these principles and are grounded in Hjelmslev's distinctions between form, substance and purport. In translation the aim is to retain the same *substance* of the content — and often the same form of the content — in the transfer from the form and substance of one expression to the form and substance of a different expression. Eco proposes a new diagram to account for the variations in both the substance and the purport of the expression. The divisions are 1) Interpretation by transcription, 2) Intrasytemic interpretation, 3) Intersystemic interpretation. Translation fits under the sub-division 3.1) With marked variation in the substance, and as distinct from 3.1.2) Rewriting and 3.1.3) Translation between other semiotic systems. Each category is then discussed in details with the help of examples which include Eco's own translation of Raymond Queneau's *Exercices de style* and Joyce's own translations, sometimes in collaboration with other writers, of the chapter from *Finnegan's Wake* entitled "Anna Livia Plurabelle". As fascinating as these examples are, they do as much to demonstrate Eco's erudition and brilliance as provide readers with new insights into *Experiences in Translation*.

Although the term *experience* becomes mostly implicit in both essays, the title for this publication has been cleverly chosen. Not only do Eco's demonstrations never lose sight of the practicing translator but the philosophical implications of experience, as in introspection, description, study and knowledge, serve the stated goal of "identifying different phenomena in the apparently uncontrollable flux of interpretative acts" (130). As Eco himself points out, however, using Wittgenstein's discussion of the effect a minuet might produce on listeners, it is not enough to describe the effect one experiences in aesthetic appreciation,

one also has to examine the textual strategies that brought the effect about, i.e. the minuet itself. This means that, in order to understand an aesthetic experience, the shuttling back and forth between cause and effect must be considered. In attempting to isolate translation from other forms of interpretation, therefore, Eco needs to discuss various cases of interpretation. Interestingly, these demonstrations result in showing that all forms of interpretation laid out in his table are called upon to determine what is and what is not translation proper and when translation is “merely” used as a metaphor.

But why should the practicing translator, or the theorist, stay away from any metaphorical use of translation? Is the etymological sense of *metapherein* not precisely “to carry over, to transfer”? Isn’t translation itself a metaphor in its task of suggesting likeness within difference? The process of interpretation, as Eco so aptly demonstrates, constitutes an integral part of the process of translation and relies on many, if not all, forms of interpretation Eco wishes to dissociate from translation proper. He admits to overlaps between categories but I would argue, as Antoine Berman has, that “la traduction, c’est toujours bien plus que la traduction” (292). It belongs to the nature of translation to overflow the semantic and epistemological boundaries imposed on it by certain theories. Although it is clear that Umberto Eco takes it upon himself to continue the “pioneer, or rather [the] backwoodsman” task Peirce had defined for himself, namely to clear and open up “what I call *semeiotic*, that is, the doctrine of the essential nature and fundamental varieties of possible semiosis” (5:488), he ends up closing the door on exciting recent developments in Translation Studies where, in collaboration with other disciplines such as Cultural Studies or Women’s Studies for example, a careful examination of the metaphoric nature of the experience of translation is leading to a better understanding of translation proper. In other words, if the translator is to be expected to have the kind of multiple competence Eco talked about in the first essay, it is essential that various theories of interpretation explicitly complement each other rather than stand in opposition. This kind of collaboration can show, for example, how intricately connected interlinguistic, as well as intralinguistic, translation, cultural translation and identity can be in the writings of immigrant and other displaced writers. (ANNE MALENA, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

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Hartshorne

FRANÇOISE GENEVRAY. *George Sand et ses contemporains russes: Audience échos, réécritures*. Paris, Montréal: L'Harmattan, Collection "Des idées et des femmes," 2000. Pp. 412. __ 29, cloth.

In her introduction, Genevray remarks on the strange absence of any earlier extensive scholarly work chronicling so significant a presence in nineteenth-century Russian culture as George Sand's. Fragmentary scholarly studies have focused on literal dialogues such as that between Sand and Turgenev, on intertextual traces in works by Dostoevsky, Druzhinin and Chernyshevsky, or on Sand's influence on Russian women writers or Russian writing in general considering the "woman question." As Genevray points out, the historical context in which Sand's works were read in Russia has problematized broader inquiries. Sand's novels circulated, in French and in Russian translations, at a peculiarly formative moment in Russian literary history. On the one hand, Sand's voice was refracted through politicized readings characteristic of early modern Russian literary discourse. In the Soviet context, Sand's association with a Saint-Simonian sort of socialism complicated scholarly inquiry. The political appropriation of her work made her seem less relevant to Western scholarship focused on "literary" influence, except as regards Sand's certain but ambivalent contributions to the "woman question." On the other hand, the wide dissemination of Sand's texts in the Russian context led to diffuse echoes, indistinct from those of other French writers within the tradition of romantic realism. Genevray undertakes the difficult task of recovering fragments of Sand's work and thought, buried in the uneven terrain of early modern Russian literary culture. Interpreting traces from not only the literary and critical texts, but also the personal diaries and correspondence of Sand's contemporary Russian readers, in light of well-documented larger cultural dialogues, Genevray explodes any estimation of Sand as a minor or marginal figure in Russian literary history. Rather, as Genevray's opening chapters rigorously demonstrate, Sand explodes on the Russian literary scene. Sand's impact is overlooked by literary historians, in part, because she became such a commonplace of nineteenth-century Russian discourse. Genevray's study remedies this oversight, discovering in Sand's popular appeal and the appropriation of her texts and/or persona by figures from opposing aesthetic and ideological camps the inherent complexity of Sand's work. A liminal figure, the capacity of whose literal existence and literary expression for multiple readings exposes the frameworks of her readers, Sand calls for re-reading. Genevray surveys Sand's texts as intersections at which cultural dialogue resounds.

Divided into three sections followed by extensive scholarly bibliographies, Genevray's study examines, first, the complex cultural context informing the circulation and critical reception of Sand's texts in Russia. While analysing the editions of Sand's works read by her Russian contemporaries, she offers an illuminatingly focused introduction to the problems of textual circulation, translation, publication and commentary under both the constraints of censorship and the pressure of politicized literary discourse. Critical dialogues are informed by textual and temporal distortions of Sand's work, often relying on poor or partial translations and reflecting anachronistic revisions. At the same time, they depend on distant knowledge of Sand's biography and are framed by Russian debates concerning social and literary form. Hence Genevray rehearses the history of Russian literary journalism and the shifting climate of censorship while unfolding the publication history of Sand's texts in Russian. Her chronicle of censorship is compelling — informed and critical, not only legible but even eloquent. Genevray fleshes out statistical analysis with incisive, and often ironic, testimonials. For instance, while denoting the many Sandian titles forbidden by censors (including works widely read by the literary establishment such as *Lélia*, *Spiridion*, and *Le Compagnon du tour de France*, as well as, after 1847, titles previously translated and published such as *Indiana* and *Mauprat*), she offers an illuminating analysis of the shifting motives for aborting or altering Sandian texts, filtered through the tongue-in-cheek private critique of the censor Nikitenko. Underlining contradictions in competing moral, political and religious pressures, Genevray elucidates how readings on the part of censors, often inattentive to the ironies and subtleties of the text, nevertheless, not only arouse the curiosity of the public (for whom the text may still be available in unofficial forms), but also inform critical reviews. Here Genevray demonstrates what will be her own *modus operandi*: constructing a critique by juxtaposing critical readings (and misreadings) of the text.

Sand's voice multiplies as it is appropriated and reaccented by different readers. Genevray herself, commenting not only on readings by Sand's Russian contemporaries but also more recent scholarship, becomes one of these readers — but one attentive to the polyphony inherent in Sand's texts (liberally cited) and to the afterlife of those texts in what Bakhtin termed "Great Dialogue." French literary debates provide the matrix against which Genevray plots the evolution of the forms and terms of literary debate in the Russian context: literary forms such as the *physiologie* or *feuilleton*, figures such as the *publiciste* (Belinskij, for instance, is introduced in relation to Sand as both critic and editor, *publiciste* in the sense of both *journaliste* and *agent de publicité* 96), terms such as the Russian Natural School, closer to French Realism than Naturalism. Through a survey of discrete literary forums, contexts for publication and

dialogically engaged critical reviews, Genevray delineates a cultural framework within which she identifies Sandian “leitmotifs” that characterize critical discourse.

Genevray fleshes out central debates by focusing on three different readers (Herzen, Belinsky, and Dostoevsky), and on three interrelated ways (personal, critical, literary) of reading the text. While distinguishing between them, Genevray demonstrates that these are complex readers whose readings and ways of reading are dialogically engaged not only with each other but with a plethora of other figures, with whom she populates her narrative. All of these ways of reading are, to a large extent, ideological and, to a lesser degree, aesthetic. While constantly referring to Sand’s vigorous style, Sand’s Russian critics make formal considerations “rarement l’objet de commentaire plus précis,” focusing instead on a politicized debate of the works’ thematics. Readings are informed less by “la lettre de ses romans” than “l’esprit de révolte qui les dicte.” Genevray’s own survey self-consciously echoes this kind of reading, considering interpretations of Sand in light of intersecting personal or critical reviews and literary re-writings. Her analysis focuses on the ideological transformation of Sandian subtexts — especially as these interpret Sand’s socialism and feminism. It unfolds in a way that reflects the terms in which Sand was debated in Russian letters, while also following a chronology determined by the order in which Herzen, Belinsky, Dostoevsky and their contemporaries read and debated Sand. Concomitantly, Genevray critically reflects on the terms of the debates between westerners and slavophiles, in their infinite gradations. She extends those terms by attending in her own close re-readings of Sand’s texts to those aspects neglected by Sand’s Russian critics, aspects ranging from subtle turns of plot and characterization to the multiplicity of voices and authorial ambivalence regarding certain social concerns.

Herzen’s critical and personal references to *Horace*, considered in light of a more objective or synthetic reading of the text, provide navigational markers for following an ideological trajectory. Likewise, Belinsky’s exemplary conversion from Hegelian idealism to a secular French socialism is reflected in his radical revision of Sand: no longer that woman “[qui] écrit tout un tas de romans plus sots et plus révoltants l’un que l’autre,” but the “premier talent littéraire de notre temps” (98-99). Even as she underlines the problems inherent in Belinsky’s reading of Sand — not only did Belinsky read poor or partial translations, if he read the text at all, but often “borrowed” critical remarks — she notes his particular insights into the Sandian text and his attentiveness not only to social but aesthetic concerns. Genevray finds in Sand not only a measure but mediator of Belinsky’s conversion (Sand’s *Mauprat* marking the turning point — “la découverte,” informing his poetic ideal of *pathos* — and *Consuelo* “la consécration;” Belinsky’s reading of *Jeanne* is then “la confirmation” — a statement of the tenants of his

aesthetics). She demonstrates how Sand's novels condensed aspects of French philosophy (especially that expressed by Philippe Leroux and his circle). Insofar as Belinsky defines the terms of Russian literary debate, the Sandian subtext is even more essential than that of authors such as Balzac and Sue (whose influence has been seriously studied), over whom Belinsky valued Sand.

Genevray opens up the debate by posing questions that function as a self-conscious critique of contemporary criticism as well as nineteenth-century Russian readings. In one such instance, contrasting the complexity of viewpoints expressed in *Lélia*, she concludes, "Le livre échappe donc aux interprétations univoque [...] mais il ne saurait empêcher les libres extrapolations des lecteurs [...] l'imagination projective des lecteurs balaye son système de défense. Elle confond les propos trouvés dans les livres de Sand et les bruits courants sur sa vie privée (son indépendance, son divorce, ses amants)" (106). While Sand's works are, thus, read in light of a "sexual ambiguity," this is a thematic that Genevray complicates by asking to what degree Sand's contemporaries saw this filtered into form, "Les contemporains ont-ils ressenti cette ambiguïté jusque dans la texture de la prose sandienne, dans la voix narrative doublement sexuée de ces livres, dans son écriture androgyne?" (160). In her extensive analysis of Sand as appropriated in the debates concerning the "woman question," as a cornerstone in an evolving feminine Russian consciousness and writing (including that of Mar'ja Zhukova, Elena Gan, and Liudmila Shelgunova), and as a writer whose own feminism was ambivalent, Genevray explores the problematics of reading as these are inscribed in Sand's own writing. Sand's Russian readers, such as Dostoevsky, would make reading and misreading an increasingly explicit subject of the fiction. While, in the second part of her narrative ordered around Belinsky (but including comparative reconsiderations of texts by Druzhinin and Chernyshevsky, among others), Genevray explores the limits of sociological and ideological readings of Sand's texts, in her final section on Dostoevsky and Sand her work exemplifies an alternative critical approach.

Genevray's work is most original in intertextually elucidating the structure and significance of Sand's and Dostoevsky's novels: *Idiot* and *Le Compagnon du tour de France*, *Brat'ia Karamazovy* and *Spiridion*. Here she is interested not so much in direct influences with respect to style and/or plot (difficult to establish) as in a dynamic dialogue, in which Dostoevsky both responds to Sand and with Sand to common subtexts (Hoffmann, for instance). Genevray explores the ways in which Sandian and Dostoevskian interior landscapes overlap and diverge, corresponding forms and limits of dialogue in their respective novels, distinct novelistic incorporations of utopia and beauty, and so forth. She incisively argues with other critical readings that Sandian subtexts are creatively deformed in Dostoevsky's novels, through such filters as "dispersion temporelle," "intermittences de conscience," "duplication," "multiplication des

locuteurs,” and “mélange des tons.” Sand’s and Dostoevsky’s texts, ultimately, have differing “centers of gravity,” related to the cultural and literary contexts in which they each wrote. This critical review of their intersections, nevertheless, incisively locates those cores, while it illumines both texts and their contexts.

While critically surveying Sand’s reception by Russian contemporaries, Genevray’s study also reconsiders frameworks for literary history and critical interpretation in both Russia and the West. On the one hand, Genevray argues against more recent French criticism, finding in Sand’s texts supports for various ways in which Russian writers framed their readings: focusing particularly on Sand’s social realism and democratic distribution of political, social and aesthetic consciousness. She might have taken her analysis further, investigating, for instance, the ways in which Sand’s work, rooted in “social reality” rather than “family life” informs the peculiarly eccentric Petersburg (rather than Muscovite) text. Likewise, she might have made more of the influence of the interiority of Sand’s novels, as well as their philosophical and psychological aspects (which she explores mainly in the context of Dostoevsky’s reading/rewriting). On the other hand, Genevray frames the essential questions, even as she demonstrates the richness and limitations of both Sand’s texts and those of her readers. By taking Sand as a whole, Genevray disputes the reductive divisions of Sand’s works into chronologically demarked psychological, social, and rustic phases, or alternately personal/unconscious fiction and socially conscious critique). By considering Russian cultural dialogue as a whole (juxtaposing readings), Genevray practically undertakes that project theoretically suggested by Bakhtin and Lachmann as a “social stylistics” necessary to understanding literary history. She seems to adopt Lotman’s concept, within the domain of cultural semiotics, of the semiosphere, operating at the level of the text and of cultural consciousness, and constantly, dynamically shifting, animated by illumining collisions and generative interpenetrations. As she suggests, the scope of her inquiry, both broad (encompassing so many interrelated spheres of Russian and French culture) and narrow (focused on the reception of Sand’s texts roughly from 1830 to 1850), is sufficient to indicate general tendencies. More than that, Genevray’s study sheds insight on cultural context, instructively reconsiders critical texts/positions (exposing framework, imperatives, limitations, as well as appreciating peculiar insights of such framed readings), and also incisively re-interprets literary texts — both Sand’s and those of her Russian readers. (SHARON LUBKEMANN ALLEN, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY)

SIGLIND BRUHN. *Musical Ekphrasis in Rilke’s Marien-Leben*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. Pp. 235. US\$

JÜRGEN SIESS. *Rilke: Images de la ville, Figures de l'artiste*. Paris: Champion, 2000. Pp. 208. — 38.10.

Towards the end of 1911, Princess Marie von Thurn and Taxis-Hohenlohe invited Rainer Maria Rilke to stay at Duino Castle built on the Adriatic coast, “*das wie ein Vorgebirg menschlichen Daseins mit manchen seiner Fenster (darunter mit einem meinigen) in den offensten Meerraum hinaussieht, unmittelbar ins All möchte man sagen und in seine generösen, über alle hinausgehende Schauspiele*” (as he wrote in a letter).¹ Here he began work on the great *Duineser Elegien* but, before this, he completed a short sequence of poems on events from the life of Mary, *Das Marien-Leben* — as he told another correspondent, “*der Strom des begnadeten Geistes war so gewaltig in mir, daß ich, nebenan, auch noch diese kleine Mühle des Marien-Lebens mit unter halten durfte.*”² As Siglind Bruhn explains in *Musical Ekphrasis in Rilke's Maria-Leben*, the sequence of thirteen poems can be seen, when the subdivision of “Vom Tode Mariae” into three sections is taken into account, to constitute a cycle of fifteen texts, thus following the traditional number of the mysteries of the Rosary, while also hinting at “the tension that pervades the cycle” (p.21). For the poems are unconventional in other respects, too, such as the nature of their focus on Mary, and the fact that “Mary’s counterpart in these poems is not Jesus, and much less God, but the angel”; indeed, “should readers decide to take this cycle as yet another artistic tribute to the belief that all justification for the veneration of Mary relies entirely on Jesus and in no way on her own person, they could be shown to act out of a determination to adhere to Church doctrines, not out of a close attention to Rilke’s poetry,” claims Bruhn (25, 71). Rilke’s own lack of adherence to ecclesiastical dogma is detectable in earlier poems with a Marian theme, including the early poem “Verkündigung,” a response to an etching by Heinrich Vogeler, one of the artists Rilke met at Worpswede; the “Gebete der Mädchen zur Maria” in *Mir zur Feier*; and the poems “Da ward auch die zur Frucht Erweckte,” “Aber als hätte die Last der Fruchtgehänge,” and “So hat man sie gemalt,” in “Das Buch vom mönchischen Leben” in *Das*

1 Rainer Maria Rilke, *Briefe: An das Ehepaar S. Fischer*, ed. by Hedwig Fischer, Zurich: Werner Classen, 1947, p.66.

2 Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die Briefe an Gräfin Sizzo 1921-1926*, ed. by Ingeborg Schnack, Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1977, pp.16-17.

Stunden-Buch. These texts, according to Bruhn, reveal what Rilke considered problematic about the figure of Mary: her “conception without passion,” and her “motherhood without prior womanhood” (29). In his *Florenzer Tagebuch*, Rilke commented on the Madonnas he had seen, “*wie eine Schuld fühlen alle diese Madonnen ihr Unverwundetsein [...] [sie erschrecken] vor der fremden Reife ihres Frühlings und sehnen sich in aller Hoffnungslosigkeit ihrer Himmel nach einer heißen Sommerfreude voll irdischer Innigkeit*” (cited p.30).³ Other poems written by Rilke about Mary constitute responses to works of visual art: “So hat man sie gemalt” (also from *Das Stunden-Buch*) to the *Madonna dei candelabri* (known in English as the *Virgin and Child attended by Seven Angels*), a tondo from the school of Boticelli; “Das Abendmahl” (from *Das Buch der Bilder*) to Leonardo da Vinci’s fresco, *The Last Supper*, in the monastery Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan; “L’ange du méridien. Chartres” (from the *Neue Gedichte*) to an early twelfth-century stone figure on the southern corner of the French cathedral; and “Himmelfahrt Mariae I/II” to a painting by El Greco (although probably not the painting stated by Bruhn, but a painting actually entitled the *Immaculate Conception*, seen by Rilke in the chapel of Isabel de Oballe in San Vicente, Toledo).⁴ These texts are all examples of *ekphrasis*, a term first found in the writings attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus,⁵ and defined (by Claus Clüver) as “the verbal representation of a real or fictitious text composed on a non-verbal sign system” (cited p.9); as Baudelaire, whose own work contains many *transpositions d’art*, put it in his *Salon de 1846*, “le meilleur compte rendu d’un tableau pourra être un sonnet.” Although Bruhn’s major concern is not what Rilke made of paintings or statues, but the two different settings of *Das Marien-Leben* by the German composer Paul Hindemith, published in 1923 and, in a considerably revised form, in 1948, she argues that “the way in which Hindemith’s music relates to its poetic stimulus is indeed analogous to that in which Rilke’s poems on Mary, Christ, and the angel relate to Botticelli, El Greco, Leonardo, and the anonymous sculptor on the façade of Chartres cathedral” (211).

3 Rainer Maria Rilke, *Tagebücher aus der Frühzeit*, ed. by Ruth Sieber-Rilke and Carl Sieber, Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1942, p.87.

4 Fatima Naqvi-Peters, “A Turning Point in Rilke’s Evolution: The Experience of El Greco,” *The Germanic Review*, 72 (1997), 344-62.

5 *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993, p.320.

Distinguishing between “vocal compositions as ekphrasis of a poetic text” and simple examples of musical ekphrasis on verbal texts (such as Ravel’s *Gaspard de la nuit*, based on three poems by Aloysius Bertrand), Bruhn seeks to investigate Hindemith’s “transmedialization” of Rilke’s poetry and to demonstrate that “the gist of the changed interpretation of or relationship to the text” — here, what changes in the twenty-seven-year-old and the fifty-two-year-old Hindemith’s settings of Rilke — “is expressed in the *musical* parameters of these two compositions” (11, 211). In his “Preface” to his 1948 version, Hindemith claimed he had developed “*ein [...] System tonal-emotioneller-gedanklicher Bezogenheiten, in dem jeder tonale Schritt nach dem einmal verabredeten Plan seine Bedeutung bekommt*” (cited p.78), and Bruhn analyzes the settings in great detail. For example, “Geburt Mariä” in *Marien-Leben I* contains, as David Neumeyer has shown, a paraphrase of the Easter hymn “Surrexit Christus hodie” (also used by Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber in the eleventh of his “Rosary Sonatas”). Then again, the tune representing the angel of the Annunciation in “Mariä Verkündigung” is derived from a chorale by Luther, “Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her,” but whereas in the 1923 setting “the angel is an overwhelming presence” (117) and the dynamic and vocal climax of the song ensures that the sexual implications of the lines “hineingedrängt in sie” are not left in any doubt, the entirely new setting in 1948 tries (sadly, so we are told, with success) to “de-eroticize” the song, rendering the suggestive wording “almost colorless, placed as it is on unaccented beat and integrated into a modest ascent that peaks in the three-times-repeated minor third B#-D#” (122). (Given the degree of technicality of Bruhn’s discussion, and what Hindemith, in his 1948 Preface, called “the tendency to burden the sound with so much cognitive baggage,” it would have been helpful if Bruhn had included a discography, and it would also be interesting to know the performance and recording history of Hindemith’s settings.)⁶ At the end of her analysis of the second setting of “Vom Tode Mariä II,” Bruhn concludes that “the mature Hindemith’s pious wish to fit the *Marienleben* into the tradition of devotional Life-of-Mary cycles leads him to gloss over and musically retouch some of Rilke’s more critical readings of the scene”; in short, what distinguishes the fifty-two-year-old composer from the twenty-seven-year-old — and from Rilke himself — is said to be the belief “that the true center of the Life of Mary is not she herself but Jesus” (199).

6 Perhaps the most easily available recording is the version with Ruth Ziesak and the NDR Orchestra (cpo 999 331-2).

Whereas Bruhn's study is a detailed examination of a particular response to Rilke, Jürgen Siess's study, *Rilke: Images de la ville, Figures de l'artiste*, offers a more general consideration of Rilke's reaction to various cities and to the work of various artists. In his first essay, "Les Centres se déplacent: La Carte intérieure de Rilke," Siess cites Rilke's letter of 26 November 1925 to the artist Sophy Giauque, where he refers to "un espace tout intérieur et imaginaire." Rilke's work, Siess contends, not only establishes a correspondence between the integration of the subject in exterior space and the construction of an interior space, but reveals the dialectical dynamic between the inner and the outer (17). (Here, Siess could have shown how such a dialectical conception was by no means new, recalling the Goethean insight: *Nichts ist drinnen, nichts ist draußen: / Denn was innen, das ist außen. / So ergreift ohne Säumnis / Heilig öffentlich Geheimnis*.⁷) The centre, a quintessentially self-deconstructing image, acquires for Rilke both positive and negative connotations as a point of concentration and dispersal, the point from which one escapes and the point to which one aspires (19). Via a discussion of the "Elegie an Marina Zwetajewa-Efron," Siess turns to four particularly Rilkean cities, starting with two in Russia, St Petersburg ("Nächtliche Fahrt" in the *Neue Gedichte*) and Moscow ("Die Zaren" in *Das Buch der Bilder*). As well as Rilke, Paris impressed itself on the minds of, for example, Baudelaire (above all, in his *Petits Poèmes en prose*), and Picasso, and the image of the acrobat, found in the text "Le vieux Saltimbanque" and in the painting "La famille des Saltimbanques," inform, as is well-known, the *Duineser Elegien*. The glimpse of the city in the Fifth Elegy, "Plätze, o Platz in Paris, unendlicher Schauplatz," and the figure of Madame Lamort, anticipate the later, more intense, fairground scene in the "Leid-Stadt" in the Tenth Elegy, just as the French capital forms not just the backdrop but the subject-matter for *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*. Even while in Paris, however, Rilke carried the images of other cities with him, as "Die grosse Nacht," a memory of Toledo or Ronda, demonstrates. The significance for Rilke of Spain emerges through a discussion of this poem, and "Die spanische Trilogie," and Siess refutes the claim attributed to the Spanish critic Ferreiro Alemparte that Rilke travelled Spain, completely absorbed with his own problems. According to Siess, Rilke's journey to Spain constituted rather an attempt to discover in reality the kind of landscapes he had found described in the Bible and the Qur'an, and seen in the work of El Greco. His second essay, "Le Poète chez les artistes: Rilke critique d'art," returns to the question of Rilke's relation to the plastic arts, first as a journalist, and then as an essayist, writing about the *Künstlerkolonie* at

7 Goethe, "Epirrhema," *Gedichte in zeitlicher Folge*, ed. by Heinz Nicolai, Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1982, p.911.

Worpswede and about Rodin; and finally, as a correspondent, about Van Gogh and Cézanne. Acknowledging the incompleteness of his study, Siess concludes by noting the proximity between the views expounded by Kandinsky in his essay “Über das Geistige in der Kunst” (1912) and Rilke’s reflections on music and mathematics in his letter of 17 November 1912 to Marie von Thurn und Taxis-Hohenlohe. At the same time, Siess compares the modernist aesthetics of, say, Picasso and Klee, with Rilke’s conception of art which deals with a very particular world (as described in his letter to Herta Koenig of 4 March 1921), “eine Welt zwar nicht neuer, sondern eben jener urältesten Gegenstände, die sich durch die Jahrtausende hin dem künstlerisch-erstaunten Blick wie unerschöpflich erwiesen haben.”⁸ (PAUL BISHOP, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW)

PAUL BUDRA and ELIZABETH SCHELLENBERG, eds. *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. Pp. 272. CDN\$ 58.00 cloth.

Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel, edited by Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg, is an ambitious work. From Homer to Hollywood, from Tamburlaine to Freddy, with a comprehensive range of stops along the way, its scope presents an unwieldy, even daunting prospect. The diversity of the volume’s thirteen essays stems from the latitude allowed the contributors. Budra and Schellenburg placed no restrictions on choice of period, genre, or critical approach, and encouraged their contributors to explore freely the cultural conditions of production, the marketplace and audience reception as they relate to the sequel phenomenon. The results are timely. While there are many good studies of individual originary and secondary works, there are few, if any, that attempt this volume’s range or its critical attention to the historical convergence that produces sequels.

The editors, moreover, also ensured that, despite its wide-ranging mandate, readers could move through these disparate essays with grace and ease. They not only bring together a collection of stimulating essays on an abiding cultural phenomenon, but also create a community of scholars actively and interactively engaged with a common intellectual interest through their own areas of expertise. In a

8 Cited in French on p.190; original German quoted with permission of the Schiller-Nationalmuseum/ Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar [A: Rilke 77.889/27].

significant editorial guideline, they asked their contributors to exchange observations, “testing those about other sequelizations with their own.” This awareness of each other’s arguments and interpretations acts sometimes as a further clarifier of what is said elsewhere and provides insightful connections that continue to resonate beyond the specific instance. For example, Carole Gerson, in her analysis of Anne’s commodification, connects the “combination of familiarity with novelty” that the “very name L. M. Montgomery signals” to Lianne McLarty’s discussion of the success of the genre film sequel in popular culture. Alexander Leggatt’s discussion of Renaissance drama, “Killing the Hero,” deftly associates Tamburlaine with the “recurrent monster” of Budra’s essay; neither, Leggatt asserts, acknowledges “boundaries;” neither finds a reason “why he should ever stop.”

The editors also suggested a working definition of the sequel to help shape their contributors’s responses: “Chronological extension of a narrative was therefore our starting point, to which we added the criterion of a precursor narrative that was originally presented as closed and complete in itself (whether or not it was, in fact, conceived as such by its author).” Enumerating their exclusions, Budra and Schellenberg concede the difficulty not only of distinguishing “the sequel neatly from related narrative outgrowths,” but also of their contributors’s push “at the boundaries of [their] definition.” The latter is in keeping with their own intent of challenging certain assumptions about the sequel, the most significant of which, perhaps, is that the sequel always fails, that it is always second best, never measuring up to the achievement of the original. This is a difficult idea to overcome, especially in our current climate of Hollywood’s seemingly mindless repetitions. In her 1986 study of eighteenth-century carnivalesque, Terry Castle’s commentary on the power of “charismatic texts” and their subsequent disappointments seems to pose a particular challenge to the contributors since several feel the need to refute her argument directly, and to use her as a touchstone for their own critical explorations. The contributors of this collection, however, clearly thrive on challenge, for the collection’s most rewarding essays are the ones that push most forcefully at the editors’ definition of the sequel.

In “The Literary Agent and the Sequel,” Mary Ann Gillies’s rejection of those parts of the collection’s working definition which seem an imposition on the realities of the late nineteenth century publishing world is what helps her locate Arnold Bennett’s sequels to *Anna of the Five Towns* most effectively in the “historical moment.” Analyzing the material and cultural forces that led to the success of Bennett’s sequels, Gillies focuses, in large part, on the literary and publishing acumen of J. B. Pinker, Bennett’s literary agent, but she provides a range of useful insights into the nineteenth-century novel sequel/sequence generally: she distinguishes, for example, why Bennett’s Five Town novels are sequels and

Hardy's Wessex novels are not ("there need to be clear links to the originary text in terms of character, storyline, and the world created by the author," and in Hardy, the first two are missing or minimal); and specifically, the brief critical commentary that she provides on Bennett's novels — Bennett unites these fictions "by returning again and again to various moral parables" — seems a solid and creative starting point for further interpretive analysis within the sequel framework.

Three other essays deal with eighteenth and nineteenth century literature; Schellenberg, on the female novelist in the eighteenth century, and June Sturrock, on the Victorian popular fiction writer, Charlotte Yonge, examine, respectively, the potential that the sequel offered women for promoting their professional status as writers, and the adaptability of their creative efforts to popular literary trends, specifically, in Yonge's case, to the sensational novel. The third of these, Lynette Felber's essay on Trollope, provides a contrast to Gillies in that she argues for a distinction between sequel and sequence novels, but the distinction itself seems less important than the conclusions about Trollope to which her argument keeps reaching — that he enjoyed creatively populating his own fictional world and that authorial intention is also a part of the context of sequel creation. In a collection focusing on the socio-economic influences of the literary marketplace, this, too, is against the grain and suggestively broadens the scope of the volume's cultural focus.

At further ends of the volume's chronological spectrum, the results are mixed. Both Ingrid E. Holmberg on Homer's epics and Samuel Glen Wong on Milton's paradise, lost and regained, deliberately disrupt notions of sequels, undermining the inherent hierarchy of originary texts and sequels, and, like the volume's later deliberations on postmodernism, thinking more in terms of fragmentation and rearrangement. In Andrew Taylor's otherwise thoughtful discussion of the ending of *The Canterbury Tales*, however, the focus on the sequel becomes cursory, and Taylor fails to maintain the fine balance that so many of the essays in this volume achieve between exploring the sequel phenomenon and illuminating the prequels, sequels and originary texts themselves. Michael Zeitlin on Donald Barthelme and Thomas Carmichael on John Barth echo this problem in another way, for in their essays, the concept of sequel threatens to disappear into what Zeitlin terms "a more broadly conceived intertextuality" for defining the post-modern sequel.

Nonetheless, it is Zeitlin who articulates one of the collection's greatest strengths when he observes that "it is often impossible to tell which end is up; a text conventionally defined as a 'sequel' can work a transformative effect on its precursor, which thereby becomes derivative, secondary, subsequent." As many of the essays in this volume suggest, the relationship of secondary texts to their precursors is dynamic;

sequels demand that we read both ways, not only looking forward in the traditional search for influence, but also casting back through a transformative cultural lens. The collection provides no sweeping generalizations to explain why part 2 (or 3 or 4) retains its appeal, or what universal aesthetic principles affirm the sequel's status as a significant cultural production, and the focus of some of these essays proves more illuminating than others; but all, in different ways, whether examining classical texts or *Die Hard 1* and 2, display a fine sensitivity to variables that go far to legitimize the sequel and, hence, our fascination with it.

Some things are nonetheless still missing here. In a work that attempts to examine the sequel in a "wide range of temporal, generic and media manifestations," a greater focus on the sequel as a crossover between different art forms would be welcome. *Apocalypse Now*, after all, has become the cinematic artistic equivalent of its literary original. Like *Terminator* fans anticipating Part 3 (coming in July, 2003), *Part Two* readers await such a sequel. (RITA BODE, TRENT UNIVERSITY)

DANIEL L. PURDY. *The Tyranny of Elegance: Consumer Cosmopolitanism in the Era of Goethe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. Pp. 301. US\$ 54.00 hardcover.

This book stakes out several significant and stimulating claims in its introduction: consumer culture preceded industrialization in late 18th-century Germany, so that luxury consumption was not generated by the surplus of industrial production, but rather helped stimulate it; the aesthetic and moral standards for evaluating commodities were developed in the late-century fashion journals and "legitimated for the nineteenth-century bourgeois consumer by the classical literature of Goethe and the Romantics"(x), which "taught its adherents to judge objects in terms of their relation to the individual's emotional and aesthetic identity" (ibid.); the new "bourgeois consumer culture developed outside, or even in opposition to, the rituals of monarchs and princes"; since the German states lacked both the capacity to produce luxury goods and the wherewithal to finance them, the new culture developed vicariously through the avid reading of fashion journals rather than actual consumption of goods; fashion replaced an older system of social control based on government prescription of permissible clothing. This series of assertions is based on Purdy's analysis of the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (1786-1827), edited in Weimar by Friedrich Justin Bertuch. The approach depends heavily on Roland Barthes' *The Fashion System* and on the work of Michel Foucault, especially *Discipline and Punish*.

The first three chapters generalize the results of reading through the *Journal*: Bertuch argued that demand for consumer goods would stimulate both the manufacturing market and the physical and mental productivity of the consumer; reading of fashion journals was, like the prevailing reading of fiction, identificatory; fashion discourse extended beyond clothing to household objects, home decoration and even health. Chapter Four makes the transition to fashion as a regime of power by discussing the prevalence of the metaphor of fashion as queen in the period. There follow chapters on how fashion replaced sumptuary laws and on the "paranoid geography" of fashion (fashion is where we aren't, the polarity of England and France in German discourse, the perceived dangers of fashion). A close reading of clothing in Goethe's *Werther* and the ensuing vogue of its hero's blue coat and buff waistcoat and pants extends the discussion to gender in Chapter Six. Chapters Seven and Eight discuss uniforms in the eighteenth century. The first analyzes the discussion around uniforms for civilians, the second for the military; they emerge as complementary but not identical systems of discipline. The final chapter, "Signification as Discipline" connects the semiotic and the power-focused aspects of the book in a discursive summary of its conclusions.

This is an ambitious piece of work on an interesting and, indeed, fashionable topic. Purdy operates at a high level of abstraction with enthusiasm, great intensity and considerable fluency. His basic allegiances are to Foucault and Barthes, but beyond them he draws on an impressive range of social theory — the Frankfurt School, anthropologists, sociologists, social historians both general and highly specific. These are great strengths, but not entirely without costs. All but the most committed Foucauldians will find the book tough sledding, which suggests it has not fully identified its target audience. On the one hand it seems addressed more to social theorists, particularly to theorists of fashion, than to scholars in German Studies, since it takes for granted a familiarity with terminology derived from economic and social theory as well as with the more individual jargons of its favorite theorists, and discusses only a single literary example in its two hundred and fifty pages. Nevertheless, only a dedicated German specialist will share either the book's premise that this particular material is of general importance or the thorough knowledge of dates and historical relationships among figures in the highways and by-ways of the German eighteenth century that it takes for granted. How many readers, one wonders, will appreciate the lengthy comparison of the thought of Barthes and Christian Garve, a popular philosopher of the German Enlightenment? In any given chapter historical information, abstract conceptualization and theoretical debate (with social theorists of all stripes, even film studies scholarship) mix and match unpredictably, while the focus jumps among multiple topics.

Purdy has not yet struck the very difficult balance between explication of theory and provision of basic information for his different audiences: there is often so little concrete evidence and description in the text that one often can't quite tell who is speaking — Purdy, this or that theorist, a historian or an eighteenth-century source — and the footnotes do not dependably support generalizations or identify when they are obvious to scholars in the field. There are few, if any, scholars beside Purdy who have read the full run of the *Journal*, which is scattered among many different libraries, much less the full range of fashion magazines from the period referred to in the preface and bibliography. Unfortunately with few exceptions only Bertuch's journal is cited, and sparsely at that, while the excellent illustrations remain largely undiscussed. After reading this book I still have very little sense of what reading the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* is like or whether I can depend on the conclusions, interesting as they are. The catchy chapter titles mostly communicate their essential theses effectively, but the book keeps making its entire argument all at once, so that no single part sounds so new or convincing as it deserves, and the implicit historical argument that Frederick the Great's introduction of military uniforms ultimately led to the internalization of the disciplinary regime they embody in the social self-regulation of fashion in early nineteenth-century Germany emerges only in reverse order in the second half of the book and has to be reconstructed by the reader. This reader would have preferred less repetition and more detailed reporting.

Nevertheless, the book opens a large new area of discussion for the study of German classical culture. Purdy has marked out the crucial paths for others to test his hypotheses against the specific biographical information and the evidence of literary texts that our discipline has previously amassed and that he has largely eschewed in the interests of establishing the broader framework. The subtitle invokes "the Era of Goethe," but except for the nice reading of *Werther* almost at the center of the book, Goethe and the other poetic writers of the period receive only the most cursory attention. Reading this book makes one realize how much there still is to say about, for example, Goethe's reflections on fashion and on uniforms in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, on fashion and history in *Hermann und Dorothea*, and the complexity of his thinking about the autonomy of art. And in the wake of this work there is a fascinating study to be written about consumer consumption among the German literati of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth, using the abundant material about the daily lives of Germany's classic writers that literary scholars have collected. Someone needs to weigh the relative importance of Bertuch's journal against the kinds of consuming habits middle-class writers like Goethe inherited from wealthy ancestors. Here is a great new use for all of those *klassische Gedenkstätten*. It will also be interesting to see Purdy or someone else test the larger theoretical claims by looking at Bertuch's journal in the context of other fashion journals

inside and especially outside the German-speaking lands. This work is too intelligent and too interesting to stop where it is, and I look forward to learning even more from Purdy's further work. (JANE K. BROWN, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON)

MARÍA ROSA MENOCAL. *Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*. Boston, New York, London: Little, Brown and Company, 2002. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000. Pagination, price and format from publishers website [Pp. 336 US\$ 26.95 hardcover] <http://www.twbookmark.com/books/52/0316566888/index.html>

The complete title of this very well written, witty and provocative essay under review is, in fact, a composite of three disparate sources: source one, "Ornament of the World," is the tenth-century Saxon nun Hroswitha's metaphor used to qualify the eighth- to tenth-century Omayyad capital in Andalusian Spain, Cordoba. Source two, "How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain," is a distant reflection and English translation of the belated hispanist Américo Castro's (1885-1972) theory or, better said, hypothesis of *convivencia* as expounded in his masterful *España en su historia: cristianos, moros y judíos* ([orig. Buenos Aires], Barcelona: [orig. Losada] Crítica, [orig. 1948] 1984, an essay that would later evolve into the revised *La realidad histórica de España* (Mexico, 1954 & 1962). Hispanists prepared in my generation and the prior one (i.e. of the nineteen-fifties to the seventies) are all too familiar with the five+ decade-old controversy that accompanied and, often times, shrouded Castro's masterwork, especially in Francoist Spain until 1991. The Columbus quincentennial was a crucial turning point for sparking a heightened interest in medieval Jewish Spain; credit needs to be given to the government of Spain for promoting this revival of learning. A similar initiative for Islamic Spain is needed.

The most virulent counter-arguments to Castro's theory of a Spanish late medieval society in which three religions, four distinct languages (Arabic, Hebrew, Romance Andalusí / Spanish, and Latin) and their respective ethnic groups (Arabs and Moors, Jews, and Christians) co-existed, communicated, and prayed amongst one another and, in so doing, culturally thrived, derived mostly from two prominent Spanish academicians: the first was Claudio Sánchez Albornoz (1893-1984), who targeted Castro's theories in his *España, un enigma histórico* (Buenos Aires: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1956); the second was Eugenio Asensio, who also categorically attempted to prove Castro wrong in his *La España imaginada de Américo Castro* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1992). C. S. A., an eminent medieval historian, a specialist on Muslim Spain,

and a former colleague of A. C., and E. A., a literary historian, found fault with just about every piece of Castro's theory. This theory extended to the subsequent sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the remnants of Spain's once appreciable Jewish community, having, in most cases, been forcibly converted to Catholicism centuries or decades before, emerged as the protagonists of a resounding case of superior creative productivity. Castro had made the "outlandish" claim that the Spanish Golden Age could be more precisely deemed "La Edad Conflictiva" ('An Age of Conflict'). That did not sit well with most traditionalists. I can recall my professor of medieval Spanish philology in a graduate seminar in the United States considering Castro a kind of kook, a once respectable traditional philologist gone wild. Castro had fled wartorn Spain during her Civil War. From his exile in Buenos Aires and later from his professorship at Princeton University, "el rabino" ('the rabbi'), as his detractors called him, assumed the quixotic task of singlehandedly trying to set Spain's historico-cultural record straight. Naturally, the debacle of the Spanish Civil War and the gruesomeness of the Nazi holocaust of millions of Jews weighed heavily and, at times, excessively, on his sensitive and brilliant consciousness. The major works of medieval Spanish literature, according to his understanding, were products of *convivencia*, tolerance, respect; and most of the masterpieces of the Spanish Golden Age (starting in 1499, with the publication of *La Celestina* and lasting until about 1660) were authored by Jewish *conversos* who in their writing reflect an exclusive emotional distention never before experienced in European intellectual history. Castro purported to counter the official story that had been disseminated by Catholic conservatives, the all-mighty clergy, the "true documentary historians," and the representatives of the Falangist movement at the time. That story was of a mythic Aryan/Germanic supremacy, the effect of which was to categorize Spanish ethnicity, with the end result Iberian greatness. In the immediate post-World-War Two era, Castro's theory could be persuasive, especially to a democratic, freedom-loving, more tolerant audience. But in Spain his works were mostly branded as heretical. María Rosa Menocal, as have others before her, brings the question back to the fore.

For source three, Menocal departs from a value statement enunciated in F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story, "The Crack-Up," in which the authorial voice states that "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time." F. Scott Fitzgerald, Américo Castro, and Hroswitha take us along the way.

Reading Menocal's essay is an experience in synaesthesia — the author records the sounds of Andalusian courtyard fountains, revives for us the musty smell of books in Cordoban libraries, recalls the fresh odour of the newly-stuccoed arabesques in Arab-controlled and later Christian-controlled Seville, and transmits the "language of minarets" (94). The cultural magnificence and superiority of the eighth- to the

beginning of the eleventh-century Arabic-Spanish city of Cordoba and all its trappings (a “memory palace or place” that she calls “the Shangri-la of the West” (199)), the reiterated admission to a successful exercise in ethnic and religious tolerance, and the ability of Andalusian Arabic Spain to respect and permit contradictions as the principle element in the episteme of successful, tolerant societal co-existence among diverse peoples, combine in her essay’s title. Here, three pieces of a variegated cloth, the purpose of which is to introduce the potential reader to a phenomenon of cultural near-perfection rarely known to humankind, starts the reader out on a journey through chronological time and memory places, one that will transport us through almost ten centuries of individual and anecdotal creative accomplishments, be they by Arabs, Moors, Jews or Christians. If Washington Irving could take his reader on a romantic tour of the Generalife’s restructured gardens and the Alhambra’s ruins, and could have an elderly Spanish gatekeeper retell centuries-old tales of Moorish Spain, María Rosa Menocal does much more. Indeed, she connects threads and pieces of an intellectual historical cloth. The author, a Professor of Spanish at Yale University, exhibits her tapestry or text(ile) to a nationwide English-speaking and reading audience of lay and, perhaps, no-so-lay readers. I understand that a Spanish version is already in circulation in Spain, where it will undoubtedly be scrutinized under the highest graduated critical lens. Yet the author has succeeded in transmitting her messages to a worldwide audience that only scholars can dream and fantasize about. It seems apparent that Professor Menocal hopes her erudition can change the course of humankind for the better. In her essay (261), she refers to experiencing Cervantes’ *Don Quijote de la Mancha*’s “life altering powers of fiction.” I detect on her part a strong desire to effect the “life altering powers of the essay.” No intellectual goal could be more noble.

María Rosa Menocal does achieve her stated purpose; that is, to convey the creative magnificence of what was Arabic Omayyad Andalusian Spain from the mid-eighth to the beginning of the eleventh centuries, by focusing on Cordoba’s richly endowed libraries, her worldclass poets in Arabic and Hebrew, her lavish, sophisticated court life, and Madinat al-Zahra’s dazzling green onyx fountains. It rightly deserved Hroswitha’s title “of most civilized place on earth” (86). Then, the author chronicles the intellectual exuberance of Cordoba’s successor, Christian Toledo, under the inspiring reign of Ferdinand III, the monarch who appropriated the remaining, and decaying cultural legacy of Arabic-Spanish Andalusia in order to educate Christian European culture for centuries to come in such fields as technology, medicine, geography, the art of translation, and philosophy. In the process, the Spanish language would intentionally become the language of empire. Professor Menocal considers Toledo’s School of Translation the “First laboratory in Europe dedicated to forging a modern language, a vernacular that

would replace Latin in all its functions save the purely ecclesiastical and liturgical." (224)

It needs stating here that I come to this essay as a Hispanist entirely familiar with M. R. Menocal's other major authored and edited works: *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History* (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania P., 1987), *Writing in Dante's Cult of Truth From Borges to Boccaccio* (Durham, North Carolina, and London: Duke UP, 1991), *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric* (Durham: Duke UP, 1994) and the co-edited (with Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells) *The Literature of Al-Andalus* (Cambridge: UP, 2000). She possesses an uncanny gift for recounting literary and intellectual history in a comparative context. In the same breath, for instance, she suggests or intimates a plausible thematic or lyrical connection between a tenth-century Andalusian early Romance-language rhymed refrain and Jim Morrison's or Eric Clapton's Rock and Roll beat and lyrics (not the acid-head type, though), a mix that owes much to medieval Arabic music, its instruments (the drums, the guitar, the tambourine) as well as its love lyrics. Professor Menocal must be an inspirational leader to her students.

I have referred to M. R. M.'s study as an essay, and wonderfully tendentious it is. A major theme that resonates throughout is the urgent need for reevaluation, a need to revisit, and, ultimately extract a just vindication of the term *medieval*. At the same time, *modern* or *modernity* lose some of their cultural cachet. Arabian high culture dominated Cordoba and the rest of Andalusia for hundreds of years and *medieval* twelfth-fourteenth-century Toledo under an enlightened Christian rule were centres of cultural greatness, of the highest achievements in translation and preservation of classical Greek, Roman and Arabic philosophy, history, music, medicine. Cordoba was especially a centre for supine poetic language in freshly arrived Arabic and newly revived Hebrew, for philological tracts on Arabic language, for methodologies of history.

Andalusian Spain's "memory palaces" were aesthetically imagined and constructed to serve the intellect's loftiest whims, by connecting angles of edifices to artistic concepts, by reflecting successive levels of creativity. Thanks to Prof. Menocal's lucid prose, *Medieval* Andalusian Spain becomes a place worthy of emulation. The author also considers *Don Quijote de la Mancha* a memory palace, "forged out of very real Inquisitorial fires" (265), a likely last recollection of a tolerant *medieval* Spanish greatness. As a professor who studies and regularly teaches the *Quijote* and as a scholar who assiduously studies Inquisitorial records and then applies their contents to explain contexts of *converso* and Sephardic literary works, I am in full accord with her. Now that Inquisition research and scholarship has finally arrived at a respectable stage of development (especially in Spain), I trust that Cervantes' masterpiece can be better understood as a "memory palace" for a once first-rate culture.

At the beginning of this review, I refer to Professor Menocal's expressive wit. One luscious example should suffice. As she deftly recounts the Arabic al-Khawarizmi's invention of "the Algebra," she refers to him as the ninth-century scholar who worked "in the caliphal Center for Advanced Study in Baghdad." The academic analogy is much appreciated.

The errors in the book are few and my reservations about the contents minimal. One slight misnomer is found on page 192, when the author explains that Leonardi Fibonacci "would make a gift to the emperor [Frederick II of Sicily] of a copy (second edition, 1228), of his already-famous *Liber Abaci*, first published in 1202." Publishing and editing are terms for the Gutenberg Galaxy, not for the world of manuscript preparation and copying. The photographs included between pages 174 and 175 are not as precise and nitid as one would expect. Their photographers were obviously unaware of the crucial significance of what they were capturing in their view finder. The inscriptions on Ferdinand's III's tomb, for instance, are barely legible. Anyone (such as I) who has taken a master class on digital photography of ancient texts with Bruce Zuckerman, of the University of Southern California, finds it impossible to be satisfied with less than perfect reproductions. And, yet, the maps are excellent.

The book's multiple testimonials can be somewhat bothersome, although this is not an authorial fault. A Madison-Avenue type advertizing blitz campaign attempts to sway our unwavering acceptance of the book prior to reading. The work commences with nine testimonials, and is then followed by Harold Bloom's diatribe on U.S.-university cultural wars. Professor Menocal's essay comes next, to be followed by a section "Other Readings," followed by a note of "Thanks," the Index, "A Reading Group Guide," "Questions and Topics for Discussion," three blank pp. for notes, and, finally, a back jacket with six additional testimonials. That's a lot of media hype for anyone to swallow. And, yet, I love the book and recommend it for a Canadian book reading group.

And, then, when it comes down to not-so-trivial basics, there's nothing radically new in the essay, especially after one has read and pondered her other works. As Professor Menocal articulates in her *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (1987) (p. xiv), "I have made no great discoveries of undeniable links, constructed no new "proofs," or found heretofore lost manuscripts showing the West's indebtedness to medieval Arabic culture. I recount no facts that have been unknown or have remained adduced by many in previous discussions." Her "New Historicist," post-modernist approach to cultural history, dependent a great deal on secondary and anecdotal evidence, is not as "scientific" as a true documentary historian would wish. This reviewer has recently read Sara Nalle's *God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500-1650* (Baltimore and London: Johns

Hopkins UP, 1992), replete with recently exhumed primary information from numerous archives. I would have liked to see evidence of a newly discovered “shard,” such as a document from the Simancas Archive attesting to Geoffrey Chaucer’s diplomatic mission in Spain, or a recently exhumed (by the author) Arabic or Hebrew and Romance Andalusí rhymed couplet extracted from a forgotten el Cairo Jewish Genizah (i.e. “Resting place of no longer usable texts”) fragment. Despite these reservations, *Ornament of the World* has made an overwhelming positive impression on me and has aided me in my current research and teaching. Professor Menocal is right: notwithstanding the weight of documentary evidence, the perspicacious reader and well-traveled thinker detects and knows that Spanish cultural history from the eighth century to the seventeenth tells a non-fictional history of tolerance, multilingualism and intellectual exuberance that was eroded by religious fundamentalism (Christian and Islamic), Jewish skepticism, Christian intolerance of otherness, the deleterious effects of the Black Plague, and a mis-directed notion of modernism. As cultural historians indiscriminately throw around the terms *pre-modern*, *modern* and *post-modern*, they become meaningless verbiage when the reader/thinker avoids deep reading and profound, cross-disciplinary connections.

Things academic are not bad at all in Spain nowadays. As stated above, the Spanish Government has actively promoted Sephardic studies. Several years ago, Spanish Jews in Madrid were said to be planning a move back to Toledo. Alphonse the Wise’s twelfth-century School of Translation is up and operating once again, albeit with a different professional charge, and the Ortega y Gasset Institute is a major intellectual research institute in Toledo. In Toledo’s medieval quarter there is an antique shop called *Bereshit*, the first word in the Torah, meaning “In the beginning.” Thus, a movement is on to return to and restore some of that medieval greatness. Cordoba, though, has never regained her glory, and Madinat al-Zahra remains only partially excavated.

As an addendum, I should like to add the following personal knowledge. María Rosa Menocal tells a lively, personalized account of Moses de León, the thirteenth-fourteenth century Castilian author of the major Cabalistic tract, *The Zohar*. Moses died in Arévalo, Spain, a small town in northern Castile, on the road from Madrid to Valladolid. He was likely buried in the town’s unknown-to-exist Jewish cemetery. Nowadays, in Arévalo, a community dependent on agriculture, hardly anything is known of its medieval and post-Expulsion Jewish and crypto-Jewish communities. Saint John of the Cross, of *converso* origins, spent time there, and Abraham Gómez Silveira, an Amsterdam rabbi who wrote scathing anti-mesianic poetics, was born there. Ergo, something Sephardic was going on in Arévalo for centuries and remains to be explored. (KENNETH BROWN, UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY)

GERHARD RICHTER, ed. *Benjamin's Ghosts: Interventions in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002. Pagination, price and format from publishers website [Pp. 384 US\$ 65.00 cloth] http://www.sup.org/book.cgi?book_id=4125%204126

The strongest of the fourteen essays in this volume bear out the editor's claim that Benjamin's "concepts" require novel strategies of reading, though these strategies may seem less novel after three decades of deconstruction. Taken as a whole, these essays address both the major concepts of Benjamin's work (aura, dialectical image, mimesis, messianic time, among others) and examine the more obscure figures that Benjamin often seems to deploy for their quasi-conceptual power of analysis and organization. With the exception of Lutz Koepnick's discussion of aura, the essays that focus primarily on the major concepts (Peter Fenves on tragedy, Miriam Hansen on mimesis and the "optical unconscious," Rainer Nägele on image) cannot do without the extraordinarily attentive reading that Benjamin requires. The essays that identify the more obscure figurative connections, the "spectral relays" (1) that are less easily illuminated by Benjamin's major concepts, tend to be successful when they are as careful with the conceptual focus that they develop from textual hints (for example, Kevin McLaughlin on the virtual, Stanley Corngold on obscurity and banality) as they are with the relays.

The best of the essays that revisit certain of Benjamin's major concepts demonstrate the persistence of the analytical and explanatory power of Benjamin's thought. Among these I would emphasize Hansen's and Koepnick's lucid and judicious analyses of the concepts that shape Benjamin's analysis of media technology. Hansen's essay, which previously appeared in *Critical Inquiry*, is one of the two important articles she has written on Benjamin's theory of cinema. The earlier essay examined "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" for moments in which Benjamin suggests that mimetic experience and aura cannot simply be eradicated, but can be preserved and transformed by the technology of film. The essay in this volume focuses on the concepts of "innervation" and of the "optical unconscious" in the works that anticipate the essay on the work of art, particularly *One Way Street*, as well as in the abandoned early drafts of "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."¹ Together, Hansen's articles (though

1 The first of these essays is "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology,'" *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987), 179-244; reprinted in Ginsberg, Terri and Thompson, Kirten Moana, eds., *Perspectives*

only the later one appears in this volume) demonstrate, against the predominant poststructural views of Benjamin, that “the very impulse to theorize technology is part of [Benjamin’s] project *to reimagine the aesthetic*” (56). Hansen’s rich and thorough argument merits her observation that “reconstructing these reflections in their complexity and extremity is not just a philological endeavor, nor a matter of ‘getting Benjamin right’ versus oversimplifying readings and appropriations” (72).

Though Koepnick's essay, "Aura Reconsidered: Benjamin and Contemporary Visual Culture," relies on the reconstruction performed by others, and particularly on Hansen's important efforts to reexamine Benjamin's notion of experience in light of aura and mimesis (see 104-06), it also demonstrates that reading Benjamin is not merely a philological exercise.² Claiming with Hansen that Benjamin's project is to reimagine the aesthetic, Koepnick argues that "a discontinuous reinscription of aura can remind us of our need for experience in its most emphatic sense" (111). Reflecting on the role of the "dichotomy of auratic and postauratic art" (97) in the debates over Christo's 1995 *Wrapped Reichstag*, Koepnick asks if the visual culture of the postmodern era of "flexible accumulation" (107) has not made Benjamin's reflections on technology obsolete. In his effort "to investigate what can be redeemed of Benjamin (and Adorno) for our own times" (114), Koepnick concludes that the auratic dimension of Christo's wrapping of the Reichstag demonstrates "the potential virtues of the visual today to articulate experience, insight, and knowledge across given boundaries of public and private" (113). While his appeal to "an ethos of significance" is not as clearly related as one would wish to his argument for "a hybrid visual public sphere ... in which the body and its pleasures played an undeniable role" (112), Koepnick's reconsideration of aura is a valuable effort to imagine how aesthetic experience can "help enable politically relevant processes of collective will-formation" (110).

While Hansen and Koepnick are not primarily concerned with "getting Benjamin right" (72), Benjamin scholars such as Peter Fenves demonstrate both how difficult and how valuable it is to undertake such a "philological endeavor" (72). Among the essays that focus on major Benjaminian concepts, Fenves' essay on the concept of tragedy is — along with Corngold's and Nägele's essays — an exemplary instance of Benjamin criticism at its authoritative best. Among the many strengths of Fenves' essay is its demonstration of Benjamin's remarkable capacity to make distinctions, to differentiate phenomena in a manner that requires strategies of thinking that challenge the conceptuality upon which such distinctions rely (see 245). Carefully situating the development of Benjamin's reflections on tragedy in the German and Jewish cultural and intellectual contexts of the early twentieth century, Fenves attempts to reconstruct "a dialogue between *Judentum* and *Deutschtum*" (249) that emerges only marginally in Benjamin's correspondence with Florens Christian Rang. As Fenves acknowledges, this dialogue "cannot be so easily

2 Koepnick's essay includes much of a chapter of his book *Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Power* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999).

reconstructed, however, for Benjamin never articulates his understanding of the relation between tragic silence, prophecy, and his admonitions that German-Jews remain silent" (249). This apparently modest concession only prepares the ground for Fenves to turn Benjamin's silence on these questions into an example of the silence Benjamin admonishes German-Jews to practice (259). While there is never any question that Fenves is concerned with "getting Benjamin right," the sensitivity of his essay both to conceptuality and to the "spectral relays" of Benjamin's writing manages to satisfy both of the modes of reading Benjamin's work requires.

A different challenge is posed to those essays which focus less on the major Benjaminian concepts and instead pursue the murkier tunnels and corridors of his thought and writing, or what Beatrice Hanssen, in her valuable meditation on the image of Benjamin as melancholic, calls "the hidden recesses of his scholarship where his thought threatens to become arcane, at times even hermetic" (171). Certain of Benjamin's essays and notes are conceptually so elusive that one has no choice but to read differently, to take risks with sense.³ Sigrid Weigel writes that Benjamin's essay on Karl Kraus "juts out like a hermetic block into the midst of the more fluid mode of writing of Benjamin's late works" (278). Weigel's analysis of the Kraus essay, like Fenves' study of Benjamin's book on the German mourning play, carefully examines related notes and documents that reveal the patterns of thought that underlie both the complex and the apparently simple ideas and figures of Benjamin's texts. Both of these essays are evidence that the close reading required by the more hermetic writings succeeds only when the conceptual organization that guides the various threads of the reading is carefully presented. Weigel's analysis is precise about the status of the metaphors and concepts she investigates: the Kraus essay, she argues, "is structured by a mode of writing different from a conceptually systematic representation, although the text in fact has a clear scheme as its basis" (289). The strength of the essays by Fenves, McLaughlin, Hansen, and Corngold, among others, lies in the attention they pay to the "scheme" of Benjamin's thinking even as they resist making that thinking appear systematic. Certain of Benjamin's major concepts, such as the optical unconscious, remain difficult enough in his account of them that this second method of reading is the only option for arriving at even the sketchiest conceptual coherence. This dimension of Benjamin's writing has been emphasized since

3 However, the editor overstates the case when he writes that Benjamin's "concepts are most themselves when they are changing into something else, when their logic can no longer be accounted for by what the texts in which they are embedded seem to be arguing" (3).

Derrida's practices of reading encouraged the examination of the dense texture of writing — and at times it has seemed that deconstruction had to come along before Benjamin's text could become legible.

However, in spite of the philosophical claims made on behalf of this kind of reading, it can seem as tendentious as the bad close reading of a poem. In what should be a remarkable essay on Benjamin's "theory of reading and writing" in connection with "the concept of '*nonsensory similarity*,'" Bettina Menke explores a complex set of figures at the center of which she places the "precise figure" of "constellation," a figure that will be familiar to readers of Benjamin and Adorno. In spite of her thorough knowledge of the texts, however, Menke fails to elucidate the "scheme" that her reading ought to be able to present in one form or another. The main reason for this, it seems to me, is that the problematic that allows her to relate these figures is difficult to articulate in terms of Benjamin's major concepts, even his quasi- or non-concepts of reading and writing. Instead, the scheme that guides her reading is derived from a problematic, as her footnotes on Derrida and Barthes make clear, provided by poststructural meditations on reading and writing. It is easier to assume that Benjamin anticipated this problematic than to argue that he did, but it is precisely the relation between Benjamin and certain poststructuralist thinkers that needs to be clarified before the problematic can be articulated. Menke's work would be of much more benefit to readers had her argument been as lucid as Hansen's suggestion that technological innovation in the early twentieth century "heralds a resurgence of writing's imagistic, sensuous, mimetic qualities" (63). Since it has so little to say about its own context in Benjamin criticism after the poststructural reception of Benjamin's work, Menke's argument might best be approached as a detailed investigation of Hansen's proposal that Benjamin's rethinking of the aesthetic through the "cinema as a form of sensory, psychosomatic, aesthetic experience ... includes but does not reduce to poststructuralist notions of writing and reading" (70).

In contrast to Menke, Kevin McLaughlin manages the difficult task of reading the texture of Benjamin's writing attentively in order to articulate a latent quasi-conceptual scheme, while at the same time demonstrating that the emergent concept can have a bearing on the present. While he finds his way through the text on the basis of some of Benjamin's major concepts, he proposes that "Benjamin's writing is punctuated throughout with terms stressing potentiality." McLaughlin identifies these terms as "parts of a vocabulary of virtuality that surfaces in his works of the late 1910s and 1920s" (209). After a very useful discussion of the concept of "content" (*Gehalt*) in German aesthetic theory, McLaughlin traces this vocabulary by way of "Benjamin's manipulation of the German root word *Teil* (part)" (214) in his early essay, "On Language as Such and the Languages of Man." *Teil*, according to McLaughlin, links *Mitteilung* (communication) and *Urteil* (judgment) to the problem of divisibility, which in turn allows McLaughlin,

the English translator of the *Arcades Project*, to argue that Paris, for Benjamin's unfinished project, "is the name of a place where names are mixed up in judgment in the sense of *Urteil* (primal division) and where divisibility makes it possible to read the judgment virtually conserved by place names" (218). When reading essays on Benjamin, one comes across many sentences as difficult and concentrated as this one. However, the careful presentation of McLaughlin's comprehensive and demanding essay makes this sentence lucid in its context, and places this essay among the strongest in the volume.

Just as Koepnick, by careful analysis, makes the concept of aura usable once more, McLaughlin brings the concept of the virtual to bear on the present in an argument with John Guillory's influential argument (in *Cultural Capital*) for a "culture of universal access" (223) — or a culture without barbarism. McLaughlin and Koepnick answer the question, raised by Fritz Breihaupt in his contribution to this volume, "whether we today still need to read Benjamin" (199). Breihaupt attempts to bring Benjamin into present debates about historical analysis on the basis of a brief and tendentious survey of figures and ideas loosely related to "Benjamin's thought on history and phenomenology" (191). The quasi-concept at which his laborious argument arrives is that of "the empty space," with which he takes on the New Historicism. The argument takes all the risks of the close reading of Benjamin, but gains little in return. Though Breihaupt feels he should "apologize for the detours that this approach makes necessary" (192), one feels the apology is not heartfelt. The argument does not merit summary, and the purpose of an attack on the New Historicism at this late date is unclear to me; the issues raised by New Historicism, which are of course relevant as issues, are not made contemporary in Breihaupt's reading. Apparently what is at stake in this debate, however, is "the practice of academia" (202).

The irony of Breihaupt's attack is not only that his essay more than any of the others appears to serve little more than the purpose of academic positioning. Given the demanding nature of the material, and the high standards provided by the best criticism, it is difficult to enter the fray of Benjamin studies; it must also be tempting, therefore, to find one's "position" (see pp. 199-200) by standard academic means: by securing it against an imagined enemy, and overstating the stakes of the battle. The intensity of the Benjamin "industry," as Koepnick calls it (99), certainly heightens the academic as much as the intellectual stakes, and the competition is not always handled well. Even as accomplished and intelligent a critic as Fenves finds himself so provoked by Jeffrey Mehlman's miscasting of Benjamin as a tragic hero that he ridicules him for the further error of mistaking a *Habilitationsschrift* for a doctoral thesis: "thus Jeffrey Mehlman, who in a book called *Benjamin for Children* apparently need not distinguish between [the two], for what, after all, do children care about these matters?" Mehlman certainly made an error concerning

German graduate education, and when he miscast Benjamin he had not had the advantage of having read Fenves' excellent analysis of Benjamin's concept of tragedy. Fenves feels the need to vilify someone for buying into "the popular image of Benjamin" as a tragic hero, and to identify someone who sees "at the heart of this tragedy ... the failure of his theory of tragedy to secure an academic appointment" (238). By indulging this need, he permits his essay to lurch awkwardly into its intelligent and absorbing argument, which in the end does concern the idea of the academy in the Socratic and Platonic sense, though not in any way that is usefully proposed by his introduction.

I touch upon these matters because questions of the academy and of academic publishing are raised by this collection of essays, which, including endnotes, amounts to over three hundred and sixty pages. Not all of this material deserves to be published by as prestigious a press as Stanford. Of the material that is included, few have any place under the rubric of spectrality. One of the merits of this collection is its translations of four previously published German articles or chapters into English. However, the principle by which Richter selected the German material (by Eva Geulen, Norbert Bolz, Menke, and Weigel), which would justify the exclusion of essays by other scholars more concerned with spectrality, is never articulated. It is unclear to me, after reading all of the essays, why the title is *Benjamin's Ghosts*. According to the editor, "One can never fully grasp [Benjamin's] concepts and sentences, which return to haunt once we turn our back on them. In short, they are ghostly" (3). He insists that "Benjamin's lesson, if there is one, is that a theoretical emphasis on textual and cultural ghosts is a highly significant form of analysis" (5). However, in spite of Richter's efforts in his introduction, it is difficult to see how these essays demonstrate that they have learned the particular form of the lesson that gives priority to the trope of ghosts. Fenves' is the only essay to discuss ghosts in any serious way (244-46). The conceptual and figurative "relays" that Benjamin's thought requires does not call for the spectral melodrama or gothic aesthetics that his thought, in spite of his careful strictures against surrealism, at times evokes in readers. I do not see how what the editor calls the "structure of ghostliness or spectrality [that] is encoded throughout Benjamin's writings" is not more properly identified by Menke as "the Benjaminian repertoire of metaphorical models" (276), and by Tom McCall as "Benjamin's understated conceptual metaphors" (91). Better yet, perhaps, is Winfried Menninghaus' formulation which, according to Richter's summary – intended to elucidate his own trope of ghostliness – envisions Benjamin's work as "a series of meditations on a spectral *Öin-betweenness*' in a world structured by a multitude of thresholds, transitions, and transitory acts and events" (4). If there is a coherence to this collection of essays, Richter is not a useful guide to the patterns and principles of relation, and his introduction would better serve as a promotional blurb to an academic audience taken with the idea

of spectrality – an audience which, moreover, will be disappointed that a ghost only rarely “*flits* by” (1).
(LUKE CARSON, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA)

ANN RIGNEY. *Imperfect Histories: the Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. Pagination, price and format from publishers website [Pp. 224 US\$ 45.00 cloth]
http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/cup_catalog.taf?_function=detail&Title_ID=3520&_UserReference=213E98240B5DD89C426D29DA

The problem of how to distinguish fiction from history, so simple on the face of it as repeatedly to elicit impatient, pragmatic dismals from those have heard too much on the issue and who wish to get on with the business of writing or reading one or the other, nonetheless has recurred as long as there has been theoretical reflection upon these entities. For Aristotle both history and poetry are a mimesis of action, and starting from this commonality he articulates the basic distinction between them with which to some extent we all operate and which works well enough up to a point: “the historian narrates events that have actually happened, whereas the poet writes about things as they might possibly occur” (48). With Aristotle, of course, this leads to the flattering (at least for those engaged in the writing or study of literature) privileging of poetry over history. “Poetry, therefore, is more philosophical and more significant than history, for poetry is more concerned with the universal, and history more with the individual. By the universal I mean what sort of man turns out to say or do what sort of thing according to probability or necessity . . .” (48). The unity and organic form of fiction’s well made plots, wherein events unfold according to probability or necessity, imparts a more universal knowledge of human behavior than does history “in which it is necessary to show not one action but one period of time and as many things as happened in this time, whether they concern one man or many, and whether or not each of these things is related to others” (60). Fiction can give us a unified and broadly characteristic view of human action — a conception which will find itself re-articulated in Lukács’ defense of Sir Walter Scott’s historical fiction — history only inchoate particulars held loosely together by the contingency of an historical period.

Aristotle, then, establishes an opposition and hierarchy between fiction and history, but only at the cost of both covering over the intricate interrelations between them, and by rather mis-characterizing history. History *inhabits* fiction, as Aristotle is well aware with his focus upon tragic and epic poetry which

were characteristically based on at least a grain of actuality — individuals and events which had existed, or were believed to have existed. (Although anticipating much twentieth-century theorizing of “fictional worlds”, Aristotle asserts: “If the poet happens to write about things that have actually occurred, he is no less the poet for that . . .”(49), by which he seems to imply that it is not the origin of characters or events that is important but, rather, their function and purpose within the fictional work). Simultaneously, fiction inhabits history. It is almost impossible to imagine, as Hayden White has so influentially insisted, a history that does not undergo some degree of the unifying, shaping function of the pleasingly well made plot that Aristotle defines as the soul of poetry, wherein one thing happens not simply *after* another but *because* of it, and wherein a principle of selection is operating such that we are not given all the events of a period but those which are taken to be significant, because somehow, like the characters and actions in a fictional work, characteristic. Furthermore, if fiction is taken in a somewhat different sense to mean not simply that which is made, crafted, but that which is *made up*, invented, then fiction likewise inhabits history at any point the historian desires access to what cannot be known with certainty, or known at all. As Sir Philip Sidney wrote: “both he [Herodotus] and all the rest that followed him either stole or usurped of poetry their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battles, which no man could affirm, or, if that be denied me, long orations put in the mouths of great kinds of captains, which it is certain they never pronounced. So that, truly, neither philosopher nor historiographer could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgments, if they had not taken a great passport of poetry . . .” (136). Thus while history and fiction are easy enough to distinguish on the face of it, comprehending their interrelations is a more complex task, but one which can reward greater insight into their natures, functions and values.

Through analyzing works of historical fiction and history in English and French from the late-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, as well as analyzing the critical responses these works elicited in their times, Anne Rigney’s *Imperfect Histories: the Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism*, thinks through again the recurrent, but far from redundant, question of the interrelations of fiction and history. By way of doing so she also traces an often fascinating history of others’ attempts to think through such interrelations and demonstrates that self-conscious reflection upon the boundaries of fiction and history, as well as a certain willingness to let these borders open up to one another, is by no means uniquely postmodern. In this respect Rigney’s study is part of a growing body of recent scholarship on the intersections of the Romantic and postmodern periods as seen in such works as Orrin Wang’s *Fantastic Modernity: Dialectical Readings in Romanticism and Theory*, David Simpson’s *The Academic Postmodern and the Rule of Literature*, and Tilottama Rajan and David L. Clark’s *Intersections:*

Nineteenth-Century Philosophy and Contemporary Theory.

Rigney works with the guiding assumption that one should not conceptualize fiction or history as generically pure discourses untainted by each other, yet nor should one collapse the fundamental distinctions between them as it is sometimes suggested postmodern historiography and literary theory do (although such suggestions are usually polemical caricatures and Rigney herself does not make them). To comprehend meaningfully the interrelations between the two discourses the task must be, rather, to analyze the *tensions* between their opposing, but also overlapping and interdependent, ends and means. To validate the tensions in a conceptual opposition such as history and fiction might seem, by now, to be a rather too familiar, too well occupied postmodern position, yet the virtue of Rigney's thesis — if also, perhaps, a bit of the devil — lies in the details of her generally highly insightful exploration of these tensions.

Rigney's first chapter deals with the historical fiction of Sir Walter Scott and focuses upon *Old Mortality*, Scott's novel of 1816 which treats "the struggle of the radical Scottish Presbyterians, the Covenanters, against the repressive government forces of Charles II in the second half of the seventeenth century" (21). Here Rigney's key concern, as noted in the title to this chapter, is the "hybridity" of Scott's writing which announces itself as both history and fiction. She analyzes the manner in which Scott's text adapts and modifies the historical record and the critical reception of the work by reviewers, who both praised it for venturing convincingly into the social realm where the previous historical record had not, and took issue with what was perceived to be its various historical misrepresentations. She further analyzes the ways in which Scott responded to these reviews both in the popular press and, fascinatingly, in the foot notes to later editions of his novels. In this chapter Rigney convincingly establishes that literary texts were at the time accepted as a legitimate, if imperfect, kind of history and that at times such literary works have been as vociferously debated for their historical accuracy as more conventional histories, a point which works to further blur the distinction between literature and history, as literature is shown to also be involved in public debate over the representation and understanding of the past.

With the case for the hybridity of historical writing well established with Scott, Rigney moves in her second chapter to analyze attempts by French historians of the early to mid nineteenth century to write social history, namely, Le Grand d'Aussy's *Histoire de la vie privée des Français* (1800), Amans-Alexis Monteil's *Histoire des Français* (1828-44), Augustin Thierry's *Récits des temps mérovingiens* (1840) and Jules Michelet's *La sorcière* (1862). Here Rigney analyzes the narrative and representational challenges that confronted the early attempts to write social history, the history of the customs, attitudes and experiences of

the mass majority of people who fall outside traditional military and political history. Military campaigns, or political power struggles, seem rather obviously to have narratives (undoubtedly they've significantly shaped what we understand narrative to be) with central players, motives, beginnings and endings, although the particular configuration of all of these narrative elements will be open to debate. But how does one write the history of the customs and experiences of those off the centre stage? Not only might the documented evidence of such experiences be sparse or problematic (they might themselves be literary or para-literary sources: poems, diaries, etc) but how does one organize and narrate a history where there are no longer central actors or a central action, or action at all? How does one determine a significant focus? In seeking to write such a history historians have been, Rigney argues, all the more prone to selecting the narrative devices and imaginative leaps of fiction, and in particular, of the novel. Along with Hayden White, Rigney argues that the novel, and in particular the historical novel, provides some of the important roots of social history, both in so far as it stimulates a desire for a history of manners, of the inner everyday world of experience and belief, and in so far as it provides social history with some of its narrative devices.

A third chapter returns to the English scene with Thomas Carlyle, although more classifiable than Scott as an historian, once again a thoroughly hybrid writer on the unstable boundaries of literature and history. Here Rigney's chief concern is with the aesthetics of the sublime in Carlyle's historical writing and how this aesthetic category functions in his work to figure the "boundlessness" (104), "inaccessibility" (106), and "unintelligibility" (109) of the past. Rigney's analysis demonstrates, as it does elsewhere in the study, that the nineteenth century provides, at least in some writers, a thorough going reflection upon the limits, but also the possibilities, of historical representation and knowledge. This chapter provides both a good overview of the scholarship and theoretical debates on the function and the politics of the sublime (thereby summing up some two decades of work on the topic) and some suggestive consideration of how the sublime functions in history as opposed to literature. In brief, there is always a limit to the historical sublime. While some reflection upon the impossibility of complete historical knowledge may be regarded as tolerable and valuable, one cannot take this too far and still be committed to the historical endeavor. Furthermore, Rigney makes a valuable point in suggesting that, in Carlyle and others, the sublime may not be "the result of a genuine attempt to overcome ignorance and to push back the boundaries of the unintelligible, but a rhetorical pose adopted for some reason(s) or other — laziness, mystification, aestheticism, a deliberate or unconscious desire to grind some ideological axe" (119).

The fourth and concluding chapter (while Rigney analyzes the "fear of long books" (59) in historiography this is not itself a long book) considers "the role of literary works as historical sources" (128)

and takes the analysis of the legacy of romantic historiography up to our contemporary scene with a consideration of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *La sorcière de Jasmin* (1983) and Natalie Zemon Davis's *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (1995). Both of these works employ literary sources and the latter engages in openly fictional dialogue between the three women into whose attitudes and experiences the historian seeks an access that is impossible to gain through documented evidence. Rigney's sympathetic analysis here of the interplay between history and literature in these contemporary studies is much enriched by the historical context established by the previous chapters. She convincingly establishes that historiography can never be a simple case of *either* history *or* fiction but that it must always be a more or less successful negotiation of the tensions between them.

The key tension Rigney focuses upon throughout the study is "the inbuilt tension between narrativity and representation as a structural feature of historical writing"(30). To become authoritative, historical representations must strive to be both true to *actuality*, to documented evidence, and true to *meaning*, a convincing interpretation and configuration of the significance of events (26). The tension arises, Rigney suggests, in so far as the demand for a meaningful representation pulls historical writing, on the one hand, toward narrative with its definitive beginnings, authoritative resolutions, unified action, three dimensional characters and clearly drawn, comprehensible themes. The pull toward fictional invention becomes all the more acute as historians wish to move into the realm of social history. There is, Rigney argues, a parallel tension in historical writing between relevance and representability (108) in so far as that history which would seem most relevant to us — the history of the experiences and attitudes of the mass majority of people in the past — is least accessible to us. Thus the desire for this kind of history feels most the pull of fictional invention in an attempt to gain that impossible access to the elusive past.

But if there is, in the need to be true to meaning, a pull toward narrativity and fictional invention in historical writing, there is a countering pull away from narrativity in our sense that if history becomes too cut and dried as a story, it becomes less believable, less true to actuality. It is one of the fresh contributions of Rigney's work to demonstrate that the novelists and historians of the early to mid nineteenth century, as well as their contemporary reviewers, fully reflected on the problems, limits, and possibilities, of narrative in historical representations. "Romantic historiography" and "Romantic historicism" are terms which in contemporary theory and scholarship too often stand for dangerously naive, unreflective, essentialist narratives of the progress of the nation, *volk*, or spirit, against which, implicitly, we are to measure the virtue of our contemporary critical self-consciousness. It is one of Rigney's key achievements to considerably complicate this picture by restoring to our understanding of Romantic historiography its

heterogeneity, flexible methodological plurality, and above all its own critical self-consciousness. And against what Fredric Jameson has aptly described as the pervasively nominalist tenor of postmodern theory, in which it seems at times as if all of reality is to be taken as a *construct* of *discourses*, Rigney rightfully insists on the intractable, disruptive nature of the real, the thing in itself, as well as its ongoing seductive appeal, which lies at the heart of the historical impulse and which ensures that any attempts to fully and meaningfully represent actuality can only ever be partial and imperfect.

Imperfection, failure, and dissatisfaction, Rigney argues, must be understood not as an unfortunate “by-product” (1) of the historical endeavor but as “one of its structural and distinctive features” (1), much as the central theorist of Romanticism, Friedrich Schlegel (a figure that might have been fruitfully engaged by Rigney in support of her positions) argued that incomprehensibility must be understood as the condition of the possibility of comprehension. Yet rightfully, Rigney insists that history can never affirm, as Wallace Stevens wrote, that “the imperfect is our paradise.” With a view toward perfection, toward getting it right and true, history will continually supplement with more history, the structural imperfection that lies at its heart and which it lives on. And thus it lives on.

In places one might have liked to see Rigney complicate further her own positions as well as her own oppositions. Fiction and the literary seem generally to be conceived in Rigney’s exploration of the tension between representation and narrativity in a traditional Aristotelean way as that which can give shape and coherence to a seemingly inchoate actuality. This view of fiction works well enough if one confines one’s analysis of literature to Scott’s historical romances. But, as Rigney herself points out without ever sufficiently exploring the consequences, the literary production of the Romantic period is one which considerably problematized such traditional notions of fiction and narrative with, amongst other things, an aesthetics of fragmentation and a suspicion of the claim of art to provide order and coherence. What happens, then, if one reads the tension between fiction and history through, in addition to Scott, certain writers of the Romantic period whose work more fully embraced this aesthetic, but whose texts are no less hybrid, no more purely fictional, than Scott’s? There is also in Rigney’s work persistent references to the role of politics and/or ideology in the sorts of struggles which she analyzes through much of her book, over whether or not an historical representation can be taken to be authoritative. But the references to the role of politics and ideology remains somewhat muted and vague, sometimes only a rather generalized reference to people’s particular “interests.” One would have liked to see the work more thoroughly consider these questions since it repeatedly gesture toward them. On the whole, however, this is an important work of admirable lucidity and insight. It provides both an excellent synthetic and critical overview of the last

several decades of theoretical and methodological inquiry into the interrelations of history and fiction, and broadens, deepens and complicates our understanding by restoring a greater historical dimension to this inquiry. (??? CARTER, Affiliation?)

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ALISON CONWAY. *Private Interests: Women, Portraiture, and the Visual Culture of the English Novel, 1709-1791*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. Pagination, price and format from publishers website [Pp. 328 CDN\$ 68.00 cloth]
<http://www.utppublishing.com/pubstore/merchant.ihtml?pid=7486&step=4>

This intellectually rich book centers upon what its "Afterword" characterizes as "the eighteenth-century novel's encounter with portraiture" (210), making an excellent case for a dynamic, two-way relationship that is equally informed and informative about portraits of female subjects (Conway's particular focus) considered as graphic phenomena, as elements in prose fiction and as objects of moral, social and critical evaluation. Taking off from the significant fact that the not always — or usually — approving "critical reception histories of the portrait and the novel shared a common vocabulary" (12), it demonstrates convincingly (with predictable, though not uncritical invocations of the relevant theoretical views of Foucault, John Bender and Nancy Armstrong) that "the eighteenth-century English novel uses the painted

portrait to analyze the meaning of women's relation to private interests" (inwardness, domesticity, the private, as opposed to the public sphere) and places "the idea of the spectacle and the aesthetics of beholding at the centre of its discussion" (3). It does so by discussing the salient features of portraiture — on canvas and in novels, decorous and illicit — and its reception in the period, moving at once forward through the century and back and forth between the two arts. The range of examples is reasonably representative: on the literary side, extensive treatment is given to Manley's *New Atalantis*, Richardson's *Clarissa*, Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless*, Fielding's *Amelia*, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and *Sentimental Journey*, Wollstonecraft's *Mary* and Inchbald's *A Simple Story*; and, on the graphic side, there are revealing discussions of portraits by, among other artists, Lely, Verelst, Mercier, Hogarth, Hudson, Haytley, Reynolds, Wright of Derby, Romney, Gainsborough and Angelica Kauffman.

Conway's first main chapter is a wide-ranging demonstration of the parallel aesthetic denigrations in the period of portraiture (in relation to history painting) and the novel (in relation to more traditional genres) and of their similarly parallel denigrations on moral grounds, especially insofar as they focused on females, exposing them to public gaze, or were considered influential upon female spectators or readers, in whom they were claimed to encourage vanity and even immoral behavior. Readyng the reader for illuminating discussions in later chapters of novels in which portraits are thematically important (with, at least for this reader, the Bibles and love letters on the toilet table of Pope's *Belinda* somewhere, unmentioned, in the background), this introductory discussion is particularly effective — indeed splendid — as it focuses on portraits of women reading or holding books and letters, sometimes — arguably, though I am not as sure as Conway — with positive associations (e.g., Reynold's "A Girl Reading" and Romney's "Serena," where the reading matters are *Clarissa* and *Evelina*) and sometimes with negative or equivocal ones. The most telling negative examples are portraits of courtesans, such as Reynolds' portrayal of Kitty Fisher, where the reading matter is a love letter and the sitter's eyes challenge the spectator with attractive impudence, mocking the gaze of the titillated. And the most interesting, because most equivocal, example is Hogarth's portrait of his patroness, Miss Mary Edwards, where the implications of the printed matter (a copy of an address to her troops by Queen Elizabeth I, the most outstanding example in English history of an impressive woman exceeding with impunity what would normally have been considered the very outer limits of female public agency) are positive, albeit freighted with complexities, but the sitter, who gazes out steadily, consideringly and a bit disconcertingly, would have been viewed as a notorious, highly successful defier of the decorous limitations on female behavior. "Miss" Mary had secretly married an impecunious nobleman and borne his son, then stopped her husband's squandering of her large fortune

and regained control of it by eliminating all evidence of their marriage and publicly proclaiming their son a bastard.

Chapter Two deals with the pictorial aspects of Mrs. Manley's *New Atalantis*, especially its erotic tableaux, approaching them in a context of tensions between male-focused state portraiture and female-focused portraits, pornographic appeal and virtuous gesturings and (I must say *much* less clearly or convincingly) "Whig" and "Tory" values and language. Making excellent use of portraits by Peter Lely and others, Conway argues, with perhaps some exaggeration, that Manley's novel exerted a broad and sustained, if never quite respectable influence, and succeeded in "triangulating the moment of beholding, breaking the monopoly of the male gaze." In essence, the chapter defines one extreme of portraiture in prose fiction, the extreme at which being portrayed, on canvas or on canvas in a novel or in a graphic description in a novel converges with being "prostituted," the Latin etymology of which (as I kept expecting Conway to stress, here and in later chapters) suggests being placed or self-placed on public display, put forward, put out, exposed. Thus, it provides a point of departure for later discussions, including the very impressively probing of portraiture in *Clarissa* in Chapter Three.

The bridging claim is that the influence of Manley's "techniques of veiling and unveiling" is detectable in the unrelenting tensions in Richardson's novel: its portrayal of Clarissa's "transcendence with the intensity afforded by pictorial language," for example, even as it attempts "to avoid betraying her body to a voyeuristic gaze that pictorial language can invite — a gaze that starkly aligns sentimental and libertine interests" (81). Putting the proposed connection with Manley aside, the significant point is that there is considerable fascination and illumination in Conway's probings of the relation between thematic patterns in the novel and its visual elements, particularly Clarissa's three portraits. The insights this chapter affords and the arguments that support them are complex, so much so that I cannot do them justice here. What I can say (meaning it as high praise) is that Conway lends vital new meanings to Ian Watt's characterization of Richardson's art as a melding of sermon and strip-tease.

Chapter Four illuminatingly discusses Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless* and Fielding's *Amelia*, using as points of departure the miniature portraits that play significant roles in them, standing, Conway argues, "metonymically for particular understanding[s] of women's relation to private interests in the mid-century." Its arguments are some what uneven: generally impressive, but occasionally much weaker than one expects in so good a book. The unevenness is most striking in Conway's dealings with Fielding's fiction, where the excellence of her discussion of the pawning of the miniature by Amelia, is in stark contrast, for example, with a wrongheaded treatment of the accident to Amelia's nose as rooted "in

Fielding's willingness to make his heroines the butt of low humour jokes and innuendoes." It gets no better when she goes on to allow that "this misogynist humour remains only as a vestigial trace in *Amelia*, for the novel tries tremendously hard to lift its heroine above the muck that Sophia falls into in *Tom Jones*" (140).

By contrast, Chapter Five analyzes Sterne's fiction with consistent verve and conviction, stressing the self-conscious overttness of Sterne's interest in portraiture, the confusion of gender roles in terms of viewing and being viewed that sometimes allows Mrs. Wadman and Mrs. Shandya "kind of visual agency" (172), the droll involvements of the viewer as blank-page "painter," and the relation all this bears to Sterne's distanced, yet embracing attitudes toward sentiment and his endless conflation of inward states of mind with outward manifestations and the reverse. With reservations, again, about Fielding's part in it, I can only concur with Conway's conclusion that "hearkening back to the male bravado that characterizes *Tom Jones*, Sterne looks to assert male authority over the sentimental culture, and the private interests it sustained as its focus, with which women had come to be aligned by 1767" (177). The only weakness — or rather missed opportunity — I can see in this chapter is a failure sufficiently to place the emphasis on the masculinization of females, a process distrusted by the males in the novel and by Sterne, against the backdrop of the far, far more important theme of emasculation, which is obsessively dominant in *Tristram Shandy* from first page to last.

Chapter Six deals with impressively with the portraits (particularly the self-portrayals) of Angelica Kauffman and their literary equivalents in Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*, and less impressively with related aspects of *Mary*, Mary Wollstonecraft's failed attempt at a novel. It approaches them as representative examples of a kind of art (involving the kind of self-portraiture — portrayals of the artist as such or becoming or trying to become such — that is inherently central to the archetypically romantic *Kunstlerroman*) that women were likely, even driven, to produce under the peculiar pressures of the period. It was a time when both the portrait and the novel, though still subject to aesthetic and moral denigrations, had become "dominant modes of cultural expression in England," and when traits formerly regarded as female, such as sentimentality, had come to be "valued as masculine" (178), an evolution of ideas that could render a "female sensibility" in a female "suspect" (179). With *Mary* positioned between them as a symbol of the artistic and self-expressional frustrations they managed to overcome, Conway convincingly celebrates the heroic achievements, in this oddly encouraging, yet double-binding context, of Kauffman and Inchbald: the former (in her "Self-Portrait: Hesitating Between the Arts of Music and Painting") by fusing self-portraiture with history painting in an all-female and thus de-eroticized, aesthetic (as opposed to moralizing) version of the "Choice of Hercules," and the latter in a novelistic self-portrait

(incorporating portraits within its compass) that succeeds “by focusing, like Kauffman, on the work involved in the creation of art” (194) by a woman who is a professional author.

This is an intellectually rich book, as I said at the outset, and also a critically insightful one: it will be valuable — indeed essential — reading for anyone with a professional interest in eighteenth-century English culture. (THOMAS R. CLEARY, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA)

SINCLAIR ROSS. *The Well*. Intro. by Kristjana Gunnars. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001. Pagination, price and format from publishers website [Pp. ? CDN\$ 16.95 trade paper] <http://www.uap.ualberta.ca/UAP.asp?lid=41&bookid=280>
and SINCLAIR ROSS. *The Whir of Gold*. Intro. by Nat Hardy. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001. Pagination, price and format from publishers website [Pp. ? CDN\$ 16.95 trade paper] <http://www.uap.ualberta.ca/UAP.asp?lid=41&bookid=284>
and SINCLAIR ROSS. *Sawbones Memorial*. Intro. by Ken Mitchell. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001. Pagination, price and format from publishers website [Pp. ? CDN\$ 16.95 trade paper] <http://www.uap.ualberta.ca/UAP.asp?lid=41&bookid=230>

Sinclair Ross's 1941 novel *As For Me and My House* has attracted a good deal of critical attention since its reprinting as one of the early titles in McClelland and Stewart's New Canadian Library in 1957, and has been a frequently taught text in university courses in Canadian literature ever since. Two volumes of Ross's short stories, *The Lamp at Noon* and *The Race and other Stories*, remain in print, and several of these stories, notably "The Lamp at Noon," "A Field of Wheat," and "One's a Heifer," are frequently anthologized. But Ross's place in the canon — if there is indeed a canon of Canadian literature, certainly a contested proposition — depends entirely on these few works. His last novel, *Sawbones Memorial*, published in 1974, got a New Canadian Library edition in 1985 but has been out of print for some time, an indication that it has had limited success as a teaching text. Certainly there has been very little critical discussion of it apart from general studies of Ross by Gail Bowen, Ken Mitchell, Morton Ross, and Lorraine McMullen, and articles by Charlene Diehl-Jones and Marilyn Ross. Ross's two other novels, *The Well* (1958) and *Whir of Gold* (1970), have never been reprinted and, apart from comments in Mitchell, Ross, and McMullen, and an article by Dennis Cooley on names in Ross which addresses some attention to *The Well*, have largely been forgotten. Now, however, in an apparent attempt to redress the imbalance, the

University of Alberta Press has re-issued Ross's three later novels in crisp new paperback editions with good paper and thoughtful critical introductions. Though the price makes them a tad expensive for undergraduate texts, and the glum face on the cover of *Sawbones Memorial* won't encourage trade sales (the two others, particularly *The Well*, get better design treatment), we are being invited to consider whether the neglected part of the Ross canon deserves, at last, increased attention. And if so, what kind of attention should it have?

The renewed flurry of discussion of Ross which followed the publication of Keith Fraser's *As For Me and My Body* in 1997, a book which documented Ross's homosexuality and offered a reading of *As For Me and My House* which took account of it, has been focused almost entirely on questions of sexuality in *As For Me and My House*, although Andrew Lesk has also offered a gay reading of several of the short stories in his article "Something Queer Going on Here: Desire in the Short Fiction of Sinclair Ross." Are *The Well*, *Whir of Gold*, and *Sawbones Memorial*, therefore, gay novels in the sense that *As For Me and My House* can be read as a gay novel? They certainly offer possibilities; *Sawbones Memorial* is the most obvious candidate for such a reading in that it contains an overtly gay character, Benny Fox, who has worked out a way, if not of being accepted, at least of getting by, in small-town Saskatchewan in the late 1940s. Ken Mitchell, in his Introduction, calls Benny "probably the closest to self-portraiture of any character in Ross's canon" (viii). The similarity in sound of Benny's name to the author's familiar name, Jimmy Ross, seems to be a clue to Ross's intention here. Lorraine McMullen suggested as long ago as 1979 that there may be a homoerotic element in the relationship between Chris and his street-wise mentor Rickie (95), and John O'Connor, in his introduction to the present edition of *Whir of Gold*, suggests that there is a similar dynamic at work in the relationship between Sonny and his criminal mentor Charlie (xii). We may also note that both the manipulative Sylvia of *The Well* and the generous, kind Mad of *Whir of Gold* are sexually attractive women who offer themselves to Chris and Sonny respectively, and are both ultimately rejected by them.

Other themes present themselves, however, one of the most insistent of which in all four of the novels is the relationship between fathers and sons. It is difficult not to suspect a biographical influence here; Ross's own mother deserted his father when Ross was six, and, as Keith Fraser notes, "he spent the rest of his life making up idealized male protagonists with whom he identified" (Fraser 28). As a result of the breach in the family, he resented his mother and had "an abiding and emotional sense of illegitimacy" (Fraser 28). Certainly many of Ross's protagonists either have troubled relationships with fathers or feel keenly if inarticulately the lack of them. In *As For Me and My House*, Philip is described as the

illegitimate son of a Main Street waitress and a student minister who died before Philip was born. He grew up in a small prairie town where he was stigmatized for the conditions of his birth, blamed and resented his mother, hero-worshiped his absent father, and discovered, in a trunkful of books and letters which he left behind, that father's ambitions to paint. In entering a ministry for which he is unsuited, while secretly nourishing artistic ambitions, Philip seems to be modeling himself on his father, or on what he understands that father to have been, though as Mrs. Bentley shrewdly observes, "if these two [parents] were really as he thought, then the moral responsibility for his existence could hardly have been where he placed it. . . . And his father all the time belonged to the escape world of his imagination, and his mother to the drab, sometimes sordid world of the restaurant." (*House* 41). Ironically, Philip also imitates his father in fathering an illegitimate child; in this case, however, it is the mother, Judith, who dies, and the father who takes his responsibilities for his son. Or he is permitted by his wife to take them. Whether he will be able to do so in a satisfactory manner is one of the many questions which the ending of the novel leaves in doubt. At any rate, the father whose absence is a source of the son's sense of illegitimacy and alienation appears to have biographical roots.

In *The Well*, Chris, criminal and possible murderer on the lam, has also been brought up in poverty in Montreal, until his single mother acquires a shadowy and barely mentioned lover who raises their standard of living by a few notches. This stepfather's main paternal function seems to be to provide the young Chris with spending money, which promptly gives him status in the street and teaches him cynicism: "To take, never to be taken — he worked on it. He too became tough and crafty. He trusted no one, and from not trusting derived a sense of self-sufficiency and initiation" (53). That's really about all we get of Chris's youth; life on the street has made him hard and selfish, but we see too little of his mother and her lover to know whether they are to carry some of the blame for Chris's imperfections of character and his incapacity for love and trust. Like Philip, Chris is an outsider; when, after hopping a series of freight trains across Canada on the run from the law, he rather improbably lucks into a situation on a Saskatchewan farm which he can exploit to his advantage, he does so with hardly a second's hesitation. The plot begins as Chaucer's Miller's Tale crossed with *Oedipus Rex*: Larson, a wealthy, elderly farmer, has married a much younger woman, Sylvia, who is mainly interested in the economic security such a marriage can provide. She and Chris are soon in bed together whenever Sylvia can distract Larson. But Larson has taken a liking to Chris, who reminds him of his dead son, and he begins to treat Chris almost as a son. For Chris this situation is initially almost too good to be true: security from the law, good food, lots of sex, and the possibility of future wealth. He can, perhaps, inherit the farm from Larson, or he can aid Sylvia in her

plans to get rid of Larson, have him declared missing, and claim the farm for herself (and, presumably, Chris). But as the novel proceeds, Chris begins to see Larson not as a foolish old man but as the father he never had. And if Larson is a father, what is he doing with Larson's wife? Chris will have to choose — does he want a father or a mistress? He can't have both.

In the end he gets neither, but his failure in this regard is actually a mark of his movement from the cynical, manipulative youth toward some sort of maturity. Kristjana Gunnars rightly notes the importance of horses in this novel; the fact that Chris, the boy from the mean streets of Montreal, can not only command the dangerous young stallion North, symbol of masculine power, but also aid the aged mare Fanny to give birth, is an indication that he is developing a mature combination of strength and compassion. In the end, after Sylvia has persuaded him to help her murder Larson, he realizes that to be forever bound to her in secrecy would be worse than acknowledging his guilt and risking prison or worse. Shaking himself free of her, he moves to give himself up. As Gunnars suggests, the novel is a meditation on the nature of freedom; it is also a meditation on how the boy's finding a father makes him a man.

There is a somewhat similar configuration of three characters in *Whir of Gold*, as Ken Mitchell, in his earlier study *Sinclair Ross: a Reader's Guide*, observed (59-60). Here Sonny, reversing Chris's journey, is a refugee from small-town Saskatchewan trying to make a career as a musician in Montreal — and failing drearily. He takes up with Mad, or rather, she takes up with him, looking after him in a devoted but ultimately smothering way. Her competition for Sonny's loyalty is Charlie, the sinister petty criminal in the next room, who lures Sonny into being his accomplice in a botched hold-up and then deserts him. As a guide to the dark side of the city, Charlie might be seen as a kind of potential father, but Ross never encourages this interpretation of the relationship. Instead, as Nat Hardy points out in his Introduction, there are homoerotic overtones in Charlie's efforts to seduce Chris into a life of crime, overtones of which Mad seems aware — "You don't mean he's one of those fellows that don't like girls?" (32) — and which strengthen her resolve to keep Sonny away from Charlie.

Charlie's betrayal of Sonny, however, does not bring Sonny and Mad closer together; indeed, Sonny seems to need to free himself from both of them, though it is far from clear that at the end of the story Sonny has achieved anything or arrived anywhere. At the end he makes it clear to Mad that he does not want her to stay, and she goes. But he is still Sonny, an name which implies a junior partner in need of paternal guidance, and he still lives in a rooming house on the ironically named St. Famille St., though there is no family, holy or otherwise, in evidence. In fact, the unrelieved bleakness of this novel, a bleakness without tragic dimensions, derives from Sonny's failure to find any human connection with anybody. At

the end of the novel, even the dreary rooming house is about to be demolished. The title of the novel refers to a flicker which dazzled Sonny in his youth in Saskatchewan with its quick-moving glitter, and which he attempted to catch, in an ironic reversal of the *carpe diem* formula, by setting a gopher trap for it. Of course all he succeeds in doing is fatally maiming the bird, turning its beauty to hatred and pain, and getting accused by his older brother, who has to kill it, of being a "mean little bastard." (197). And perhaps it is the failure of this novel that we never see anything that might lead us to revise this judgement. Sonny is still a mean bastard, as immature as his name suggests, unable to find or imagine anybody more suitable than the wholly unsuitable Charlie as a paternal figure, and, as a result, unable to interest us in what will become of him. Whereas Chris's freeing himself from Sylvia is a move toward maturity and responsibility, Sonny's rejection of Mad merely confirms him in his failure both as man and artist.

In *Sawbones Memorial* we return to Saskatchewan, where we revisit the subject of the father's quest for a son and the son's quest for a father. Doc Hunter, the country doctor of the title who is retiring after forty-five years in Upward, has groomed his own replacement in the form of Nick Miller. Nick, in spite of his Anglicized name, is the son of a Doukhobor woman and, ostensibly, of her tubercular Ukrainian husband. Some of the townsfolk who once participated in Nick's persecution as a member of a vulnerable minority at school are reluctant to see their former victim placed in such a powerful and prestigious position in the town. That Nick would actually return to Upward, even for a few years, and even at the high point of its post-war prosperity, is perhaps not very likely, but it completes a pattern adumbrated in *As For Me and My House*: the Bentleys, at Philip's instigation, take in the orphaned Steve, who because of his Slavic origins and illegitimacy is not acceptable to Protestant Horizon, and is therefore all the more acceptable to Philip because Steve provides him with an occasion to defy the town's bigotry. Steve is eventually taken from the Bentleys and sent to a Catholic orphanage elsewhere; the son, so intensely desired, is a son for only a few months and then is lost to his new father. But in this novel Nick stays, and the foster-father can finish his work. Doc Hunter, also childless because of a sexless marriage, takes the young Nick on house calls, encourages him to think of medicine as a career, and eventually, though secretly, helps him through medical school.

Nick has to come back to Horizon because Nick is the son Doc never had, and must, at least symbolically, carry on his work. Ironically, we discover in Doc's final monologue that Nick is also his son in fact; Doc carried on various affairs in his years in Upward, and one of them was with Nick's mother, who did housework for Doc's wife. Doc can end the novel reasonably satisfied with his life, not only because of his public accomplishments of many years of service, recognized in the naming of the town's new hospital

after him, but also in the secret satisfaction of having installed his own son in his place, with no-one — including even Nick, it seems — any the wiser. If we can regard Doc, as Mitchell suggests, as a “philosophical spokesman”(xii) for Ross in his statement about the possibility of meaning in the universe, then perhaps he is a personal spokesman too. Ross may be saying to his readership that, like Doc, he did good work and left a worthy legacy, but also that he kept his own secrets. Certainly the story of Doc and Nick is the closest we ever get in Ross’s novels to a successful father-son resolution, but the fact that Doc still cannot or will not acknowledge the truth of Nick’s paternity makes this success a partial and limited one.

Upward is the same kind of small town that the Bentleys in *As For Me and My House* were so eager to escape. It is true that Upward is not Horizon, but only in the sense that we see Upward at a time of hope and possibility — the setting is 1948, a time of good wheat prices and the first CCF government, and, in this case, of a new hospital — whereas Horizon is trapped in the Depression of the 1930s. And yet there is a real difference in the author’s attitude to his material; whereas the younger Ross found the towns and farms of the prairies alienating places for a writer and, we now know, a gay man, the older Ross, who had by the time of the novel’s composition had escaped Canada altogether (he retired to Greece in 1968 and moved to Spain in 1972) could afford to look back on his prairie origins, the place which had provided him with the material for most of his fiction, with a certain amount of ambivalent affection. In this regard, the trajectory of Ross’s career somewhat resembles that of the narrator of Stephen Leacock’s *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, who after presenting us with a series of pictures of small-town corruption, pettiness, and self-importance, makes it clear that, having got safely away from Mariposa and made a life in the city, he can now look back on his youth as a golden time spent in a place of friendliness, innocence, and harmonious community. And yet at the same time he knows that his nostalgia is an illusion; he can dream of returning to “the little Town in the Sunshine that once we knew” (Leacock 156), but he does not return to it. He can remember his childhood, but he’s stuck with being an adult. Ross did something similar; he left the small towns of Saskatchewan as early as 1933, when the Royal Bank transferred him to Winnipeg, and except for brief visits he did not return until after his death in 1996, when he was buried in Indian Head, Saskatchewan. And yet the material of his art was always most compellingly the rural and small-town Saskatchewan of his youth, the places he “came to loathe passionately,” as Ken Mitchell puts it (“Introduction” vii), and yet for which “an affectionate and amused tolerance” is expressed in *Sawbones Memorial* as well as in *The Well* and *Whir of Gold*, along with the condemnation of “bigotry, pretension, and hypocrisy” (“Introduction” viii). The tone is not as finely balanced as Leacock’s, but there is a

recognizable link between the two writers which helps to define a feature of a Canadian sensibility. (PAUL DENHAM, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN)

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