

## Proceedings of the Montreal-Ottawa Congress of the ICLA

ULRICH WEISSTEIN

Like the Olympic Games, but caught in a slightly different temporal rhythm — every three rather than every four years —, the congresses of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) are a unique meeting ground for comparat(iv)ists from the five continents. More than four hundred, hailing from, or active in, thirty-five countries, were registered participants in the event held in the summer of 1973 in Montreal and Ottawa. (The distribution along national lines was, naturally, uneven: Canada, the United States, Hungary, and Romania being extremely well and Holland, the German-speaking countries, and the Soviet Union very poorly represented, while the French delegation, though numerically large, by no means included all of the leading and internationally known practitioners of *littérature comparée*.) The published *Proceedings*<sup>1</sup> of this cosmopolitan five-ring circus duly reflect the intellectual, though not the social, activities engaged in during the monster show, whether in the form of plenary sessions, panel discussions, symposia, round tables or special events. As the editors put it in their *Avant-Propos* I, 11; repeated in II, 13), it is precisely 'le rôle des actes d'un congrès de servir de point de repère dans l'histoire d'une discipline.' As the steadily increasing number of participants in the triennial meetings graphically illustrates, Comparative Literature has, by now, become such a popular and competitive sport that it is out of the question for a reviewer to deal with every facet of relevant or allegedly relevant scholarship that may be in evidence at such a gathering.

Having reviewed the *Proceedings* of the Bordeaux Congress of 1970 in this journal (4 [1977] 372-80), and having miraculously avoided the fate of a St. Stephen or St. Sebastian, I venture to expose myself, once again,

1 Milan V. Dimić and Eva Kushner, gen. eds., with Juan Ferraté and Roman Struc, eds. *Actes du VII<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée/Proceedings of the VIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*. Bibliothèque de la Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée/Library of the Canadian Review of Comparative Literature, Vols. 2 and 3 (Stuttgart: Kunst und Wissen Erich Bieber 1979) pp. 562 and 728, DM 213.00 (prepublication subscription price Can.\$ 50.00)

to the metaphorical stones and arrows. Yet, considering the sheer effort entailed in ploughing through the 200-odd papers here assembled – an enterprise which, to tell the truth, was, for reasons of mental hygiene, frequently interrupted by lighter reading, such as the *Faber Book of Epigrams and Epitaphs*, and some headlong flights into recorded music – I have decided to let well enough alone in the future. Wishing neither to be a Timon nor a Mosca, I solemnly swear that this will be my last appearance in a tightrope act which only a Kleistian marionette or a genius with an IQ approximating that of Kant could be expected to perform satisfactorily.

Before undertaking what, strictly speaking, cannot be done, namely taking stock of what is probably close to a million words' worth of scholericism – pardon the atrocious meta-Joycean double pun which issues from a brain overwrought by a truly Herculean labor – discourse, documentation and speculation, I would like to apologize in advance for any oversight or lapsus that might have crept into this *compte rendu*. Erring is human; and memory, even when bolstered by the concrete physical evidence of the official Program and by several firsthand accounts, such as the rather extensive report written by Leonhard Fiedler for the *Schweizer Monatshefte* (53 [1973/74] 523-30), is bound to be fallible. I am reasonably certain that if duelling were still in fashion I would have to be prepared to meet a second at every corner and might not survive until the next congress, the tenth in the series, scheduled to be held in New York in August, 1982.

Let me say, at the outset, that while the time lapse between the Bordeaux Congress and the publication of its *Acta* amounted exactly to a *lustrum*, it took 'pour des raisons d'ordre matériel' (I, 11; II, 13) six years to produce the current set of volumes. (During that time, the community of comparatists has been deprived of such eminent members as Nina Façon, Werner Krauss and Irena Neupokoeva.) While this would seem to indicate a worsening of the situation, a reversal of trends can now be discerned. Thus the *Proceedings* of the Budapest Congress, held in 1976, were published in December, 1980, and those of the Innsbruck Congress, held in 1979, are already available in print. In the latter case, it was wisely decided to distribute the 'loot' among four volumes and four pairs of editors. I sincerely hope that future organizers, actively supported by the ICLA Bureau, will follow this precedent, if only for the practical reason that thematically unified volumes stand a much better chance of being identified and bought, as well as read, by scholars regardless of whether or not they belong to the ICLA. What is more, many members might then be able to afford the tomes which cater to their interests without having to mortgage their homes.

A few basic facts regarding the volumes under consideration may provide a basis for the subsequent discussion of their form and content — to use a thoroughly oldfashioned but still useful dichotomy in literary parlance. Volume One, subtitled *Literatures of America: Dependence, Independence, Interdependence* — a label matching the one assigned to the first major theme of the Congress — was edited by Milan V. Dimić and his colleague Juan Ferraté. It encompasses about eighty-five contributions by scholars from fifteen or so countries. Given the nature of the topic, the uneven geographical distribution (about three fourths of the papers having been authored by U.S. and Canadian scholars) was to be expected. Unfortunately, the Latin American contingent was much smaller than could have been hoped for. By contrast, Volume Two, entitled *Comparative Literature Today: Theory and Practice* and edited by Eva Kushner in collaboration with Roman Struc, embraces the second major theme, 'Comparative Literature and Modern Literary Scholarship,' as well as the symposia on East-West literary relations, African-American literary relations and the 'Status of Comparative Literature in the Universities.' This companion volume, with over a hundred communications, constitutes a more truly international effort.

Well over half of the papers presented in Montreal and Ottawa were couched in English, and slightly over one third in French, the only other languages employed being German and Spanish. This distribution leaves much to be desired, viewing the fact that this is the *International Comparative Literature Association*, a body composed of many national entities and individual members with a host of native tongues. Yet the existence of two *linguae francae*, while suggesting a certain cultural/scholarly dominance, clearly facilitates the intellectual exchange between, say, Zairians and Dutchmen, on the one hand, and Russians and Taiwanese on the other.

When first skimming over the Table of Contents of the *Proceedings*, I was struck by the fact that the names of several participants — close to a dozen — appeared twice in different places, though usually within the same volume. The explanation was provided by the Program, which revealed that several speakers had served in a double capacity by offering papers in plenary or committee sessions, as well as contributing to round-table discussions. Thus Emir Rodríguez-Monegal delivered a major paper entitled 'A Game of Shifting Mirrors: The New Latin American Narrative and the North American Novel' (I, 269-75) and offered remarks on 'The New Latin American Novel' in the context of a symposium concerned with 'Le Roman latino-américain.' And G.M. Vajda, in addition to discussing the topic 'European Literature — American Literature' (I, 21-6), reported on the status of the 'Histoire comparée des

littératures de langues européennes' (1, 555-9) as well as presiding over the *post partum* analysis of the first published volume in the series, *Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon* (summarized in 1, 561f.), copies of which he had brought with him from Budapest. (What a pity that the *Proceedings* offer no record of the sessions devoted to Robert Escarpit's *Dictionnaire international des termes littéraires* and conducted by Alain Boisson — presumably because that enterprise, which is finally reaching the stage of fruition, is no longer officially sponsored by the ICLA!) The only *congressiste* whose double contribution creates a slightly jarring effect is Rosa Valdes-Cruz, whose papers 'Huella Africana en la literatura cubana' (1, 323-6) and 'African Heritage in Cuban Folktales' (1, 327-30), placed back to back, show some signs of overlapping.

According to the 'Guidelines for the Editing of ICLA Proceedings' issued in March, 1974, the *Acta* of the meetings of our organization are to constitute a reasonably fair and complete record of the given event. While the editors of the current set have obviously done their best to meet this challenge, they have not uniformly succeeded, in my opinion. Thus a check of the Table of Contents against the Program and my, admittedly unreliable, personal memory shows that several papers delivered in the two Canadian host cities are missing for whatever reason — among them István Sötér's presidential address, major communications by Manfred Naumann, Benjamin Hrushovsky and Jean Alter, as well as contributions to various panels, such as Heitor Martins' comments on the Latin American novel.\* Conversely, two papers not actually read by their authors — Henryk Markiewicz and Rita Schober respectively — have been included, one assumes because, as the 'Guidelines' have it, a *vis major* was to blame for the non-participation of these esteemed members.

One of the aspects emphasized in the 'Guidelines' is the *longueur raisonnable* of the published contributions. This means that there should be a reasonably close correlation between the length of the papers as actually presented and as subsequently printed: twenty minutes/four printed pages in the case of regular presentations, forty minutes/eight printed pages in that of major lectures. In the vast majority of cases, this rule of thumb has been adhered to, a crass exception having been made in the case of Rita Schober, whose presentation 'Zum Problem der

\* Contributions mentioned here and others which have been missed by the reviewer later in his text, have either not been submitted to the editors, despite a number of invitations and reminders, or their respective authors have specifically preferred that they not be published. M.V. Dimić/E. Kushner

literarischen Wertung' (II, 497-524) is a veritable treatise, complete with charts, to the tune of roughly fifteen thousand words. Other contributors enjoy 'favoured nation' status by having been allowed to add lengthy bibliographies (Paul G. Zolbrod on 'Native American Poetry with Emphasis on the Navajo') or to amass footnotes out of all proportion (Hans Galinsky on the Colonial Baroque, Danielle Johnson-Cousin on Madame de Staël's reception in the U.S., and John L. Brown on American exoticism in French Literature between the wars). At the other end of the spectrum, we find, next to appropriately succinct introductions to, and summaries of, various symposia, a few synopses substituting for full-length papers published elsewhere by themselves (I, 135; I, 293) or as part of a larger whole (II, 247f.).

Before discussing the overall structure of the Proceedings, I should like to state emphatically that it is high time for the governing body of the ICLA, in conjunction with future congress organizers, to revise the by now traditional scheme, which is both cumbersome and counterproductive. I wholeheartedly agree with Roger Bauer and Erwin Koppen — not Köppen, as his name is erroneously spelled throughout — who, writing in *Arcadia* (9 [1974] 110-12), bemoan 'die Zwänge eines Systems, das bis jetzt von allen akzeptiert wurde, dessen Nachteile aber umso krasser hervortreten, je größer der Kreis der aktiven Teilnehmer ist.' Our West German colleagues justly complain that too many sessions were held concurrently and that 'unter einem gegebenen Etikett auch Referate untergebracht werden, die nur ungefähr in den gegebenen Rahmen passen.' With them I plead for a tougher selection and a more sophisticated articulation of future congress programs, including a clear-cut distinction between 'prinzipiellen Beiträgen, die von der Thematik her auf ein breites Interesse stoßen müßten, und anderen, spezielleren, die "en petit comité" vorgetragen werden könnten.'

As for the arrangement of the varied materials in the two-volume *Proceedings* for which they are responsible, the editors candidly admit: 'Le congrès ne fut que l'occasion vivante de la rencontre des idées; en reclassant les communications nous avons été attentifs aux relations qui s'établissent parmi elles' (I, 13; II, 15). In my view, they have done themselves and their readers a disservice by multiplying categories. The redistribution which they find necessary or desirable entails, much to this reader's chagrin, a tearing apart of that which belongs together, i.e., of the ingredients of holistically conceived panel discussions. What is worse, they have not supplied a rationale for this wilful act of dismemberment. Can Orpheus survive under such conditions?

Now to the specifics of the organization. As for Volume One, the overall theme which it recapitulates was, at the Congress itself, broken

down into four subdivisions, to wit (1) Causes and Aspects of the Breaking away of the American Literatures from their Literatures of Origin, (2) The subsequent Relationship between American Literatures and their Literatures of Origin, (3) Relationships among the Literatures of the Americas: Resemblances and Differences, and (4) Relationships between American and other Literatures. Both from a logical and chronological angle that looks like an eminently sensible arrangement. In the *Proceedings*, these four categories have been, just as sensibly, retained, but some of the labels have been slightly, though significantly, altered. Thus in category 1 the term *rupture*, implying a more or less violent separation, has been replaced by the more organic and 'receiver'-oriented *naissance*, and in category 2 the phrase 'subsequent relationship' has been replaced by the conventional and much maligned term 'influences.' In the process of reorganization, several papers have actually been shifted from one domain to another.

Since the number of papers read in each of the subsections of Theme A was exceptionally large, the editors have introduced further refinements by subdividing the subdivisions into 4, 4, 4 and 3 units respectively. This works rather nicely in some cases, such as 11, 4 (Surrealism in the Americas — actually the proceedings of a stimulating round-table discussion organized by Renée Riese Hubert) and 14, 2 (The Image and Myth of America), but is rather questionable in others. Thus I see no clear line of demarcation between 1, 1 (The European Heritage and the Inception of American Literatures) and 1, 3 (The Coming of Age of American Literature), at least not as far as the actual content is concerned; and why has Paul-André Bourque's *Referat* on 'L'Américanité du roman québécois' (or, rather, what is left of it) been spliced off from the contributions assembled under 11, 2 (French/Canadian [Quebec] Literature)? Would it not have been more logical to publish Renée Legris' paper on 'La Littérature radiophonique du Québec: Ses relations avec celle des États-Unis' under the same heading, rather than unicellularly in its own niche labelled 'Other Interactions'?

Under Theme A the Program lists four panel discussions, recognizable as such by the fact that, while the names of the participants are given, the titles of their communications are not. Only one of these round tables, the one on Surrealism in the Americas (1, 237-63), has been left intact, while three of the four contributions to another one (The Theme of the Negro in the Literatures of the Americas) are printed *en bloc* as part of a larger subsection but without reference to their original linkage. The papers offered in the session devoted to the Latin American novel have been scattered through Volume One; and the three sets of observations contributed to the panel on The Emerging Literatures and their Place in



Comparative Literature' have been shifted to Volume Two, where they appear tautologically under the identical headings 'Introduction to the Panel Discussion "Emerging and Neglected Literatures: Their Place in the Traditional Spectrum of Comparative Literature" ' in the section labelled 'Pedagogical Problems.'

The panel discussions reproduced in Volume Two have fared just as badly, on the whole, with the notable exception of the symposium on 'Periodization in Twentieth-Century Literature,' organized by this reviewer (II, 183-205). What I, for one, find especially frustrating are the frequent references in the text to links that have been torn asunder and chains that can no longer be reconstructed. To mention only two especially glaring examples: (1) All that remains of the plenary session on 'Avant-Garde Movements as Catalysts in the History of Literatures' (p. 37 of the Program) are the brief communications by Roberto F. Retamar, Miklós Szabolcsi and Naïm Kattan, which are physically separated by the insertion of Edward Mozejko's paper on 'The Avant-Gardes in Slavic Literatures of the Twentieth Century' (II, 209-10) — a contribution that is mentioned neither in the Program itself nor among the reserve papers, and of which I do not know whether it was actually delivered. But in II, 212, Professor Szabolcsi is reported to have contested 'les thèses de Mme. H. Cixous' which, although presented on August 18 in the auditorium of the National Library in Ottawa, are unaccountably missing in the published *Proceedings*. (2) The panel on periodization in nineteenth-century literature (p. 44 of the Program) was presided over by Henry H.H. Remak, whose introductory and concluding remarks, needed to round out the proceedings as printed in II, 151-62, are nowhere to be found, although his initial charge to the panelists, asking them to 'choose a *particular* movement of the nineteenth century and sketch some problems arising from the application of that *particular* periodization to another European or American country' is mentioned by Peter Boerner (II, 161).

Volume Two enshrines all communications pertaining to Theme B (Comparative Literature and Modern Literary Scholarship) and the three clusters of symposia already referred to, as well as a round table on radio drama and one concerned with the ties between literature and cinematography. Subsection 1 (pp. 21-213) embodies the papers read under the general heading 'What are the Ways of Articulating and Periodizing the Process of History in Comparative Literature?' (B 1 of the Program). By and large, these may be seen as a sequel to the discussion begun at the Budapest conference of December, 1971 (see the first issue of *Neohelicon*) and vitally linked to the 'Histoire comparée ...' project of the ICLA. This portion of the *Proceedings* is further broken down into a sec-

tion on 'Principles' (pp. 21-70) and one devoted to 'Specific Approaches' (pp. 73-119). Of the six panel discussions on various facets of this question held during the congress — two of them focused on esthetic and philosophical aspects, and the remaining four on specific period styles —, five have been published more or less fully, though not always in sequence.

Subsection II of the volume, entitled 'Methods of Analysis' offers a record of the conference activities gauged to subthemes 2 ('The Contribution of Cultural Anthropology to Comparative Literature Studies') and 4 ('The Analysis of the Literary Discourse and Comparative Literature'). It consists of four parts labelled 'Anthropological Method' (pp. 219-44), 'Sociological Method' (pp. 247-91), 'Formal (Structural, Semiotic, Stylistic) Methods' (pp. 295-402), and 'Analysis of Newer Art Forms: Film and Radio in their Relationships with Literary Studies' (pp. 405-21). Insofar as the number of topics relevant to the anthropological approach was predictably small, the rather flexible and far more generous category 'Sociological Method' was generated by the editors in order to accommodate papers on such patently non-comparativist subjects as 'French Book Production in the Nineteenth Century: New Materials, New Methods' and 'Le Dénouement de *Tartuffe* et le spectateur privilégié: Situation et problématique.' Being moderately conservative with regard to any working definition of our discipline, I also question the pertinence of such communications as Werner Krauss' 'Quelques Remarques sur l'anthropologie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,' which is almost exclusively limited to France, and Thomas Pavel's '*Phèdre* de Racine: Esquisse d'une grammaire narrative.' I personally feel that an overly broad conception of what the term Comparative Literature signifies is to blame for this sad state of affairs. Matters are not helped by the slightly ambiguous phrasing of the key sentence in the revised Statutes, which now reads: 'The International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) aims to develop the study of Comparative Literature, which includes the study of literary history, literary theory, and *text interpretation*, undertaken from an international comparative point of view' [italics mine].

Communications concerned with 'Problems of Evaluation,' corresponding to Congress Theme B III ('The Concept of Value in Comparative Literature'), are gathered in a section (pp. 427-580) subdivided into segments entitled 'Establishment and Practice of Aesthetic Value Judgements with Respect to Literary Works of Art' — a tortuous phrase, if ever there was one — and 'The Dialectic of Text and Context in the Production of Literary Values.' Once again, the distinction is rather tenuous, and it is hard to see why a paper like Maria Strzalkowa's '*Valeur intrinsèque ou extrinsèque de l'œuvre littéraire?*' should have been



deposited in one compartment and Nicolas Popa's 'Le Problème de la valeur en critique comparée' in another. And there is the methodologically significant question whether the notion of value, when treated on a theoretical level, should be raised within the pale of *Literaturwissenschaft* or whether the branch of philosophy known as esthetics should lay claim to it.

To round out the survey of the organization of materials in the *Proceedings*: Subsection 4 of Volume II, labelled 'Special Problems in Comparative Literature' (pp. 585-728), offers under the heading 'Intercultural Literary Relations' a transcript of the East-West and Africa-America symposia and under the heading of 'Pedagogical Problems' the texts of some — approximately one third — of the contributions made to the discussion of that important topic. One suspects that a number of the remarks volunteered in the sessions were improvisatory in nature and, hence, unsuited for publication.

While it was clearly within my range of competence to judge the structure of the *Proceedings* (whose usefulness would have been vastly enhanced by the inclusion of an *index nominum*, if not *rerum*), I do not see how I could do justice to the wealth of subjects which the two volumes spread out before our eyes. Hopelessly outclassed by Leonardo da Vinci as an *uomo universale* and by Diderot as an encyclopedist, I will nevertheless venture a few critical observations, full well realizing that it would be vain to look for a common denominator or for a yardstick with which to measure the comparative or proportionate value of the diverse contributions.

One thought that occurred to me as I proceeded to worm my way through the nearly 1300 densely packed pages of the *Actes* was that the subjects (authors, works or concepts) touched upon with varying intensity and depth were partly familiar or even commonplace (Madame de Staël, Ezra Pound, *Moby Dick*, Epic Theater, *Weltliteratur*, Romanticism), and partly strange or even esoteric ('Transmission of Knowledge by Antero Vipunen to Väinämöinen in *Kalevala* and by Sukra to Kacha in *Mahabharata*, 'The Poetic Marriage between Arabic and Hausa'). However, I soon came to realize that, more often than not, originality lies in the method rather than in the matter, and that sometimes that which promised to be stale, flat and unprofitable gained unexpected significance by the way in which it was presented.

On the whole, the tone maintained in these volumes is one of high seriousness, at times degenerating into *tierischer Ernst*. (How fortunate that, unlike the participant who must keep up appearances, the reader/reviewer can afford to yawn when the demon of noontide strikes!) All the more refreshing, therefore, the few personal and

biographical digressions, such as Victor Hell's reminiscences, based on 'un certain nombre de témoignages vécus' (I, 427), of the expatriate Gertrude Stein, and Leonhard Fiedler's forthright account of 'Max Reinhardt's American Experiences.' A touch of humor, if not of the poet, was added by the eminent Africanist Bernth Lindfors (II, 727f.), who somewhat mischievously charges Comparative Literature with being a 'loose, baggy discipline with a stiff, narrow neck' and likens it to a dying dinosaur which 'suddenly constricts, curls up into a relatively small ball, and petrifies.' And as if to demonstrate that the Brave New World is still with us, S.E.G. Curtis, author of an otherwise wellwrought 'Comparison between Gilbert White's *Selborne* and William Bartram's *Travels*,' ingenuously hopes that during the Congress he would, at long last, learn 'what on earth "periodization" and "semiology" mean, and other concepts that are creeping under the "comparative" umbrella' (I, 140).

As for the critical and theoretical approaches taken, and techniques of analysis used, within the scope of the *Proceedings*, their number is legion. Thus one encounters rather sweeping surveys of multilateral relations over a period of time (Vera Calin's paper on the 'Influence de la prose américaine du xx<sup>e</sup> siècle sur le discours littéraire européen'), eclectic bouquets (Sarah Lawall's 'Relativity of Literary Values,' Mojmir Grygar's 'La Sémiologie et l'analyse comparative des arts' and many others), dogmatic pronouncements (Claus Träger's 'Weltgeschichte, Nationalliteratur — Nationalgeschichte, Weltliteratur'), *explications de textes* (Yuan-Shu Yen's ' "Since Your Departure": An Analysis'), comparisons based on rather far-fetched analogies (Paul Mankin on Nathanael West and Boris Vian), and poorly constructed theoretical edifices (George Szanto's 'Comparative Diachronics').

A startling number of communications justify the strictures made in René Wellek's polemical and hard-hitting paper on 'Science, Pseudo-Science and Intuition in Recent Criticism' (II, 465-9) by indulging in statistical exercises. Thus Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, in 'Towards a Comparative Analysis of Poetic Diction,' quantifies 'dominant forms of syntactic complication' in the works of poets like Longfellow, Swinburne and Arany (II, 333), and Nabaneeta Sen ('Thematic Structure of Epic Poems in the East and the West') makes a quantitative study of the frequency with which divine rejoicings, mutilation, cosmic disruptions and thirty-five other 'themes' occur in thirteen major epics. Throughout, it is evident that Comparative Literature as it is preached and practiced today suffers from the same chronic indigestion known as *Methodenpluralismus* that plagues all of modern *Literaturwissenschaft*. (It may well be a blessing in disguise.) Fortunately, we are not always on the receiving end but, on occasion, contribute a method partly or wholly

our own. Thus the seventies witnessed the Phoenix-like rise, out of cold ashes, of *Imagologie* in the Aachen School of Hugo Dyserinck; and, as these *Proceedings* demonstrate, the eighties may one day be remembered as the age of *mentalité-ologie*, a scion of *Geisteswissenschaft* that stresses psychological constants in the *Zeitgeist* — at least if one is to judge by the vigorous activities mounted by several Romanian scholars under the leadership of Alexandru Duțu, whose paper on 'Le Rythme des contacts culturels et l'évolution des mentalités' (11, 109-11) is a lucid exposé of the new tack.

The 'absolute' quality of a scholarly work can be high or low regardless of the author's ideological stance or methodological preference; it largely depends on a writer's intellectual maturity, his expertise and the scope of his esemplastic power. The *Proceedings* offer numerous examples of firstclass scholarship in papers which, at times enhanced by brief prefatory remarks on method, excel in matters thematic, structural or stylistic. I cannot list them here *in toto* but would like to mention a handful of those which gave me pleasure — *de gustibus non est disputandum* — and lightened the reviewer's burden. To the reader who merely wishes to browse and sample the best Comparative Literature has to offer I recommend Itamar Even-Zohar's 'The Relations between Primary and Secondary Systems in the Literary Polysystem' (despite its loftiness), Claudio Guillén's 'Narrative Forms in Literary History,' Danielle Bonnaud-Lamotte's 'Dans quelle Mesure le théâtre populaire oriental peut-il être une source de renouvellement pour le théâtre populaire occidental?', R.K. Das Gupta's 'Indian Responses to Western Literature in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,' Adalbert Dessau's 'L'Investigation de la littérature latino-américaine et les méthodes comparatives,' Walter Paché's 'Symbolism vs. Allegory: Whiteness in Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, Melville's *Moby Dick* and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*' (in spite of the jaded subject), and Harry Levin's urbane 'Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and the Idea of Comparative Literature.' Other pieces, while less accomplished in their totality, yield unsuspected nuggets in the form of felicitous thoughts and neat formulations.

As for the debit side of the ledger this public accountant is charged with inspecting, the less said the better. The partial shortcoming or total failure of certain papers results partly from fuzzy thinking, partly from sloppy presentation, and partly from the kind of eclecticism that finds expression in the use of clichés and fashionable catchwords. Bound by their pledge to be fair and impartial, the editors clearly had no choice but to include even those submissions which, to use a Flaubertian expression, might better have been left in mouldy corners. Let us hope that with the anticipated changes in the 'Guidelines,' whose existence we owe to

special circumstances, their successors will have some freedom of choice, such as the editors of the Innsbruck *Proceedings* have actually proclaimed.

Reviewers have to live up to their nasty reputation of being nitpickers, people who love to smell a rat, if only to show that they have done their homework. Speaking in this vein, I feel obliged to say, by way of a Scientific Postscript, that the Montreal/Ottawa *Proceedings* are by no means flawless as far as factual accuracy and typographical neatness are concerned. But can the editors be blamed for failing to note that Goethe never attended the Berlin meeting of scientists held in 1828 (I, 21), that Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of our Teeth* does not really deal with a scientist's dilemma (I, 533), and that *topos* is not synonymous with *theme* (II, 79) — to name only a few flies in the ointment? Probably not. On the other hand, they should have noticed that Felice Pastorello's essay on a French version of the *Dreigroschenoper* (II, 375ff.) is 'quotationally' unreliable, that Joseph Strelka edits a *Yearbook of Comparative* (not: *Contemporary*) *Criticism* (II, 625), and that the Helmut referred to by Victor Hell (I, 413) bears the name Heissenbüttel (not Heisenhüttel). And Günter Grass, staunch Social Democrat though he is, would not have allowed his character to be *Östlich betäubt* (I, 421) under any circumstances. Amusing or slightly annoying slips of the pen or the composition machine, these sporadic patches hardly diminish the overall value of these *Actes* which, like their six antecedents, truly 'témoignent de l'évolution de la discipline, de ses préoccupations [et] de ses besoins sur le plan de l'enseignement et de la recherche' (I, 11; II, 13); and the reviewer (who teaches at Indiana University rather than the University of Indiana), having accomplished his feat as an intellectual long-distance runner, though exhausted from his exertions, collapses with a smile.

*Indiana University*