

Book Reviews

***Dancing at the Club Holocaust.* By J. J. Steinfeld. Charlottetown: Ragweed, 1993. Pp. 281. Paper, \$14.95.**

Holocaust or post-Holocaust writing must steer a delicate course between Adorno's warning, "no poetry after Auschwitz," and Elie Weisel's call to bear witness. The oxymoronic "silent scream" best epitomizes the dilemma faced by the creative imagination trying to come to terms with the Nazi genocide of European Jewry during World War II. As Holocaust deniers and historical revisionists increase with the passage of time, so too do the numbers of writers who seek the truth surrounding Hitler's "final solution" to the "Jewish question." The Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld and the American writer Cynthia Ozick have dedicated much of their work to understanding the "Shoah," while in Canada many of our major Jewish writers from A. M. Klein to Henry Kreisel and Mordecai Richler have added significantly to our understanding of the unspeakable catastrophe. J. J. Steinfeld is the latest writer to add his voice to the silent scream.

Dancing at the Club Holocaust is Steinfeld's fifth collection of short stories, and the startling title calls to mind Matt Cohen's *Café Le Dog* and Norman Ravvin's *Café Des Westens*—the fiction of two Canadian-Jewish writers who deal indirectly with the Holocaust. Leonard Cohen may also come to mind with his "black romanticism" that reveals the kind of cabaret decadence in Germany during the 1930's. The title story, like most of the others in this collection, provokes the reader in a manner that Kafka had recommended for literature: "If the book we are reading does not wake us, as with a fist hammering on the skull, why then do we read it? . . . A book must be an ice-axe to break the sea frozen inside us." Kafka's words are especially appropriate for Canadians whose cold pastorals are so removed in time and place from the ovens of Auschwitz.

Most of Steinfeld's stories in this volume are indeed axes that break our inner frozen sea, as the author's rage seeks revenge for Nazi atrocities. The title story opens with a description of a clean, richly furnished psychiatrist's office in downtown Montreal. "Only a long window that opened an unconscious eye over the city seemed to tilt the office away from symmetrical perfection" (31). Steinfeld opens the reader's unconscious eye over history and various Canadian cities where he tilts vision away from symmetrical perfection. Each of his embittered protagonists upsets the symmetry of complacent Canadians. Thus Reuben Sklar, a Jewish professor, disturbs the decorum in his psychiatrist's office, not just through verbal abuse, but through his fantasy and fixation of visiting the Club Holocaust in New York.

Since Reuben's mother had been a dancer before the War when she was crippled, Reuben projects part of his fantasy around dancing in the basement club in New York where an anti-Semitic audience watches Nazi propaganda films. Like the unnamed psychiatrist in the story, the reader believes that the Club is a delusion or morbid fantasy as Reuben attempts the Totentanz or Dance of Death, but is unable to move. "His mother's legs were his; he was almost all the way back" (38). As in many of these short stories, the creative young protagonist seeks to identify with his dead mother through an anatomical gesture or detail such as the concentration camp number tattooed on the forearm. From a psychoanalytic point of view, Reuben not only gets "back" at history, but he also returns to a lost origin, performing a variation on the oedipal quest where all figures of authority must be challenged. Thus, at a Halloween party Reuben reacts instinctively to someone dressed as Hitler: he urinates on the man who turns out to be a dean. "What a historical event: a Jewish professor from Montreal pissing on Hitler" (39).

The story ends with Reuben taking further revenge at the Club Holocaust. He uses the *Jewish Daily Forward* as a torch to burn down the Club as he shouts "Ich bin ein Jude" and dances the *Totentanz*. "In the midst of the commotion and spreading black smoke and retributive flames, Reuben Sklar moved through a marvellous, masterful *Totentanz*, movement and heat and damaged decades coalescing, and for the first time in his adult life, he felt happy" (41). Added to this powerful ending is the fact that Reuben is writing a story about these events. If Reuben achieves catharsis through this affirmation of his identity, through

literalizing the Holocaust as burnt offering, Steinfeld's other protagonists do not always experience such a "happy" ending. Steinfeld keeps his reader off guard by alternately withholding details and occasionally offering too many, so that the ambiguous residue coalesces the decades.

The volume begins with "The Chess Master," another obsessive tale that pits Lionel Lazar Siedelman, a young Jewish writer, against Heinrich Kruger, a Toronto grocery store owner and former Nazi. As Lionel passes by Kruger's Grocery where old men play chess, he wants to break the front window and destroy the grocery "by explosives, by fire, by the wrath of God, but mostly by his bare hands, pulverizing each brick into dust, blowing the dust out of time" (1). While some readers will recognize Steinfeld's vengeful response to *Kristallnacht* and a possibly too-pat *lex talionis*, others will admire the writer's framing devices, time shifts, and angular vision that sufficiently distort the surface. Steinfeld treads a very fine line between the overt, compulsive obsessiveness of Siedelman urinating against the window or thrusting his fist through it, and the asymmetrical distortions that give his stories texture and density.

After Lionel shatters the glass, the blood that flows reminds both protagonist and antagonist of different times: the violent act results in narrative and historical projection as we learn about Lionel's childhood relationship to Kruger's twin brother, Ernst. The blood that flows is not just a historical reminder, but a psychological means of identifying victor and victim through Doppelgänger relationships. Similarly the game of chess that Ernst teaches young Lionel serves as a lesson in history and fate when Lionel traces his mother's concentration camp number on Kruger's left forearm with the same index finger used to move the various chess pieces. While Kruger quotes Goethe's words about chess being the touchstone of the intellect, Lionel is at work on a story called "The Chess Master" which eventually gets published in *Jewish Dialog*. After Kruger dies, Lionel smashes the window and begins writing a novel "about a Jewish boy growing up in Toronto and playing chess almost daily with a displaced old German" (11). The novel starts out with a grocery in flames—Steinfeld's vengeance and catharsis. A story about a story, a story within a story, Steinfeld demonstrates that he can be a master of chess and of fiction, pushing the pawns and, at his best, artfully manipulating the knight in complex directions.

Spatial considerations prevent me from going into further detail on other stories in this collection, but I would point out that the final story, "The Hearing of Memory's Voice," breaks new ground with its surprise ending and role reversals, while weaker stories such as "The Cost of Conversion" and "Ribbentrop's Mistress" remain unconvincing and inconclusive. In "The Apostate's Tatoo" the protagonist is so obsessed with identifying with his mother's suffering in a concentration camp that he gets tattooed on the wrong arm. Obsessions can be blinding for authors as well as their characters, and the future challenge for Steinfeld will be to finally exorcise his demon and move on in new directions with other subject matter, otherwise his catharsis will not be complete. Steinfeld reiterates this danger in a number of stories.

He felt no stronger now at thirty-seven dealing with the past than when he was twenty-seven or seventeen . . . or when his mother stood over him at seven. He wanted to believe that this mood would pass, as others like it had. The doctor in Winnipeg told him to confront his fears, to fight against his demons through art. Art isn't magic, Aaron had argued. Make your art magic, the doctor encouraged. (241)

"The Funeral," "Academic Freedom," "Ida Solomon's Play," and "Weintraub's Education" carry the same message. Through magic, *Dancing at the Club Holocaust* denies Hitler a posthumous victory as Steinfeld's prose tattoos memory on every page.

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Michael Greenstein

***DAYMARES: Selected Fictions on Dreams and Time.* By Robert Zend. Edited by Brian Wyatt. Cacanadadada P, 1991. Pp. 183. Paper, \$12.95.**

Robert Zend was certainly not alone in his fascination with the topsyturvy world of dreams: many of the Romantics, Symbolists and Surrealists before him and a good many writers of various schools and persuasions since, have dabbled with the strange image juxtapositions, jump cuts, the weft and warp of space/time dream inspirations afford; but there

haven't been many writers with Zend's wit and zany sense of humor, and, among Canadian writers, he was one of a kind. That he died in 1985 a young 56, is tragic: that he left so much of his work untranslated or unpublished is even more unfortunate.

Zend's enthusiasms and experiments were legion, and almost everything he attempted bears his unique humorous, anarchic signature. His concrete typescapes and scaptures, lunatic anti-poems, prose poems, fables, parables, lyrics, narrative poems, monologues, scripts, epigrams, fragments, speculative fictions, fake letters and memoranda, and made-up language put-ons, all somehow made us look at ourselves in novel ways and, finally, enjoy our humanness more than we might otherwise have done. From the time he emigrated to Canada from Hungary in 1956, through his rise from shipper to film librarian and editor, to CBC "Ideas" researcher/writer/producer/director (with over one hundred programs and interviews with some of the most interesting thinkers of our times to his credit): from the time of his postgraduate work in Italian Literature at the University of Toronto until his death, he was the peripatetic child explorer/creator in all things. Indeed, if the record didn't allude to his birth in Budapest back in 1929, we might fairly conclude that he invented himself as well. And then he did that too.

Yet, in spite of the impressive chameleon-like transformations and curriculum vitae, Robert Zend's English-language publications are hard to come by, and he remains relatively unknown. *From Zero To One* (Sono Nis Press, 1973), *Arbormundi* (blewointmentpress, 1982), *Beyond Labels* (Hounslow Press, 1982), three collaborative works (*Premiere Performance*, *On Love*, and *On Childhood*) by The Three Roberts (Robert Priest, Robert Sward, Robert Zend) are perhaps his best-known titles. There are five other, scarcer volumes of his work in print.

And now we have this posthumous collection of poems, fictions, and concrete pieces: perhaps his best book to date. And what a delight it is! By turns, rich, antic, hilarious, probing, insightful, deeply textured—and, best of all, madcap and engaging throughout. Whether your taste runs to fairy tales and speculative fiction; or to tongue-in-cheek manifestos, visual play, shaggy dog stories; or to rich Borgesian parables and meta-fiction; the mastery of form and substance here, the control of tone, wit and whimsy is sure to delight.

Of course, being a posthumous work, some pieces are better than others, and the whole has a kind of potpourri assemblage feel to it. Yet even a slight piece by Robert Zend is better than the vast majority of so-called avant-garde metafiction out there, and most of the pieces appear here for the first time, so the reader is bound to find more than a few gems; and, for those unfamiliar with Robert Zend's work, the book is as good a place to start reading as any.

My own favorites include a farcical speculative fiction piece, "The End of the World," in which the narrator and his family, all dead, discuss the changes to their lifestyle that the apocalypse has brought about, and gossip shamelessly about all their dead neighbors; "On the Terrace," another farcical piece in which two blonde gods sit on the porch and muse over their mistakes and creations; "Daymare," a delightful meta-fictional fairy tale in which "twice upon a time there lived two men who were born on the same day, but who never met . . ." and still manage several swapped identities and lifestyle permutations, with all the attendant disgruntlement and un-wishfulfilment that entails; and "Magellan's Tombstone," a metafictional reworking of the legend of the explorer Ferdinand Magellan.

The poems seem slighter, read like out-takes from the author's first book, but they are amusing nonetheless; even clever little tours de farce.

Readers of Jorge Luis Borges's *Ficciones* and Julio Cortazar's *Cronopios and Famas* will find an equally masterful word wizard here: one capable of much tomfoolery and many hi-jinks; a writer as original and gifted as any of his straighter, more middle-of-the-road Canlit brethren; one who is a good deal more fun to read than most. I can't recommend this book too highly.

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Richard Stevenson

***Letter Bomb: Nuclear Holocaust and the Exploding Word.* By Peter Schwenger. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992. Pp. xviii, 163. Paper, \$12.95.**

This paperback packs a punch, though it does not, thankfully, live up to the terrorist promise of its title. The mushroom cloud on its cover

(reproduced from a photograph courtesy of the U.S. Department of Energy) may become ever more ominous as Peter Schwenger's text unfolds, but there is no revelling in violence for its own sake here. Moreover, it is hard to sensationalize that which might well remove most of our species from the world of sensation altogether. This inexpensive and provocative volume in the Johns Hopkins's series, *Parallax: Re-visions of Culture and Society*, is an accessible and important contribution to nuclear criticism (inaugurated at a Cornell conference in 1984), and it could well serve as a model for literary scholars interested in fashioning a more public idiom in which to pursue matters of more general interest. Make no mistake: this is a scholarly work which engages with some of the most difficult contemporary thought on a wide range of issues, but it is clearly written, considerately organized, and will appeal to students of film and music, contemporary fiction, French theory, cultural politics, and even the general reader prepared to work with some demanding quotations and rigorous commentary.

In the first section of the book, "Deconstruction and Detour," Schwenger situates the "intense anxiety" which caused him to explore "what the nuclear referent could tell us about literature" (xi). The act of reading, encouraged by a student in a discreet but telling reminder of the possibilities of academic community, leads the teacher of literature to connect his own personal concerns and convictions to the current crisis of reference. As we know, that crisis of reference is frequently trivialized as the obsessive obscurantism of post-structuralist theory, and Schwenger sets himself the task of redefining its critical mass and range of applications in terms of that which is inexhaustibly fugitive, mysterious, unspeakable, unthinkable, but infinitely dear to us: such "things" as selfhood, amity, peace, life. He works in the tradition of those who have dared to imagine the Holocaust despite objections that it must remain by definition the Other of understanding, the Beyond of representation.

Nuclear holocaust points back to the human "totalities" consumed by fire in the Nazi deathcamps and in the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and forward to the fireball that would incinerate us all. Horrendous as they have been, modern examples of holocaust have not been as thorough as their engineers would have liked; in fact, they have been denied completion by the crucial residues of memory, physical survival, and what might be termed an elegiac unconscious in which grief and hope

continue to stir. Schwenger connects the irreversible results of the bomb as source of "the radical instability that underlies our lives" (xii) to the agency and language of deconstruction, and, in particular, to Derrida's essay, "No Apocalypse, Not Now, (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives)" (*Diacritics* 14). Such a title, and the text it introduces, might seem too clever and insouciant by half, but Schwenger carefully and persuasively defends Derrida's post-bomb version of *serio ludere* as an unsparingly honest, brave admonition constantly in danger of being thought obscenely irresponsible or reductive. The productive "misreading" of this essay, and of Derrida's *Post Card*, helps clarify a political and ethical agenda for deconstruction in contrast to recent rumors of its imminent demise. Textuality and humanity are brought together compellingly also in David Brin's nuclear novel, *The Postman* (1986), and in the historical figure of "[f]ifteen-year-old Sumiteru, the so-called *Postman of Nagasaki*" (9) whose scarred back became a living text first hidden by its "owner" from view and then put into limited but shocking circulation. From such convergences, and the walking cure presented in Russell Hoban's fiction, there emerges a new allegiance to narrative as an immensely painful and hazardous but necessary journey toward "the idea of us" (32). The reader is constantly encouraged to assist in reworking relations between the lived and the literary in order that we may more effectively come to terms with "what Barbara Freeman has called nuclear desire: not only the secret wish for nuclear holocaust but the fusion of that wish with erotic desire" (8). This appositely explosive idea permits Schwenger to pursue the love-death nexus into the Freudian and Lacanian unconscious, into novels like *Gravity's Rainbow*, *Riddley Walker*, *The Burning Book*, *Fiskadoro*, *The Nuclear Age*, Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach* and Steve Reich's *The Desert Music*, and the films of Andrey Tarkovsky.

The second section of the book, "Holocaust and Sacrifice," is a brilliant elaboration of Lacan's famous aphorism, "The best image to sum up the unconscious is Baltimore in the early morning" (47). Baltimore is connected to Hiroshima the morning the bomb was dropped, while survivors' attempts to name nonentity are linked to Lacan's comments on the quasi-linguistic structure of the unconscious, and to Fredric Jameson's sense of the textually mediated unconscious made available by interpretation in the form of "'strong' rewriting" (56). Schwenger rehabilitates the

silence of trauma as the attentive praxis of the analyst, before offering another kind of illuminating detour via Pynchon's famous novel about the Second World War, a narrative "ostensibly not about Hiroshima" (57). Schwenger then introduces Girard's notion of "mimetic desire" (70) to help elucidate "nuclear desire's" relation to the "textual unconscious" and the "sacrificial text" before proceeding to the book's final section, "Imagining Hope," where he maintains the effort to get beyond "dogmatism [and] denial . . . towards an extreme Otherness" (93-94).

Schwenger's own writing is particularly effective at this point, but he also makes extensive use of Blanchot's work on the Jewish Holocaust and on the imaginary—as both "vitalizing negation" and "the neutral double of the object" (117)—to provide models of explosion and disaster which can (uncannily) be detected even in works "with no direct lineage to Blanchot's ideas" (98). The claims of memory are disputed, the virtues of forgetting re-affirmed in the name of a future "undetermined, either by controlling agendas or their necessary ruin" (117). Here is the narratable future and the grounds of Blochian hope, the being of literature, the imagery of Scripture (as in the "hope of a tree" [Job 14, 7-9]). Schwenger's self-styled bricolage becomes finally a tree of sorts, of language and the unconscious, a site of ramifying meanings re-convening many of his texts in a re-vision of the future which re-habilitates indeterminacy, explosion, denial of identity, as signifying "an opening into hope" (150). It is hard not to think of the second act of *Waiting for Godot* and the impression made by the fact that now "[t]he tree has four or five leaves." And I mean this as a compliment; the closing pages of Schwenger's remarkable meditation are moving and memorable because so thoroughly ironized. Whatever one's receptivity to negative theology or psychoanalysis or aesthetic imagery, whatever one's doubts about the limitations of the literary in the context of social and political transformation, it would be hard to deny that this is a work that glows with intelligence and concern.

***Onomatopoeics: Theory of Language and Literature.* By Joseph F. Graham. New York: Cambridge UP. 1992. Pp. xviii, 311. \$44.94.**

The scope of this book is wider than its title suggests; on first glancing at the table of contents one might be tempted to say also narrower than the pretensions of its subtitle require. But the absence of both the definite and indefinite article before *theory* is well motivated and an indication of the author's approach: he treats aspects of language analysis and beliefs about language (not always deserving the name of *theory*) that he deems to be relevant to literary analysis.

Defining what is literary consists, for Graham, in comparing modes of representation that are distinct capacities of mind, a point of view influenced by current work in cognitive psychology. He devotes much space to this relatively new adjunct to linguistics, but not before reviewing the contrasting notions of naturalness and conventionality in language from Plato's *Cratylus* to Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*. Therein lies one of the disappointments of the book. Though it promises by its design to integrate views on language and bring them to bear on literature, fully half the text is given to scathing indictments of structural linguistics, structuralism, and semiotics. This is puzzling, given that no such demolition is required to clear the ground for the line of analysis Graham wishes to advance.

The *Cratylus* imposes itself as the starting point for an inquiry into the natural/conventional opposition. It also allows the author to anticipate his later discussion of epistemological conundra at the centre of recent philosophical debate and literary theory. If language is natural, interpretation is not necessary; if language is conventional, no interpretation is possible without radical translation. The laudable objective achieved in Graham's first chapter is to focus on generally neglected connections contributing to the coherence and comprehensiveness of the *Cratylus*. It is only the conclusion that strikes an odd note. In a move which might be explained as overcompensating for undetected connections within Plato's dialogue, the author invents a connection to generative grammar, proclaiming that it "has the notable effect of providing a cogent illustration and historical vindication of the main lesson of the *Cratylus*" (39).

In chapter two, Saussure plays *Cratylus* to Chomsky's Hermogenes in what Graham at first dubs "the historic confrontation between structural linguistics and generative grammar" (44). Subsequently, Chomsky himself

is said to have described the transition from structural linguistics to generative grammar as simply a shift in focus (67). Eventually he is recast as Socrates, and the historic confrontation is conjured out of existence: "In the version of language that Chomsky defends, it does not make much sense to talk about any grammar as being either arbitrary or conventional [as opposed to natural]. The problem is formulated in a way that effectively defuses the basic tension of the whole issue" (135). One is reminded of Leonard Bloomfield, weary of the mechanist/mentalist debate, deftly sweeping the opposition into his camp.

Graham complains of Saussure's dogmatism while displaying infinitely more in describing generative grammar, about whose claims "there is no longer any serious doubt or debate" (46). Saussure is said to be too theoretical and too philosophical, but the strength of generative grammar is said to be its theoretical orientation and its links to philosophy.

One wonders if Socrates's proof about the paradox of naturalism (it can only be true in particular if it is false in general) could not apply to generative grammar as well, but Graham does not entertain the question. He waxes lyrical—and occasionally tautological, noting, for example, that the consequence of science for natural language is to naturalize the subject (46).

The paean to generativism induces, at times, a style that is between chant and cant: "Conventionalism could itself be a convention only if it were a convention *of* or *for* something—something like the truth about truth in language. But then it becomes a matter of real truth as to what is and what is not true by convention" (47). Such examples are amply compensated for elsewhere by Graham's variations in style, which extend to the whimsical. He can be at his best with analogies to soufflés and the marriage of pillows or the conflation of the brains-in-a-vat hypothesis with Archie Bunker's behavior.

None of this offsets the fact that the author is guilty of the sort of misreading of which he accuses Stanley Fish in his closing chapter. He also perpetuates the fiction that the enemies of generative grammar are unified under the banner of arbitrariness and conventionality. (Graham frequently equates these terms rather than construing the latter as a corollary of the former, a relatively common procedure in enlightened variations of structural linguistics with which he is apparently unfamiliar.)

If the author is harsh with Saussure, he is brutal with semiotics, dismissing it in favor of cognitive psychology, which is said to stand to generative grammar as semiotics stands to structural linguistics (98). But by his own definition this relation is one of non-science to pseudo-science.

According to Graham, the "new wrinkle" brought to epistemology by Fodor's cognitive psychology is to view semiosis as a form of translation (100). As it happens, this notion also runs through the more wrinkled semioticians such as Welby, Peirce, Ogden and Richards, and others. It is interesting to note passages where the author can manage to sound by turns like B. F. Skinner ("There is no agency to thought and no relevant distinction between what I do myself and what happens to me or in me during thought"—106) and I. A. Richards ("to be *thought* it does not have to *be* thought [though it does have to be thought of]"—107). Skinner and Richards were lifelong friends but disagreed violently on the relationship of language to thought.

There is much good sense in Graham's final chapter. He unmasks the problem of indeterminacy or undecidability of literary interpretation as orthological deficiency and "an exaggeration of the epistemic hazard of what is really no more than an ordinary inductive risk" (202). This argument is grounded in the observation that in philosophy indeterminacy is an ontological problem, which is not the problem in literature. Discussion ranges over the work of Stanley Fish, Paul de Man, and William Wimsatt, the latter being one of Graham's mentors. It becomes clear here that the purpose of the book is to extend Wimsatt's study. The latter's programmatic taxonomy of types of iconicity is presented. This corresponds partly to Pierre Guiraud's overview of categories of motivation for the linguistic sign (not discussed) and in that respect provides an interesting corroboration of Wimsatt's view.

There is much of interest in this book, but one remains puzzled that Graham can begin by declaring that he is aesthetically rather than linguistically oriented and then devote so much of his hermeneutic energy to invective against Saussure and his legacy.

Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics. By Bruce R. Smith. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991. Pp. xii, 329. \$29.95.

In its opening chapter, Bruce R. Smith's *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* grapples with a dilemma which it (understandably) never resolves, and from which it never seems to recover. Presumably under the pressure of recent widespread critical acceptance, Smith dutifully summarizes Foucault's constructionist theory of sexuality, and warns us we will have to learn "to unthink 'homosexuality' as a subject of inquiry and 'homosexual' as a type of person" (12). Yet it becomes apparent that Smith does not really *believe* in Foucault's theories, though he is reluctant to personally challenge that heavyweight. Initially he lets others do the challenging: though "homosexual" did not exist as a category of self-definition in the Renaissance, "that does not mean, Boswell would interject, that there were no men in early modern England whose desires were turned primarily toward other men" (12). This intimation of an essentially essentialist position is followed by more lip-service to Foucault and other theories of cultural scripting. Significantly, the scripts which seem to interest Smith most are the "intrapsychic" ones from the "deepest self," which we can access through literary discourse. Although he apparently acknowledges that even here "cultural scripting is at work" (16), Smith really takes these *essential* desires as his starting point, the grounds for everything else, and admits as much: "Moral, legal, and medical discourse are concerned with sexual *acts*, only poetic discourse can address homosexual *desire*. And it is with the fact of homosexual desire that I begin" (17). Thus, though the author claims to negotiate the "Scylla and Charybdis" of the essentialist/constructionist controversy, ideologically he has slid well over to the essentialist side, as the statement of his "political purpose" makes clear: "it is an attempt to consolidate gay identity in the last decade of the twentieth century, to help men whose desire is turned toward other men realize that they have not only a present community but a past history" (27).

While the political purpose may be clear, the strategies of literary and historical analysis are not, and the reader, unsettled by the conflicted nature of the introduction, remains unsettled through the ensuing chapters. Concerned with the connections between homosexual desire and patterns of poetic discourse, Smith isolates six separate "myths" of homosexual desire and devotes a chapter to each: "Combatants and Comrades," "The

Passionate Shepherd," "The Shipwrecked Youth," "Knights in Shifts," "Master and Minion," and "The Secret Sharer." In the introduction Smith claims that each myth "constitutes a 'cultural scenario' for *acting upon* homosexual desire" (21, my emphasis), but they are also treated as fantasies of the imagination, a kind of psychic pressure valve, and the study never makes clear the proposed "homology," the dynamic between literary myth and the validation of sexual acts within the various social institutions. In fact, the question Smith uses as an epigraph to his opening chapter—"what are we to make of a culture that could consume popular prints of Apollo embracing Hyacinth and yet could order hanging for men who acted on the very feelings that inspire that embrace"—remains as problematic at the end of the study as at the beginning. Historically, the exact nature and context of each particular "consumption" would seem to require further elucidation, if indeed such inquiry is even possible.

Other difficulties confront the reader in the discussions of the various "myths." In "Combatants and Comrades" an extensive examination of the legal discourse is awkwardly placed within a discussion of male bonding, and the moral discourse is (for the time being) downplayed. Smith attempts to refute Alan Bray's characterization of early modern England as strongly homophobic, opting instead for the third relationship between male "homosocial" desire and the structures of patriarchal power proposed by Eve Sedgwick; that is, of highly conflicted but intensively structured combination of ideological homophobia and ideological homosexuality (rather than a dominance of either). Yet, despite the very brief mention of James I's dispensation of political favors, this claim remains unconvincing, since the examination of the "poetic" discourse alone does not offer enough proof of the ways power was actually implemented in Renaissance society.

In "The Passionate Shepherd" Smith claims that "the pastoral scenario presents a perfect homolog to the all-male social institutions that nurtured sixteenth- and seventeenth-century males from boyhood to manhood" (82), but this examination of "homosexual" elements in a wide range of pastoral literature, including Virgil's second eclogue, does not at all make clear what kinds of desires, sexual acts, or power relations were actually experienced within these institutions. The discussion contains some interesting appropriations. The beloved in Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd" is assumed to be a boy, on tenuous evidence. (No explanation

is offered as to why Raleigh, presumably familiar with this particular "cultural scenario," would pen a nymph's reply; though the title of Raleigh's poem is not necessarily the author's it at the least shows editorial resistance to the "myth," assuming the poems belong to this "myth" at all).

"The Shipwrecked Youth" suggests an even more tenuous "homology" between folk-plays and romance narratives. The chapter includes a curious reading of "Hero and Leander," which, Smith suggest, Marlowe may have left unfinished "because there were no more opportunities for homoerotic titillation" (134). Smith states, with respect to the poem's two erotic encounters, that "What was graphic and passionate with Neptune and Leander becomes figurative and ridiculous with Leander and Hero." Considering that the poem modulates into a realistic mode with the sexual consummation of the lovers at the end (the only "real" consummation in the poem), Smith's terms "graphic" and "figurative" are oddly inverted, and in fact the poem would appear much less a completely "homosexual" text than he suggests. Elsewhere Smith emphasizes that the sexual freedom offered in the romance world allows only catharsis or exorcism of desires which must be abandoned or repressed upon return to the strictures of Elizabethan society, the "real" world, thus linking the homosexual with the purely imaginative.

The social homophobia implicit here (supporting the earlier refuted Bray) is further emphasized in "Knights in Shifts," which explores the satires which serve as "homologs to institutionalized morality" (161). The unpleasantness of this material is somewhat mitigated by a critique (via Foucault) of the satirist, who gets "caught up in the very vices he castigates . . . and encourages his 'victims' to enjoy their vices all the more" (164). What also makes this myth bearable to contemplate is that Shakespeare will have none of it. Smith has difficulty (here and elsewhere) maintaining that Renaissance homosexual activity and effeminacy should not be equated, since some of the evidence he marshals implies that it sometimes was.

"Master and Minion" contains the most glaring instance of Smith's attempts to force works of literature into what the reader has come to realize are quite arbitrarily constructed categories. The prime example of this "myth" is Marlowe's *Edward II*; after discussing the play for three and a half pages, Smith admits that "the role of 'minion' does not quite

fit Gaveston" (213), though it has been clear from the beginning, to any reader familiar with this text, that it does not fit Gaveston *at all*, and that the "pliant" Edward is hardly a master. Smith is so fond of the Neptune-Leander passage from "Hero and Leander" ("we ourselves begin to drown in pleasure" [133] when "we" read it) that he deliberately obscures the fact that in Gaveston's allusion to the myth in the play's opening speech, the favorite has cast Edward in the role of Hero, not of Neptune. Considering the book's subject, the treatment of Marlowe's plays seems particularly sketchy and weak. *The Massacre at Paris* might have offered a better example of "minions." Oddly, Calyphas in *Tamburlaine Part Two* is characterized as a "sodomite playing it for laughs" (209), when this character makes clear he desires *women*. Discussions of other texts, such as Jonson's *Sejanus*, also beg further analysis.

The final chapter, "The Secret Sharer," concerned with Shakespeare's sonnets, is a dense and sometimes confusing discussion, though it is interesting in its summary of the editorial and publishing history of the sonnets, during which the homoerotic content was deliberately obscured. The procreation sonnets are compared with Spenser's "Epithalamion," since both exemplify "cosmic heterosexuality" (251); the comparison is strained, since Spenser's bride is fully realized as a partner in love, while women in Shakespeare's early sonnets seem only potential incubators of offspring. With honesty and directness Smith criticizes Auden's hypocritical preface and refutes apologists for the sonnets "as testimonials to friendship" (257). Yet when Smith concludes that the "sexual potentiality in male bonding, steadily mounting through the sequence of six myths, reaches a literal and figurative [?] climax in Shakespeare's sonnets" (267), he claims a clarity of progression in his discussion which is not at all evident from a reading of the book. The term "male bonding" seems strikingly inappropriate when applied to several of the myths, including the mysterious relationship between the speaker of the sonnets and the beautiful young man.

While it is doubtful that Smith's categories of "myths" will become current in critical discourse, the book does amass a large amount of material and raises important questions, and will be a useful point of departure for future studies. It also offers references to a great deal of recent discussions of sexual theory and history, although a proper works cited list would have increased its usefulness in this respect. Unfortunate-

ly the work as a whole stands as a kind of proof that, for a culture which regards homosexual desire as a universal temptation rather than a signifier of a particular personality type, it is extremely difficult to isolate and categorize the specifically "homosexual" as the subject of "a cultural poetics" inquiry.

University of Calgary

Ian McAdam

***The Letters of Samuel Johnson.* Edited by Bruce Redford. The Hyde Edition. 3 vols. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992. Vol. I (1731–1772): pp. xxix, 431; Vol. II (1773–1776): pp. xvii, 385; Vol. III (1777–1781): pp. xvii, 399. \$29.95 per volume.**

This handsome new edition of Dr. Johnson's letters takes us to the end of 1781, three years before his death. Two additional volumes are projected for 1994: the fourth will cover the period 1781 to 1784, and the fifth will consist of appendices and a comprehensive index. Each of the three volumes under review is equipped with an index of proper names.

The Hyde Edition is appropriately named after the late Donald Hyde and his widow, Mary Hyde (now Viscountess Eccles), joint creators of the magnificent Hyde Collection of Johnsoniana housed in their Four Oaks Farm Library in New Jersey, "an archive of incomparable rarity and coherence," as Bruce Redford describes it (I.xv).

For many years, Johnsonians have depended heavily on the late R. W. Chapman's edition of the letters, a three-volume set published by Clarendon Press in 1952. Almost at the outset, Chapman's was criticized for its capricious numbering system involving decimal points, its complex indexing, and its often inconclusive or unhelpful footnotes. Bruce Redford has done everything editorially possible to remedy these deficiencies, while being sensible enough to utilize the indispensable contributions of Chapman and, before him, George Birkbeck Hill. The latter's two-volume edition, published in 1892, also by Clarendon Press, had excluded all the letters that had appeared in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*—not surprisingly, since Hill was the editor of that *Life*. Thus Chapman's 1952 edition contained many more letters, indeed 500 more, than Hill's, and now Red-

ford adds another 52. If there is yet another edition, say in 2052, will there be even more? Who knows what may yet lurk in dusty attics.

A case in point is the group of letters known as the Lennox collection, now housed in the Houghton Library at Harvard. These 12 letters, from Johnson to Charlotte Lennox (1720–1804), author of *The Female Quixote*, were found quite recently in a bank vault in Scotland. The discovery was made known to the world by Duncan Isles in a series of letters in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and several articles in the *Harvard Library Bulletin* in 1970.

As well as providing those and other additions to the canon, Redford claims two distinct advantages over Chapman: more accurate readings of the text, and up-to-date annotation. His edition offers many texts "transcribed for the first time from the original documents" (I.ix). Among these are 42 letters from Johnson to his closest female friend, Mrs. Hester Thrale—in many ways the most intimate and most moving in the entire collection. For the precise text of the later letters to her, from a virtually heartbroken Johnson who felt betrayed by her marriage to an Italian musician, we shall have to wait for Redford's fourth volume, promised for 1994. In this context, the importance of the transcription from holographs lies in the fact that Mrs. Thrale had carefully erased some telling phrases from her own edition of *Letters to and From the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1778), and Redford has, with equal care, restored as much of the original manuscript as possible, using state-of-the-art techniques to decipher the suppressed passages.

In many other instances the Hyde Edition corrects mistakes in decipherment made by previous editors, and even drops four of the letters Chapman had included, because of doubtful authorship or questionable authenticity. But Redford himself confesses that Johnson's handwriting often presents special difficulties, which are "compounded by the mutilated state of many of the manuscripts." While making no claim for transcriptive infallibility, he modestly states that his work "represents an improvement over its predecessors" (I.xii).

Though he might have been a shade more gracious in acknowledging the enormous editorial labors that preceded his own, particularly those of Chapman, Redford's statement is fully justified. His textual notes and footnotes are models of conciseness. He has supplied a detailed record of substantive deletions, clearly indicating both the first and second thoughts

of the writer. He has traced most of the original letters to their present owners, pointing out that Chapman's ownership credits were often "decades out of date" (I.xii). The probable reason for this was that Chapman had published a selection of Johnson's letters as early as 1925, and simply repeated what he then knew of their provenance in his 1952 edition. Since Chapman's time, moreover, there have been many "transatlantic transfers" of manuscript materials, most notably into collections such as that of the Hydes. Some items remain elusive, perhaps untraceable, and even such an assiduous detective as Bruce Redford must continue to rely on printed sources and auction records for details of their earlier whereabouts and, in a few cases, for the texts themselves.

Even a scholarly achievement of this high order is not without its flaws, of course. The index to each volume, in itself a welcome innovation, lacks life dates and references to authorities quoted, and is inconsistent in showing where footnotes occur. One hopes that the master index in Volume Five will prove to be truly comprehensive. A proper listing of the "newly discovered" letters ("newly" is a bit of an exaggeration, perhaps) would have been helpful to those who are financially unable to discard their Chapmans but could consult the Hyde Edition in a library. Further, information about the letters to which Johnson was responding might have been provided in greater detail.

The compensating virtues of this beautiful edition far outweigh such minor shortcomings. Not the least of these virtues is the large format, easily handled, with acid-free paper of the highest quality. The large-type printing, by the Stinehour Press of Lunenburg, Vermont, is exemplary, and the price, considering the current inflation in the book market, remarkably reasonable—thanks, no doubt, to the generous patronage of Lady Eccles who, as Bruce Redford rightly comments, "as discerning scholar and benefactor . . . has played a crucial role in the development of Johnsonian studies" (I.xv).

Johnson, writing in the heyday of the epistolary art, which had much to do with the early development of the novel, described the qualities of good letter-writing as "ease and simplicity, an even flow of unlaboured diction, and an artless arrangement of obvious sentiments" (*Rambler* 152). He did not always follow his own prescription. His celebrated letters to Lord Chesterfield on literary patronage (I.94–7) and to "Ossian" Macpherson ("I received your foolish and impudent note . . . I will not desist from

detecting what I think a cheat, from any fear of the menaces of a Ruffian": II.168–9) go far beyond "obvious sentiments." At the other end of the emotional scale, however, Johnson could be, and often was, a kindly, sympathetic, tender and loving correspondent. The volumes under review deal with his early career as a struggling journalist in London, his personal tragedies, such as the deaths of his alcoholic wife and his beloved but rigidly Calvinistic mother, his rise to fame as an author, his travels through Scotland and Wales, and his many friendships, most notably those with Boswell and the Thrales. They form much more, in fact, than a desirable companion piece to place alongside Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, as they frequently reveal sides of the man which, even to that indefatigably nosy biographer, were quite inaccessible. To offer one example, in a category that deserves more attention than it has been given, that of Johnson's letters to children, there is a remarkable gentleness, simplicity and warmth. Yet even here, the Great Moralist keeps breaking in: "I am glad to hear," he writes (I.404) to eight-year-old "Queeney" Thrale, "of the improvement and prosperity of my hen. Miss Porter [his step-daughter] has buried her fine black cat. So things come and go. Generations, as Homer says, are but like leaves, and you now see the faded leaves falling about you."

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James Gray

***Coleridge: Historian of Ideas.* By Charles De Paolo. English Literary Studies. No. 54. Victoria: U of Victoria, 1992. Pp. 110. Paper. \$8.50.**

De Paolo's monograph reworks the traditional view, first advanced by John Stuart Mill, of Coleridge as a "historical philosopher," articulating "a philosophy of society, in the only form in which it is yet possible, that of a philosophy of history; not a defence of particular ethical or religious doctrines, but a contribution . . . towards the philosophy of human culture" (Mill, "Coleridge"). While maintaining the proposition that Coleridge's philosophy of history subsumes his philosophy of society, De Paolo argues convincingly that this philosophy of history is itself subsumed within a traditional theological paradigm, adopted by Coleridge

precisely as a "defence" of ethical and religious doctrines threatened by the increasingly secularized historiography of the day. In De Paolo's words, Coleridge "intended to write a theological history grounding temporal phenomena in Divine Ideas"; and in the often fragmentary historical commentary Coleridge did produce, "religious and cultural convictions clearly inform and direct his speculations" (88, 98).

Working with some deftness through bits and pieces of Coleridge's letters, notebooks, marginalia, lectures, and essays, as well as the more obvious texts like *Lay Sermons* and *On the Constitution of Church and State*, De Paolo manages to reconstruct the "eclectic orthodoxy" of Coleridge's historical sensibility and thought, and in a properly historical way. He presents Coleridge, in other words, as a historian responding at various moments and with some inconsistency to ideas and events as diverse as Enlightenment mechanics and epistemology, the French Revolution, the advent of German idealism, and the Reform debates of the early 1830s. What binds these responses together, according to De Paolo, is Coleridge's unwavering investment in the universal history figured in the Christian scriptures and reified in the historiography of the patristic tradition.

The most important product of this study, it seems to me, is De Paolo's reassessment of the vexed problem, particularly in Coleridge criticism, of influence. Coleridge's debts to German idealism, for instance, are notorious, but, in the matter of historiography at least, De Paolo defines a relationship, not of simple adoption and restatement, but rather of digestion and critique. Coleridge, says De Paolo,

is intent upon opposing the German idealists and others who had rationalized God into an abstract, nominally-benevolent force; thus he hoped to recover lost ontological ground through the recrudescence of scholastic doctrine, reinstating God as the Lord of history. Owing more to St. Augustine than to Fichte or Hegel, his theological history diverged, sharply, from empirical currents in historical research. (98)

Though this passage turns on the notion of opposition, the emphasis throughout is generally (and correctly, I believe) on Coleridge's "imaginatively-syncretic approach to universal history," his attempt "to accommodate modern scientific, philosophical, and political theory to traditional ideas and forms" (64, 100). In De Paolo's view, Coleridge

appears less as a "divine ventriloquist" than as a brilliantly conservative negotiator of his own sacred and secular heritages.

The monograph is unfortunately not without its weaknesses. There are a number of distracting lexical and editorial oddities, like the "verbing" of nouns ("refrain" is used as a verb meaning "to recur like the refrain in a song"; "nomenclature" appears as a gerund, "nomenclaturing") and needless or inaccurate hyphenation (adverbs are regularly joined to the adjectives they modify, as in two of the quotes above; as a line ending, "metascientific" is consistently hyphenated after the "s"). More troublesome is an unevenness in the argumentation, the result I think of a failure in focus in the first few chapters, where De Paolo presents relevant contextualizing materials, but without an explicit enough sense of the point to which they are tending. The study divides, consequently, into halves, the first diffuse and comparatively unconvincing, the second concentrated and persuasive. The early chapters may also suffer from an insufficiency of detail: chapter three, "The Chiliastic Verse," for instance, deals so summarily with Coleridge's political odes and "Religious Musings" that, for the reader acquainted with the poems, the discussion seems to beg more than it offers. Finally, the study is almost certainly mistitled, for, though one chapter does treat Coleridge specifically as a "historian of ideas," the thesis of the monograph as a whole is rather that Coleridge was a "theologian of history" or, less awkwardly, a "theological historian."

These objections notwithstanding, De Paolo carries his thesis, on the strength of the research embodied throughout and the forcefulness of its presentation in the later chapters. A notable contribution to Coleridge studies, *Coleridge: Historian of Ideas* should prove useful as well to students of history and theology, and, as De Paolo intended, to "all those interested in nineteenth-century culture and thought" (10).

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Mark Bruhn

***Tennyson's Language.* By Donald S. Hair. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1991. Pp. vii, 198. \$50.00.**

Donald Hair begins his study with a solid presentation of the Lockean-Coleridgean split in the assumptions made concerning language. An essential idea in Locke is that etymology means tracing words back to their source in sensations which become ideas whose generalizations from experience make up our knowledge. To these ideas we attach sounds, and the arbitrary connection of spoken word and idea is the essence of Locke's language theory—a theory, Hair argues, which is not completely antithetical to Tennyson, who, like the other Cambridge Apostles, found the Coleridgean view more congenial. Coleridge emphasized the shaping power of the mind itself, and the patterns or forms by which it makes experience intelligible. Coleridge insisted that words were "living powers," ultimately participating in the Word, the "verb substantive" which is associated with the mysterious "I AM" by which God named himself to Moses from the burning bush. In Tennyson's experience with his own name, Hair recognizes Tennyson's concepts both of a unified self which participates mysteriously in the great "I AM," and of language as the expression of the experiences of that "I." Thus Tennyson accepts the fact that words are "matter moulded," but refuses to limit their meanings to the sensations that gave rise to them.

To say that Hair concentrates on theory in *Tennyson's Language* is not to infer that he does not throw new light on the poetry. His analysis of *In Memoriam* and *Idylls of the King*, specifically, brings new richness not only to the interpretation of these poems but also to Tennyson's view of the poet's task which he described as "fitting aptest words to things" (*IM* lxxv). (Indeed Hair gives an extremely sensitive analysis of the word "things" as it appears in sections vii, xlv, xxv, etc., of *In Memoriam*.) But Hair's chief intent is to present Tennyson's own, non-philosophical, view of language and to set that view in the context of both the old and the new approaches to language study. He does not try to convince the reader that Tennyson himself was a theorist, even though many of the books on language cited in this study were in the Somersby library of Tennyson's father; rather, Hair demonstrates that Tennyson's interest in language came more from his association with the Apostles, particularly Hallam, Kemble and Trench. Tennyson was more of a practitioner—a passionate, "expressive" poet, unusually receptive to the emotive power of words.

The visual and auditory sensations in Tennyson's poetry are minutely examined in chapters two and three. Hair exhaustively reflects on Allingham's observation that Tennyson "is especially and preeminently a landscape-painter in words, a colourist, rich, full and subtle," and he is particularly insightful in elucidating Tennyson's place in the conventional analogy between painting and poetry. Tracing that line to the links existing among Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing*, the great French painters of the nineteenth century, and Berkeley's theory of vision, Hair focusses on the 1831 review of Tennyson's *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, which Hallam wrote to show how association accounts for the suggestiveness and affective power of Tennyson's images which really form a web of relations made possible by the detaching of the image from a one-to-one relation to its object, and by the placing of it in a configuration whereby it becomes the sign of other images and of the emotions to which they are associated. Particularly sensitive is Hair's reading of "Mariana" in the context of Berkeley's views of light and color. The poet's drawing together of music and poetry develops the conventional analogy made between poetry's articulate sound and music's ability to express what words cannot. Eighteenth-century aesthetics qualify Locke's idea of the arbitrary link between sound and word by insisting that sound in language, especially in poetic language, is expressive rather than imitative, and it is for his "expressive" power that Hallam praised Tennyson, who found that Nature's voice expressed feelings that were also human feelings. The primal sounds of human speech—heard and spoken—combine to make the speech that shapes the ongoing experiences of life and, for Tennyson, oral was more natural than written speech.

In chapter five Hair concentrates on *In Memoriam*. He finds in the phrase "Heart-affluence in discursive talk" (cix) a summary of the two kinds of language in the poem—the emotive (heart-affluence) and the cognitive (discursive). Hair interprets the poem's structure not as a journeying from doubt to faith but rather as a harmonizing of feeling and thought—a harmonizing that will enable the poet to get on with his life.

Hair's final chapter is devoted to the *Idylls of the King* and in the chapter's title, "Man's word is God in man," Hair, exploring how language is the expression of the character of the people, sees Tennyson's linking of language with moral character. History is a story, like the

Arthurian legend, and through its retelling through language, it is renewed.

Tennyson's Language succeeds as both a theoretical and interpretive study. Hair brings to the work an impressive background knowledge of philological development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; he also offers some original insights into the development of contemporary language theory.

Mount Saint Vincent University

Martha Westwater

***Emerson and Thoreau: The Contemporary Reviews.* Edited by Joel Myerson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Pp. xvii, 450. \$90.00.**

This volume is part of *The American Critical Archives*, described by its editor as "a series of reference books that provide representative selections of contemporary reviews of the main works of major American authors." *Emerson and Thoreau* reprints entire reviews, minus the copious quotations from the work that routinely were part of nineteenth-century book notices. Readers desiring to retrieve these excisions are referred to modern editions by page and line number, and they are also provided with a list of known reviews not reprinted in this volume. There is an index of titles and authors and an introduction that indicates in brief the range of responses to each work. In all, I think this book lives up to the series editor's stated goal of providing "quick and easy access" to a substantial portion of the immediate responses to the works of these two important figures. The next step, one hopes, will be a complete, electronic archive.

The usefulness of such a collection is related to the quality of the reviews themselves. In this case, their range, seriousness, and number, particularly in response to Emerson's work, is an index of mid-nineteenth-century New England's cultural synergy. Most of those reprinted here have something substantial to say, and many are long essays that meet Emerson with something like his own intensity and seriousness, engaging his ideas and analyzing his style. A few, mostly those unsympathetic to Emerson, respond in kind to Emerson's sense of revelatory, and perhaps revolutionary, moment, as expressed, for example, in *Nature*:

"The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we through their eyes. Why should we not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not a history of theirs?" (21). The secular *New York Review* considered Emerson's lectures and essays "as a cause, or certainly as the type of a somewhat novel and singular species of fanaticism now prevailing more or less in [New England], under the name of transcendentalism." It is fanaticism because it makes "as large demands on the conduct as on the faith of those who receive it, and [leads] to principles and forms of social organization that have no basis in the nature of man" (77). Religious conservatives like Andrews Norton reacted with alarm to Emerson's paradoxical use of traditional Christian language on the way to making the individual the effective source, and not just the recipient, of religious truth: "The words God, Religion, Christianity have a definite meaning, well understood. . . . [T]he truths which they express are unchanged and unchangeable" (35). Even a generally more approving Orestes Brownson disliked Emerson's "perpetual use of old words in new senses" (42). In general, American reviewers convey more of a sense than English reviewers that there is something important at stake in Emerson's writing. In one of the best and most extensive comments on Emerson's works, Theodore Parker appears to take Emerson as he would wish: "Mr. Emerson is the most American of our writers. The Idea of America, which lies at the bottom of our original institutions, appears in him with great prominence. We mean the idea of personal freedom, of the dignity and value of human nature, the superiority of a man to the accidents of a man" (228).

There are some very astute comments on Emerson's style, and a lot of discussion of how much, and what kind of, authority he was claiming. Margaret Fuller refers to the lectures out of which Emerson's essays grew as "grave didactic poems" (115). She remarks upon what many of my students grapple with if they pursue Emerson at all:

This writer has never written one good work, if such a work be one where the whole commands more attention than the parts. . . . Single passages and sentences engage our attention too much in proportion. These essays, it has been justly said, tire like a string of mosaics or a house built of medals. (115-6)

This comment on what it is like to read Emerson's essays overlaps with others that are focussed on what it was Emerson was trying to write. Orestes Brownson says that the essays "contain no doctrine or system of doctrines, logically drawn out. . . . They consist of detached observations, independent propositions, distinct, enigmatical, oracular sayings Consequently, it is impossible to reduce their teachings to a few general propositions . . ." (85).

Mr. Emerson . . . is a philosopher neither in the order of his mind, nor in his method of investigation. . . . He is to be regarded as a Seer, who rises into the regions of the Transcendental, and reports what he sees His worth can be determined . . . by none except those who rise to the same regions. (85)

But Brownson bestows a high value on Emerson's writing, despite these qualifications:

Writers like Mr. Emerson . . . present new aspects of things, or at least old familiar objects in new dresses . . . break up old associations, and excite to greater and fresher mental activity. After having read them . . . we feel, that somehow or other new virtue has been imparted to us, that a change has come over us, and that we are no longer what we were, but greater and better. (85-86)

The reviews of Thoreau's work are fewer, shorter, and perhaps less probing than those on Emerson. (*Emerson and Thoreau* devotes 330 pages to the former and about 100 pages to the latter.) A link between the comments on the two men's works, however, is the concern with what kind of writing they were, in fact, producing. Of Thoreau's *Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, James Russell Lowell says: "its being a book at all is a happy fortuity. The door of the portfolio cage has been left open, and the thoughts have flown out of themselves. The paper and types are only accidents. The page is confidential like a diary" (356). Another review of *Week*, by Sophia Dobson Collet, picks up on the lack of narrative structure that was noted by many commentators on Emerson and Thoreau, placing *Week* within

a species of literature which may be regarded as the flower of autobiography, in which the author takes some passage of his life or studies as a text, and illustrates it with all the varied life-lore that is suggested by the

incidents; breathing to the ear of his fellows, not a circumstantial narrative of his every deed, but the essence of wisdom which they bequeathed in departing.

This she calls the "Literature of Individuality," mentioning Emerson and Margaret Fuller, in addition to Thoreau, as practitioners (359). A remarkable thing about the reception of the two men's works, as evidenced in this volume, is that, despite readers' difficulties in matching their generic expectations with the specific qualities of these texts—in reading them confidently, in other words—they nonetheless admired them and strove to convey a sense of their impact, even if this was more felt than understood. Considering that these specificities remain to some extent unassimilated, even radical, these early responses remain valuable to all serious readers of Emerson and Thoreau, not just to literary historians. Among other things, they are a kind of casebook of "the new importance given to the single person" (Emerson, "Scholar" 79) that Emerson and Thoreau discerned and fostered in their own time.

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Bruce Greenfield

***Aurora Leigh*. By Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Edited by Margaret Reynolds. Athens: Ohio UP, 1992. Pp. xiii, 692. \$69.95.**

Profound thanks from students and scholars of the works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning are due to Margaret Reynolds for her impressive critical and annotated edition of *Aurora Leigh*.

Three other editions of *Aurora Leigh* have appeared since 1900: *Aurora Leigh*, introduced by Charlotte Porter and Helen Clarke, 1902 (also available in the AMS Press reprint, 1973, of the *1900 Complete*

Works Of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, edited by Porter and Clarke, which includes lengthy and still useful notes—Reynolds, unfortunately, neglects to mention Clarke's and Porter's notes anywhere in her edition; *Aurora Leigh And Other Poems*, introduced by Cora Kaplan (Women's Press, 1978), facsimile reprint of an earlier edition, n.d.; *Aurora Leigh*, introduced by Gardner B. Taplin (Chicago), a 1979 facsimile reprint of an 1864 edition published by J. Miller in New York. Neither facsimile reprint provides much editorial information. Kaplan provides three pages of notes, and a one-page bibliography; Taplin provides no notes. Kaplan's long ground-breaking feminist introduction and the renewed availability of a text long out of print gave the Women's Press edition value at the time.

Now, finally, readers of Barrett Browning's novel-in-verse about a woman poet told by a woman poet have their first modern comprehensive edition of the poem. Reynolds lays out the volume very sensibly in order "to provide a reliable, informative, and *useful* text" (124). The text of the poem and variants appearing in footnotes take 431 of the 692 pages of text. The range, depth and fullness of the 261 pages of scholarly material which is included in this edition are impressive, especially when considered in the context of other recent annotated editions of authors such as Yeats, Wordsworth, Auden and Tennyson. I have one regret, however: a book with such abundant scholarly and critical riches deserves an index.

In her "Critical Introduction," Reynolds concentrates on "methods of reading the verse-novel which emphasize the contextual, formalist, and theoretical questions raised by the work" (12). She demands that we read *Aurora Leigh* with her "in relation to the historical context and cultural assumptions which produced [it]" (54). She revises old readings, qualifying earlier feminist analyses by such critics as Cora Kaplan and Barbara Gelpi, and she suggests new ones. Especially interesting is her argument concerning the bias of Aurora's vision and her misreadings of Romney, as Aurora reduces Romney "to a cipher" (46). Reynolds notes elsewhere Aurora's dangerous tendency to devalue the feminine. Ultimately she celebrates "the double vision," "the new story," "the multiplicity of voices," and the "literariness" of *Aurora Leigh*.

Reynolds's "Editorial Introduction" untangles both the complex compositional and the editorial history of the poem. In it, she argues

persuasively for her choice of the revised ("fourth") edition as her copy-text. She also provides invaluable descriptions of manuscripts, proofs and editions of the poem, with their locations—no mean feat after the scattering of Browning manuscripts after the Sotheby auction of 1913. Telling details emerge here; for example, she notes the "occurrence of Robert Browning's hand . . . as evidence of the degree and character of his assistance in the processes of publication" (104). As well, both this and the "Critical Introduction" provide full and very useful scholarly notes.

The explanatory annotations following the text of *Aurora Leigh* give full literary, social and historical contexts for the poem. Here we find cross-references to other works, to other parts of the poem, to sources, and to analogues in the works of other writers. Notes also cite many of Robert Browning's works as intertexts, and offer possible interpretations of difficult passages. The Bibliography proves invaluable in its listing of manuscripts, editions, works, letters of E. B. B., contemporary reviews, and secondary sources.

Margaret Reynolds's hopes that this edition will do much to achieve for *Aurora Leigh* recognition as a primary text of the nineteenth century. I share that hope, in confidence.

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Corinne Bieman Davies

***The Pioneer Woman: A Canadian Character Type.* By Elizabeth Thompson. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1991. Pp. 199. \$34.95.**

Elizabeth Thompson argues in this book that a particular figure, that of the pioneer woman, recurs in English-Canadian literature from the "time of the earliest creative writing" to the present, and that it represents an ideal type, a heroic "metaphor for Canadian femininity" (3).

This character type emerges, Thompson says, in the fiction and real-life accounts produced by nineteenth-century women settlers, most notably Catharine Parr Traill, "the single most important contributor to the creation of this new, Canadian, concept of women" (5). By the early twentieth century, this evolving pioneer type can be seen (in the fiction of such writers as Sara Jeannette Duncan) as having taken the form of women characters rebelling against the social constraints of small-town

central Canada. Later still, in modern Canadian writing, and particularly the fiction of Margaret Laurence (whose protagonists Thompson calls "contemporary versions of the pioneer woman" [112]), the figure reappears in the guise of women characters struggling to overcome internalized, psychological barriers to personal growth.

It is an argument which is neat, but in the end unconvincing: not only is the thematic linkage between texts slight at best, given Thompson's rather superficial treatment of pioneers and pioneering, but her book's "centrism"—its assumption that eastern and central Canadian pioneer experience is paradigmatic—further weakens her case.

The problems begin with Thompson's rather slippery definitions of "frontier" and "pioneer." In *The Pioneer Woman*, the frontier is presented as a shifting concept: "a real, physical place" in the earliest narratives, it has become a social space ("a metaphor for religious and social conflict") in early twentieth-century fiction, and a psychological space characterized by "a personal dilemma to be solved by the protagonist" in its modern incarnation (8). Nor are these "frontiers"—already so loosely defined as to compromise the meaning of that word—problematized to any extent. Rather each is seen simply as a positive space, a challenging "new environment" which develops "new domestic skills" and serves to "re-define their feminine role" for those women characters who experience it (4).

The ideal female pioneer, indeed, is defined by Thompson as one who is cheery, competent, and fundamentally compliant—a "self-assured, confident woman" who "adapts cheerfully to adverse circumstances," is "capable and active in an emergency," has "the courage to attempt an improvement of these frontier conditions," but avoids transgressing the boundaries of "femininity" (3-4). Hence Thompson's valorization of Catharine Parr Trail as the cornerstone of her myth of the Canadian pioneer woman: Catharine sets out to teach immigrant women of her class how to perform necessary pioneer tasks with verve—and without compromising their fundamental gentility. Susanna Moodie, on the other hand, is dismissed by Thompson as "unable or unwilling to reconcile a pioneer way of life with the concept of English gentility" (160), while her frank ambivalence toward many of the givens of pioneering life (and indeed toward her own troubling contestation of the conditions of her life in the

bush) are ignored by Thompson—who quite frankly prefers a patina of good cheer to "laments" for perceived losses, however sincerely felt (32).

Such soft definitions and gentle inclinations rob Thompson's argument of much of its potential bite. Surely a "frontier," properly defined, is a contested space on the margins of "civilization," a site where the forces of that "civilization" literally or figuratively struggle to subdue untrammelled "nature"—even as "nature" simultaneously works to deconstruct the encroachment of the "civilized." It is, in other words, a political arena in which imperial forces struggle to colonize a desired space. For women, moreover, the "frontier experience" is especially complex. On the one hand, the literal frontier, colonial space, has been (in North American experience at any rate) a resolutely male sphere where, as Frederick Philip Grove correctly observed, woman is routinely construed as mere "helper" if not "slave" (8) within a context of authorized male ambition. At the same time, however, it is a liberating space for women in which their traditional "civilized" roles, with their built-in restraints, simply cannot be maintained in the face of the necessity for crude labor. The inevitable rupturing of the imported identity, given the practical need for behavior which violates the boundaries of accepted femininity—yet without real social sanction for the "coarsened woman" who emerges—makes pioneering, for women, a deeply dissonant experience, one that is not without rewards, but also not without pain.

A useful study of women "on frontiers," whether literal or figurative, would require a willingness to see pioneer women as struggling, as resisting cultural boundaries; it would require recognition, even celebration, of female anger, frustration, and subversion, all of which figure prominently in many female pioneer narratives; and it would ultimately require confronting the very real tension between female resistance to colonization and female complicity in colonization—a theme which also surfaces in a number of pioneer narratives.

The Pioneer Woman falters, then, primarily because of its refusal to face hard questions: what does "cheerful idealism" on the part of pioneer women conceal in terms of the painful side of the experience? To what extent are all pioneer women caught in a kind of double-bind, given their need to conform in order to survive, yet the inevitability of dreams of subversion when one lives on the shifting sand that is a frontier? And how, exactly, does physical pioneering emblemize "social" or "psycho-

logical" pioneering and the different kinds of cultural dissonance which they entail?

Thompson's topic is a good one, and I would welcome a substantial thematic study of the pioneer woman character type in Canadian literature. But it seems to me that this study gets off on the wrong foot with its focus on English lady settlers of central Canada, given their very specific class-related concerns about femininity and gentility. Had she turned to women pioneers of the west and the north as well as those of the centre and the east in establishing her prototype, and in looking at the literary descendants of that prototype in more modern writing, her book might have developed some of the hard edge, indeed the cutting edge, that it lacks.

Most of all, I wish Thompson had moderated her own resolutely cheery and uncritical stance: it strikes the reader as naïve and leads her to soft-pedal too often where hard thinking needs to be done. It is a shame that a book so well researched and so clearly and pleasantly written, without any of the jargon that makes so many critical texts so indigestible these days, should fail in the end because the author has not pushed her investigation of her topic—which has great potential as a locus for critical inquiry—beyond the boundaries of her own overly-genteel critical inclinations.

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Marilyn Russell Rose

***Shades of Right: Nativist and Fascist Politics in Canada 1920-1940.* By Martin Robin. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1992. Pp. viii, 372. \$60.00. Paper, \$16.95.**

Left-wing parties and movements, socialist and communist, have received ample attention from Canadian scholars. The same cannot be said of right-wing fringe parties and groups. The main merit of Professor Robin's most recent book, *Shades of Right*, is that it incorporates all the available literature and provides a valuable overview of the various small fascist and national socialist sects that jostled each other in the Depression-mired 1930s. As a sort of introduction, one that is fascinating even if it fits the remainder of the book less than smoothly, he offers an account of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the later 1920s. He paints a clear picture of the

politics of hate, hatred sometimes of English-speaking Protestants, hatred more often of Roman Catholics, French- or English-speaking, hatred usually of "foreigners," especially from countries where garlic was consumed, and hatred almost invariably of Jews.

The Klan had its origins in the United States, of course, but especially in Saskatchewan it found, for a time, very fertile soil. Resentment of French Canadians and Roman Catholics ran higher in that province than elsewhere in Canada, and the Liberal governments in Ottawa and Regina were held by not a few people to be working hand-in-glove with those despised groups. One of the distressing, though not perhaps surprising, aspects of the story that Robin tells is the willingness of Conservative politicians to use the Klan covertly for their own ends. Some, indeed, were active in it. To what extent Dr. J. T. M. Anderson, prime minister of a Tory-led coalition government in Saskatchewan from 1929 to 1934, collaborated with the KKK will probably never be known, but it is clear that he owed his victory to Klan support. R. B. Bennett, although worried about the possible negative effects in Quebec of the Saskatchewan Conservative party's ties to the Klan, thought it unwise to denounce the latter. The Liberal Premier Jimmy Gardiner did denounce the Klan and sought to demonstrate its links to the Tory opposition. Robin suggests he thereby did his own cause more harm than good.

Each extremist group and grouplet of the 1930s gets some attention, but Robin rightly concentrates on Adrien Arcand, Quebec's version of Adolf Hitler, and on the efforts made by consular agents from Italy and Germany to promote Fascist or Nazi ideas among emigrants from those countries. Arcand was a sometime Conservative distantly linked both to the provincial Conservatives and later to Maurice Duplessis's Union Nationale. Indeed, Arcand rather admired "le Chef" and applauded the Padlock Act, introduced in 1937 to crush the handful of communists in Quebec. But from Arcand's point of view Duplessis was weak on the Jewish question. He saw himself as the future real leader of Quebec and Canada. His National Social Christian Party went nowhere, however, and from 1940 until 1945 he was interned, along with a number of other right-wing extremists, under the Defence of Canada Regulations.

Professor Robin, who teaches political science at Simon Fraser University, writes easily and entertainingly, qualities other political scientists and historians would do well to emulate. At times he should

have taken more care, however. For example, there are too many misspelled names: Leslie Pigeon instead of Pidgeon, Pope Pious IX (well, perhaps he was), Hindenberg instead of Hindenburg, Ribbentropp instead of Ribbentrop. The title of J. T. M. Anderson's book *The Education of the New-Canadian* is rendered incorrectly. These are small things, but in the world of scholarship they do matter.

Some material is omitted that would have augmented the account, notably the attacks in 1933 by J. A. Chaiifoux's bully boys and Italian-Canadian pro-Fascists on Albert St. Martin's Technocracy Educational Institute in Montreal. Robin does not speculate why those Saskatchewanians who welcomed the Klan in the 1920s gave so little support to home-grown fascists in the 1930s. Most important, the reader looks in vain for a concluding chapter that tries to make sense of the whole malodorous mess. All in all, however, this is a useful book that deserves a wide readership.

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***Getting it Right—Regional Development in Canada.* By R. Harley McGee. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1992. Pp. xxix, 329. \$39.95.**

This is an insider's ardent defence of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and all its works. DREE is presented as a unique and successful experiment based on unprecedented co-operation (even "harmony" [46]) between the federal and provincial governments and on trust and confidence between politicians and their officials in the field.

Because of its overriding emphasis on the functioning of DREE as a department, *Getting it Right* will be of primary interest to those concerned with public administration. It will be of less interest to political scientists since, there is much less inside information on the politics of DREE than in Savoie (1992).

Economists will find few insights. R. Harley McGee presents a market-oriented view of regional disparities, except to argue that migration is not a solution, since it may increase disparities (20-22).

McGee has little sympathy for theory—it only "side-tracks" (9) policy development. Of course, he has his pet theories, such as the importance of mega-projects and of growth centres for regional development. These

are treated as received truths. McGee dismisses the academic re-evaluation of growth centres, not even bothering to explain why a change in the academic wind might not lead to a new policy tack.

Because "there is no need for effective regional development to be postponed for the lack of a theory . . ." (11), McGee can note, without explanation, that DREE operated for four years before it "sought to grasp the fundamentals of the [Atlantic] region's economy" (105). Nonetheless, he presents the three phases of DREE policy (89) as if they were a well-thought out sequence, not the ad hocery they appeared to be to outsiders. When DREE studies are mentioned (90, 105, 109), it is usually in the context of proving that DREE was active. There is no attempt to explain their content or why they were not public documents, available for peer evaluation.

McGee's defence of DREE goes beyond the claim that it was the only institutional framework for regional policy. He claims to have presented "strong evidence" that the policies were also the right ones, although he recognizes the difficulties inherent in measuring the effectiveness of DREE (xxviii, r, 9, 17, 191ff). We are assured that officials' "common-sense experience and good judgement . . . ensured good projects with positive impact, even if not posthumously confirmed by evaluation exercises . . ." (193).

McGee downplays quantitative evaluations, such as the cost per job, arguing that such measures "fade to insignificance" (207) relative to the other spinoffs. The data he presents on jobs created or maintained, payrolls generated, and so on, are "predicted" not actual impacts (197). Other studies document cases where the actual jobs were less than half of those predicted in making grants (Bradfield, 1987; Economic Council of Canada, 1990).

Moreover, McGee's cost figures are too low. They do not include related DREE expenditures, such as for infrastructure, even though McGee considers these crucial for development (95, 97). Nor do the costs include the tax concessions or provincial and municipal grants which may be several times greater than the DREE grant (McLoughlin and Proudfoot, 1981).

McGee's data raise more questions than they answer. While he claims that the Atlantic provinces were in particular need of infrastructure, that the proportion of DREE money spent of infrastructure in the region (34

percent) was below that for Quebec (61 percent) and Ontario (49 percent) (91). No attempt is made to explain the inconsistency. Similarly, he claims that federal and provincial funding was "heavily tilted to the small and medium-sized business sector" (254) yet less than 10 percent of the funds actually went to projects of less than \$100,00 (199).

McGee is deeply aggrieved that DREE was disbanded in 1982, just as they had their act totally together. He gives DREE credit for anything that was correctly done subsequently since it had all "been envisaged by DREE in 1981."

This book is of interest not for the insight it gives into the workings of DREE but rather into the mind of one of the faithful. McGee's faith is touching but unconvincing.

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***A Night at the Opera*. By Ray Smith. Erin, ON: The Porcupine's Quill, 1992. Pp. 234. Paper, \$14.95.**

The "night" in Ray Smith's latest novel is the gala celebration of the new tram and bus system of Waltherrott, a consummately bourgeois German city in "the Bergwald," described thus by the authorial narrator:

The Bergwald in all its glories is not, perhaps, as well known as it deserves to be. Neither the *Blue Guide* nor Fielding mentions the Bergwald at all, while Frommer merely suggests that southbound Eurail-passers have a better view from the right-hand side of the train. . . .

Baedeker, a German publication, could have taken a more informed and generous view, but it dismisses the Bergwald as "locally popular."

This passage is characteristic of the elegantly poised wit and stylish irony Smith uses to create the town and citizens of Waltherrott: one of those unheralded locales, which Smith makes both laughable because of its vaunting efforts at self-importance and endearing because of those same attempts at self-worth and recognition.

Two (imaginary) operas are woven into the narrative, both by Waltherrott's nineteenth-century composer, Carl Maria von Stumpf. *Waltherrotterdämmerung* conjures Waltherrott's founder, Graf Walther, "wily Father Adalbert" who persuades Graf Walther to go crusading, and Gräfin Irmtraud, Walther's heroic and beloved wife. "But it is undoubtedly the bittersweet romance, *Der Hosenkavalier*, which has secured for von Stumpf his niche, however obscure, in the annals of opera." This opera crowns the festivities honoring Waltherrott's new transportation system. "It is a comic confection of gently bittersweet romance, mistaken identities, and a pair of miraculous trousers, set in eighteenth-century Waltherrott." The construct "mistaken identities" is central to this novel.

Smith's prose style has a finesse and muted grandeur more reminiscent of nineteenth-century European fiction than most contemporary North American writing. The novel's structure, however, is inventive and investigative in the most delightful, enchanting sense of "postmodern." Identities will, indeed, be deconstructed and the process of artistic creation subjected to self-reflexive revelation and demystification. Yet, in Smith's hands, these manoeuvres playfully enhance a narrative as entertaining as Mozart's operatic plots and as trenchant as the Brecht-Weill *Threepenny Opera*.

A principal mistaken identity is that of Herr Director Einzelturm of the Waltherrott Verkehrsverbund, who conceived and for 22 years guided to fruition the tram and bus system. Herr Einzelturm, too, is a creator, though his entire life and being constitute only a bland and portly technocrat within the "Economic Miracle." On the night of his life's triumph, as he receives ovations at the opera house, a disaster shatters his self-image and sends him to the Stadtbibliothek in search of the real Carl von Stumpf.

The archives yield the long-forgotten *The Journal of Carl Maria von Stumpf. Genius. Failure*. This journal occupies much of the narrative until

the night in 1848 (with Europe in revolution) when von Stump is hosted by the "last" Graf Walther, who gives von Stump the "Surviving Fragment from the Annals of the priest Adalbert, later Saint Adalbert of Waltherrott. . . ." The composer, working on *Waltherrotterdämmerung*, hounded by beer hall friends to compose for the revolution, but choosing to compose for the Burgermeisters, whose bourgeois values he despises as much as he distrusts the revolutionaries, reads Adalbert's Annals, which hardly conform to Waltherrott's official legends. Afterward, von Stumpf resolves to write *Der Hosenkavalier*, romantic fluff on the surface but a savage deflation of the bourgeoisie between the lines and notes. Writes von Stumpf, "Messages? Here is my message: Art has no message! . . . Sometimes the message is what is left out." Meanwhile, Herr Einzelturm is confronted with the revelations of Adalbert's text within a text, as well as von Stumpf's reactions and confessions.

There is more in von Stumpf's Journal which suggests Smith's vision of artistic creation—whether that creation be a town, myths of its origins, its religious motifs, cultural pretensions, and commercial-technocratic realities, individual creations (operas, revolutions, tram systems) of citizens, and the most essential creative acts of all: fabrication of self-image and self-worth, and reconstruction of self after one has been demolished. As Herr Einzelturm finds in von Stumpf's Journal and Adalbert's Annals, fabrication, demolition, and reconstruction can be frequent and even simultaneous.

Among von Stumpf's reflections is the contention that the "paragon of burgerlich virtue . . . has made the mistake of taking himself too seriously, of thinking that he is not a clown like all the rest of us. . . ." The novel's structure and characterizations lead convincingly to this conclusion, which is, in the narrative's context, comically liberating and pathetic, but not cynical. This conclusion persuades primarily through the character of von Stumpf, the persona Smith seems to know best, bring to life most vividly, and speak through most effectively. Father Adalbert is a set-piece narrator, interesting far more for the version of truth and history he bestows than for his voice or substance. The female characters in Einzelturm's and von Stumpf's era are incidental. Only Saint Irmtraud and Sister Renate (in Adalbert's Annals, rival nuns and mistresses of Graf Walther) play prominent (mock-epic) roles. Herr Einzelturm is the frame character. Whether intentionally or not, Smith gives us a distanced

portrait, a finely drawn but featureless silhouette of our modern protagonist, inheritor of more nobly mythologized and colorfully substantial (in hope and corruption) forbears.

Smith's long-standing comic gift has developed into sophisticated wit, without losing its willingness to indulge in verbal slapstick, parody, and puns. Readers will encounter Herr Bach, Superintendent of Traffic Circulation; the "beloved Holzschuhtanz" [*Holzschuh*=clog, *Tanz*=dance] in *Der Hosenkavalier*; von Stumpf's mistress and singer, Fräulein Prima Donna Sängerin Gisela Klatschmeyer [*Sang*=song, *Klatsch*=gossip, scandal]. There is a wonderful set-up of academic jargon and the less felicitous strain of postmodernism in excerpts from H. Dunstler ('É/cr(i/ea)ture,' 'Texte,' 'Mus(ch)ik:' *Waltherrotterdämmerung/damenerinnerung zum Mar(x)ks und Frauenrechtlertum*. Waltherrott: Universitäts-Verlag, 1981). *A Night at the Opera* is one of the most intelligently entertaining novels to appear in years. Finally, whoever has not encountered the lyrics of "Frülingstraum im Bergwald," the best-known song of Carl von Stumpf, must secure this volume.

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***The Automatic Glass Door and Other Poems.* By Manuel A. Viray. Manila: Kalikasan P, 1991. Pp. 96.**

A casual, preliminary glance at the poems in this volume might mislead a reader into seriously underestimating the achievement of Manuel A. Viray. The twin vertical shafts of letters in "Elevator," for instance, might seem to be vestigial remnants of the e.e. cummings/Jose Garcia Villa generation of free verse experimenters—until, that is, the reader perceived the ironic emblematic rendering of "a legless Vietnam/veteran in a wheelchair/a girl in green miniskirt." Again, Viray's stylistic tic of listing the exact time of completion not only of a poem but also of each successive draft (e.g., "10:03 a.m./Saturday/January 20, 1990" for "Green") might appear to be either self-parody or eccentricity, but in fact this practice dovetails with Viray's other methods of carefully crafting the structure to suit the content: he is as precise as "10:03 a.m." suggests, and the succession of times and dates is in consonance with his constant use of catalogues and lists.

No insight or even progression in thought emanates from this rather dull passage. Happily, this is the exception rather than the rule. The third stanza of this same poem represents the more usual situation:

We pump the well, the blood leaps, swells:
 Lost we are in spasmodic dreams
 of our lusting will:
 Flesh suddenly unveiled, drilled,
 unsealed, distilled, is
 still.

The chronological sequence of operations "unveiled," drilled, unsealed, "distilled" not only maintains the phallic momentum of arousal (reinforced by the suggestiveness of "pump the well," "swells," "spasmodic," "drilled," and "unsealed") but also supports the notion that sex (even though we are "lost" in "dreams of our lusting will") is refining rather than besmirching. The culmination of the stanza in the zeugma "still" also contributes to this effect, by suggesting the richness of result: "still" is "unmoving," "enduring," and, perhaps, "an apparatus for producing liquor" as well. Simultaneously, an oxymoron emerges. If a substance is "distilled" it is changed, not constant, and thus cannot be "still" in the latter sense demanded by the zeugma; but since "still" is encapsulated within "distilled," such is the case. No wonder the poem concludes that "we seek / the unknown, the chimerical" and that we experience "the rituals of forgotten dreams, / befogged vision."

In sum, *The Automatic Glass Door* is, for the reader who finds non-metaphysical poetry of intellectual quest palatable, excellent. As Viray's inscription to the volume reads, "*Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerat in sensu.*"

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