

*BETH SWAN. *Fictions of Law: An Investigation of the Law in Eighteenth-Century Fiction*. Anglo-Amerikanische Studien/Anglo-American Studies 9. Berlin: Peter Lang, 1997. 231 pp.

The field of law and literature persists in both legal and literary studies for several reasons, including the sheer mass of imaginative, mimetic engagement with law by authors and, hence, by their audiences. The examples multiply, like litigants, in Western literatures. Beth Swan furthers work on the English eighteenth-century. In large part, she undertakes to provide a corrective to literary criticism where it underplays law altogether or effectively ignores the legal matrices that specifically allow for the impotence or economic entrapment of women. These are marriage law; law, property and finance; and virtue, especially female virtue, taken as a legal and financial matter. For Swan, the eighteenth is a long century, where women's rights over property in marriage did not materially improve before 1822 (96-97). Swan also investigates the criminal law. In effect, her focus is substantially feminist but not exclusively so. Swan would amend criticism that treats the law as a symptom, usually of politics and economics, which the law overlays and which are presumed to exceed it in explanatory power. As a corrective the book should be critically read and used, both for its insistence on the role of law in the literature and for the illuminating readings it provides to demonstrate that importance. Yet, the victim of its own success, *Fictions of Law* opens substantial avenues into the mutual lifeworld of contemporary law and literature, only to leave me at least aware of the opportunities missed because these routes are not explored as far as could be wished. I suspect that Swan is aware of this shortcoming; indeed, her conclusion points to wider ranges of discourse on law and literature. As it stands, the book makes a good contribution to the field and stimulated me to re-read Defoe's work, amongst others whose fiction Swan analyses.

In the introduction, Swan analyses the law as an entertainment and a preoccupation general throughout eighteenth-century society and argues for the need for criticism to engage eighteenth-century women novelists more seriously, because of the cogency and persistence of their attention to jurisprudence. Thus, Swan deals not only with a standard canon, including Richardson, Fielding and Swift, but also with Frances Sheridan, for instance. The book's main strength consists, I think, in the legal history Swan brings to her readings. For instance, her argument that the Gothic motif of female imprisonment reflects experience and anxiety about the law's application against women should build students' appreciation of the genre, as well as contribute to scholarship. In any case, one should read *Fictions of the Law*

with an understanding of legal historiography. Understandably, Swan presumes specialist knowledge, but those without it may come to a patchy understanding of the law and its ramification for the literature she treats. Critics and teachers who do not know the area could do much worse than turn to Swan's apparatus. She certainly does not hide her use of acknowledged works, such as J.M. Beattie's *Crime and the Courts in England 1660-1800* (1986). *Fictions of Law* could be more expansive, and less focused on rebutting critics – at points I wondered whether it grew from Swan's doctoral thesis – and certainly could have been less Anglocentric, since Swan's work in French literature is listed on the book jacket. I would also have liked a more diverse mix of methodology. Still, all such cavils do not obscure the worth of the book. I shall use it as a guide to reflection on law and entertainment, in our century as in the eighteenth; for classroom preparation; and in my research.

If there is a substantially troubling aspect to the book, it is in the literary historiography in play. Swan's argument is convincing, that criticism's underplaying of the law leads to misunderstanding of the critique in fiction of the treatment of women. At points, however, Swan would have us see value in the popular but non-canon woman writer *by virtue* of her place in the line leading to Mary Wollstonecraft. Such an approach can occlude our understanding of popular culture, insofar as it inadvertently puts the value of such works to be their culmination in some greater career – in the process eliding the actual processes of production and reception. Such an approach to canon diversification seems to me at least to give the devil more than his due, largely by assimilating in its method the model of some "great line" of writers. Popular culture and canon-formation are two topics in which the book comes close to making more of a contribution to law and literature but does not do so. This is a general shortcoming, which as I read became a source of frustration for me, given the book's real virtues.

In other words, *Fictions of Law*, by being a good guide to the law in the fiction, makes the avenues it does not explore snap into focus for us. The question of production and reception, just broached above, is most salient in this regard. Law, crime and punishment (mutilations, hangings, decapitations) made for the stuff of spectacle – were a social obsession motivating journalism and entertainment, as Swan indicates, repeatedly. Just how did the production of fiction with legal elements fit with this obsession? What were the channels for this fiction's reception by its audiences? Answers to such questions require situating novelists in the fuller, detailed context of debates on legal reform. As well, such work could lead to the study of comparative fictionalized law. Swan adroitly focuses on how French, or Italian Inquisitorial, law were both "Englished," yet left alien. Inasmuch as law, or reformed law at any rate, seems to have been taken to express powerful norms, non-English law was alternately a reproach to England and something to be reproached itself. This

dual phenomenon could be analysed in depth, not the least in the aspect of gender. How did contemporary legal expressions of patriarchal control compare across countries, and how did literatures approach these? In summation, reading *Fictions of Law* provides not only a substantial treatment of the eighteenth-century English material, but spreads out for us a sense of the rewarding work that remains to be done in historiography, theory and comparative literature around the law. (DAVID BARKER, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO)

*ZHANG LONGXI. *Mighty Opposites: From Dichotomies to Differences in the Comparative Study of China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998. ix + 248 pp. US\$ 49.50, cloth.

Coming as it does amid the current scholarly debates over cross-cultural theorization, Zhang Longxi's *Mighty Opposites*, which is marked by precision, clarity, insight and scrupulously detailed scholarship, constitutes a timely contribution to the cross-cultural study of China. Zhang's vast expertise in the subject of East-West cultural relations is apparent throughout his broad-gauged discussion, of which the central polemical thrust is the "counterargument against the relativist paradigm and its dichotomous view of the East and the West" (14). Until recently, as Zhang points out in the introductory section, the studies of the problematic relationship between China and the West were characterized by "a rigid and mutually exclusive dichotomy" (12); and associated with this dichotomy were growing formalization and elaboration of differences between Chinese and Western literatures and cultures. In response to the "overemphasis on difference" in the academic study of China or non-Western cultures, Zhang deems it "absolutely necessary to point out the many similarities, what is shared and common in languages, literatures, and cultures of the East and the West" (13). Accordingly, his book purports "to call for genuine efforts at understanding that does not reduce China to a fantastic mirror image of Western desires, fantasies, and stereotypical notions" (14). In a broad perspective, Zhang's efforts can be seen as embodying a self-reflexive attempt to present China anew before the West and to re-examine China's cultural identity in relation to Western pre-conceptions.

As Zhang has pointed, the image of China is oftentimes an overdetermined discourse that has been constructed from a Western perspective. In the case of Chinese cultural identity, Western scholars have played an important role in setting up an Orientalist epistemological frame in which the intellectual locus of ideological control does not lie inside but outside of China. For a long time, Chinese culture comes to be represented

by virtue of Western interpreters who have the privilege as well as the authority over their images/imaginings of China. In the first chapter entitled "The Myth of the Other," Zhang traces the changing images of China in Western cultural history and presents some judicious observations on the issue of cross-cultural representation. Based on Said's theory about Western construction of the Orient, Zhang's discussion adumbrates two general patterns in Western conceptualization of China as either "an idealized dreamland" or "a symbol of stagnation and backwardness." Both conceptions, which are inherent in the writings of many Western thinkers and writers ranging from Leibniz, Voltaire, Defoe, Reichwein, Bacon, Foucault to Barthes, are "distorting misrepresentations" that must be demythologized. "To demythologize the Other," Zhang emphasizes, "is not to become self-alienated in adopting alien values, but eventually to come back to the self with rewarding experiences" (53). Drawing on Gadamer's concepts of hermeneutic "fusion of horizons" and Hegel's idea of "theoretical *Bildung*," Zhang attempts to define cross-cultural understanding as a process of self-cultivation, "which is neither projecting the self onto the Other nor erasing the self with the Other's alterity" (53). In other words, what Zhang tries to assert is not a simple rejection of the image of the Other, but a cross-fertilizing cultivation that is to be located at the nexus of double refutation of both "the self's subjective projection" and "its illusion of a total identity with the Other" (14).

One of the points that Zhang makes clear in the second chapter, "Montaigne, Postmodernism, and Cultural Critique," is that absolute dichotomy "reduces the one to the other's negative mirror image, and thus completely fails to recognize the reality of cultures and their interrelations" (56). Although this learned, elegantly written chapter continues to elaborate on the Western "mirror image" of the Other, it shifts its focus from China to "the New World" that Montaigne evoked in his critique of European culture in the sixteenth century. Following Lyotard and Eco, Zhang defines postmodernism as an ahistorical category that inscribes "an ironic revisit of the past" or "ironic use of the already used language to represent what cannot otherwise be represented" (61). In this sense, the barbarity of native Brazilian cannibals that Montaigne studied several hundred years ago can be "revisited" as a positive image of the Other, for Montaigne's image of barbarism does not prescribe the Other as "pure difference," but rather affirms "a shared, common humanity between the self and the Other" (81). Zhang's discussion of Montaigne, reinforced by his frequent references to Todorov and Foucault, provides a fresh perspective upon Chinese and other non-Western cultures which, Zhang insists, have "unexpected affinities" with the West. However, despite the many merits of this chapter, the results that it achieves are mixed. On the positive side, an alternative approach to the image of the Other is clearly laid out and the anachronistic reading of Montaigne as postmodern

will be of great interest to those who are concerned with the question of cross-cultural affinities. Nevertheless, it is not entirely justifiable to compress Montaigne's ideas into the framework of "postmodernism," a label not corresponding to the conventional usage that Zhang adopts in his later chapters. In addition, the binary values of the "barbarian" and the "civilized" that Montaigne stresses in his *Essays* do not really overturn the dichotomy between the West and the Rest, but rather imply another rigid cultural construction that needs a wide array of unmakings.

The limitations of Zhang's study of Montaigne are to a great extent a reflection of the difficulty of the topic, which is doubtless not susceptible to any easy explication. Obviously, Zhang is not unaware of the challenge, as he continues to trace the developments of the dichotomous cultural constructs and their "undesirable consequences" within Western history in the third chapter entitled "Jewish and Chinese Literalism." One of the most interesting observations that Zhang brings up in this chapter is the opposition between Hellenism and Hebraism "inside" the Western tradition, which is analogous to the "outside" opposition between the East and the West. Although the range of his discussion covers a wide spectrum of issues, Zhang's main focus in this chapter is on the Christian typological and allegorical exegesis of the Bible and the seventeenth-century European debate on "Chinese rites." Zhang presents a perceptive analysis of the complicated relationship between Hellenic and the Hebraic cultures, which manages to pry away the layers of the "exaggerated anthropomorphism" and "purblind literalism" and shows the real Logos that lie within. Zhang argues that the problem of "sharp antithesis" between Hellenism and Hebraism should be examined in relation to a wider picture of dichotomies in general; and one of the major conclusions that emerge from Zhang's observations is the arbitrary, erratic, and fortuitous nature of all dichotomous structures. To Zhang's dismay, the old erroneous views of dichotomy that seriously obstructed adequate cross-cultural understanding can still be found in some areas of current Chinese studies.

While the first three chapters deal with Western (mis)conceptions of China in the past and comment on a variety of works by authors of different time periods, the last three chapters, which are extensively documented and informed with the most current works in the field, are organized to offer a detailed and inclusive view of modern China and Chinese studies today. In these chapters, Zhang expands upon the problematic interactions between Western theories and the social and political conditions in China at the present time. Chapter 4 "Out of the Cultural Ghetto" provides a subtle and necessary transition from the discussion of the East-West dichotomy in the past to the contemporary studies of Chinese literature and culture. Zhang seems to get most upset by what he views as "self-imposed ghettoization" in the field of Sinology, arguing that the East-West dichotomy has restricted Sinology to "a

narrow and esoteric field, closed off from the larger intellectual community in Western academic institutions and from the debates on important theoretical issues" (16). Zhang criticizes several Sinologists such as Stephen Owen and Pauline Yu for their "predilection for difference," arguing that "the radical difference between Chinese and Western tradition set up in Owen's and Yu's works has a tremendous appeal because some Western scholars are eager to see the non-Western world as a world of irreducible difference" (135). Furthermore, this predilection for difference, which helped ghettoize Sinology in the West, has created a wide gap between cultural signifiers and the signified, and made the theatricality of Chinese culture more spectacular than its content. Zhang seems to suggest that good Sinologists should keep themselves at once both inside and outside Chinese culture, for one of the best ways to break the ghettoization of Chinese studies is to engage in broader theoretical discussions of literature and culture and to re-contextualize Chinese studies in response to the rapid development of intellectual discourse beyond the boundaries of national and linguistic enclosures. Taking Fredric Jameson's reading of Lao She and Lu Xun as a positive example of the "sophisticated and insightful" study of Chinese literature, Zhang argues for multidimensional inquiries which, to Zhang's belief, would lead Chinese studies out of the cultural ghetto.

Zhang's discussion of cultural ghetto is related to other important questions such as what are the basic function and role that Western theory can assume in an intercultural dialogue between China and the West. While his criticism of cultural ghettoization is instructive and illuminating, his argument about Jameson's reading of Lu Xun is not likewise compelling. Although Jameson's concept of "national allegory" may apply very well to the reading of Lu Xun's stories, it is arguable that his sweeping theory can do any justice or good to Chinese literature or culture. The concept of "national allegory" is indeed useful in analyzing some Chinese or other Third World literary texts that reveal certain national collective desire; nonetheless, underneath the allegorizable desire often lies the vast amplitude of cultural complexity and particularity that probably only experienced specialists or "ghettologists" of a particular literature, language and culture can fully perceive. It would be desirable to open up a cultural ghetto, but it would be unpropitious to ruin the ghetto by denying its *ipso facto* particularity. As a well-trained Sinologist himself, Zhang is not unobservant of the potential pitfall of his "plea for openness" in Chinese studies; so he attempts to balance his view in the next chapter "Western Theory and Chinese Reality," in which he is more than willing to defend the particularity and uniqueness of Chinese studies. Zhang takes pains to criticize what he calls the "useless," "harmful," "facile" and "mindless" mimicry of Western theories. This epigonic mimicry, Zhang maintains, "not only obscures our understanding, but brings about

consequences that are not at all ideologically radical or liberating in the specific context of the Chinese society" (16).

Zhang's argument becomes increasingly contentious and polemical, as he goes on to perform the difficult task of reading contemporary Western theoretical discourse in the context of cross-cultural politics. He is particularly scathing about those "self-appointed leftist intellectuals" in the United States who are blind to or ignorant of the social condition and political reality of China. Zhang remarks with some justification that these intellectuals want to continue to keep China in their dreams as a sanctuary of revolutionary and utopian ideals, conceiving it as "the opposite to the decadent capitalist West." These left-wingers could write with great theoretical brilliance on China, but their theories, however sophisticated, tend to grow narcissistic when they lose contact with Chinese reality. Using the student demonstration and the massacre in Beijing in June 1989 as a testing case, Zhang shows how these leftist intellectuals failed to grasp Chinese people's aspirations for democracy in their theoretical bombast. The moral question that Zhang raises is "whether these armchair-dreamy revolutionaries have any concern for the quality of life, the suffering, the feelings, desires, and hopes of those people for whom China is not a place to dream about, but a reality of daily experience" (16). The gap between the leftist theoretical discourse of the West and the reality of China only suggests another myth of the Other.

Such an ingrained obsession of polarity between China and the West can be detected not only in Western academia, but also in recent critical discourse in China. In the last chapter of his book, "Postmodernism and the Return of the Native," Zhang examines the imported version of Third World criticism as well as the indigenous nativism in China to highlight the postmodern cross-cultural encounter that galvanized Chinese intellectuals to re-examine both China and its others from an Occidental, if not Occidentalist, viewpoint. The importation of postcolonial theories and Said's critical ideas about Orientalism and imperialism into China, however, did not really open up a new vision, but rather resulted in a narrow-minded nationalism that revived the old anti-imperialist discourse and anti-Western rhetoric of Cultural Revolution. "Transplanted into the Chinese context," Zhang observes, "Said's theory of Orientalism is employed to resituate a domestic cultural critique onto a map of global confrontation, in which sentiments of nationalism tend to be easily rekindled" (190). Rather than accepting Said's theory in its entirety and applying it to the critique of their own cultural and political system, some contemporary critics in China only picked up a few terms and concepts from Said and other Western postcolonial critics to advance a dyspeptic Chinese version of Third World criticism molded in the binary system of opposition between Third World victimization and Western imperialism. The development of such a Third World criticism points to a general problem

of nativist *mentalité* that is reflective of the conservative forces in China; and the imported criticism, in this sense, has become more part of the problem than the solution to today's Chinese studies, for it has intensified the dichotomous tension between China and the West. "With its edge pointing outward, not inward," Zhang writes, "such a criticism serves to divert any critique of the status quo from China to its imagined Other, and some of those patriotic 'postmodern' critics even ride on the tideway of a xenophobic nationalism in covering up every internal problem with a bogus enemy in the West" (17). Zhang's observation calls our attention to the Chinese version of the persistent dichotomous construction, and highlights the various manifestations of East-West misunderstanding, to which no simplistic theoretical formulae would provide a satisfactory answer. Whether or not every point in Zhang's detailed arguments will hold up in the long run, this book will certainly inspire us all to look more carefully at what we have previously taken for granted about China. There is no question that Zhang succeeds adequately, at times even brilliantly, in making us think more critically about the "mighty opposites" in cross-cultural studies. (BENZl ZHANG, CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG)

*CHRISTIAN RIEGEL and HERB WYLIE, eds. *A Sense of Place: Re-Evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1998. CDN\$ 24.95, paper. Also published as *Textual Studies in Canada* 9 (1997)

Regionalism is a form of cultural paranoia. It represents the irrational fear that if literature is not linked to the land, it will lose its *raison d'être*. Implicitly dependent on topography, regionalism is much more a topology, a welter of shifting spaces whose loci are as mutable as the correction lines that run through the prairies. This collection puts the paradox most forcefully in the record it provides of an *international* conference on regionalism, as Jonathan Hart subtly, if tellingly, points out in his Afterword. Neither here nor there, region occupies the territory staked out for Canadians by Northrop Frye, who dismissed the local and particular while giving them back in a pastoral myth of loss and resignation. Frye follows E.K. Brown in this regard; the two are linked by Alison Calder in her contribution to this volume through their desire to have "Canadians ... learn of the extent of their diversity in order to suppress it" (52).

But whether this diversity is marked off in regions is a large question. Much of our sense of regionalism is predicated on a map of provinces and territories that is less than a hundred years old. If you look at a map of Canada that is older than a century, you see different regions, different

configurations, implying different ways of understanding the literature produced there – if you must understand it this way. And where are the aboriginal peoples in this picture? As Frank Davey remarks in the introductory essay to this book, “a northern regionalism has not developed significant power in Canada because it has remained racially a white figuration, unable to compete with the discourses of race and ethnicity which structure the Inuit and Dene figurations of land and politics” (7). Davey reminds us that talk about regionalism is often a way of not talking about “gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, and race” (2). But the observation could be taken further by being turned back on itself: why not try to understand the *situatedness* of these interests, and how they too can constitute regions – the gay village, the gated enclave, the strip mall, Chinatown, all of which are at least as prominent in contemporary literature and critique than any region this book might care to describe.

The tectonic shift from place to space is not easy to define; my students from the Geography department read science fiction and watch film noir with me, however, so I know that it's taking place. *Taking place* – and giving back what? Perhaps first of all the knowledge that it is no longer necessary to obey the regionalist imperative while recognizing at the same time that this is not *carte blanche* for a universalist noetic. Perhaps the sense that space is constructed, that it is social, and to devolve that production onto thousands of square miles of shale or silt is to participate in the devolution of culture itself as a form of praxis as well as a form of knowing.

The way we know place today has certainly something to do with the media, as more than one of these authors asserts. Hart points out that there are now virtual regions, thanks to the internet. Calder suggests that regionalism might be a response to local/global tensions. Jeanette Lynes argues that media undermine traditional regional boundaries; her reading of Wayne Johnston's *Human Amusements* presents the most sustained discussion of this issue, though it ends up where most of the other essays in this collection end up, with the assertion that media are robbing us of our sense of difference in their bypassing of the regional. Richard Pickard goes for the full Monty in this regard, invoking the Global Village and condemning McLuhan for its current ascendancy. Pickard is perplexed that the global constantly invokes the local, largely because he indulges in the classic misreading of McLuhan as prophet of globalisation. To the “global village,” Pickard opposes “magic environmentalism,” though he does not convince this reader of its political efficaciousness. McLuhan's notion of the global village has entered the cultural lexicon because it captures the relational quality of that which Arjun Appadurai, drawing on McLuhan, calls the *scape*. The *scape* is *at once* here and there, thanks to the power of the social imaginary within a highly mediated culture, and it is in this superposition of the local and the global

that we arrive at a much more productive notion (politically, theoretically) than the regional (or the national, for that matter).

Of the authors in this collection who focus on Canadian literature, W.M. Verhoeven's discussion of Aritha Van Herk's “ageofeminism” interestingly complicates region with gender, though finally rejecting Van Herk's conflation of theory with fiction in a move that parallels the mimetic presuppositions of regionalism itself. Pickard writes about logging narratives in B.C., representing the regional as a form of resistance to multinationalism, though one is hard pressed to understand how texts by Hodgins et al achieve “cultural specificity” by invoking a magic realist intertextuality with Latin America. Calder writes about the necessity of asserting the regional in a world increasingly without boundaries, though this leads her to claim that a “prairie realist” novel such as Ross's *As For Me and My House* has rarely been described as a Canadian classic. Ross spent his career, in fact, putting the kibosh on regionalism, and perhaps nowhere more brilliantly than in “One's a Heifer,” which is certainly a classic of prairie surrealism.

Not all of these essays focus on Canadian literature; a number focus on American literature, and it would have been interesting to read a comparison of the ways in which region has been constructed within the two literatures. The comparatist aspect of the collection has its purchase, rather, through the interdisciplinary interests of the authors, though one has some misgivings when reading one author asserting that the notion of “going native” still has currency in anthropology, and that in some cases doing so is considered to be “beneficial.” Marjorie Pryse discusses a wide range of American regionalist texts, as well as a “postcolonial” text by Tsitsi Dangembga, concluding about the latter that she doesn't know “whether Zimbabwe has a concept of national literature, but if it does, *Nervous Conditions* writes from the regions”; this is the most accurate statement in the book of the relational quality of regionalism, though it comes at the price of an entire literature. Like Pryse, David Martin focuses on Sarah Orne Jewett, as well as Hamlin Garland, George Washington Cable, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and Joel Chandler Harris, all of the “local colour” school of American writing, reading them within and against an anthropological discourse, and in the context of the ambiguities of cultural knowledge. This is one of the few essays in the collection to see regionalism as a polyvalent notion; in most cases, the region is everything that its opposite – globalism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism – is not.

The cover of this attractively designed book has a monochrome photo by Sima Khorrami across its top half showing a person with their hands behind their head, fingertips just touching. The nails are painted a dark colour. The person is standing in the middle of a two lane road. From the camera's waist-level position, the sky appears criss-crossed with wires. It is dusk. An

illuminated neon sign and an approaching car can be seen on the left. Here, too, is a sense of place, and a reminder that that sense is a highly mediated notion. *A Sense of Place* would be complemented by a further set of essays discussing the ways in which regionalism is heightened by media, at the same time that it is placed in question. (RICHARD CAVELL, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA)

*JOHN BLAIR. *Tracing Subversive Currents in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Columbia: Camden House, 1997.

Ogleich die Forschung schon vor geraumer Zeit 'subversive' Züge in Goethes Altersroman *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* herausgearbeitet hat (z.B. Thomas Degering: *Das Elend der Entsagung. Goethes "Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre,"* 1982), konnte sich bei den *Lehrjahren* das eher affirmative Deutungsmuster des Bildungsromans bis in die Gegenwart hinein behaupten. Versuche, mit dieser Tradition zu brechen, gab es kaum. Den bedeutendsten stellt wohl Karl Schlechtas wenig rezipiertes Buch *Goethes Wilhelm Meister* (1953) dar, das auch als Bezugstext für die hier vorzustellende Studie fungiert. Ihr Verfasser John Blair knüpft ausdrücklich an Schlechtas Thesen an (vgl. 2), überbietet und radikalisiert sie freilich in seiner Argumentation noch. Blair geht es darum, "the suppressed details and values in the text" (1) zum Sprechen zu bringen, um auf diese Weise "a low-cultural, subversive vitality that mocks conservative, authoritarian powers" (1) aufzudecken. Dieser Ansatz vermag vor allem deshalb zu überzeugen, weil der Verfasser sich darauf beschränkt, einzelne Aspekte des Romans herauszuarbeiten, und ausdrücklich auf eine "closed, totalizing interpretation" (1) der *Lehrjahre* verzichtet.

Inspiziert von den theoretischen Ansätzen Foucaults und Bakhtins interessiert sich Blair besonders für bestehende Machtstrukturen, die er ebenso eindringlich analysiert wie er deren Subvertierung durch karnevaleske Elemente vorführt. So gelangt er zu dem Schluß: "The *Lehrjahre* is a vehicle for a critique of the upper and middle classes, their institutions of power, their legitimacy; it is also a vehicle for a valorization of rebellion, of sexuality, of lower class figures and institutions, of the personal expressiveness of art unmediated by authoritarian or prescriptive aesthetic precepts" (9). Als drittes theoretisches Leitmodell der Untersuchung fungiert der Gedanke einer "Dialektik der Aufklärung," wie er von Horkheimer und Adorno entfaltet worden ist. Blair möchte die *Lehrjahre* gern als grundsätzliche Auseinandersetzung mit der Aufklärung verstehen. Doch schon die Grundthese, daß der Roman "a heightened awareness of the problematic aspects of the Enlightenment" (21) spiegle, vermag nicht recht zu überzeugen. Vollends fragwürdig erscheinen dann jene apodiktischen Feststellungen Blairs,

die nicht falsifizierbare Behauptungen als erwiesen hinstellen. Mit generalisierenden Thesen wie: Barbara fungiere "as a grotesque figural representation of the Enlightenment" (34) oder Therese und Natalie verkörpern "cultural ideals and characteristic weaknesses of the Enlightenment" (155), fällt der Verfasser in genau jene totalisierende Argumentationsweise zurück, die er eigentlich vermeiden wollte. Bedauerlicherweise setzt Blair auf weite Strecken bürgerliche mit aufklärerischen Werten gleich und kommt so zu dem voreiligen Schluß, Goethe betreibe eine Fundamentalkritik der Aufklärung, wo er doch eher eine zeitgeschichtliche Selbstverortung seiner bürgerlichen Gegenwart vornimmt.

Insgesamt gesehen ist dieser Kurzschuß zwar ärgerlich, er fällt aber angesichts der sonst überzeugenden Argumentation nicht allzu sehr ins Gewicht. Gewünscht hätte man sich allerdings eine stärkere Einbeziehung der übrigen Werke Goethes. Obschon Blair zuweilen auf andere Texte des Autors verweist, bleibt sein Blick doch sehr auf die *Lehrjahre* fixiert. So versäumt er es etwa, im Kapitel "Collections" auf die geradezu strukturbildende Funktion der Sammlung in den *Wanderjahren* hinzuweisen, wo das Zusammentragen von Materialien nicht nur vielfach thematisiert, sondern in der Form des Archivromans sogar erzähltechnisch umgesetzt wird. Bedauerlich ist auch, daß der Verfasser *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* nur nach der englischen Übersetzung zitiert, so daß der Leser ohne den Wortlaut des Originaltextes auskommen muß.

Insgesamt gesehen liegt mit Blairs Untersuchung eine Arbeit vor, die in vielerlei Hinsicht neue Sichtweisen auf Goethes Roman eröffnet und die das intellektuelle Potential besitzt, eine lebhaftere Forschungsdiskussion anzuregen. Man würde sich wünschen, daß der Verfasser seine Fragestellung auf die *Wanderjahre*, ja mehr noch: auch auf die *Leiden des jungen Werthers* und die *Wahlverwandtschaften* ausweitete und in absehbarer Zeit eine umfassende Studie präsentierte, die Goethes gesamtes Romanschaffen auf seine subversiven Spuren hin analysiert. (WOLFGANG BUNZEL, DRESDEN)

*STEFAN GLOMB. *Erinnerung und Identität im britischen Gegenwartsdrama*. Mannheimer Beiträge zur Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft. Volume 34. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1997.

This is a book about memory and identity in contemporary British drama, or rather about how both individual and collective memory work to establish individual and collective identity in six more or less contemporary British plays, to wit Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, Harold Pinter's *Old Times*, James Saunders's *A Scent of Flowers*, David Hare's *Plenty*, Peter Shaffer's

Amadeus, and Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*. From the division of the book into numbered headings and sub-headings (familiar to anyone who has taught or studied in a contemporary German university literature department), as well as from its penchant for interpolating long and not always essential quotations, one can readily deduce its prior identity as a doctoral dissertation (at the University of Mannheim in 1995), though the official memory thereof is evoked only once and then in small type on the obverse of the title page.

Not that the prospective reader need fear being obfuscated by a cloud of dissertationese. On the whole Glomb succeeds in presenting his argument(s) lucidly and with adequate and appropriate supporting evidence. He is also aware of the need for a prefatory definition of terms, which he undertakes in a separate section entitled "Der theoretische Rahmen" (or "The Theoretical Framework"), which follows a preliminary clearing of critical space in which he disposes of two potential German rivals, Hubert Zapf's *Drama in der abstrakten Gesellschaft* (1988) which deals with the structure of modern British drama as it relates to British society, and Bernhard Reitz's *The Stamp of Humanity* (1993), which questions the validity of a purely sociological analysis of post-1956 British drama. Only then is Glomb free to proclaim his goal of showing how a literary analysis of the "problem of identity," such as the one provided here, will reach conclusions similar to analyses of identity carried out in other areas of scholarly endeavor, specifically in sociology and psychology. Basing his definitions largely on work carried out in those disciplines (as well as in philosophy and intellectual history), Glomb proposes that we should think of memory as a "construct of the past" established (and re-established) in the present, and that, similarly, identity is to be viewed as a continual process of self-construction and self-revision in the context of social interaction and individual biography. Both memory and identity, then, are fluid self-constructions, the necessary fictions of a modern age in which an abstract and open society (*Gesellschaft*), which coheres only by virtue of the cash nexus, has largely replaced a formerly rather more confining but also more nurturing community (*Gemeinschaft*), which provided for its citizens a more secure and stable identity.

Leaving aside for the moment the obvious objection that *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* (not to mention sociology, psychology, etc.) are themselves at least as much "constructs" as are memory and identity, one wonders if, given Glomb's working assumptions and definitions, memory and identity (and the link between them) were ever anything other than constructs or necessary fictions, or if, further, it is not true (and always was true) that once one embarks on any journey of abstraction and generalization such as this one, one is inevitably, like Odysseus, fated to encounter a variety of largely imaginary monsters. In other words, it seems that once one gives oneself over to the study of "constructs" rather than *realities* (even if only approximate

or probable literary, social or other realities), it becomes impossible to discriminate among constructs which are either more or less valid. Is Circe more valid than Cyclops? Or Penelope's web? Or even Odysseus himself?

There is something else here too, something more immediately relevant to the student of contemporary British drama or even of literature generally, namely the question of what sort of interest or use a study of identity and memory (and the relation between them) is in a specifically *literary* sense. In other words, even supposing Glomb's stated purpose of demonstrating that sociologically current concepts of identity and memory are confirmed by an examination of contemporary practice in selected British plays, what exactly have we learned in a specifically literary sense? Do I understand, say, *Krapp's Last Tape* better from an aesthetic point of view because I have come to know (or presumably know) that Krapp's identity is actually the result of a continual process of self-construction and self-revision? Or that his memory is also – and, in this case, quite literally – a construct on a tape-recording machine? Has my (again presumed) understanding of these facets of Krapp's personality and predicament increased my aesthetic appreciation of Beckett's play in any discernible way? Or are Glomb's findings of interest and use only to sociologists?

Let me answer this question at once by affirming that Glomb's analysis of Beckett's play (and of the other plays too, for that matter) is indeed of interest and use to students of literature and not merely to sociologists. But it is of interest not because it confirms (or denies) any sociological hypotheses, but because it succeeds in demonstrating the subtlety and complexity of Beckett's art. Without in any way singling out Glomb for censure in this context – for the phenomenon has become widespread in American as well as European departments of literature, especially English departments – one needs to remember what one's identity is. In the case of Glomb and most of his likely readers, their (our) primary professional identity is that of literary critics, scholars, and teachers, not sociologists. And one needs to remember too – memory is as important here as is identity – that while terms like identity and memory may and do have a tangential relevance to literary study, they need to be related to specifically literary terms (such as complexity and subtlety) if they are to become centrally relevant in a *literary* study such as this one. That is why, paradoxically but not, alas, uncommonly, Glomb's individual interpretations of plays are of critical and literary interest precisely because they often diverge from his ostensibly sociological agenda.

The real use of Glomb's study of contemporary British drama, it turns out, is that it shows how the past survives in complex and subtle forms into the present – how it does so existentially (and very much in opposition to Proust) in *Krapp's Last Tape*; how it reshapes itself in the struggle for personal domination in *Old Times*; how we are unable to escape its consequences in *A*

Scent of Flowers; how the loss of sometime collective illusions (in this particular case, of Empire) cannot be replaced by modern consumerism in *Plenty*, how a similar loss of personal faith in a world ordered by a just God leads to a pointless Romantic nihilism in *Amadeus*; and, finally, how historical and literary intertextuality culminates in the theatrically brilliant fireworks of *Travesties*. Though inevitably Glomb tries to stress the continuities of intent (primarily by way of memory and identity, as one might expect) among these plays – and though he does in fact often succeed in revealing suggestive links, as for example when he discusses the role Proust in both *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Old Times* – the impression one gets from reading through his individual interpretations is rather of the great variety and difference of contemporary British drama than of any alleged “identity” or homogeneity. Glomb is especially good at showing how contemporary British drama (notably Shaffer and Stoppard) has managed to incorporate psychological techniques, particularly those involving shifting points of view, that were previously thought to be confined to the novel. That is why Glomb's book can be warmly recommended to any literary person teaching a course in which one or more of these plays are included.

That is, of course, with the essential proviso that one is able to read German. For, naturally, except for the quotations from the plays and from some of the criticism, which are given in the original English, Glomb's text is written entirely in German. No doubt this means that his readership in Anglosaxondom will be even smaller than it might otherwise expected to be for a book of this type. That would/will, however, be a pity, for, as Glomb's own analyses and his many references to current German criticism of British drama suggest, some of the most original and interesting work in this area is being carried out in Germany and in German. One can only hope, therefore, that at least the major libraries in the English-speaking world will buy this book, if only to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the increasingly rare critic of English or American literature in the Western hemisphere whose memory and identity have not been formed exclusively by the English language. (PETER FIRCHOW, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA)

*GISELA BRUDE-FIRNAU. *Die literarische Deutung Kaiser Wilhelm II. zwischen 1889 und 1989*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C., 1996. 219 pp.

A history text used in Canadian high schools in recent years contains a pre-1914 Dutch cartoon that depicts Wilhelm II as a sword-wielding Falstaff. This image of a strutting buffoon captures the essence of Brude-Firnaus's examination of the Kaiser's appearance in German literature during the hundred years between Bismarck's dismissal and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It

does seem odd that scholarship has avoided until now a comprehensive study of writers' responses to a monarch who had such a decisive and disastrous influence on German development, especially since Brude-Firnaus's analysis of some sixty novels and the occasional essay, play and memoirs as historical documents proves that such a study can yield rewarding insights into both fiction and history.

True to the spirit of the Falstaff cartoon, Nietzsche's condemnation of Wilhelm's rule as a “*Theatokratie*” and Wilhelm's own admission (“das Theater ist auch eine meiner Waffen”), this study begins with a play, Ernst von Wildenbruch's *Die Quitzows* (1889), whose primary significance lies in its glorification of the first Hohenzollern margrave that strengthened Wilhelm's calamitous conviction of his divine right to rule. It is also a forceful reminder of his call for literature to foster the cult of his monarchy, so that writers who fell foul of imperial favour could be hounded by the law.

As Brude-Firnaus shows, writers confronted this intimidation in different ways. Ludwig Quidde disarmed the public prosecutor with satirical bravado in his essay *Caligula* (1894): everyone knew that Wilhelm was intended, but the authorities did not press charges, because a conviction would have entailed a public comparison of a mentally unstable Roman tyrant with Wilhelm, who, as a prince, had signed photographs with Caligula's motto, “*oderint dum metuant*.” Ironically, Maximilian Harden, motivated by genuine monarchist concern, attempted to correct Wilhelm's autocratic attitude (“*suprema lex regis voluntas*”) with satire in his weekly *Die Zukunft* and twice went to gaol for his pains. As Brude-Firnaus illustrates in the cases of Fontane, Ompfeda and Hermann, writers resorted at times to a form of self-censorship that allowed them to signal their clear disapproval without mentioning their ruler. Fontane in *Der Stechlin* (1898) heaped praise on the old Prussia and the first Emperor Wilhelm I; Ompfeda in his trilogy *Deutscher Adel um 1900* emphasized the military aristocracy, pointedly without mention of their supreme commander, as the guarantor of Germany's power; Georg Hermann in his opposition to the cult of militarism and personality expressed approval in his Berlin novels for Edward VII, the uncle whom Wilhelm detested.

Indirectly, Thomas Mann's *Königliche Hoheit* (1909) also advocated a ceremonial view of monarchy. Brude-Firnaus underlines the political character of the work by drawing attention to Prince Klaus Heinrich's physical resemblance to Wilhelm, including a shortened left arm. In this literary reworking of his own private obsession, Mann was able to identify with his monarch, who in his way, too, was a “*Held der Schwäche*,” another actor straining to keep up appearances.

The more widespread identification of the German middle classes with Wilhelm guides Brude-Firnaus's analysis of Bierbaum's *Prinz Kuckuck* (1907/08) and Heinrich Mann's *Der Untertan* (1914). Though she ranks Bierbaum's

novel as "der große Zeitroman des Wilhelmismus," (85) ironically her discussion of both novels' reflection of Wilhelm's shaping of German middle-class social psychology tends to argue in favour of the conventional view of *Der Untertan* as the more significant text. Her description of the intertextual connections between *Der Untertan* and Marx's analysis of Louis Napoleon and French society in *Der 18. Brumaire des Louis Napoleon* renders important insights into the genesis and intention of the novel. If Wilhelm, too, was an impostor, the farce that followed on tragedy, then the Germans who adopted his mannerisms and phrases and sported his W-shaped moustache, were in their turn caricatures of a caricature.

Marx's forecast that Louis Philippe would be France's ruin anticipated Mann's implicit message for Germany under Wilhelm's rule. The First World War forms the background to Kraus's *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* and the novels of ex-combatants such as Remarque and Plivier. Kraus's satire focused on Wilhelm's language during the war (including his Pontius Pilate-like rejection of responsibility, "Ich habe es nicht gewollt"), whereas the war novels, as Brude-Firnau demonstrates, document the failure of imperial rhetoric on front-line soldiers. They recognized in Wilhelm's morale-boosting visits the "Fronttheater" of a commander whose war service consisted of martial poses and hollow phrases. Defeat forced Wilhelm into exile but his baleful influence remained and helped Hitler to power. For instance, by receiving Göring, Wilhelm aided the Nazis to gain political respectability, and until 1933 the Nazis encouraged the monarchists to believe that a Nazi regime would restore Wilhelm. Brude-Firnau contends that even writers of noble origin (Lily Braun, Rudolf Stratz, Fritz von Unruh) with a sharp eye for Wilhelm's faults were not immune to a lingering emotional attachment to a discredited monarch.

In contrast to this widespread irrationalism, Brude-Firnau, borrowing a phrase from Sternheim, presents two "Ernüchterungsschriften für die Deutschen." Sternheim's story *Libussa: des Kaisers Leibproß* (1922), which through the eyes of his horse reveals Wilhelm above all as a fraud in his belief in his divine mission, and Heinrich Mann's *Der Kopf* (1925), which traces the decisions that led to disaster to the psychological symbiosis of Wilhelm and society. Hermann Broch's *Pasenow oder die Romantik* (1931) also probes the mind of ruler and ruled and Brude-Firnau's description of how Broch used Wilhelm as a model for Pasenow's character results in a psychogram that essentially unites the criticism of previous writers in one striking symbol: the uniform. Both Wilhelm with his stunted arm and Germany felt insecure and inferior, and both sought in a manner familiar to Adlerian psychology (rather than "in früher Freud-Nachfolge" [146]) to overcompensate by wearing military uniform and displaying aggressive masculinity. Thus the uniform belonged to the age's romanticism, the age's irrationalism, and the psychological need to wear a uniform united Wilhelm with Nazi Germany.

Brude-Firnau's review of writers' interpretations of Wilhelm since 1945 makes a somewhat perfunctory impression. Admittedly, the passage of time has made Wilhelm a more remote figure, but individual works in what Brude-Firnau calls a "Wilhelminisches Mosaik" seem to warrant a more extensive discussion of his continued presence. For instance, what Wilhelm signified to Böll in *Billard um halb zehn* (1959) deserves surely more than the remark that Wilhelm, like Hitler, belonged to those, "die vom 'Sakrament des Büffels' gegessen haben" (156). Brude-Firnau does greater justice to Wilhelm's viability as a symbol of negative continuity in her presentation of Dieter Kühn's *Herbstmanöver* (1977). In this play she sees the expression of the old irrationalism in new form: the exiled Wilhelm throws himself into manic activity (sawing wood) to prevent his mind from dwelling on his war guilt. Thus he stands as a symbol for a later generation of Germans who, after having served an even more neurotic and murderous ruler, buried themselves in the work of economic recovery both as a means of moral evasion and rehabilitation.

This continuity of irrationalism and symbolic relevance in literature serves as a reminder that Wilhelm is not solely the property of the professional historians. With this study of writers' responses to Wilhelm, Brude-Firnau has succeeded in combining history and literature to their mutual benefit. Her study represents a valuable commentary on the "Geschichte der öffentlichen Seele unter Wilhelm II." (Mann's intended subtitle to *Der Untertan*), in both senses of "Geschichte," in his own day and later. (COLIN FEWSTER, TRENT UNIVERSITY)

*ANDRÉ GENDRE. *Évolution du Sonnet Français*. Paris: PUF, 1996. FF 140 / EUR 21.34, paper.

It is in the space of the sonnet that the merging of generic conventions and individual ingenuity is best observed, Heather Dubrow concluded in *Genre* (Methuen, 1982), and it is this point that André Gendré's *Évolution du Sonnet Français* sets out to prove. Unfolding in three parts, the study creates a sequential panorama of classical French sonnet-writing, from the Renaissance (Ronsard, Du Bellay, d'Aubigné, Jean de Sponde) to what has been considered the classical phase of the form in nineteenth-century France (Nerval, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé). Despite the fact that Professor Gendré's notion of "évolution" in literary history appears slightly problematic, stressing continuity and intentionality instead of rupture and contingency, his use of historical interpretation, i.e. of the literary-critical tools of the time of the sonnets' production, is exemplary. So, for example, in Chapter One we learn about the notion of *emphasis* (174) and the twin development of the "style

naturel," that enables one to appreciate the sonnets of Du Bellay on their own merits. Likewise, at the other end of the chronological spectrum, Mallarmé is judged according to the aesthetic of *anti-figurality* (224: "l'abolition de la vieille loi de la mimésis") dominant in 19th-century poetry and painting, manifested in his frequent use of syntactical equivocations and the margins of the page as signifying means on their own right. It is on the basis of this premise that the introduction to Professor Gendreau's work becomes most valuable: After setting the parameters of his own analysis (by discussing the question of the identification of the rules that constitute a sonnet, 2-3), the author proceeds with an exposition of the perceptions of older critics on the form (3-12), which he then incorporates into his own exegetical apparatus. Gendreau thus combines the historical and the structuralist perspective, spelling out the universally accepted features of the form, such as its dualist structure, self-reflexive nature, claim to nobility (hence, canonicity) and – ultimately – what the critic calls a "sémantique structurale" (13). On the basis of this understanding of the content-form isomorphy, Gendreau proceeds with ingenious analyses of individual sonnets (see for instance the analysis of "Sonnet en pyx," 223), that display varying degrees of empathy between the critic and the poet. The *minutiae* on metre, rhyme and structural formation of a number of more (or less) illustrious sonnets across the span of these four centuries, leaves no doubt as to Professor Gendreau's scholarly capacity, depth of learning, and interpretive skills. I would nonetheless like to remark that this book would be better enjoyed by the comparatist scholar when read in conjunction with the work of scholars such as Malcolm Bowie, David Scott, Clive Scott et al. – who keep an eye on the parallel developments of the visual arts, and other interpretative perspectives that enrich the reading of a potentially arid subject – a parallel legitimized by Baudelaire's famous dictum from the *Salon de 1846* that "ainsi le meilleur comte rendu d'un tableau pourra être un sonnet ou une élogie" (the point would enrich, for instance, the discussion of Baudelaire's transpositional sonnet "Sur Le tasse en prison d'Eugène Delacroix," 180). However, these desired elaborations should not obscure the fact that this *major* study of the French sonnet orchestrates an enormous amount of scholarly research and a plethora of contemporary bibliographical material on itemized aspects of French sonnet-writing, in one, cohesive *oeuvre*, an effort which justifiably turns *Évolution du sonnet français* into the legitimate heir of Max Jasinski's monumental *Histoire du sonnet en France*, Douai, Bruguère, 1903, first published almost a century ago, and not reprinted since 1970. (MARIA ATHANASSOPOULO, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY)

*RACHEL SCHMIDT. *Critical Images: The Canonization of Don Quixote through Illustrated Editions of the Eighteenth Century*. Montréal & Kingston: McGill/Queens University Press, 1999. 248 pp. US\$ 55, cloth.

Ninguna de las ediciones del *Quijote* impresas en vida de su autor fue ilustrada; sin embargo, antes de llegar al capítulo 10 de la Primera Parte, ya sabía Cervantes que su obra habría de ilustrarse, y a su modo se adelanta a hacerlo cuando pergeña la *éxprasis* de la gran batalla del ingenioso hidalgo con el vizcaíno "pintada muy al natural" en el cartapacio de Cide Hamete Benengeli (I, ix). Es curioso que Rachel Schmidt al analizar dos ilustraciones de esta escena (131-132) no aluda en absoluto al texto cervantino, cuando es indudable que las similitudes entre ellas se deben, por lo menos en lo que se refiere a la pelea, a que ambos artistas han seguido a pie juntillas la siguiente descripción: "levantadas las espadas, el uno cubierto de su rodela, el otro de la almohada." Por otra parte hubiera valido la pena preguntarse por qué un ilustrador tan atento al texto, en esta ocasión ha eliminado por completo la figura de Sancho, de la cual nos da aquí Cervantes el retrato que se hará arquetípico, "que tenía, a lo que mostraba la pintura, la barriga grande, el talle corto y las zancas largas." A lo largo de *Critical Images* esta ausencia del discurso cervantino ocurre en muchas oportunidades, aunque cuando está presente se ve a las claras que la autora tiene tan fino entendimiento del mismo como del amplio *corpus* de ilustraciones que analiza magistralmente.

Mucho más que la simple fidelidad o infidelidad al libro que ilustran, grabados, láminas y estampas implican lecturas del mismo, que quedan plasmadas en una representación que refleja tanto el texto como su lectura y que afecta a ambos. En tanto lecturas del libro muestran su recepción; en tanto representaciones del texto dan nueva forma a su contenido, afectando así su futura recepción (12-13). Con acierto Schmidt aplica el concepto de Ernst Gombrich de lectura – que relaciona la creación de la imagen visual al acto interpretativo (14-18) – a los varios ilustradores del *Quijote*. A pesar del subtítulo de su estudio,afortunadamente la autora no comienza con el siglo XVIII, sino que nos presenta un panorama completo de tal trayectoria ilustrativa desde sus primeras muestras en el XVII hasta Goya.

En el capítulo 2 atiende a la recepción del *Quijote* en el siglo XVII y el temprano XVIII, antes de la canonización de la novela. Muy pronto tras la publicación de *El ingenioso hidalgo*, sus personajes pasaron a formar parte de los espectáculos populares, tanto del teatro burlesco como de los jolgorios carnavalescos. Entendido como parodia de la novela de caballerías el *Quijote* aparece en la edición de Juan de Momarte (Bruselas, 1662) como perteneciente a tal género y sin pretensiones didácticas. Así como para Momarte la novela era un libro de burlas también los ilustradores de la época se centraron en lo burlesco. Las láminas de la edición de 1662 son las

mismas que aparecieron en la traducción holandesa de 1657, si bien ahora firmadas por Gaspar Bouttats. Pronto se harán sobradamente populares al ser reproducidas en ediciones españolas. Para analizar a Don Quijote en tanto figura cómica y carnavalesca Schmidt acude provechosamente a Bakhtin (31-37). Entre los muchos excelentes análisis de imágenes visuales que el lector ha de hallar en este estudio el del episodio del carro de las Cortes de la Muerte en la ilustración de Bouttats es particularmente afortunado. De seguido Schmidt atiende – siguiendo la tónica bakhtiniana – a la frecuente ilustración de las partes del cuerpo consideradas innobles, notablemente el trasero, como en el caso de Sancho en la aventura de los batanes y de Don Quijote en la penitencia en Sierra Morena. Al tratar de la figura de Maritornes por el mismo Bouttats la autora comete un raro desliz al decir que el artista la muestra con los senos desnudos (37). No es el caso. Un brazo caído frente al pecho los cubre por completo, pero deja bien al descubierto un vasto vientre con el ombligo en el centro mismo de la composición. Bakhtin hubiese aplaudido. En 1724 aparece otra serie de ilustraciones, finamente ejecutadas, cuyo diseño proviene de los cartones que el pintor de la corte francesa Charles Antoine Coypel había hecho para los tapices del Palacio de Compiègne. Siguen la representación burlesca, ahora plasmada con refinamiento rococó. Estos elegantes grabados intentan entretener, no instruir. Cuando la Ilustración decidió canonizar el *Quijote* las cosas cambiaron radicalmente.

El tercer capítulo trata de la primera edición neoclásica, la de Londres en 1738, de J. y R. Tonson bajo el mecenazgo de Lord John Carteret, que es también la primera edición de lujo del *Quijote* y la primera que lo eleva a la categoría de clásico. Schmidt presenta las importantísimas consecuencias de este cambio, fundamental en la historia de la recepción de la novela, y lo sitúa lúcidamente en su contexto ideológico y cultural. Nada en este capítulo tiene desperdicio, sea su consideración de la obra de Gregorio Mayans y Siscar en su contexto histórico, sea su análisis del frontispicio alegórico y del retrato de Cervantes por William Kent. Naturalmente la “Vida de Cervantes” de Mayans, la figura del mismo como Hércules Musagetes, y su retrato como heroico soldado y escritor notable, así como la edición entera de la obra tienen el claro propósito de ennoblecer al autor. Acaso hubiese sido deseable que al Hayman considerara el frontispicio, donde se ve a Cervantes, defensor de las Musas, en camino al Monte Parnaso, se hubiese recordado que el mismísimo Cervantes poetizó a su persona en tal circunstancia en su *Viaje del Parnaso*, donde es bienvenido y saludado como “raro inventor.” Fue el mismo novelista quien primero se puso en tal vía, lo que más que probablemente supieran los colaboradores de la edición de Lord Carteret, y así decidieran retratarlo siguiendo la pauta del *Viaje del Parnaso*, pero limpio de sus socarronerías y aderezado de mitología neoclásica. Parte del ennoblecimiento de Cervantes fue la elevación del protagonista de su novela. Desde Mayans tenemos la visión

de un Don Quijote valiente, cuyas nobles virtudes trascienden su comicidad (64). La edición fue ilustrada con 68 finos grabados de John Vanderbank, en los cuales, por un lado, se marginaliza lo fantástico, como en el caso de la Cueva de Montesinos (68-70), y por otro, se evita lo burlesco. No solamente Don Quijote aparece dignificado; Vanderbank por su cuenta dignifica a Sancho (lo que no ocurre con Mayans), quien ahora representa el sentido común, característica que subrayaran en el futuro las ilustraciones de Francis Hayman (73-83).

No menos interesante que el capítulo sobre la suntuosa edición aristocrática y neoclásica de Lord Carteret es el siguiente, que considera como en la Inglaterra del siglo XVIII el *Quijote* se volvió instrumental para artistas y escritores de la clase media de tendencias reformistas. Tal es el caso de William Hogarth y Henry Fielding, y luego de Smollett – traductor de la novela – y Hayman que ilustra la traducción; todos ellos estudiados admirablemente en su contexto social, estético e intelectual. Sólo lamento que mientras se presentan diez grabados tanto de Hayman como de Vanderbank, de la importante obra de Hogarth – que Schmidt analiza estupendamente – apenas se ofrece una sola muestra.

En 1771 aparece en España la edición de Ibarra, encargada por la Real Compañía de Impresores y Libreros del Reino, acompañada de la *Vida de Cervantes* de Mayans e ilustraciones diseñadas por José Camarón, grabadas por Manuel Monforte, influidas por las de Bouttats, pero con algo de la elegancia de Coypel. Schmidt nota cómo estas láminas muestran el cambio entre la interpretación burlesca del XVII y la nueva lectura satírica propia de la Ilustración. Poco después, en 1780, aparece la estupenda edición de la Real Academia de la Lengua, proclamando finalmente el *Quijote* como un clásico en su propia tierra, un verdadero monumento nacional. El retrato de Cervantes de José del Castillo – embleático de toda la edición – presenta al autor en un busto de tres cuartos de perfil dentro de un medallón en un marco arquitectónico, rematado por una corona seguramente de laureles. La edición incluye el *Análisis del Quijote* del sabio artillero Vicente de los Ríos, dentro del cual se halla una biografía de Cervantes. De todo ello Schmidt nos entrega un excelente análisis, haciendo notar como este olvidado crítico neoclásico descubrió lo que un día Spitzer llamaría el perspectivismo cervantino (146-149). De seguido se encuentra una extensa consideración de las ilustraciones, y en particular las de los dos principales artistas, Antonio Carnicero y José del Castillo (discípulo de Mengs y compañero de Goya), grabados que según Schmidt comienzan a ofrecer una nueva interpretación de Don Quijote y Sancho en tanto personajes psicológicamente complejos y no ya meros arquetipos satíricos (149-169).

El último capítulo, a modo de conclusión, trata de Goya y la lectura romántica de la novela cervantina. Goya había presentado un magnífico

grabado para la edición de la Real Academia, pero fue rechazado. Piensa Schmidt que lo que habrá resultado ofensivo fue el contenido y no el estilo del mismo. Así en el combate de los rebuznadores –que Schmidt relaciona convincentemente con *El entierro de la sardina*– Goya habría representado a Don Quijote y su escudero como víctimas de la locura colectiva de los rebuznadores, invirtiendo así los términos y haciendo de su ilustración un ataque satírico contra el pueblo idiotizado por el miedo y la ignorancia (175-177). En un dibujo, ejecutado entre 1812 y 1823, Goya representó a Don Quijote leyendo, que tras acabado análisis Schmidt relaciona inteligentemente con el frontispicio de la serie de *Caprichos*, “El sueño de la razón.” En su dibujo Goya muestra al caballero asaltado no solamente por los personajes de sus lecturas sino por su propia lujuria y sus propias obsesiones, en la afortunada frase de Schmidt, por “las oscuras criaturas de nuestras pesadillas” (181). Aquí nosotros somos Don Quijote. El libro acaba con el estudio de otro dibujo, “Rara penitencia,” donde se ve una figura grotesca con los pantalones caídos. ¿Don Quijote o Sancho Panza?

Critical Images es sin duda una obra meritoria por su riqueza de información y su lucidez analítica. Todo lector interesado en la trayectoria de la recepción y de un clásico hallará su lectura provechosa. El libro ha sido elegantemente impreso e ilustrado.

A veces se desearía que cuando la autora compara dos grabados ambos se ilustraran (ver por ej. p. 131). Irónicamente el único fallo serio en la presentación de este libro es la sobretapa, casi de seguro no elegida por la autora. Schmidt se ha esforzado en ofrecernos una revaluación de las lecturas de el *Quijote* hasta los umbrales del Romanticismo; la única figura del siglo XIX que estudia es Goya, a caballo entre dos centurias. Pero Goya no ilustra la sobretapa. Si se quería el ícono de Don Quijote y Sancho montados en sus ya emblemáticas cabalgaduras, la ilustración de José del Castillo de la p. 16 hubiese venido de perlas. Pero no es tal el caso. Nada demuestra mejor el poder de la visión idealista del hidalgo de la Mancha, y el aun hoy día vivísimo atractivo de su más famoso ilustrador, que el notable traspies de presentar este libro de visiones del siglo XVII y XVIII con una ilustración de Gustavo Doré. (ALICIA DE COLOMBÍ-MONGUIÓ, SUNY-ALBANY)

*CRISTINA TERRILE. *La crise de la volonté ou le romanesque en question*. Borgese, Green, Perutz, Pirandello, Kafka. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997. 408pp. FF 375 / EUR 57.17, cloth.

Cristina Terrile a écrit un livre intéressant, qui nous offre une lecture originale et unifiante de nombreuses expériences narratives des années 1920. Elle sait réconcilier des questions fondamentales de forme et de contenu, et elle maîtrise

une approche comparatiste à la fois synchronique et diachronique, nous rappelant comment des oeuvres déjà élévées à la stature des classiques et souvent étudiées dans leur singularité font plutôt partie d'une problématique plus générale, qui traverse plusieurs traditions nationales, et qui concerne également des textes moins connus et moins exploités.

L'essayiste veut faire ressortir les lignes de développement d'une trajectoire qui, dans le passage du roman naturaliste au roman moderne au début du vingtième siècle, trouve un tournant dans les paradigmes littéraires des années 1920: c'est à ce moment-là que le dépassement du roman traditionnel se rend évident, poussant les formes narratives au-delà du réalisme psychologique, vers un véritable renouveau. Quel est l'apport de cette étude? L'essayiste ne met pas en question les deux grands aboutissements de l'évolution du roman du vingtième siècle: la dissolution du personnage et le dépassement de la narration omnisciente selon des stratégies textuelles antithétiques. D'un côté, il y a l'expression d'une conscience qui phagocyte et intériorise la réalité extérieure, et, de l'autre, l'effacement de toute subjectivité singulière, qui dépersonnalise la narration. Toutefois, elle souligne que, dans la plupart de cas, les recherches accomplies ont examiné ces deux tendances séparément, au lieu d'en faire l'objet d'une unique réflexion.

C'est dans l'espace de ce manque que s'insère le projet de Cristina Terrile, qui propose de réinterpréter l'affaiblissement et la dispersion du personnage et l'oscillation du discours narratif entre anonyme et hypersubjectivité comme manifestations du même phénomène: "l'effort d'une volonté, c'est-à-dire, d'une conscience qui agit, qui pense des objets sur le mode du projet et s'efforce de les atteindre" (17). Donc, une crise de la volonté affectant en même temps les agents de l'histoire et les modalités du récit, qui, par ailleurs, loin de nous faire reculer vers le réalisme psychologique, inaugure une véritable herméneutique – pour évoquer le titre d'une section de cette étude. Autrement dit, repenser la crise du roman comme crise de la volonté signifie pour Terrile envisager dans la volonté une catégorie opératoire, une stratégie à la fois de production, d'écriture, et de réception du texte littéraire capable de dégager un nouveau rapport parmi les éléments constitutifs du pacte littéraire, notamment le narrateur, le personnage, le lecteur, ici recodifiés comme "volonté narratrice," "volonté du personnage," et "vouloir-lire" (35).

Ainsi, à travers le concept, la fonction même, du vouloir, le livre soulève-t-il le problème de la lecture au sens plus général. Prenant ses distances avec une approche étroitement narratologique, tout en reconnaissant la cohérence interne de la dimension textuelle, Terrile fait tourner son travail autour de l'opération de la lecture, insistant sur sa fonction indispensable à, et même constitutive de, la narration. En tant qu'acte volontaire, la lecture ne crée pas l'oeuvre, ne reproduit pas ni respecte forcément l'intention de l'auteur (d'où la nécessité de séparer représentation et communication) mais intervient dans

la production esthétique retrouvant dans le texte "une occasion de sens" (23). Loin de présupposer une volonté autoriale à l'origine de la création littéraire, il s'agit en effet de construire une organisation formelle et conceptuelle dans la lecture, et de faire coïncider un tel ordre avec ce que Terrile définit "le maître d'oeuvre" (24), concept apparemment assez proche de "[l']auteur implicite" proposé par Wayne Booth, mais en effet distinct. Comme Terrile nous l'explique, le maître d'œuvre est une projection du lecteur mais il ne correspond pas toujours forcément à une image autoriale. C'est plutôt une fonction du vouloir qui se manifeste dans l'acte de la lecture permettant d'envisager une synthèse voulue au départ dans la constitution du texte. Nous ne sommes pas non plus – Terrile le précise – dans le domaine de ce qu'Umberto Eco appelle *intentio operis*, car selon elle cette dernière catégorie n'arrive pas toujours à surmonter les liens entre stratégies narratives et le style, qui renvoie donc à un auteur empirique.

Il apparaît que la représentation de la volonté du personnage, ainsi structurée, dépend de, et participe elle aussi à, l'axe vouloir lire – volonté narratrice: elle aussi est soumise aux mêmes modalités de construction et de réception en tant que partie constitutive de la machine textuelle mais au même temps moteur de la trame romanesque.

Ces démarches théoriques exposées dans le premier chapitre du livre sont l'échafaudage des analyses textuelles qui suivent. Après un *excursus* qui discute l'évolution du rapport entre personnage et volonté dans le roman européen à partir du legs réaliste (tel qu'on le retrouve dans des textes canoniques comme ceux par Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, Goncharov) et décadent (Huysmans, D'Annunzio) jusqu'à un panorama des années 1920 (Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Gide, parmi d'autres), la lecture de Terrile se concentre sur des œuvres romanesques, prises comme exemplaires de cette dernière période, qui mettent en question une volonté narratrice forte et un personnage monolithique: *Rubè* de G. Borgese, *Le Voyageur sur la terre* de J. Green, *Le Marquis de Bolibar* de L. Perutz, *Un, personne et cent mille* de L. Pirandello, et *L'Amérique*, *Le Procès*, *Le Château* de F. Kafka. Le but c'est de montrer, à l'intérieur de cette tranche spatio-temporelle, l'évolution de la crise du personnage et de la narration, et de systématiser les différentes réponses offertes à la problématique de la volonté.

Borgese et Kafka fonctionnent comme les deux extrêmes opposés de ce chemin (voir, respectivement, les chapitres II – "Vouloir un personnage sans volonté" – et V – "Le roman sans narrateur ni personnage"): là où *Rubè* laisse transparaitre les résidus d'une structure romanesque traditionnelle, puisque c'est encore à travers une volonté narratrice aspirant à l'omniscience que s'exprime, paradoxalement la négativité du personnage central, dans les romans de Kafka l'anéantissement de la volonté va jusqu'à réduire la voix narrative et la singularité du personnage à la même indétermination et, finalement, absence.

Compris entre ces deux étapes de l'expérience de l'épuisement du vouloir, Green, Perutz et Pirandello abolissent, selon l'essayiste, la distance entre crise de la subjectivité du personnage et crise de la volonté narrative grâce au récit à la première personne. Le "je" du personnage-narrateur lie les deux perspectives et les soumet à un dépaysement progressif, de la destruction du type vers la recherche d'une identité impossible jusqu'à une aliénation qui implique aussi le lecteur, après un illusoire encouragement.

Des références plus pointues au traitement de *Un, personne et cent mille* de L. Pirandello – à notre avis, la discussion la mieux réussie – pourra élucider la méthodologie et les résultats de la recherche entreprise par Terrile. Comme dans le cas des romans de Green et Perutz, l'analyse de cette œuvre se déroule en trois moments partant d'une première lecture "spontanée," dans laquelle l'attention du lecteur se concentre sur les actes et les mots du personnage sans réfléchir sur le sens des matériaux textuels (voir la section sur Pirandello dans le chapitre II "Les inconstances de la volonté"), pour passer à la découverte de la narration en tant que "paradoxe logique" (160) qui empêche tout achèvement (chapitre III "Les ruses de la volonté narrative"), et finalement à la postulation – derrière la dispersion du sujet et des formes de la réalité et du discours – de l'action d'une volonté narratrice impersonnelle, "ni personnage ni narrateur" (chapitre IV "Un narrateur escamoté par l'écriture" 222), qui maîtrise l'écriture pour la soumettre aux jeux du perspectivisme et de la néantisation, comme si personnage et narrateur, on pourrait dire, étaient parlés par cette voix radicalement autre.

Sans aucun doute, l'aventure de Moscarda, le cérébral protagoniste pirandellien, se prête facilement à ce genre d'observations, que le roman encourage lui-même à plusieurs reprises avec ses méditations sur la volonté (la question du "punto vivo" l'illustre bien), mais Terrile sait systématiser ces traces jusqu'à leur attribuer une valeur démonstrative et fonctionnelle, récupérant selon la même optique pas seulement l'impasse existentielle du protagoniste mais aussi l'organisation de la trame et de la narration, et la mécanique du langage.

La crise de la volonté ou le romanesque en question est un travail méticuleux, qui doit être apprécié, entre autres, pour l'attention réservée aux détails des textes primaires sur lesquels il se fonde. Par ailleurs, on pourrait aussi dire que c'est cette même concentration sur les particularités de chaque roman qui est parfois redondante, surtout dans le passage d'un chapitre à l'autre. À notre avis, une reprise des concepts-clés des différentes théories de la réception esquissées dans le premier chapitre aurait pu rendre la discussion des romans plus dynamique et stimulante, et aurait même permis de partir des textes pour problématiser et enrichir la théorie. Tout en respectant aussi l'objectif de l'essayiste de ne pas s'attarder sur le statut ontologique de la volonté et de circonscrire son travail aux implications pour la fonction

cognitive de la lecture, le livre aurait pu également bénéficier de quelques considérations, par exemple sous forme de prémisses, au moins sur l'importance de cette notion dans le plus vaste contexte culturel de l'époque: justement partant de Schopenhauer, que Terzile effleure dans deux notes, pensons à Ribot et à Nietzsche, parmi les nombreux penseurs dans la transition entre les deux siècles qui se sont occupés de la volonté, mais aussi à la "volontà esteriorizzata" de Marinetti.

Enfin, il faudrait questionner la représentativité des textes choisis pour cette étude. Bien que l'auteur aborde le problème fondamental du corpus, il n'est pas toujours possible d'identifier et de justifier (sur la base des données qui nous sont offertes) les frontières de l'espace littéraire et spatio-temporel que l'hypothèse de travail voudrait exemplifier, surtout quand, dans les conclusions, la crise de la volonté est invoquée comme le principe sous-jacent à tous les romans des années 1920, et même à leurs développements successifs.

Cette difficile transition entre échantillonnage et exhaustivité, néanmoins, est loin d'empêcher au livre de fournir aux spécialistes du roman et du modernisme, aussi bien qu'à tout lecteur fasciné par la complexité et la richesse des phénomènes esthétiques, bien des nouveaux points de repères et d'occasions de réflexion sur auteurs, genres littéraires et approches interprétatives. (NICOLETTA PIREDDU, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY)

*GERLINDE RÖDER-BOLTON. *George Eliot and Goethe: An Elective Affinity*. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1998. 290 pp. HFL 90 / US\$ 50, paper.

This study explores the "elective affinity" between the title authors through a sustained comparative analysis of the last two books of *The Mill on the Floss* and of *Daniel Deronda* in terms of a host of similarities with *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, the first part of *Faust*, and *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. The concept of "affinity" is grounded in Goethe's impact on Eliot and effectively supported through a series of parallels that only occasionally stretch the bounds of credibility. Specifically, Part I focuses on the similarities between *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* and *The Mill on the Floss* in terms of "narrative strategy and personal morality." Part II examines the similarities between *Faust I* and *Daniel Deronda* in terms of "narrative structure and the struggle for Gwendolen's soul," and the third and longest Part discusses the affinities between "the process of individual *Bildung*" in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and *Daniel Deronda*. Thus by far the greater part of the discussion of Eliot's fiction is devoted to her last major and problematic novel, with only the opening section discussing the last third of *The Mill on the Floss*. But this

highly selective treatment of Eliot's *œuvre* does not really skew the argument, because Röder-Bolton's attempt to trace the "affinity" between the two writers focuses on a limited sample intended to exemplify a larger pattern. A half century ago this book would surely have been an "influence" study; by choosing the more inclusive "affinity" term, she does at once more and less in tracing the similarities between Goethe's and Eliot's texts and world-views. Whether "affinity" is in any sense a more productive means of discussing intertextuality than the old-fashioned and (perhaps naively) positivistic "influence" is a question to be asked.

Röder-Bolton's Introduction reviews Eliot's well-known interest in German literature and culture from the time she began to learn German at twenty and in the context of the "consistent interest in Britain from the 1820s to the 1850s in German literature and certain fields of German scholarship." The young Mary Ann Evans' interest in German literature and Goethe was also fueled by her relationship with George Henry Lewes, with whom she traveled to Germany in 1854 (for materials for his Goethe biography). The brief introduction also mentions in summary fashion some major areas of affinity between the two artists: they both "kept a deliberate distance from the socio-political developments of their times," they were "both concerned with the average, not the exceptional" – can this be true of the author of *Faust* and Werther? – and they "shared a scientific approach to art."

Unlike these broad but perfunctorily stated areas of similarity, the parallels established in the next three parts are for the most part consequent, detailed, and managed with a good deal of critical acumen and address. Part I argues that the narrative shift in the last two books (6 and 7) of *The Mill on the Floss* which has often been seen as a flaw is in fact a function of Eliot modeling them on *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. Goethe had "originally planned" his narrative as a *Novelle*, and "the traces of [that form] in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* ... found their way into the last two books of the *Mill on the Floss*" which "if separated from the main part of the novel and examined as one unit, have all the ingredients of an extended *Novelle*." Röder-Bolton proceeds to detail a number of parallels based on this resemblance: for instance, a similar use of the paradise metaphor, of the metaphor of music for social and sexual relationships, and the presence of a quasi-religious myth and an ambiguous ending. The point of seeing the last two books of Eliot's tragic narrative of Maggie Tulliver as an "extended *Novelle*" is to make a case that "far from being artistically inferior to the first five books, the concluding books of *The Mill on the Floss* have the logical sequence, thematic concentration, and inevitable conclusion demanded by the genre." But if they really have all that, perhaps they should be a separate work, and not the generically discordant last third of the novel.

Röder-Bolton is at her most insightful in Part I when she pursues in considerable detail how Goethe and Eliot examine closely in a quartet of characters the "laws of attraction" in action, and how "the intertextual relationship between the two works" is evident in certain similarities between the two works' characters (e.g., Maggie and Otrilie, Eduard and Stephen) to the point that "*Die Wahlverwandtschaften* seems to be a forerunner to the last two books of *The Mill on the Floss*." The different stages of the growing attraction between Eduard and Otrilie and Maggie and Stephen are cogently unfolded from the initial sexual attraction to an awakening that results in the women's realizations that they have to renounce their (illicit) attachments. This renunciation, which is final for both young women, is a reflection of the conservative social philosophy of both authors, who ultimately reject the supremacy of the natural law and of the passion they find so appealing for the concept of duty. The best comparative insight of the first half of the book is succinctly stated: "The privileging of social duty over natural law represents an important aspect of the affinity between George Eliot's position and Goethe's investigations in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. Both texts affirm established relationships and fundamental patriarchal structures; both texts look to familial organizations as the source of order."

The second Part argues that *Faust, Part I* is a "significant intertext" for both "the narrative strategy" and the main characters of *Daniel Deronda*. After establishing how both works problematize the question of a "true beginning" of the narrative, the major parallel developed is that between Faust and Gwendolen Harleth, the fascinating heroine of Eliot's novel. There is a morality play technique as well as a psychomachia at work in both works, and that spoiled child and imperious princess of her doting family, Gwendolen, is "a Faustian figure in whom the good and evil genius are at war," a perception which is present in the novel from the first impression of the heroine by the title character (when he sees her recklessly gambling at a continental casino). This literal gambling motif becomes a sustaining metaphor for her character and life choices, including her marriage to the sinister Grandcourt, who is the Mephistopheles of the novel, albeit one "scaled down to upper-class ordinariness." The similarities between Mephisto and Grandcourt are convincingly demonstrated by Röder-Bolton, especially the "pitiless love of power" and the cynicism that define Grandcourt's treatment of his new bride. This parallel is further reinforced by striking narrative details such as the reliance of both Mephisto and Grandcourt on jewelry to achieve their corrupt(ing) ends.

If the parallel (in outlook and textual role) between these two manipulators is effectively demonstrated, that between Faust and Gwendolen – even granting the differences in gender and culture – is suggestive but problematic. To posit Gwendolen as a Faustian heroine caught in a battle

between her good and evil angels (Deronda and Grandcourt) provides a coherent way of conceptualizing her character and role in the novel. And to analogize her sinister and her – at once naive and cynical – choice to marry Grandcourt to Faust's pact with Mephisto makes for a striking view of this terminally abusive relationship: like Faust, Gwendolen entered into a pact to achieve a larger freedom (in a loveless marriage in which she assumes she can manipulate her husband) only to find herself completely trapped. The central parallel is at times convincingly stated – "George Eliot created a character who is like Faust in two ways: not only does she wilfully invite evil, but her companion also brings out the evil within her" – but in many ways the lives of the late-medieval scholar-magus and the nineteenth-century darling of the English squierarchy are ultimately so incommensurable as to make a sustained comparison between them seem quite a stretch. Röder-Bolton is of course aware of the differences – for instance, she points out that in *Daniel Deronda* the battle between good and evil (in Gwendolen's soul) is "fought within the arena of courtship and marriage." However, when Röder-Bolton reaches too far she ends up flattening out the parallel: "Like Faust, she, too, longs to escape from the narrowness of her existence into a world which is not so much different . . . but rather more in correspondence with her inner life." This is true as well of Cinderella, Madame Bovary, not to mention the contemporary soap opera addict.

With its focus on developmental patterns and parallels in the lives of Wilhelm Meister, Daniel Deronda, and Gwendolen Harleth, the area of comparison in the third and longest chapter is much broader than in the earlier two. Röder-Bolton grounds her discussion in Eliot's familiarity with Goethe's Bildungsroman and in the central and multifaceted concept of *Bildung* that informs the *Lehrjahre*. Although Eliot's is not strictly speaking a Bildungsroman, its "interest is directed almost exclusively towards the Bildungs-processes of the two main characters." Perhaps because of the breadth and complexity of the development of the three characters in question, the argument is not always as clear as in the two earlier chapters, but the level of comparative analysis and insight is consistently high. This critic makes an excellent case for *Daniel Deronda* not being an artistic failure (because it is two novels whose separate tracks – the lives of Gwendolen and Deronda, whose sporadic intersection is supposed to hold the narrative together), but as a "rare combination of an English as well as a European novel" that for the most part fulfills Eliot's intention to open out the smug "Philistinism of the upper-middle and upper classes of English society" to a larger world signified by the title hero's discovery of his Jewish identity. As the "visible link between Orient and Occident," the Jews here take on a special role as signifiers of Otherness. While acknowledging that the Jewish characters (other than Deronda) are one-dimensional, Röder-Bolton observes that "they are

representative of an idealized Semitic world placed in contrast to a strongly satirized non-Jewish English society." She might also have noted how sentimental are the portraits of Mirah and her visionary Zionist brother, as well as the irony that in a pro-Semitic work there are nevertheless highly stereotypical portraits of Jews (the Cohen family, Mirah's father).

Röder-Bolton draws out some narratological parallels between the two novels, particularly the nonconclusive or open-ended endings, which reflect *Bildung* as an ongoing process, but the majority of the resemblances developed by her are characterological: the central role of alienation in the early lives of the three characters, the succumbing to fantasy and temptation (the "false tendency" of Wilhelm's theatrical career, Gwendolen's self-serving delusions in marrying Grandcourt), the differing processes of the disillusionment of the aspirations and self-images of Wilhelm, Gwendolen, and Deronda, and their respective efforts to maintain or re-establish in the end a significant connection with their pasts.

Even as she traces a series of significant *Bildungs*-parallels, Röder-Bolton is fully cognizant of crucial differences between the two novels and three characters: "Where Goethe uses one main character and one society, George Eliot extends the concern with *Bildung* to one character of each sex and two very different cultures and societies." In her consideration of Eliot's novel, Röder-Bolton also brings to bear some productive feminist perspectives – e.g., Deronda is "the text's upholder of patriarchal law," and his society allows for a self-development that is denied to Gwendolen as a young woman – that might have been taken further.

Röder Bolton's comparative analysis of Goethe and Eliot is well-supported by relevant citations of critical studies of both authors. One of the virtues of this lucidly written, jargon-free (save for a predilection for the term *analepsis*), and insightful study of the impact of Goethe on Eliot's worldview and narrative imagination is that the extended critical discussion of the two writers' works is consistently illuminating even if one does not share the author's agenda of seeing parallel upon parallel between them. The concept of "affinity" is effectively made to serve as a critical lens for examining their works. (EUGENE STELZIG, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, GENESEO)

*JULIE TAYLOR. *Paper Tangos*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998. xxv + 124 pp. US\$ 14.95, paper.

Excluding her three-page Afterword (pp. 119-21), the last line of Julie Taylor's *Paper Tangos* consists of a question, a statement, and a command, spoken perhaps by one of her tango teachers or dance partners: "What does your

dance need? Your tango lacks scream. Dance a tango that screams" (117). The line forms an immediate association with the photo reproduced on the cover of the book, showing a woman resisting the embrace of a man, or perhaps caught with her back arched in the *suplé* of a dance, while, at the same time, her mouth is open wide as if emitting a scream. The passage from words to image, however, is just one of the many shifts in which the reader must engage through a book that moves among different media (words, pictures, music, and dance) and among the multiple facets of Argentinean tango – as movement, as obsession, as a cultural practice, as a text, as violence, as a definer of gender relationships, as a codifier of national identity and personal experience – in a narrative with both an individual and a collective protagonist.

The photo reproduced on the cover is, in fact, a still from *Tangos: el exilio de Gardel*, a 1986 film by Fernando Solanas which Taylor has drawn into her book in several ways. A selection of stills (of which the photo on the cover is one) are used to represent four brief sequences from the film by means of a flipbook printed on the bottom righthand corner of the odd-numbered pages. The device initially brings the movement of the dance into print, a way of putting tango on paper, but there are also other, stronger connections between the book and the film. They are both about exile and are examples of how the content and performance of tango may serve to represent the cause and the experience of separation. Solanas's film portrays a group of Argentineans exiled in Paris during the dictatorship and the dirty wars of the 70s and 80s whose struggle to remain in touch with each other, their country, families and culture is expressed in the creation of a *tanguedia*, a stage spectacle based on tango. The need for communication and the difficulties of achieving it are therefore among the central motifs of the film and are symbolically represented in part in the surreal images of sheets of paper fluttering through the air or littering a scene. One such sequence, a cloud of paper floating down a circular stairwell, is included in Taylor's flipbook. Like the film, her book is also an account of attempts at communication and the recreation of experience through tango. She casts parts of it as letters; she describes the problems and stresses of corresponding with friends and family during difficult times; she cites the lyrics of tango, both modern songs from Solanas's film and traditional lyrics from the standard repertoire, as well as her own verses; but, above all, she narrates on paper her experience of Argentinean society and culture through the contact she obtained with them through tango.

As in Solanas's film, tango is shown as the literal embodiment of experience, since the body becomes in the dance the vehicle through which experience is felt and remembered. "To dance the tango you remember with your body," writes Taylor (80). She is referring to how the dance is performed by an experienced *tanguero*, but from memories of how she learned and

practised tango she also constructs its culture, narrates a personal story of her immersion into Argentinean life, and writes some of the history of its recent past. Violence figures prominently in these narratives. It is embedded in the social origins of tango, in the prostitution and poverty of its urban environment among largely immigrant communities in turn-of-the-century Buenos Aires, and in the culture of *machismo*. Violence weighs heavily on much of the book, but no more so than in chapters on the years of the dirty war, the fate of the disappeared, the climate of fear among the survivors and their dispersal through exile, and the more recent acts of terrorism against Jewish institutions in Buenos Aires.

Taylor may be numbered among many Argentinean writers and filmmakers (including Solanas) who have sought to understand and describe the past through the medium of tango, but she is somewhat different from others because she is both an anthropologist and an outsider as well as a dancer. Perhaps it is the anthropologist and the outsider in her that comes through when she describes the adepts and addicts of the tango sub-culture of Buenos Aires. The men and women she presents, Argentineans and foreigners, are from many walks of life, many of them drawn to the dance with the same passion and obsession she felt for it herself. Through her description of classes, practises and *milongas* (dances) held in the small hours of the morning she portrays a gallery of friends, partners and teachers. She describes the tyranny of the dance instructor, the engendered hierarchy of *machismo* and how it is contested or complemented, and, above all, the lore of the tango dance-floor. Taylor's anthropology is not objective, however. The narrative she constructs also tells her own story and tells it in a way that takes her much further along the road of self-discovery and exploration of the genre than other recent attempts by outsiders (Sally Potter in *The Tango Lesson*, 1997; Carlos Saura in *Tango*, 1998, for example) to portray, adopt or understand the culture of tango.

Taylor arrived in Argentina as an anthropologist intending to study it. Her North American past and identity remain a constant point of reference. However, through tango, her Argentinean child, her circle of friends and the experiences, especially of political violence, they eventually held in common, she became part of what she had set out to study so that this other culture shaped the context in which to confront her own particular demons. The scream evoked on the cover of *Paper tango* has unavoidable reminiscences of Edward Munch, not so much in the fear of insanity as in fear of surrender, and not so much in surrender to an other as in surrender to self. As Taylor writes, "The problem wasn't handing myself over to the man: It was handing myself over to my own body" (113). Between her and the dance there also lie memories of the violence done to her in childhood. Thus, her anthropology of tango guides us beyond an excursion through the traditional lore of one

particular cultural community towards an understanding of how cultural phenomena and the practises of everyday are in general ways of expressing and confronting experience. However it is construed, the command to "dance a tango that screams" may also be read as an invitation to recognize this quality. (RICHARD A. YOUNG, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*DAVID J. LEVIN. *Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen: The Dramaturgy of Disavowal*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998. 198 pp. US\$ 29.95, cloth.

This book is graced with a splendid cover still from Fritz Lang's *Siegfried* – the first film in his diptych *Die Nibelungen* (1925) – showing the hero in a typically bold art-deco costume about to collapse onto a flowery bank, pierced right through the back by Hagen's treacherous spear. That and its title seem to promise much, for the subject is a "natural" one. A linkage of the *Nibelungenlied*, a foundational text of Germanic culture, with Wagner's transformation of the legend amidst the aesthetic and cultural-nationalist currents of the nineteenth century, and then with Lang's more narratively-straightforward adaptation coming at the high-point of German silent art-cinema and on the eve of Hitler's rise – followed of course by the Nazi utilization of all of these art-works in its famous "aestheticization of politics" – presents a fascinating nexus of cultural metamorphosis and an equally fascinating insight into the construction of a certain strain of Germanicity. Unfortunately, the book is micro-focussed on an arcane series of interpretive levers, and neglects to address many of the arresting questions it has itself opened up.

Levin's main argument winds itself around the presence of discourse and the mastery of discourse in all these texts. Referring to the famous "weak spot" on the back of Siegfried – which in the *Nibelungenlied* (and in Lang's film) is famously marked by a small linden leaf fallen by chance on the back of the hero who is otherwise bathed in the dragon's blood of invincibility – Levin asks what this mark represents. Later in the story, the murderous Hagen tricks Siegfried's wife Kriemhild into marking his vulnerable spot on the back of his tunic, ostensibly so that Hagen can protect him in battle, but in fact so that the assassin will know exactly where to strike. But in the epic (though not in the film), Siegfried is very strangely wearing a different costume when Hagen does strike him, so that the mark has mysteriously disappeared. Levin moves from the curious fact of this erasure of the sign of weakness into an analysis of how things signify in this narrative world, and in particular of how the ground of power seems to shift away from the guileless simplicities of Siegfried's natural strength and skill and towards the cultural complexities

of a verbal, narrational, discourse marked by wiliness and deception. Siegfried's problem, according to Levin, is that he cannot master this cultural discourse. Where such "bad" characters as Hagen (in the poem and in the first part of Lang's diptych) and Mime (in Wagner) are in control of the meanings of the stories they tell - about Siegfried's history and origins, especially - and can deflect and guide them towards their own purposes, Siegfried himself is an artless teller whose "good" innocence is in danger of translating simply into stupidity and weakness.

Particularly in the latter-day ideologies implicit in Lang's *Die Nibelungen* and Wagner's *Ring*, there is a considerable ideological investment in the vision of Siegfried as a "new man" and model of a German heroism which is naturally pure and which will defeat a decadent and over-discursive European modernity. Siegfried needs to be victorious especially, says Levin, over those grotesque, dwarfish figures of the smith Mime (in Wagner) and the Nibelung king Alberich (in Lang) - figures whose physical and moral traits are so very close to the negative stereotypes of the Jew in antisemitic German culture. The personal antisemitism of both Wagner and Lang's scenarist and wife Thea von Harbou hardly detracts from the credibility of this analysis, and Levin is (as he readily acknowledges) but one of a long line of scholars to entertain such a perspective. The contests between Siegfried and Mime in the first two acts of Wagner's *Siegfried*, and between Siegfried and Alberich in Lang's *Siegfried*, are quite one-sided and even perfunctory. In Wagner, Siegfried is sick of Mime's whining complaints and guilt-mongering already when the opera opens, and by the end of the first act the spectator fully shares this impatience, so that when Siegfried contemptuously slaughters Mime with his sword ("taste this, loathsome babler," in one popular translation), many people in the audience tend to feel that it was about time. It is hardly a famous victory, though. For Levin what is interesting here is the fact that Mime is caught out in the very game of discourse-manipulation that he has been playing with Siegfried from the beginning. "I fed and sheltered you when you were a helpless baby, I am your mother and father, you owe everything to me," *ad infinitum*, *ad nauseam*, is the burden of his story; but it is a lying one, and a taste of the blood of the dragon Siegfried has slain enables him not only to understand the speech of the birds but also to penetrate to the true meaning of Mime's prevaricating narrative and hear not his flattering speech but his murderous thoughts, whereupon he kills him. Here, then, Siegfried's natural heroism enables him to see through and conquer the weak, cowardly, and parasitical Mime - and metaphorically it is (as Levin outlines) the victory of a purified, rededicated, Wagnerian German culture over the enervating and inimical "Jewishness" in whose toils that culture had been languishing for centuries. In Lang's film, the dwarf-king Alberich, owner of the Nibelung hoard and the shape-shifting Tarnhelm, is a twisted, leering,

hook-nosed pygmy whose attempts to wrestle Siegfried to the ground are unintentionally comical. The hero has no trouble whatsoever in defeating this ageing, pint-sized antagonist, and assuming ownership of his fabulous treasures.

Wagner's Siegfried goes on (in *Die Götterdämmerung*) to be defeated and killed by Hagen in a strange inversion of his earlier victory over Mime. In Levin's terms, Hagen controls Siegfried's own narrative of himself, first feeding him a potion of forgetfulness so that his presentation of his earlier deeds leaves out any memory of Brünnhilde, to whom he has pledged his love, and then by feeding him - at a crucial moment - a potion of anti-forgetfulness which causes him to blurt out the inconvenient truth during a narration of his past deeds in front of the Gibichung King Gunther, now Brünnhilde's spouse. This guileless, unconscious speaking of the truth is what enables Hagen to kill him in revenge for his supposed treachery to Gunther. Levin sets up this panorama as a clash of aesthetic systems (Wagner's/Siegfried's truth against Jewish/Mime's manipulations) which then, however, gives way to the fear that truth in the absence of awareness and calculation will lead to defeat (Hagen's political narrative-control outwitting Siegfried's naive authenticity). The moral of this, according to Levin, is that narration itself is bad. Mime's narrative kills him, and Siegfried's kills him too, because he is unable to manage and control narrative, unable to "learn the hermeneutic lessons" that the birdsong had taught him in Act II of *Siegfried*. In tracing Wagner's attitudes to language as such, Levin turns, interestingly, to the dramatist/composer's attempts to escape from a language he felt was thoroughly adulterated and transformed by rationalist-Jewish culture: the *Ring* begins with an E-flat chord in the nonverbal world of instrumental music, proceeds to the meaningless verbalizations of the Rhinemaidens ("Wagala weial Wallala weiala wala!"), and thence into the curious, stubby, alliterative *Stabreim* in which the whole cycle is written and which Wagner thought of as being close to a more primitive, purer folk-speech.

The notion of disavowal enters when one recalls that so much of Wagner's drama falls away from the depiction of *action* - which he explicitly validated - and into *narration*, in which offstage and earlier actions are told and retold in the form of recitation - which he explicitly criticized as a dramatic method. Hence, although narration is presented in so many ways as a kind of bad aesthetics, and as dangerous to the good Siegfried and what he stands for, Wagner ends up indulging in narration by the yard from one end of the *Ring* to the other. And yet Levin never really deals with this issue at all. Merely remarking that the innumerable rehashings of earlier plot-events by every conceivable variety of character are most often a kind of "good narration," he simply turns away from the fact to concentrate fully upon the little structure of Mime's and Siegfried's narrations which illuminates his point. In the end,

Levin's argument is, I feel, of very limited usefulness in accounting for the sense of imbalance, of a difficult working-out of a fantastically ambitious and self-contradictory scheme, and indeed of the repeated moments of disavowal, with which the *Ring* presents us. What actually needs to be accounted for in Siegfried's character is not why he didn't learn to master discourse when the dragon's blood-cam-bird's speech presented him with the key, but rather why it is that Siegfried, the purest, truest, most direct and honest human being, is engaged in such an incredible web of deceit and disavowal in his own thoughts and actions.

Siegfried's real problem is not Hagen but Brünnhilde, whom he has awakened from her long sleep and initiated into humanity, sexuality, and personal love, and then immediately ridden off from, forgotten entirely, and betrayed first by becoming enamoured with another woman (Gunter's sister Gutrune) and then by forcibly dragging Brünnhilde off to become Gunther's wife while disguised, by means of the Tarnhelm, as Gunther. This is sickening behaviour, cruel treachery, and it gives Brünnhilde ample reason to plot Siegfried's death. The only explanation Wagner gives for this behaviour is to say that Siegfried is not guilty by reason of a magic potion administered by his enemy. This hoary old contrivance doesn't come close to accounting for such a spectacular rift in Siegfried's feelings and deeds, any more than the same device does in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (where, however, it is easier to simply subtract from the action without undue confusion). In the case of the *Ring* its presence does seem a real case of disavowal – Wagner's disavowal of the damage done by the "free spirit," the "new man," in his wilful and heedless progress through the world. It is especially interesting that Siegfried is allowed to escape (morally) from his inconsistencies and disavowals when Wotan, the "unfree spirit," the "old man," is held strictly to account for his: in the *Ring*, the representative of spontaneity, directness, love is thus allowed a latitude which the representative of politics and more sober wisdom is not. This, I think, is a highly intriguing perspective, and one which might figure directly in Levin's enquiry into the clash between these forces. But he doesn't appear to notice it.

Turning then to Lang's diptych, Levin finds a different instance of reflexivity and disavowal. The film, too, he argues, dramatizes its own dilemma of discourses and representation. He focuses with laser-like concentration upon a moment in *Siegfried* in which Alberich, showing off his kingdom and his treasure, projects an image of them for Siegfried's consumption, as on a screen – a *movie screen*, in Levin's interpretation. From this moment Levin constructs an allegory of the film's worry about the nature of filmic representation and the threat to a truly German, or even European, cinema from the crass, "easy" spectacles offered by the invading Hollywood cinema of the post-World-War-I era. In this scenario, the superficial riches of

Hollywood production, masterminded by Jews, is in danger of distracting the German people away from an authentic cultural cinema as represented by Lang and other German art-film-makers. Siegfried's inability to master this mode of discourse/representation – metaphorized specifically by Alberich's glowing crystal ball which has been the means of "projection," but which Siegfried after his victory over Alberich spurns in favour of the sword Balmung – is now seen by Levin as the hero's failure to master *critical viewing*, as opposed to the *naïve spectatorship* which he demonstrates when confronted with Alberich's spectacle. However much it may be desirable for the German nation to share Siegfried's "natural" virtues, it cannot afford to emulate the hero's naïve spectatorship, Levin interprets the film to be saying. And from this perspective, the locus of heroism shifts in the second film of the diptych, *Kriemhilds Rache*, to the erstwhile villain Hagen who does exactly embody the virtues of critical viewing and discourse mastership and is able to save the political nation through them. So once again, according to Levin, Siegfried's heroism is accompanied by a crisis of representation, and by a system of disavowal.

But as one reads Levin's analysis of Lang's *Die Nibelungen*, one asks: what film has he been watching? To hold up these gigantic productions with their overwhelming emphasis on, precisely, *spectacle* as attempts to warn German audiences against, and woo them away from, empty (Hollywood) spectacle is absurd. Certainly the intellectual content of these and several of Lang's (and von Harbou's) other films of the period – most famously *Metropolis* (1926) – is virtually as low as that of any piece of Hollywood "trash." Of course *Die Nibelungen* does carry markers of high culture: it is an adaptation of a literary classic, it has highflown stated aims, it clearly thinks of itself as better than ordinary (typically Hollywood) movies. But these markers are only claims, not actual achievements, and in fact *Die Nibelungen* is pretty much an endless round of inflated banal ideas and eye-popping but equally inflated strokes of production design, setting, costume and special effects. The overall impression is indeed very similar to that of, say, a D.W. Griffith spectacular with high cultural ambitions and distinctly middlebrow intellectual apparatus (*Intolerance* is the best single example). Of course it is quite possible that the makers of *Die Nibelungen* thought they were making a very different type of cinema, and that Levin's argument about the film's intentions might still stand. It is nevertheless very hard to imagine that Lang and von Harbou – still less the film itself – might really be wanting a more critical spectatorship from their own viewers, since such a critical spectatorship would lead to a deconstruction not simply of the shallow gloss and production values of Hollywood movies, but those of *Die Nibelungen* as well. It is not a thoughtful work, and I cannot believe that its aims are at any point to encourage thoughtfulness in its viewers, but rather to overawe them with spectacular

gestures of style.

The final sense one has of this book, then, is that it ignores large issues that are staring it in the face in order to pursue ones which are much more intricate and abstruse. Matters are not helped by the constant show Levin makes of wanting to get somewhere by plain questioning ("why would this be?" is a frequent question he asks of a detail of text) and of having a map to get there ("as we shall see later in this chapter/section/book"). This procedure has the effect of heightening the expectation of really solid and significant territory to be covered; but when one finally gets to the delivery, the effect is often disconcertingly thin. In a way that is typical of much recent theory-based investigation of specific texts, the book seems fiercely concentrated on producing an incredibly detailed and minutely argued interpretation, bolstered by great amounts of secondary scholarship, but resting upon tiny pinpoints of textual detail only. I am not talking here about eliciting a ruling subtext which is not openly visible, or only fleetingly visible, on the surface of a text. Nor am I talking about drawing attention to strange and suggestive details at the margins of texts. What is bothersome, rather, is the practise whereby entirely secondary phenomena are manufactured into primary ones by extrapolating meanings derived from them through the work as a whole. Still, the fascination exerted by these *Nibelungen* works and their connections, and the several intriguing byways Levin explores, ensure that book remains an interesting read - interesting but frustrating. (WILLIAM BEARD, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*VIEDA SKULTANS. *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998. 256 pp. US\$ 24.99, paper.

Outside of its geographic and linguistic borders, Latvia has tended to receive little academic attention. In the MLA International Bibliography from 1981-98, for example, the vast majority of the 2495 listings for Latvia are in Latvian.¹ Of the 39 of those articles with a cross-reference to English, only three are written in English while the rest deal with topics in English literature, folklore and linguistics in Latvian. Like Juris Dreifelds' ground-breaking 1996 *Latvia in Transition*, Skultans' study is an important contribution in redressing a chronic dearth in Western scholarship on the middle of the three Baltic states.

A medical anthropologist at the University of Bristol, Skultans was

born in Latvia and left at the age of six months with her mother and grandmother as the Soviet army advanced in the fall of 1944. This project began with the opportunity provided by the "unfreezing of the Soviet Union from 1989" [x] to do fieldwork into the state of Latvian psychiatry, specifically, neurasthenia or nervous exhaustion. She chose to work on this particular diagnosis as it "perhaps more than most was linked to social issues of power and control and... as a concept was impregnated with social and biographical meanings" [11] and therefore highly relevant to the Soviet period. The examination of illness narratives proved an overwhelming task, entwined as they were with the horrors of Soviet history: "arbitrary arrest, deportation to Siberian labour camps, the appropriation of farms, forced labour and famine were remembered over and over again" [xi]. Repeatedly confronted with the necessity of reconciling her own school-book memories of a far-away homeland with those of her informants' harsh realities, Skultans converted a painful personal process into an effective academic strategy. In relating both her own family history and those of her informants, she focuses on their narrative elements, on structural similarities, themes and identities. This creates a distance helpful to her analysis. The pastoral role of the land, lost orchards and orphaned shepherd boys, destiny and the collision of family histories with the brute force of historical events are among the elements she uses to structure her presentation.

The book's great strength and charm lie in a well-wrought balance between the personal and the scholarly. After candidly outlining the genesis of the project and the way in which it enabled her "to fit my private narrative into a larger shared meta-narrative" [16], Skultans turns her attention to the problems associated with doing fieldwork in extreme situations. How is one to appraise the overtly political nature of most illness narratives? How is one to understand the relation between personal and literary narratives? What is one to make of the fact that a country woman describing her early years on a collective farm to Skultans does so in terms which bear a striking resemblance to an account of serfdom by the great 18th century German Lettophile, Garlieb Merkel? In an unabashedly Baltic metaphor, Skultans likens language to "amber which preserves relics of past feelings and ideas" [24]. She suggests à la Barthes and Bakhtin that individuals bring all their past experience, both textual and personal, to bear upon events, and that this too is the case in extreme situations such as the onslaught of a totalitarian regime.

Skultans' research evolved in phases, and she draws on them to structure the rest of the book. She began by soliciting letters from neurasthenia sufferers. Her analysis of these letters in Chapter 4 concentrates on the denseness of their narratives and the way health problems are attributed to material and political problems. She then went to meet her informants. In the process of discovering the country, its past and her lost roots, she also became acquainted

1 This is slightly more than for its fellow Baltic states, Estonia (743) and Lithuania (1513), combined. For comparative purposes, there were 6879 listings for Poland, 3531 for Denmark and 4209 for Finland.

with and heard the stories of non-neurasthenia sufferers as well. Issues emerging from the tapes transcribed of those conversations provide the material for the following four chapters. "Destiny and the Shaping of Autobiography" looks at how the concept of destiny [*likenis*] is used to include individual fates within a larger cultural history. "The Expropriation of Biography" addresses the indoctrinational status of autobiography in Soviet Latvia and the difficulty of constructing a self as active when narrators see themselves as passive victims of hostile circumstances. "The Lived and the Remembered Forest" looks at the pivotal role of forests in Latvia as places of physical and moral refuge. To speak with Bakhtin, as Skultans does, the Latvian forest combines the idyllic and adventure chronotopes. It is a haven to which many Latvians fled in order to escape Soviet arrest, but one in which the threat of starvation and betrayal was omnipresent. In "Damaged Lives, Damaged Health," Skultans moves from this specifically Latvian element of the narratives to look at what is specific to the narratives of nervous disorders. She identifies three areas in which illness is linked to the breakdown of values, purpose and meaning: the difficulty of returning from exile in Siberia and the problems of finding satisfactory working and living arrangements. As in the previous three chapters, Skultans gives her informants ample space to relate their circumstances and restrains herself to succinct contextualizations and analyses.

The final stage of Skultans' work was the synthesis of her data. In the penultimate chapter, "Meanings Lost and Gained," she approaches the question of why some people are more successful at constructing a coherent, meaningful life for themselves than others. In contrasting illness narratives with those of informants not suffering from neurasthenia, she reaches a conclusion at odds with other anthropological research which presumes the general intelligibility of narrative. Skultans notes the progressive losses in illness narratives vis-à-vis their healthy counterparts, the loss of a sense of belonging, of identity and of meaning, and concludes:

not all lives fit comfortably into stories and it is these troublesome and unyielding lives which are perceived as making people ill. In other words the inability to enshrine experience within available narrative structures, to transform private grief into public sorrow, makes people ill. (128)

In support of this conclusion, she offers the examples of two seemingly similar lives experienced and narrated differently. Both Karlis and Valdis were born at the turn of the last century, were sent to Russia as apprentices and experienced the revolution. However, Karlis' story is one of luck and destiny. He is able to "transform what would otherwise be a demeaning walk-on part in others' lives into one rich with literary and historical resonance" [141] whereas Valdis does not manage such a step. His story is marked by a lack of

agency and ends in illness.

In the final chapter on "Habitable Identities" and the appendix "Historical Bearings," Skultans provides her non-Latvian audience with socio-historic background on the creation of the Latvian nation and Latvian nationhood, from the Crusades and serfdom to perestroika. This has the effect of making the book not only an engaging example of post-Soviet scholarship, but also a valuable resource. Skultans' intention was clearly to have written a definitive anthropological account of Latvian experience and in that, the book is an impressive success. At the same time, however, it subtly bypasses the difficult issue of ethnic conflict. While admitting that her research was conducted in Latvia in the euphoric wake of the Soviet empire, Skultans does not problematize the overtly nationalistic emphasis of her work, something which emerges most stridently in the conclusion. Section titles such as "The Soviet Invasion" and "Immigration and Russification Fears" leave no mistake as to Skultans' sympathies. Part of the current wave of Russian-Soviet conflation typical of ethnic Latvians and especially those in exile, Skultans addresses only those wrongs committed against her folk and leaves aside the problematic status of non-ethnic Latvians, and especially the challenges facing Russian Latvians. If this were the only work one were to read on Latvia, one would be left with the impression that all Latvians are anti-Russian and grieve at the toll inflicted by that evil empire on their bucolically diligent nation. Thanks, however, to the book's assiduous theoretical framework, one is left with tools to contemplate the difficulties that both individuals and nations have in coming to terms with what Skultans so felicitously refers to as "the pathogenic powers of the past" (13). (SUSAN INGRAM, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*RICHARD BERGAM. *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996. 237 pp. US\$ 45, cloth.

"What am I to do, what shall I do, what should I do, in my situation, how proceed? By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later?" (Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*).

It's hard to resist the temptation to see in these words the ironic twinkle of their author's steely blue eyes, as if he too, like Joyce before him, was setting out to keep certain left-bank professors busy. As with Joyce, Beckett's work constituted a fertile proving ground for the new theories and textual strategies of the French *nouvelle critique* of the 1960s, and in retrospect it's not hard to see why. Beckett's narrators not only use words such as aporia, but are preoccupied with issues to do with presence, speech and writing, and

whether or not their words have any reference to a reality outside language. Richard Began has done an admirable job in mapping the intimate links between the Beckett pentalogy of novels (*Murphy*, *Watt*, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnamable*), and poststructuralist theories of textuality, subjectivity, authority and signification. Beckett's importance to the contemporary history of ideas, if it was ever in question, is emphatically reinforced in *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity*.

Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity is a very timely book, in that it re-conceptualizes a body of work that was timely in a different way in the period following the Second World War. It is of its time in that it identifies Beckett's importance to *fin de siècle* debates concerning modernity and postmodernity, millennial anxiety and epochal change. It must be said, though, that such an approach to Beckett does fly in the face of a strong revisionary tendency within cultural theory to move beyond apocalyptic rhetorics and discourses of *fin de* everything. The most notable example of this tendency, particularly as it applies to Beckett, is Nicholas Zurburg's *The Parameters of Postmodernism* (1993). Zurburg does not deny that within Beckett there is a prevailing mood of failure, indigence and exhausted possibility. What he objects to and seeks to redress is the oversimplified and reductive application of such themes by social and cultural critics working at the coal-face of the modernity/postmodernity debate. Began is on the whole circumspect in his treatment of the death of modernity, and doesn't fall prey to the *in extremis* posturing that so often characterizes discussions of this theme. It is only in his concluding remarks that we encounter the foreboding of epochal collapse:

More than any other writer of the last half-century, Samuel Beckett has found and said the words that have carried our epoch toward the threshold of its dissolution, the threshold where modernity finally encounters its own equivocal but inevitable end. (187)

His discussion is usually more moderate and wary of such platitude. It is unfortunate that his parting sortie is suggestive of a level of generality that is not indicative of the text as a whole. His discussion offers detailed and rigorous exposition of the ways in which Beckett's novels act out the drama of modernity's struggle with its own principles, and the diminution of their longevity at the hands of new paradigms of thought, of "Nietzschean alternatives" to the "Cartesian paradigm" (185).

Modernity, then, as it operates within Began's text, is ostensibly the modernity of Habermas and Foucault, of the Enlightenment project, and the centring of subjectivity in terms of a Cartesian concept of the self. Began's contention is that the Beckettian pentalogy provides "the earliest and most influential literary expression we have of the 'end of modernity'" (3). Beckett's novelistic approach to zero involved a typically postmodern attack on

Cartesianism, on the "idea that reality may be known in itself as what is given in the world or self-evident to the senses" (17). But on a more specific level, modernity functions for Began as a synonym for the Western metaphysical tradition, with its essentialist and foundationalist principles concerning meaning, selfhood, consciousness and reality. It is within this context, as Began demonstrates, that Beckett is more appropriately defined as an anti-modernist, working towards the dismantling of the modernist tradition of philosophical thought through a relentless pursuit of a "literature of the unwound." This genealogy of the unsaid and unsayable commences in *Murphy*, gathers momentum in *Watt*, is consolidated in *Molloy*, breaks beyond the book in *Malone Dies*, and finally deconstructs into the general field of writing in *The Unnamable*. Began's account of this trajectory is methodical and well argued.

In this playing out of the closure of metaphysics, Beckett's affinities with poststructuralism, and with the work of Derrida in particular, becomes obvious. Both Derrida and Beckett face a common dilemma, a dilemma born out of the very tradition they are attempting to undermine. While they can "no longer work within the Western metaphysical tradition," they are "unable to move beyond it" (152). In a close and detailed exegetical style, Began demonstrates how Beckett's pentalogy constitutes a complex working through of those processes of *différance*, aporia and unnamability that have equally preoccupied writers such as Derrida and Foucault. Not surprisingly, Began frames his analysis around familiar poststructuralist slogans and concepts, such as the metaphysics of presence, the death of the author, the beginning of writing. This strategy illustrates the double scene of the Beckett/poststructuralism rapprochement, the reading of Beckett through poststructuralism and the reading of poststructuralism through Beckett. The degree of parallelism that he identifies in this connection prompts him to suggest that "we might begin to understand Beckett as a kind of buried subtext or marginalium in French poststructuralism," anticipating "many of the defining themes and ideas of Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida" (4).

It is in relation to this suggestion that Began's own discourse signals its infection from one of the most telling symptoms of the postmodern condition, the *déjà parlé*. It is also with this suggestion that his argument loses its force. There is nothing original or groundbreaking in Began's claim that "much of what we associate with poststructuralism... may be traced back to Beckett's five novels" (11). In fact Began not only reiterates previous discussions of Beckett's work and poststructuralism in this context, but fails to engage with the work of those critics who, in the 1980s, theorised the connection in the first place. It is important to briefly cite two of these critics. Floyd Merrell's *Deconstruction Reframed* (1985) is more a book on poststructuralism than Beckett, but it is framed, epigrammatically, by quotes from Musil, Borges

and, predominantly, Beckett's trilogy. The effect of this framing strategy is to suggest that the anti-Cartesian principles implicit in Derrida's work are also to be found (always already) in Beckett's. Indeed, he suggests that Derrida's work is a type of analogy of Beckett's, a "mutually cancellatory system *par excellence*" (194). More pointedly, Iain Wright's authoritative 1983 essay, "What matter who's speaking?" Beckett, The Authorial Subject and Contemporary Critical Theory," is an elaborate discussion and demonstration of the uncanny fit between Beckett's work, especially the trilogy, and poststructuralism. Wright asserts that Beckett's work after *Murphy* provided the "ideal site for poststructuralist critical revelry," noting the talismanic nature of Beckett's name within poststructuralist discourse (13), and how the language used by his narrators is "close to the fashionable lingo of Yale and Johns Hopkins" (16). In an ingenious index of parallels, Wright convincingly dramatizes how Beckett's narrators "all look eerily like deconstructionist critics *manqués*" (13).

This failure to acknowledge previous work done in the field is the major flaw of what is otherwise a well argued discussion. Began's claim to have articulated the interface between Beckett and poststructuralism is not something that *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity* will, or should, be remembered for. It will, though, constitute a relevant text that locates Beckett's work within what is undoubtedly one of the most important and ongoing debates about culture; that is, the nature of the world we live in, and the systems of thought that we draw on to make sense of it. (DARREN TOFTS, SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, MELBOURNE)

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*CHARLES S. WATSON. *The History of Southern Drama*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. xii + 259. US\$ 47.95, cloth.

Although any volume calling itself "The" history of anything opens itself to question, Charles Watson has reasonable claim to the exclusive article in his title. He pursues the laudable ambition of trying to fill in a discernible gap in

the coverage of southern literature and theatre history by presenting a monograph that defines and describes southern drama both synchronically and diachronically. He looks at works and careers within the contexts of their own times, but also combines these elements to describe the sequential development of southern drama from the late 18th century to the present. Such a volume has not previously existed.

Watson displays enviable and determined scholarship in digging out and summarizing unpublished and, frequently, forgotten manuscripts and accounts of figures who played important roles at their times and places. The study will probably prove a useful jumping-off point for further study, but further study will inevitably be necessary to flesh out the coverage and to re-examine some of his critical assumptions and decisions.

For example, Watson provides a list of some eight elements of character, setting and theme that characterize southern drama. However, he does not require all eight in any one work, but states only that "some" must be present. Further work needs to be done to suggest how many "some" might be, and which, if any, are essential.

Another opening this study creates stems from Watson's definition of southern drama as drama written about the south by southerners. At the outset, in chapters that look at theatre activity in specific cities or states, he also seems to incorporate the unstated assumption that they will probably have been written originally for southern audiences.

However, as the study proceeds, Watson begins to make value judgements of southern playwrights by looking for recognition and reputation the national scale as a register of success - looking to playwrights of the south who become important figures in "American" drama, and explaining the "failings" of some, like Paul Green, who did not make this transition out of region to national prominence. Need a writer succeed outside his or her region to be important? Future studies might want to pay more attention to how southern dramatists have proven their value more locally.

Finally, for Canadian theatre historians, the study offers an interesting perspective on Frederick Koch and his Carolina Playmakers. Watson rightly places them as influential in developing southern drama. But Koch was also retained as a teacher at the Banff School of Fine Arts in 1937, where he passed on the techniques of folk theatre to a generation of Alberta and western Canadian playwrights, the most prominent of whom was Gwen Pharis Ringwood.

Ringwood later went to Carolina to study with Koch. In the mid-1940s she participated in the Alberta Folklore project with Robert Gard of the University of Alberta (a native of Kansas, and hence somewhat of a transplanted "southerner" himself). For the Project Ringwood developed three folk plays of Alberta along the Koch model. Watson's study conceivably

could open connections between southern U.S. and western Canadian dramas as two examples of regional dramas. (DON PERKINS, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*A.D. COUSINS and DAMIAN GRACE, eds. *More's Utopia and the Utopian Inheritance*. Lanham: UP of America, 1995. xxi + 136 pp. US\$ 29.50, cloth.

This is yet another collection of essays on utopianism in the widest possible sense. The book sets out with a remarkable essay by Damian Grace on the importance of Academic Scepticism for More's mode of reasoning in *Utopia* and elsewhere ("Utopia and Academic Scepticism" 1-21). Grace undertakes to examine the "sceptical affinities in More's intellectual context, and to identify it in some of his works, notably *Utopia* and the *Letter to Dorp*" (1), locating these affinities chiefly in the writings of Cicero and in the culture of contemporary Humanism. He begins by tracing the Ciceronian influence in Pico's and Valla's anti-dogmatic humanist writings and in Erasmus's Christian scepticism. More, he then argues, shares the anti-dogmatic values of his contemporaries insofar as the rhetorical style of *Utopia* exemplifies argumentation *in utramque partem* (considering both sides of an argument), thus favouring an anti-dogmatic (anti-scholastic) peirastic style over the eristic argumentation of scholasticism (aiming at victory rather than truth). Grace concludes that:

... *Utopia* is not a representation the best state [*sic*] of the commonwealth at all, but a conversation about the conditions, principles and attitudes necessary for a better society. This is reformist, but it is also sceptical, at least in the Academic sense: its very conception is suggestive of difference, novelty and change, and its rhetoric affirms [*sic*] that truth must be sought from alien sources and on both sides of a question. So, both *Utopia* [*sic*] and the Letters [to Dorp] mark More not just an accomplished exponent of humanism, but as one of its great defenders. (17)

Grace's observations are a welcome contribution to the existing Moreana, as is Miguel Martínez López's source study in "The Idea of a Commonwealth According to the Essenes and St. Thomas More's *The Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia*" (53-68). López contends - perhaps somewhat too forcefully in view of the lack of direct evidence - that "the community of the Judaic sect of the Essenes stands as the major single religious influence on More's shaping of the commonwealth of *Utopia*" (54). In support of this claim, López points to More's likely familiarity with Pliny's and Josephus's records of the Essenes, and traces the congruence of the order and values of More's fictitious Utopian community with those said

to have characterised this early Judaic sect.

The remaining contributions to this collection are, unfortunately, not up to par with these two essays. Aleksandar Pavkovic in his "Prosperity and Intellectual Needs: The Coherence and Credibility of More's *Utopia*" (23-35) enquires, as the title indicates, into the credibility and semantic coherence of More's work which he - predictably - finds satisfactory. Dominic Baker Smith's "Utopia and the Franciscans" (37-52) follows the lead of a 1516 letter by More to Erasmus (containing a brief and ironic self-reflection of More in Franciscan habit), to inspect the influence of the Franciscan *usus pauper* on More's society of the Utopians.

"More's *Utopia*, Callenbach's *Ecotopia*, and Biosphere 2" (69-88) by Elizabeth McCutcheon informally addresses ecological questions arising from a consideration of the three cultural artifacts focused upon. James McCutcheon's "To Build a Christian Utopia in the Pacific: The Sandwich Islands in Early American Protestant Missionary Activity" (89-98) is, as the title indicates, a study in cultural anthropology. John C. Olin's "More Montaigne, Voltaire and Matthew Arnold: Thoughts on the Utopian Vision" (99-107) "ever so briefly" (107) discusses Rabelais' Thélème in *Gargantua*, Montaigne's *On Cannibals*, the Eldorado in Voltaire's *Candide*, Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, and, of course, More's *Utopia*.

Clare M. Murphy's "The Island of Utopia and Voltaire's Country of Eldorado" (109-117) presents a short history of the Morean influence in France and a Utopia/Eldorado comparison. And finally, Fred Standley's "Ever 'More': Utopian and Dystopian Visions of the Future 1890-1990" (119-136) concludes the volume with an attempt at an overview of More's influence on utopian writing over the past 100 years or so. This reviewer has wondered whether the last three contributions at least (and conceivably some others) would have perhaps more profitably been left to ferment a while longer before being tasted by the public. (ANNEGRET J. WIEMER, DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY)

*INGRID G. DAEMMRICH. *Enigmatic Bliss: The Paradise Motif in Literature*. New York: Peter Lang, 1998. 240 pp. US\$ 46.65, cloth.

Ingrid Daemmrich's *Enigmatic Bliss: The Paradise Motif in Literature* appears as volume 25 in the Lang series *Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature*. Her study constructs a broad network of literary citations illustrating the various inflections the motif undergoes in literature; more than this, it offers a challenging shift in critical perspective through her definition of motif and its theoretical implications. As both theory and taxonomy of the paradise

motif, her study adds a new dimension to the depth already provided by earlier, period-focused studies such as Giamatti's *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic*, as well as a valuable survey of literary and cultural comparisons spanning all periods of literature.

Daemmrich shifts our critical perspective through her definition of the term "motif." This shift emphasizes the inter-textual functions rather than the literary appearances of both the image and idea of paradise. Attention to literary appearances of the paradise motif, or to what a motif is instead of what it does, produces a stable and progressive mythopoetic canon. Attention to function, in contrast, elicits a more "fluid literary construct" (vii) that highlights a "non-linear series of literary networks" (205) comprising the substantial comparative literary references that ground her study. In assembling a non-linear series over six chapters, Daemmrich effectively constructs the canon of the motif. Fluidity and mobility derive in part from the etymology of motif, from the Latin "movere," which incorporates movement into function. Given the motif's inherent mobility, the various perspectives it acquires replace the assured stability of a mythopoetic canon with the more fluid, even variable condition of enigma. Enigma foregrounds paradox and ambiguity as the motif recurs in a wide-ranging intertextual dialogue sensitive to the diversity rather than the unity of literary contexts from antiquity to the present. In consequence, the very mobility of the motif becomes as much a clue to its cultural and literary durability as its universality.

The first chapter provides an overview of critical studies of paradise as a mythopoetic subject. Her survey of this "evolutionary" canon incorporates comparisons ranging from Mesopotamian, Judaeo-Christian, and Greco-Roman mythology in the ancient world to a wide survey of early modern and contemporary works. Geographical displacements and temporal deferrals of paradise identify various relationships between text and motif. Paradise can be manifested as nostalgic quest, as dream vision, as theological construct, and as human artifact. The inevitable relationship between pastoral and paradise yields important insights into the place of the motif in non-mimetic, self-reflexive works that consider the nature of poetic creation. Spenser, for example, aptly illustrates this relationship in the interplay between the Bower of Bliss and Garden of Adonis. In her introductory chapters, Daemmrich reiterates her thesis in terms of the recognizability of paradise: however it is evoked, the elements of the motif provide a synecdochal basis for the recognition of the entire compound which Daemmrich compares to "an intricate fabric . . . woven from many threads into a design at once stable and dynamically changeable" (22).

The functions she enumerates are many, but their largest domains are designated by the titles of her chapters. These titles are themselves more like compressed networks than succinct containers, maintaining the constant

fluidity of her subject. In short they are: landscape or the representation of space; the themes of quest and journey; the effects of knowledge and technology; games. Daemmrich explores each area in terms of binaries that vitalize the inter-related functions of the motif. In the representation of space, a particularly valuable component of this study, the binaries of high and low illustrate the vertical dimension of cosmology as both theological construct and imagined space. The oppositions of inner and outer and of familiar and unfamiliar, moreover, illustrate the tradition of the enclosed garden as well as the borders of true and false paradises such as Spenser's Bower of Bliss or Milton's Eden. The perspectives created by the motif serve ultimately to deconstruct both canon and tradition by foregrounding enigma, or the presence of ambiguities and paradoxes that characterize the motif as "multivalent and manipulative" (76).

The fourth chapter engages with a series of related themes, acknowledging the strong thematic resonances that paradise evokes in readers. A particularly important thematic dimension concerns the loss, invasion, or corruption of paradise through the agency of evil. Daemmrich uses this familiar theme to observe the incorporation of paradise into pastoral and romance literature in Ariosto, Sannazaro and Shakespeare, and to consider the relationship between paradise and the potentially corrupting forces of civilization and imperialism in Milton, Longfellow, and Goethe. Theme and motif either diverge or converge depending upon whether the forces of aggression and corruption are external or internal to the paradisaal setting. If paradise stands in ironic contrast to the impurities of civilization, its own "conventional identity" can also be undermined by the intrusion of evil. The destabilization of the paradise motif in this matrix of possibilities is once again productive of enigma.

The fifth chapter brings a memorable discussion of the gendering of paradise. The discussion follows from the prior exploration of aggression and control as paradises associated with the feminine or occupied by female figures may be subjected to masculine values and patriarchal structures. This possibility provokes an interesting comparison of Dante and Bunyan who both, in Daemmrich's view, depict the acquisition of female characteristics by male characters as they prepare to enter paradise. The array of functions inherent in the motif expands beyond this particular gendered situation to include further possibilities from the incorporation or accommodation of male and female perspectives to more resistant, oppositional purposes. A final, brief chapter treats varieties of game-playing in the literary treatment of paradise before closing with observations on the dispersal of the motif in the contemporary culture of advertising, where commodities from food to travel to real estate are often characterized through the motif of paradise. The literary and cultural aspects of game testify to the "concentrated self-

reflexivity" and "extensive cultural links" (203) characteristic of a motif that is prolific in part because of its sustained recognizability across time periods, cultures, and literatures.

Daemrich's study provides a coherent canon of the motif she explores. The illustrations she offers are copious, yet the necessarily compressed discussions of each illustration are constantly suggestive. Many texts, such as *Paradise Lost*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *As You Like It*, recur in successive contexts throughout the book. The redeployment of these texts, among others, shows how her study realizes the fluid, intertextual network that she sees as the functional medium of the motif. Her study is important for students of comparative literature, and also for those seeking a general theory of motif and its relevance to cognate theories of spatial representation, culture, and other domains she explores. (DAVID GAY, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

*DAVID SOLWAY. *Random Walks: Essays in Elective Criticism*. Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. 256 pp. CDN\$ 19.95, paper; CDN\$ 55, cloth.

At least David Solway is honest: the very first sentence in *Random Walks: Essays in Elective Criticism* states his position as clearly as possible: "My problem as a writer is that I have lots of axes to grind and no hatchets to bury" (ix). Later in the Preface, he argues for the value of his approach: "trapped in the midst of institutional constraints that are growing more and more withdrawn and coercive, we have forgotten what it means to be intellectually free: to take random walks across the literary landscape, to choose one's direction in consulting a private, interior compass, to remain indifferent to what is current, fashionable, 'correct,' or scholastically dominant. . . . Elective criticism . . . will always choose its own script and idiom — prompted by the myriad unsuspected reciprocities and recognitions that are mysteriously and yet somehow inevitably coded into literary works — over the multinational prose of an establishment criticism as exclusionary as it is irrelevant" (xi). Well, it is hard not to salute such a trenchant call to arms, for surely we all would like to think that we are (or can be) "intellectually free," and many would concur that 'institutional constraints' seem to be growing by leaps and bounds. Still, it seems there may be only one way out of this prison, and that is Solway's. I'm not so sure about that.

In his Foreword to *Random Walks*, Eric Ormsby refuses "to dwell on the high moral seriousness of these essays, or to point out how very funny, sometimes outrageously funny, they can be." Nor, apparently, does he "expatiate on the unusual range of the present collection, reaching from the eight essays of the first section that address theoretical and critical concerns

(and that constitute, almost *en passant*, a modern poetics) to the seven essays on individual authors that make up the second section and which extend from Kafka to the great Canadian poet Irving Layton (with an interlude devoted to a minute critique — some might think it a vivisection — of the contemporary Canadian poet Erin Mouré) on to Shakespeare, Browning, and Joyce and which culminates in the majestic and utterly original concluding essay on Jonathan Swift entitled "Swift and Sartorism" (xv-xvi). I quote Ormsby at length in order to show what an admirer of Solway has to say, and, by the by, to mention just what this collection seems to be about. As to that comment about "a modern poetics," I guess it depends on how you define modern, let alone modernist. Ormsby does spend most of his space on another matter, actually, and that is Solway's style, his language, which Ormsby represents as "a powerful (and conspicuous) protagonist in these essays" (xvi).

Now I admire a fine prose style as much as anyone, and I will admit that quite a few books of criticism and theory fail to offer us such. Ormsby argues that Solway does so, not least when he uses "those famous '\$50 words' which an admiring but exasperated fan once wrote to him about" (xvi). Indeed, Ormsby admits that sometimes even the *OED* doesn't help, but he believes that Solway's practice is deliberate and valuable. He insists: "Solway's prose, like the prose of Nabokov or Joyce, like the prose of Sterne or Donne, says to its readers: *Stop. I am not disposable. I too am a thing among things, a being among beings, a creation among other created things*. Works of art are entities in their own right; they not only deserve, but command, attention. And the essays in the present volume are works of art" (xvii). Well, I'm willing to admit that this is so, although I certainly don't agree with Ormsby (nor with Solway, who seems to feel the same way) that these essays are uniquely artistic (well, Ormsby does allow William H. Gass to sit at the same table; but no one else). Perhaps neither of these people has read widely enough, even in Canadian letters.¹

To a degree, that is an unfair accusation. Solway demonstrates throughout *Random Walks* that he is widely read in both classical and twentieth century literature and criticism; and he has read the theory he delights in disemboweling. His intelligence makes claims on almost every

1 Let me list just a few collections of essays, not all of which are Canadian, which fulfill the requirement of commanding attention as works of art: Guy Davenport's *The Geography of the Imagination* (1981), *Every Force Evolves a Form* (1987), *The Hunter Gracchus* (1996); George Bowering's *Errata* (1988), *Imaginary Hand* (1988); Susan Howe's *The Birth-mark* (1993); Daphne Marlatt's *Readings from the Labyrinth* (1998); Gilbert Sorrentino's *Something Said* (1984); Phyllis Webb's *Nothing But Brush Strokes* (1995); Jonathan Williams's *The Magpie's Bagpipe* (1982). Of course, most of these writers use their art to praise and critique other works of art that Solway disdains.

page. What I miss is a certain breadth of delighted encounter: Solway loves strongly where he loves, and hates strongly where he hates, and that can make for exciting writing, but he seems almost too much in love with his own refusal of political correctness (the term he uses disdainfully). What I find most disturbing is not, as he suggests, his "tonal swivel or liberation" between "a certain animus alternating or mingling with a certain love" (ix), but the narrow range of what he loves.

Even if readers disagree with Solway's point of view, they will find much to interest them in *Random Walks*; if they agree with his positions, they will find even more. Solway is a conservative, a poet fighting a rear-guard action against much twentieth century, let alone contemporary, poetry. His essay on Irving Layton, whom he sees as Canada's finest poet, shows both how and why he takes the stands he does. My disagreement here is finally one of taste, and there may be no accounting for that. That I feel there are a number of other Canadian poets I would place above Layton says more about me than it does about Layton – or Solway. But I am bothered by an attitude he seems to share with Layton, and which is signaled in this volume by two facts: that only three of its fifteen essays deal with women, and that all three are attacks, on Susan Sontag, Barbara Johnson, and Erin Mouré. There does seem to be a, critical at least, misogyny at work here, although Solway denies it again and again.

Admittedly, he attacks Johnson mainly because she seems a symptom of what's wrong with French theory when it "infects" North American criticism. On the other hand, it seems to be her obscurity he disdains, and I would argue that, generally, she represents the thought she prefers with clarity. Of course, selective quotation can make any writer look a fool. Sontag, however, is bad because her "celebrated essay, 'Against Interpretation,' continues to exert a disproportionate influence on the study of literature" (3); and because her wit and intelligence aren't the kind Solway likes, as far as I can tell. I'm not at all sure that Sontag's essay has that much influence but Solway does make some good points against its logic. Still one has to wonder why his animus is so strong. As for Mouré, well Mouré is a bad poet, according to Solway and his class of students in an introductory course on poetry. I have to admit that he chooses some rather bland, even ugly, lines from one poem, but it's precisely his unwillingness to show any generosity toward this writer, as opposed to the overwhelming generosity he brings to his overview of Layton, that bothers me. And, although he has every right to say he doesn't like any contemporary experimental poetry, his remarks on contemporary Canadian poetry demonstrate fully how narrowly he has read in the area. The only Canadian poets he mentions in this whole collection are a few fellow Montréalers, all male. If he is looking for some truly fine traditional poets in Canada, some who have not been misled by the sirens of theory and

experiment, he could still find many in the various provinces, the widely praised contemporary of Layton, P.K. Page, for just one. Solway's critiques of contemporary poetry lose their force when one sees how little he actually seems to have read.

This is not quite the case when he attacks what he sees as the misuse of theory. I do not find such essays as "The Autoerotic Text" and "Fellatiotics: The Relation between Surface and Depth" as funny and insightful as some other commentators have, but they do reveal that he has done his homework. Still, there's an interesting subtextual argument at work in these pieces. It implies, first, that writers who utilize theory to write about whatever do so because they neither like literature nor feel capable of confronting it on its own terms, and, second, that they are so lacking in originality they must steal whatever they use. But we all learn ways to read somewhere, and theory as such isn't necessarily the worst teacher.² Solway mounts a rather savage attack on other critics' use of theory in his response to *The Malabar Review's* special issue on (well, isn't this a surprise!) three younger women poets. He is especially outraged by Stephen Scobie's "The Barren Reach of Modern Desire: Intertextuality in Sharon Thesen's 'The Beginning of the Long Dash'." Apparently, Scobie and the other critics fail to offer "writing that does not disguise the plain truth of significant absence with the elaborate fiction of cerebral presence" (11). Again, Solway is entitled to dislike such criticism, but two implications bother me here: first, that none of the three writers, Paulette Jiles, Diana Hartog, and Sharon Thesen, is worth wasting critical time on; and, second, that the critics, like Scobie, who do, are obviously just using theory to write an article for their CVs and couldn't possibly care for these poets the way he cares for Layton. But I happen to think very highly of both Hartog's and Thesen's writing, and I certainly get the impression from Scobie's article, which I find both persuasive and entertaining,³ that he is writing about a poet and a poem he also admires, even likes a lot. What I am asking for, I guess, and what Solway, with his "take no prisoners" ("no hatchets to bury") approach, absolutely refuses to give, is a sense that others, with whom he disagrees in terms of their taste, may sincerely love what he hates.

2 In a book Solway could learn much from, and which is also written with great wit and intelligence, *The American Poetry Wax Museum*, Jed Rasula mounts a similar argument against The New Criticism, especially when it held complete hegemony over literary studies in North America

3 Indeed, Scobie is one of our best critics precisely because his style is so approachable. Although he always starts with a thorough context of theory, he writes with grace and subtlety, as in his most recent work, the entertaining and provocative *Earthquakes & Explosions: Language and Painting from Cubism to Concrete Poetry* (University of Toronto Press, 1997), which does, of course, celebrate art and artists that Solway would probably dismiss as further signs of modernism's blight.

Ah well, when he turns to writing he does like, Solway can be persuasive. "The Trial as Jewish Joke," though short, makes a strong case. "Framing Layton" is generous and sustaining, whether or not I fully agree with some of its conclusions. "Dukes and Duchesses," which attempts to rehabilitate the Duke of "My Last Duchess," doesn't fully convince me, but its use of historical context does much to undermine the usual, monologic ironies the poem is assumed to present. And "Swift and Sartorism," in which the writer's attitudes so closely match the critic's, is wonderfully astute. Where he writes of what he knows and loves, Solway can be both discriminating and delightful.

Still, too many of these essays leave me with a bad taste in my mouth. They seem ungenerous in ways that the essays of Davenport or Gass do not (let alone someone like Walter Benjamin). As I say, this may be more my problem than it is Solway's. But I find him most convincing, as well as most entertaining, when "the 'method' of elective criticism" (xi) leads him toward what he loves rather than what he despises. (DOUGLAS BARBOUR, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

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