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Elegy & Paradox: Testing the Conventions by W. David Shaw. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994. Pp. x + 279. $39.95.

W. David Shaw's new book is an ambitious meditation on the genre of elegy, the problems of critical method, and the history of Western culture. "Since death is not an experience inside life, but an event that takes place on its boundary" (5), Shaw posits an inherent connection between elegiac representation and "paradox" (for him a contradiction which is resolvable). He can then present a history of the genre by sketching a history of its paradoxes. So he does, charting a progression that moves through several discrete stages. The stages arise as the elegist progressively adapts the conventions of the genre to his or her sense of mortal crisis.

Shaw reconstructs this "testing," also a metaphor for the experience of reading, through close examinations of elegies ranging from *Pearl* to *Lycidas* to Romantic and Victorian texts by Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, Arnold, and Hardy (among others). He then continues on to modern and contemporary elegies by poets from Frost and Stevens to Amy Clampitt and Geoffrey Hill. Shaw practices what he terms an aesthetic or rhetorical criticism closely focused on the text itself. This text-centered approach he distinguishes from both the ideological specularity of post-structuralism and the excessively localized contextualization of new historicism. His own criticism seeks to marry formalism and history by recognizing that "the most authoritative histories [of the elegy] have already been written" and remain "encoded in the elegies' own testing of conventions" (p. 236).

Shaw identifies seven paradoxes which have shaped the elegy, but his historical argument seems to depend principally upon four. This argument begins with classical elegy. The poetics of the pastoral form which certain English elegies revive is a performative poetics which presumes the actualizing power of words. The paradox a performative rhetoric courts lies in the fact that if the elegist's power is to be real, it must be grounded (in a transcendent Logos, for instance); yet if it is so grounded, then the power in evidence is not truly the elegist's. Shaw's second paradox lies with the tautological structure of the circuitous confessional elegy. This form presents a process of discovery which cannot begin as a narrative until the process itself has paradoxically reached its end. His third main paradox is the paradox of the unspeakable. Here the mourner's deep sorrow and recognition of death's unknowability result in elegies which seek to incorporate silence as an index of value. Shaw's fourth main paradox, characteristic of the modern elegy, is the paradox of veridiction. Modern elegies dilate on the silences common in Romantic elegy until they become sites of fragmentation indicating the brokenness and fictiveness of truth. Because "even in denying a truth claim we presume to make one," however, the breakdowns of modern elegy can paradoxically become moments of breakthrough marking the elegist's enlightenment (147). Shaw links these four paradoxes as the main phases of the elegy's historical genealogy: they are the four movements mentioned, for instance, in his remarks on his book's intellectual genesis (235).

My reservations about this impressive book concern its neglect of available criticism and its taxonomic organization. While *Elegy and Paradox* displays wide learning, its recourse to the secondary literature remains selective and even rather casual at times. Shaw's bibliography includes comparatively few articles. For some poets, it lists comparatively few books, and in a few cases none published recently. In the case of Shelley, it lists no book at all. If *Elegy and Paradox* is not always thoroughgoing in its scholarship, it is exceptionally thoroughgoing in its commitment to classification. Discount the taxonomy of paradoxes and the book still abounds in classificatory gestures: e.g., the "comparison of 'Adonais' and 'Thyrsis' discloses five more specific differences between Romantic and Victorian elegy"; "the paradox of ends raises three difficulties"; "Wordsworth's elegies dramatize three kinds of silence"; chapter seven explores "six more specific ways in which Tennyson's elegies transgress earlier conventions"; and so on (34, 51, 112, 211). This classificatory orientation promotes a tendency to read texts as illustrations of the (one) category assigned them. When such readings are also uninformed by the relevant scholarship, they can easily seem unpersuasive.

Shaw's treatment of *Adonais* provides a case in point. Referring to the actualizing power of language in classical elegy and *Lycidas*, he comments:

> In Shelley, as in Milton, such an energy or force is best expressed as a metaphoric identity of subject and object. . . . Unfortunately, Arnold, like many Victorians, is skeptical: he does not believe in the seer's metaphoric identities. He cannot substitute a tree or even a landscape for the presence of his friend, nor does he share Shelley's faith in the almost physical energy released by words and their power to tame a hostile or uncaring world. (11)

No Romanticist will readily accept a contrast drawn between Shelley and Arnold on the basis of Arnold's skepticism. But in the light of Jerrold Hogle's influential work on the decentering force of metaphor in Shelley, it is equally difficult to accept the reference to Shelley's visionary faith in metaphoric identities—especially given the climactic turn from metaphor to simile at the conclusion of *Adonais*: "The soul of Adonais, *like* a star" (line 494). To ease the reader's own skepticism, even established critics must anticipate and disarm objections. Any argument that *Adonais* dramatizes an incarnational poetics of presence should engage available arguments that the poem is most powerfully informed by Shelley's association of language with the broken, vestigial, and belated.

Actually, it is far from clear that *Adonais* couldn't be read as an example of several elegiac paradoxes. The poem depicts a version of the circuitous form of confessional elegy by unfolding as a vocative quest: in invoking Urania, Shelley seeks the inspiration necessary to mourn Adonais properly, but cannot begin that seeking unless he already possesses the inspiration he seeks. Given the silent Adonais and Shelley's intimation of the ineffable, *Adonais,* for all its sweep and energy, might appear to reveal the silence and absence in language. Just so, the economy of identification and rejection organizing the speaker's relation to Adonais might anticipate the divided mind and paradoxical brokenness of modern elegy. Most elegies, one feels, will cross categories and exhibit several interrelated paradoxes. This is all the more unsettling a possibility because the taxonomic organization of Shaw's book underlies its historical argument. Taxonomy puts both rhetoric analysis and historical argument at risk in *Elegy and Paradox.*

Shaw proves adept at controlling these risks. In charting the genealogy of the modern elegy, he accepts a family resemblance notion of poetic similarity and carefully shows that poems from different historical periods may reflect a similar stage in the elegy's generic development. The resulting qualifications leave his historical overview compelling in broad outline. Shaw's actual close readings are often masterful. From the opening discussion of rhyme in *Lycidas,* the author's responsiveness to stylistic nuance remains continually in evidence. Moreover, many of the risks taken in *Elegy & Paradox* appear clearly foreseen and unreservedly accepted. Shaw's commitment to risk-taking reflects his conviction that reading elegies is "a life-and-death issue" (7) both for individual readers and for the future of humanistic culture. Indeed, the book seems haunted at times by Foucault's prediction of the disappearance of man—which is cited several times—and by a concern that the history of the elegy may constitute an elegy for Western civilization. This concern explains the moral urgency which surfaces occasionally in *Elegy & Paradox.* Shaw's close readings are efforts to restore the human face of the past for the present, to save history by rediscovering the emotional drama encoded in the creation and revision of poetic conventions. *Elegy & Paradox* is an important book which abounds in insights. Its most striking insight, however, may be Shaw's recognition that the traditional task of the elegiac poet has become the task of the humanistic critic.

University of Alabama William A. Ulmer

Toward a Working-Class Canon: Literary Criticism in British Working-Class Periodicals, 1816–1858 by Paul Thomas Murphy. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1994. Pp. x + 211. $39.50.

The title of Paul Thomas Murphy's book, *Toward a Working-Class Canon: Literary Criticism in British Working-Class Periodicals, 1816–1858,* indicates a deliberate modesty about the project, and perhaps too, a dual frame of historical reference. In unleashing his revisionist energies on the established literary canon, this late twentieth-century critic, like his nineteenth-century working-class predecessors, does not expect simply to produce for his readers an alternative list of sanctioned literary texts. The procedures involved in canonization are more ambiguous and contested than any straightforward act of disclosure would allow, and *Toward a Working-Class Canon* benefits from its author's awareness of the aesthetic and political contingencies he has engaged. As a historical construction and as a literary-historical reconstruction, the idea of a nineteenth-century working-class canon was, and must remain, something to be approached and argued, rather than achieved. In one of his more ambitious formulations, Murphy invokes E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class,* and presents his own work as a companion piece, in which members of the working class are treated as active agents in the ongoing project of "the making of their own *literary* values" (2).

Murphy is not, of course, the first to approach this material, and he records his debt to such earlier accounts as Louis James's *Fiction for the Working Man* (1963) and Martha Vicinus' *The Industrial Muse* (1974). But his distinctive method, in accord with the recent metacritical interest in the history of literary history, focuses on the activity of the working-class critic and reviewer in the periodical press. "This work is not in itself a study of working-class literature, but is instead a study of the perceptions of literature by working-class writers and editors" (4). Murphy's interests are historical, even at times sociological, rather than interpretive or evaluative. The result is an important map of the working-class experience of literature in nineteenth-century Britain, and it is difficult to fault Murphy if his study finally raises more questions than it answers.

The book begins with a preliminary survey of the conditions that made an alternative canon possible: an active working-class radical press, rising literacy rates, and related habits of plebeian autodidacticism, including what Murphy usefully terms "second literacy," the "highly-motivated and wide-ranging program of reading, often undertaken years after the reader had first learned to read" (17), in which readers organized their emerging literacy around a set of indispensable, formative texts. Later chapters on fiction, poetry, and drama are then organized around a three part division of the period under analysis. An initial phase of radical protest (1816–1829), triggered by post-war economic dislocation and popular unrest, gave way first to the "war of the unstamped" (1830–1836), and then to a more extended phase of Chartist organization and protest (1837–1858). For each literary genre, the working-class canon in the first phase tended to be narrow and exclusively political, with an overriding concern for what Murphy insists upon calling "the politically correct," as opposed to the aesthetically pleasing; subsequent critics were able "to take a broader view of literature than their predecessors, and were concerned as much with the pleasure of the text as with its value" (57). The Chartist journalist above all is the hero of this narrative, responsible for producing a "complex, subtle, and human" (60) sense of literary value that transcended the more utilitarian dispensation of the earliest working-class critics.

This relatively schematic historical narrative does not prevent more nuanced distinctions. We find, for example, that Richard Carlile was, in his resistance to aesthetic value, "the great literary iconoclast" (40) and most strident of the early ideologues, while T. J. Wooler, editor of the richly satirical *Black Dwarf* (1817–1824), displayed more flexibility, and "was the first working-class critic to notice and stress the idea of the pleasurable in poetry and the notion of its nonargumentative and emotional power" (107). And drama turns out to be an exceptional case throughout the period under discussion, with working-class critics consistently demeaning established theatrical performances, while at the same time participating in a political movement that displayed "a powerful and thriving dramatic aesthetic" (154) in public meetings, processions, and debates. Despite these subtleties, the book sometimes flattens out important historical differences, above all, in its fundamental conception of a "working-class canon." There is, on the one hand, a tendency to invest all popular or plebeian radical protest with a working-class character, and on the other, a tendency to operate with a relatively undeveloped sense of what the working-class experience might have involved. Murphy undertakes early on to tell us what he means by a "working-class periodical," but the definition takes the socio-economic phenomenon of class, if not its discursive expression, as a given: "I define a working-class periodical as a periodical that is self-consciously directed toward the working class and that clearly reflects working-class interests" (31). This leads to some troubling formulations for the period before 1830—Paine's "class-based view of the political system" (34), Carlile's "distinctly working-class bias" (101)—and throughout the book, radical political protest and libertarian rhetoric are equated with the values of the working class. We learn little about the extra-political character of this class of critics, and are left wondering for the most part whether their distinctive experience of (for example) capitalism, community, gender, and domesticity had a substantial impact on their criticism.

The book does not always operate with a consistent attitude to canonization and its discontents. From the outset, an alternative to "a universal or class-transcendent canon (19) seems to be something worth finding, and Murphy concludes with some interesting remarks about the fluidity of any canon. "A refreshing aspect of working-class criticism (and something that modern critics would be wise to consider) is the clear recognition of the connection between what is read and what is happening, and, in consequence, an openness to testing all works for value and wariness of relying without question upon established notions of value" (169). Along the way, however, a critical concern with the present does not always seem so salutary, as poems are "stretched to fit the context of the present moment" (118), and even Shakespeare is (absurdly?) "made into a Chartist" (127). Distortion and misreading were, it seems, as often a consequence of the working-class perspective as "refreshing" insight. Murphy's account of the process by which working-class critics assiduously refashioned the canon is, furthermore, informed by a surprisingly traditional sense of literary value. If it is true that the working-class press "preferred now-forgotten political poets to Tennyson or Browning" in order to communicate to their readers a sense of "highly charged relevance" (108), it is also true that we as readers come away from this book without any real sense of a challenge to the belief that conventional figures like Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, and Browning were, for conventional reasons, the great writers of the nineteenth century, and that working-class critics did well to acknowledge this. If Murphy wants to contend that a working-class criticism reached its maturity in a "new emphasis on Beauty—in life and in poetry" (135), without compromising its political commitment, he might have considered the view of some historians (for example, Trygve Tholfsen) that the increasing tendency over the course of the nineteenth century for working-class movements to endorse values like respectability and improvement involved an unfortunate assimilation to middle-class values. The field of literary value need not support this model of appropriation or co-option, but it would seem to be a crucial place to test it.

California Institute of Technology Kevin Gilmartin

Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind by Karl Kroeber. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Pp. 185. $16.00, paper.

The plenitude of new books and articles on relationships between literature and ecology are a welcome sign that literary criticism need not be divorced from political issues and contemporary scientific concerns, and that literatures and their criticism may have significant things to say in those areas. The relationship between Romantic studies and ecology is a case in point, exemplified here by Karl Kroeber's original, stimulating book.

In general, Kroeber presents the scientific and epistemological dimensions of current ecological theories as ways of redrawing the reader's map of familiar poems by the Romantics. There is an early but rather short chapter on ecofeminism, again from the point of view of the politics of scientific research, which is not quite blended into the whole work. Kroeber's fourth chapter deals with the consequences of ecology for poetics. He advocates that poetry be read holistically, as a sort of ecosystem within other systems of political and natural life. Other sections of the book deal with ways in which modern and postmodern sciences related to ecology, such as chaos theory, can be brought to bear upon our understanding of Romantic poetry.

At a 1992 MLA panel hosted by Alan Liu, Karl Kroeber asserted that Romantic ecological literary criticism was reforging Romantic criticism in the wake of what he described as "Cold War criticism." He declared that he had been inspired by what could be deemed a paradigm shift instigated by Jonathan Bate's 1990 study of Wordsworth, *Romantic Ecology*. Bate himself had been encouraged by Kroeber's own suggestions about ways of reading Romantic poetry ecologically. The late eighties and early nineties were a time of ecological shifts in both popular and academic ideologies in Europe and America. In Romantic studies, notable work was produced in this area not only by Bate and Kroeber but also by writers like Jeffrey Robinson, whose seminal *The Walk* (1989) is also an ecological ur-text. By the 1995 conference of the North American Society for Studies in Romanticism, "ecocriticism," ecological criticism and its cognates had made an a scholarly impact large enough to warrant not only Bate's fresh, coherent ecological re-reading of Keats' "To Autumn," but also at least two panels with ostensibly ecological themes, attended by Alan Bewell, Onno Oerlemans, Mark Lussier and myself. Moreover, ecology was a theme which threaded its way through many conversations.

In a welcome spirit of détente inspired perhaps by the recent frontal attacks on the academy by the Republican right, what Kroeber had called "Cold War criticism" four years ago established a productive dialogue with ecocriticism. David Simpson, whom Kroeber might well call an exemplar of the former, engaged Jonathan Bate in dialogue in both his and Bate's plenary sessions. The dialogue was about the need to establish some critical middle ground which would assuage the excessive encroachments of localism in postmodern intellectual work. Ecological politics, after all, is about thinking globally and acting locally. As that politics was a product of the New Left in the 1960s as well as of emergent Romantic and post-Romantic discourses about nature, it only seems fair that in the long run "Cold War criticism" might not be so very much estranged from what I have been calling ecocriticism. The implicit anti-nuclear politics suggested by the very phrase, Cold War criticism, serves to justify this assertion.

None of this could easily be assumed, however, if one's only access to Romantic ecocriticism were Karl Kroeber's *Ecological Literary Criticism*. As a critic of left historicist readings of Romantic literature, Kroeber repeats the charges he made in 1992 in the third chapter of the book. There seems to be no possibility of agreement between the over-reaching culturalism of certain historicist literary critical methods, and Kroeber's I-refute-it-thus-sir approach: "no one old enough to remember life before antibiotics will march under the new historicist banner 'There is no nature.' Nor should anyone who has encountered a forest fire, sailed on the ocean, or been out in a middle-western thunderstorm" (42).

Much of the book attempts to re-frame our reading of familiar Romantic literary works by using contemporary developments in ecology, biology, neurophysiology ("the biology of mind" is most urgently present in a discussion of Neural Darwinism), physics and mathematics. In addition, however, many of these ostensibly descriptive and refreshingly exploratory passages are prefaced or underpinned by explicitly ideological prescriptive language, often critical of what Kroeber construes as the left in some form or another, an irony that may not be lost on those very historicist critics accused of dragging extraneous ideological baggage into their close readings of Wordsworth. There is an anti-intellectual current in the accusatory tone which ought, really, to sit uneasily with the extolling of present-day science. "The romantics," writes Kroeber in the introduction, "never forgot what today we too frequently overlook, that the most important elements of our environment are our fellow human beings—most of whom, thank goodness, are not academic critics" (21).

Karl Kroeber's attacks are, however, allegedly carried out in a Blakean spirit of friendly opposition, made explicit in the dedication. Indeed, the most intriguing parts of this new look at canonized authors subtly interpenetrate the logic of academic debate, in a way that does strive to find a new critical voice responsive to the at once obvious, but surprisingly unfamiliar, discourses of nature in Romantic poetry. Very few, perhaps, have really known just how to deal with the seriousness and political sweep of this topic without tending either to dismiss it as a psychological charade or to wish it away as a cultural construct. Thus Kroeber's engaging chapter on Malthus and Shelley attempts to recast the most available of Romantic texts in a way that might do justice to "the interaffectivity of the political and the natural" (88). Points like this, at which a kind of literary critical judo comes into play, work much better than the more confrontational and heavy handed moments.

It is not quite enough, however, simply to show in the same chapter how "Malthus's and Keats's speculations resonate because both display a characteristic romantic sense for the interdependence of mind and body conceived in a developing relationship with a dynamic environment" (83). All the buzzwords of the new biology are there, but there is something missing. (Once again, apropos of nothing, Shelley seems to have beaten everyone to the post with his insistence on neologisms that use the prefix "inter".) If I were to take issue with anything in Kroeber's book, it would be the rather heady character of some of his readings, heavy on the cognitive, too light on the ethical and the aesthetic. In other words, poems are read as kinds of imaginatively charted science books, text books to be sure, but popularizing books on contemporary science.

To compare Malthus and Keats in this fashion is to view their work from a great distance, as if looking through a telescope at the New Age section of a Boulder bookstore (of which there are many), and happening to see Romantic poets jostling shoulders not with continental philosophers from Kant to Derrida but with an alternative tradition which does often hark back to Malthus, and forwards to Fritjof Capra, the author of *The Tao of Physics*. This is despite the disclaimer that by equating ecology with holiness in 1974, Kroeber did not seek to encourage any such "dim-witted and unpleasant mysticisms" (53). Indeed, it is unfortunate that Kroeber re-employs Edelman's now-discredited idea of "bootstrapping," or self-reconfiguration, in his reading of Shelley's "The Triumph of Life" (107). "Bootstrapping" is also still curiously present in a recent re-edition of *The Tao of Physics*, which popularized the idea in the first place. Moreover, Kroeber's mixture of quantum and chaos theory betrays a lack of understanding which is also typical of New Age writers. Chaos is most clearly observed in the context of Newtonian mechanics, not the more recent ways of understanding the universe whose epistemological and ethical dominance Kroeber traces back to the Romantic imagination. Such admixtures are "not even wrong," as Wolfgang Pauli might declare. In Kroeber's defence it can, and has been claimed that the quantum Shelley is a serious, or at least seriously playful, notion. But to assume that Malthus and Keats can both be summed up in a way similar to a summary of the ontology of a new biologist like Rupert Sheldrake, is to perform a rhetorical move similar to the last two decades' fascination with marketing eastern spirituality and subatomic physics in a magical blend of ecotopianism and the technocultures of contemporary scientific research. By sidestepping Hegel, Nietzsche and Marx, for example, Tyler Volk, a biologist at NYU, has recently demonstrated parallelisms between the patterns found in nature, those discovered in the sexiest postmodern sciences and the wisdom of ancient philosophies. His book *Metapatterns* begs one question from the outset: when is a pattern ever not "meta" in some sense? Kroeber's work follows a similar path, attempting to show the "meta" at work in discourses which have widely differing readerships, conditions of authorship and effects in the polis. For example, Kroeber compares Shelley's fascination for "seemingly random processes" both with twentieth century science's interest in chaos and catastrophe, and with Bachelard's speculations on "consciousness as fundamentally an 'open process'" (139). It is possible that Kroeber's understanding of the intricacy of these processes matches Volk's feel for Blake, when he adds his own couplet to "Auguries of Innocence," which he interprets in an ecological fashion: "Beer can by side of road, / Gets me ready to explode" (Volk, *Metapatterns*, 69).

What is the reason for this avoidance of the usual philosophical and hermeneutic moves? Kroeber, Volk and others share a postmodern, New Age concern for the ravages of what has come to be tarred and feathered as "the Enlightenment." Likewise, many New Age cultures are genuine attempts to create alternative ways of producing, consuming and recording reality: ways that do not seek to dominate nature or the human spirit, in their terms. It is something which they share with certain facets of postwar criticism and critical theory, notably the work of Marcuse and the Frankfurt School in general. But it is intellectually unsafe in a study of Romantic culture to bypass modernity altogether. Kroeber is conscious of this at a crucial point in his reading of Shelley's "The Triumph of Life," a significant document in the debate about whether Romanticism was pro-, anti- or simply post-Enlightenment: Shelley is figured as "for both good and ill, an inheritor of the Enlightenment ethos within an anti-Enlightenment poem" (104). Kroeber is to be admired for this statement, but it is somewhat anomalous in the context of the general argument.

It is difficult to criticize the Enlightenment, however, if the philosophical and theoretical baby is thrown out with the politically coercive and ecologically manipulative bathwater. One must perforce resort to an easy kind of intuitive, touchy-feely rhetorical mode which simply by juxtaposition aims to show the interconnectedness of certain ideas. Argument by contiguity is itself a relic of "Cold War criticism," the long march from the rediscovery of invented traditions of eastern mysticism and the long-haired version of rugged individualism, to books which popularize the Gaia hypothesis and self-actualization techniques.

Kroeber rejuvenates a sense of materialism with which the Romantics might be read, but it is not the materialism of Marx. Paradoxically, it is more like that of Feuerbach, one of those Enlightenment thinkers whom Marx rounds upon, and upon whom one might expect Kroeber to exercise harsh judgement. But the Feuerbachian tone has another genealogy. One note sounded throughout *Ecological Literary Criticism* is a form of metaphysical materialism which rewrites Spinoza as a forerunner of renewed conceptions of the universe as the indestructible circulation of matter or energy (depending which side of the uncertainty principle you are on at the time of observation) (58–61). But simply to *know* that this is the case is somewhat disappointing. It is similar to the effect of the lectures which the Zen Buddhist apologist Alan Watts gave in later life to audiences of noncommitted theology students, about how Buddhist philosophy was really concerned with a form of eco-zen that proclaimed the oneness of organism and environment. This may be so, and it is remarkable in many ways that an author in the field of literary criticism has come close to emulating some of these rhetorical moves. But a sense of oneness is not enough to help us with the kitchen-sink level problems with which ecology so rigorously confronts us, and which Kroeber makes much of in this book, like the population issue. Nor is it particularly helpful to know that we are all related on a plane of materiality.

Enlightenment epistemology has been making similar moves for the last two hundred years, and from Romanticism through theosophy and now New Age, has been touching its a-rational Other and throwing down its defences. The population issue will not be solved with a "new" epistemology, not because it is irrefutably "out there" in empirical or natural space, but because the world is too much with us. It is curiously Eurocentric to see it as purely a problem of epistemological perspective. After all, that was Malthus' way of arguing that relief for the poor was a waste of resources.

University of Colorado, Boulder Timothy Morton

Aubrey Beardsley, Dandy of the Grotesque by Chris Snodgrass. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. Pp. xix + 338. $45.00.

Aubrey Beardsley (1872–1898) was the most literary visual artist of the 1890s. During a six and one-half professional career interrupted and ultimately cut short by tuberculosis, he illustrated stories in the *Pall Mall Budget* and the *Pall Mall Magazine; Le Morte Darthur;* the *Bon-Mots,* three volumes of witty sayings by eighteenth-century writers and stage directors; *Lucian's Strange History;* Oscar Wilde's *Salomé;* title pages for twenty-one volumes in the *Keynote* series of novels as well as various eighteenth and nineteenth-century French and English novels; Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock,* Theophile Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin;* posters for the stage and for publishers' series of novels; and Ben Jonson's *Volpone,* on which he was working when he died. He also executed book plates, wrote as well as illustrated *The Story of Venus and Tännhauser,* his spoof of pornography, and was the art editor of two avant garde periodicals, *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy.* When he died at the age of twenty-five and one-half, Beardsley left approximately 1100 drawings (including juvenilia) and fascinating, sometimes bewildering, interpretations of the material he was commissioned or chose to "picture," his term for illustrating a work. It is the bewildering quality of the drawings, their structure, that Chris Snodgrass has set himself to explore, and he does so carefully and successfully.

With this book, Snodgrass intends "within the personal and historical contexts of [Beardsley's] life to try to extrapolate the logic and thematic structures that informed [his] pictures" (viii). To do so, he bases this study on three major foci: that Beardsley's drawings defeat a "univocal" reading (30), that Beardsley craved a father figure, and that Beardsley patterned his life and art after the dandy created by the eighteenth-century Beau Brummel. The result is a fascinating but uneven study which, in the fashion of Beardsley's drawings, oscillates between the life and the art.

Snodgrass originally published his striking theory of the structure of Beardsley's drawings in a 1989 collection of essays about the artist. There, he located with precision the contradictory impulses in the drawings. In this book and without the critical jargon of the essay, he has the leisure to extend his thesis, and he continues to pinpoint the ways Beardsley's drawings work as he compellingly "reads" many of them, those well-known and those much less known. His eye is clear and most of the time unerring about work which created consternation in its own time, yet which, even as it began to be reproduced, influenced the MacDonald sisters and Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Scotland and continues to influence artists in various media. Indeed, for explaining the ways in which these drawings defeat a final, univocal reading —Beardsley's contribution to the grotesque—Snodgrass deserves much credit.

His attempt to relate these drawings to Beardsley's life, however, is less successful, for two reasons. First, his anxiety about his thesis causes him to be dogmatic. It appears less in statements such as Beardsley "wished to critique canonical traditions" (97) and that he "strives to posit authenticating univocal values" (160)—without any real proof—than in overlooking alternative theories. The difficulty in writing about Beardsley's life and his ideas is that we know very little about him, despite comments recorded by his contemporaries. He was nineteen years old and untrained when he arrived in London from the provincial town of Brighton. When he sprang into success, he caused immediate jealousy among established artists, who had come up through the ranks and were trained in their craft. Young enough to want to create a towering reputation and, in light of his illness, to do it quickly, he provoked his audience by including in his drawings sexual details. These outraged the public and presented critics and jealous artists with the opportunity to praise his line and denigrate his treatment of subject matter, a general sentiment which culminated in Beardsley's removal from *The Yellow Book* in the 1895 wake of Wilde's arrest and which established the twin lines of criticism scholars followed in the years after his death.

Moreover, unlike many of these men, Beardsley left no memoir nor did he discuss his artistic intentions; indeed, his major focus was to see his drawings reproduced and disseminated in the little time he knew was allotted to him. His collected letters (1970) leave the seminal impression of a young man struggling to face death with grace and humor. They also reveal a large gap: during 1894–95, which Max Beerbohm described as the Beardsley Boom, only 34 published letters dated 1894 and 83 dated 1895 appear—in a volume which runs to 441 pages. Did Beardsley not have time to write in 1894? Did John Lane, as Mark Samuels Lasner believes, acquire the 1895 letters in order to destroy the record of Beardsley's thoughts about being dismissed from the magazine he had helped so successfully to launch? We will probably never know, but a biographer must take into account these and other problems (such as the fact that his two separately acquired libraries were never catalogued) which the minor amount of first hand commentary present.

Instead, Snodgrass insists on only one interpretation, as with Beardsley's life. For example, in asserting that Beardsley's life was patterned by a need for authority and control, he overlooks alternative speculations. One example occurs when he posits established artists as authority or father figures without considering the possibility that a young artist, new to London and without connections in the art world, would crave their acceptance or that, as an untrained artist, he needed to surpass them. Another surfaces in connection with Beardsley and money. Towards the end of his life, following doctors' orders and travelling from city to city, hotel to hotel, in search of an accomodating climate for his diseased lungs, Beardsley lived on André Raffalovich's patronage, £100 per quarter, on a £25 per week salary from Leonard Smithers, his last publisher (of which he regularly received only £10), and on the proceeds of the sale of his drawings to Herbert Pollitt. The total may have been more than adequate if one discounts doctors' fees, hotel costs, and the necessities of living for himself and his mother who nursed him. Snodgrass may be correct in viewing Beardsley's behavior as constituted by a "mania for control [which made him act] as if he were in serious financial trouble at times when there was no longer any crisis" (134). But another interpretation is plausible. By this time Beardsley knew his end was near; he writes about his depressed state of mind and fear to Pollitt, a relative stranger and (therefore?) the only one to whom he confided these emotions, "I am abominably ill. . . . *I am utterly done up*" (27 November 1897; *Letters* 396), and in his last note, "a vile attack. . . . has left me an utter wreck and quite incapable of work. . . . Heavens know when I shall be able to work again. Pray breathe not a word of this to *anyone*. . . . Such splendid things I had planned out too" (22 February 1898; *Letters* 436). Considering his will, which left all his money to his sister Mabel, it is possible to speculate that Beardsley wanted to leave Mabel, the only person Max Beerbohm and Arthur Symons tell us he was close to, better situated financially. Speculating about other possibilities would allay readers' concern that Snodgrass dismissed other ideas without considering them; equally, the presentation and dashing of alternatives would ground his own ideas more thoroughly.

A second reason that this book is less successful than it could be occurs at the outset, when Snodgrass determines that he will assess the "continuing significance [of Beardsley's work] as representatives of cultural change" (ix). Several examples stand out. In the discussion of Beardsley's ambiguity, a technique which became a hallmark of twentieth-century art, we never learn the way ambiguity connects with the dandy or contributes to that "cultural change." In addition, Snodgrass places Beardsley in the Victorian Decadence and repeatedly calls the artist a Decadent. But Symons flatly states that Beardsley hated the term, and we know that after breaking away from his youthful influences, Burne-Jones and the Pre-Raphaelites, he allied himself with no groups. And in the two chapter discussion of the dandy, placed penultimately in the book, Snodgrass stresses Beardsley's patterning of his life and art on the dandy as created in the eighteenth century by Beau Brummel. The effect of excluding contemporary illustrators is to create a hermetic argument which looks only backwards. These are examples which contribute to placing Beardsley in the 1890s, but how do they assist the reader to see the "continuing significance . . . of cultural change"?

Most problematical with accepting Beardsley as a Beau Brummel dandy, however, is the fact that the figure of the dandy did not remain static in the intervening century. Part of the dandy's change has to do with the influence, possibly equally important, of Bohemianism. By mid-century, Bohemianism meant living the life rather than doing the work; the concept changed by the 1890s. As the historian Jerrold Seigel argues in *Bohemian Paris*, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Jarry, to name only the best-known men, adapted the qualities of the eighteenth-century Beau Brummel dandy—elegance, detachment, and self-containment—notably to include psychology, the recognition that "the boundary between art and the life of art could no longer be maintained" (Seigel 124), and the confrontation of the audience. If we accept Seigel's view, Beardsley's inheritance of the dandy, mutating through French adaptations and Bohemianism, is more complex and suggests much more inherited cultural change than Snodgrass allows.

As in any book, there are errors. Snodgrass accepts the received opinion that Wilde was Beardsley's nemesis (275) without apparently being aware either of my 1992 musings on that relationship or those of Wilde's son Vyvyan, who was taken to see Beardsley before the artist's death and recorded his impressions in 1967. Beardsley did not create all the *Salomé* drawings to be "irrelevant" (276), only the three substituted for those the publisher deemed too suggestive. The most serious errors, however, arise in relation to Beardsley's technique. In arguing Beardsley's need for perfection and control, Snodgrass accepts Rothenstein's belief that Beardsley erased "the unwanted penciled remnants [of his preparatory sketches] or obliterate[d] them in black masses" (129). As I have discovered during my preparation of the catalogue raisonné, however, Beardsley frequently left pencil lines. These range from a few, for example in the alteration of a tree branch or a hat, to many, as in *Mrs. Pat Campbell* and the title-page for *The Yellow Book,* Vol. 1, where he changed the entire location of the drawing on the page. A few pages later, using Brigid Brophy and John Black (not listed in the bibliography) on another aspect of technique, Snodgrass states that Beardsley traced and retraced "details of images to get them exactly correct" (131). But Beardsley used paper which was not thin enough to permit tracing, and the backs of drawings show neither indentations nor other evidence of hard lines necessarily left by tracing.

In terms of production, the covers and the binding of the book are sturdy, and the dust jacket handsome and arresting. The text, however, suffers from being printed on thin paper; the print on the reverse of pages can be seen through the drawings. The reproductions create an additional problem. Beardsley's drawings were meant to be reduced. In this text, they are often printed larger than they were meant to be, and some are blurry (for example, 192, 193), Others, photographed from books without removing the screen, lose detail (for example, 48, 56, 215, 264, 265).

Despite the lack of cohesion among the three foci, the weaknesses in the overall argument of this book, and an occasionally pejorative tone directed at the artist, the readings of the drawings and the analysis of the their structure will delight Beardsley scholars.

Morehouse College Linda G. Zatlin

Narrative Ethics by Adam Zachary Newton. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995. Pp. 335. $39.95.

There is much that merits praise in this critical study, not least its emphatic clarity of purpose and its own ethical integrity. *Narrative Ethics* is a sophisticated, often subtle meditation on literary ethics; poised against both humanistic pieties and deconstructive denunciations, it tries to retrieve for critical discourse the intense and even traumatic impact of literary experience, its power to change the sensibilities of its readers. In pursuing this aim, Newton shows himself to be a reader of exemplary range and a comparatist of exceptional skill. His critiques of alternative versions of narrative ethics are precise and uncompromising, yet he takes from those exchanges a positive awareness of the expanded range of concerns—cultural, ideological, and linguistic—that a contemporary literary ethics must address.

Newton's initial theoretical chapters begin by critiquing traditional narrative ethics, which has typically meant one of two things. Either critics have located the ethical force of literature in the explicit messages of particular texts, treating its aims as explicit and doctrinaire moralism, or they have claimed that literature engenders a much broader (albeit vaguer) enhancement of our moral capacities—expanding our empathy, our tolerance, our respect for difference. These options describe not just humanist criticism of one kind or another, but fit equally well with the skeptical, ascetic ethos of deconstruction or the moral imperatives of much cultural criticism. Both choices, Newton insists, have led to the neglect or impoverishment of narrative ethics by denying it any independent "critical legitimacy" (27).

To capture what traditional narrative ethics has left out, Newton relies most heavily on three central figures—Mikhail Bakhtin, Stanley Cavell, and Emmanuel Levinas—whose work provides a basis for exploring "the limiting intersubjective conditions of the narrative imagination" (27). Bakhtin's dialogics provide him with an intersubjective model of language, whose speakers are forever caught up in a web of competing social discourses. Our awareness of this heteroglossia would ideally spark an ethical obligation that Bakhtin terms *vzhivanie* or *live-entering,* "a mode of active engagement with the other which mediates between identification or empathy on the one hand, and objective respect at a distance on the other" (85). Cavell's work specifies this demand in a slightly different way, as a desire for acknowledgment that goes beyond mere understanding to validate the presence and worth of the other person. Although Newton criticizes Cavell's emphasis on the moral content of certain texts, he emphatically endorses the reversal of Hegel that places the claims of intersubjectivity above the claims of reason (5).

Useful as Newton finds both Bakhtin and Cavell, it is Levinas's stress upon the affective intensities of intersubjective relations that matters most to his work. Levinas also contends that an encounter between persons becomes ethical to the extent that each acknowledges the irreducible otherness of the other. "Morality begins with the separateness of persons" (309), and Newton draws from this claim the corollary principle that literary texts serve their most powerful ethical function when they "allegorize the crevasse dividing person from person, as well as the techniques they invent (for seeming) to traverse it" (45). Levinas differs most from Bakhtin and Cavell, however, by insisting that such encounters radically interrupt our day-to-day relations and remain irrecuperable in language; instead, "they shock and linger as 'traumatisms of astonishment'" (13). Regardless of the good will that we may bring to them, they remain unsettling, even potentially violent. In Levinas's own terms, "The Other is the sole being that one can be tempted to kill. This temptation of murder and this impossibility of murder constitute the very vision of the face" (175).

For all three theorists, then, intersubjectivity is both ontologically and ethically prior to subjectivity. They resist the idea that an antecedent self consciously or rationally decides to enter into relations with others. Instead, "The task of selfhood is proposed, called into being, from outside the self as answerability" (45). Narrative both amplifies and reduces these encounters, preserving their traces, but never wholly overcoming the incommensurability of seeing and telling, and erring if it fails to acknowledge its incapacity to do so. Hence one measure of our critical responsibility is how well we preserve the irreducible particularity of individual literary texts, avoiding the sorts of allegorical readings that treat characters or incidents solely as exemplary types.

Narrative Ethics succeeds in part because it enacts this dialogic responsibility in framing its own theoretical vision, developing its particular stance out of an ongoing debate with other critics. Narratology gets relatively brief attention, since it has typically had little or no concern for the ethical consequences of its structural or formal analyses. Newton's exchange with deconstruction is more persistent and intense, sympathetic in its assessment of deconstruction's value and yet incisive in its diagnosis of its limits. He concedes that deconstruction preserves the unsettling difference of literary texts, while objecting that it stops within the text, as if the reader never did re-emerge from it, never did retell it. This approach fails, then, to recognize the positive implications of the fragmented self, the opening out to others that can result from sensing this. Newton affirms Bakhtin's comment that, "The self's inner division is a sign of life, not estrangement, since it records the presence of others, the saving heterogeneity of consciousness" (47). Precisely because both narratology and deconstruction stop short of considering literature as a performative act, they allow literary ethics to be treated as if it could be reduced to relations of power, when in fact, "the face to face in its ethical mode dispels or neutralizes power; it appears always as 'a positive value'" (215).

Newton is closer in purpose to the recent ethical criticism that he terms "neo-humanism," the work of such philosophers and critics as Nussbaum, Booth, and Altieri. Yet even these theorists, he contends, err in attempting to rationalize and systematize the contingent purposes that predominate in literary texts. By conceiving the self as a relatively stable entity, they gloss over the tremendous uncertainties of the encounter, losing sight of its "immediacy of contact" (11) in their pursuit of meanings that readers can take away from such events. Furthermore, they tend to treat the assimilation of particular cases into universal rules as a relatively unproblematic process, so that their concern for the exemplary features of particular texts inevitably overrides the claims of those texts to singularity. Seeing a text as exemplary "misses the fact that it is meant first to be *confronted*" (66).

Where should we locate the ethical core of literary texts instead? The distinctive orientation of Newton's narrative ethics involves seeing "narrative as relationship and human connectivity, as Saying over and above Said, or as Said called to account in Saying" (7). Seeing and telling constitute for him an act of witnessing, a relational exchange that goes beyond assimilating whatever might be told. With greater or lesser success, all retellings of narrative strive to preserve the integrity of the encounter. "In life . . . as authors of their own fragments, persons can only recognize one another through glimpse and approximation; they wait on the charity of narrative amplitude" (104). But that amplification must also be an exercise in hermeneutic self-restraint, preserving the difference of the other as "a concrete and singular other whose moral appeal precedes both decision and understanding" (12). We should, that is, be witnesses first and readers (or interpreters) second. Newton's narrative ethics resides secondly in the active reflection of narrative texts on their own ethical potential, their thematizing of the act of narration. This emphasis on the metafictional aspect of texts means that his method finds its fullest expression in modern or postmodern texts, where self-reflexivity is most often an integral part of the text's performance.

The four chapters that follow this theoretical prelude canvass a range of ways of attending to others that Newton discerns in nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors. They often begin on familiar ground by demonstrating the self-referentiality of the texts in question, but gain momentum as they move toward delineating the gains and costs of inhabiting specific narrational roles. Chapter 3 focuses on short texts by Conrad and Anderson, considering the constraints that inhibit full narration or full interpretation of another's story and underscoring the assumption, often only partial, by narrators, listeners, and witnesses of the ethical obligations that go with the roles that they perform (128). The following chapter points out how an appeal to these obligations may arise outside an author's own intent; Henry James's tales reveal a representational ethics beyond narrator and author alike, where James becomes the unconscious critic of his own aesthetic omniscience (146).

Chapter 5 takes up texts by Crane, Melville, and Wright in a marvelously compelling analysis that projects Levinas's philosophical metaphorics of the face onto the theme of facelessness in texts by and about African Americans. Newton brilliantly demonstrates how the cultural erasure of black faces destroys the possibilities for ethical encounter and—for black writers as well as white ones—turns black figures into monsters. The same conclusion can be drawn about Melville's Babo or even Wright's Bigger Thomas as about Crane's Henry Johnson in *The Monster*: "The text, in effect, exhausts Henry's personhood through a relentless racial optics" (190). His disfigurement and monstrosity simply literalize and force into consciousness a condition that existed from the start. Remarkably fine practical literary criticism, this chapter articulates as well as any comparable study how ethical criticism and cultural criticism can productively converge. Newton's ethical perspective takes subtle account of the pervasively dehumanizing consequences of racism, while showing how these same texts resist the reinscription of racial categories as primary. Newton refuses to draw any easy morals from these texts, as if these authors might be suggesting some recipe to neutralize racism. Here as throughout his volume, he reads these texts as defining problems, not solutions, and carrying within them all the latent violence of the cultural situations that they describe, Chapter 6 concludes Newton's survey by turning to the themes of secrecy and personal identity in texts by Dickens, Barnes, and Ishiguro. Questioning expressivist accounts of the foundational interiority of selfhood, Newton argues that "the *telling* or the *hoarding* of secrets serves as the glue which binds person to person" (247).

Newton's dogged insistence upon the vividness and hermeneutic depths of these emblematic literary encounters is admirable, yet leaves a lingering question: what follows from this? Most fundamentally, his narrative ethics has an injunctive force, calling on us to adopt a specific attitude toward texts (and toward other persons as well): a "critical tact" toward the absoluteness of their difference from one another and from us. Citing Richard Brudney, Newton clearly agrees that moral deliberation is "a craft, rather than a reflection on the nature of moral rules" (68).

Yet it is not so self-evident that we have to make an either-or choice here between craft and science, between tact and knowledge, Nor is it clear that an emphatic separation of these alternatives really fits our reading purposes and practices better than a vision that tries, however clumsily, to oscillate between them. Does the stunned astonishment of Levinas really provide us with a full narrative ethics, or only with an affective sensibility that—however fundamental it may be—must eventually give way to a more formalized ethics or perhaps cease to be ethical at all? It is telling in this regard that Newton's examples are all essentially negative, markers of the difficulties that stand in the path of ethical encounter. Just as "*Lord Jim* can only work in terms of successive mediations, partial disclosures" and thus remains "not fully 'Levinasian,'" (89–90), and as *Winesburg, Ohio* "depicts a primitive and partial, let us say pre-Levinasian world" (106), so, too, do the texts of Crane, Melville, and Wright only "negatively confirm an ethical principle by conspicuously violating it" (227). Nor does it seem likely that other literary examples would tell a different story. It is not so much that Newton's ethical model for literary discourse remains only partially articulated here; it is in a fundamental sense inarticulable. Conrad's texts are symptomatic in being about "the redemptiveness of inarticulacy, the ethical claim of the unfinalized text" (103). Yet what *besides* our attention is it claiming? Can that attention in and of itself really suffice?

While the texts Newton favors do ask a bit more, valorizing the capacity for dialogue that narrators such as Conrad's Marlow or Dickens' Inspector Bucket embody, what such dialogue might mean in a given context remains —by necessity it would seem—perfectly open. The narrator of Anderson's "The Philosopher" "infuses a kind of grace into his fragmentary and elliptical stories by asking merely that they be followed" (120). Quite right, one might agree, but then? Levinas's answer, that we should proceed from the "traumatism of astonishment" to the "'idea of infinity' produced by the other in me" (204) is at one and the same time tremendously uplifting and terribly vague. And one wonders whether a salutary critique of the limits of rational ethics hasn't become a more problematic displacement of rationality itself. To return to one of Newton's own key terms, what would the price of abiding within a purely Levinasian ethics be? Leaving us poised upon fundamental questions, though, may not be the least of the virtues of this challenging text. *Narrative Ethics* is by any account a serious and significant contribution to the discussion of literary ethics, a field of inquiry where even now all too few texts of comparable rigor and intensity can be found.

University of Washington Gary Handwerk

"Antike Roman": Power Symbology and the Roman Play in Early Modern England, 1585–1635 by Clifford Ronan. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995. Pp. xiii + 233. 12 illustrations. $50.00.

This book is a lively and learned survey of Roman materials as employed by the literature, especially the dramatic literature, of the Tudor-Stuart period. Written in an engaging style, and ranging knowledgeably through many scholarly fields, including painting and illustration, it covers a large number of subtopics, endeavoring to show how every feature of ancient Rome, real or imagined, functioned to express and represent some equivalent or related feature of life in early modern England. Actually, at least in this case, the term "Renaissance" seems not only easier to use but more appropriate.) The method is obliquely related to that of J. V. Cunningham in *Woe or Wonder*; that is, certain key words or significant terms are explored to reveal their extended associations, either latent or patent, with the cultural background of the age.

Several theoretical points are made. At one juncture (50–51) Ronan appears poised to resist the current insistence on the political topicality of Renaissance theatre, though this argument is eventually abandoned. At other points, Ronan, as E. R. Dodds had done before him with the Greeks, stresses the violent and irrational side of Rome's supposedly self-restrained culture (a side which was already familiar to the Renaissance). The treatment of anachronism in the early chapters of the book is very interesting. Of greatest importance to the present reviewer is Ronan's argument that there is occasionally a hollow and even antic undertone in some of the Roman plays. This section (3–7) goes far to support by analogy my own revisionist reading of *Macbeth* in *Identity and Community* (chapter IV).

A summary of the topics covered in this volume, from general features such as stoicism through special forms of behavior such as suicide, to highly specific notions such as the putative vulpine characteristics of the Romans, may be found on 152–55. There are a dozen illustrations, and the appendices include a short-title list of Roman plays from 1407 to 1651, as well as various statistical tables.

Most readers, I suspect, will quickly find objections to the organization of the book. The lively and witty style, the often curious and esoteric subject-matter, seem out of keeping with a form that strikes one at times as careless. The author does not seem to have put as much effort into finding an appropriate structure for the exposition of his materials as he has put into the details. Nor is there any discernible overarching thesis or major conclusion to bring the miscellaneous facts and observations together. On the other hand, if one stops to think how one might oneself have organized such a book, no obvious improvement springs to mind. It is a compendium, and clearly a useful one; to force a thesis on it would not have strengthened it or made it more useful. One might have put the most interesting materials in the book, which appear in the Introduction and Part One, at the end rather than at the beginning; but the work is basically a scholarly guide to a certain body of information rather than a structured argument, and to rearrange its contents would not have altered its essential character. It can be used, enjoyed, and appreciated as presented.

State University of New York at Buffalo *Irving Massey*

Jews in Today's German Culture by Sander L. Gilman. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. 132. $24.95.

Although Sander Gilman's focus is on Jews in united Germany since the fall of the wall in 1989, he roams far and wide in history, drawing significant connections to the past to show how Jewish culture has gradually been reconstituted in post-Shoah Germany. Indeed, there is today a thriving and complex Jewish social and cultural life in Germany, and Gilman traces its unique contours so that we can gain a sense of how difficult it is to be Jewish in a country that practically denies Jewish existence as German. In this respect, Gilman's short but rich study is "must" reading for anyone interested in the trials and tribulations of Jewish life in Germany during the 1990s.

Jews in Today's German Culture is divided into three chapters: 1) "Jewish Self-Consciousness and Awareness of Jews in Post-Wall Germany"; 2) "Jewish Writing in its German and Jewish Contexts"; 3) "Representing Jewish Sexuality." In his introduction, Gilman positions Jews in Germany by explaining the distinction between the Diaspora (the involuntary exile of the Jews) and the Galut (the voluntary dispersion of the Jews). "The very assumption of the Diaspora is ambiguous and contradictory, even though it carries the force of divine revelation incorporated in texts. The Galut, on the other hand, is often understood as the experienced reality of being in exile, structured, however, by the internalization of the textual notion of the Diaspora tempered by the daily experience (good and bad) of life in the world. The Jew experiences the daily life of 'exile' through the mirror of the biblical model of the expulsion—whether it be the expulsion from the Garden of Eden or captivity in Egypt" (6). For Gilman, the Diaspora and Galut models are helpful for explaining the situation of Jews in post-Shoah Germany particularly since there have been different stages in the formation of Jewish communities in Germany, and the experiences of the younger Jews differ markedly from those of their parents and grandparents. While Jews may not have wanted to remain in Germany after 1945, most have remained voluntarily, and many have emigrated to Germany and made it their homeland. Yet, there is also a "diasporic" quality to their lives due to the sense of isolation from mainstream German culture.

In Chapter one, "Jewish Self-consciousness and awareness of Jews in Post-Wall Germany," Gilman describes how Jews have come to occupy a very bizarre position in contemporary Germany: they are both visible and invisible in a negative symbiosis with German culture. That is, they are at one with German culture but also resist it by pointing to the differences between Germans and Jews whether they be religious, cultural, or social. Of course, such a self-conscious position may not be typical of every Jew in Germany—and there are many different types of Jews—but it is at the heart of the literary self-representation of numerous Jewish writers. On the other hand, Germans do not really see Jews as Jews because they have become so integrated into German culture, and this benign neglect constitutes the "invisibility" of the Jews, who can choose to be as visible or invisible as they want. For Germans, most Jews are dead Jews or they are identified with their putative homeland, Israel. A real Jew for them is not a German but some type of Other. Today, the Other is more clearly represented by the Turks, Gypsies, Pakistanis, and Vietnamese because of their different physical features or clothing. Jews are more questionable because they look like Germans, and yet their allegiance is allegedly with Israel.

Having described the tenuous situation of Jews in Germany, their visible invisibility, Gilman moves in his next chapter, "Jewish Writing in Its German and Jewish Contexts," to explain how contemporary Jewish authors have forged a kind of minor literature, a category developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature.* Like Kafka, but certainly not as compelling, the young Jewish writers in Germany use the cultural traditions of the world around them to define themselves, but they also undermine and question these traditions to demonstrate how they are different from it. Here Gilman uses two authors of the third generation, Rafael Seligmann and Esther Dischereit, as his prime examples of how Jewish writers personally contend with their experiences of growing up in post-Shoah Germany to designate their paradoxical situations. Gilman' s discussions of Seligmann's *Rubinstein's Auction* (1988) and *The Yiddish Mama* (1990) and Dischereit's *Joemi's Table: A Jewish Story* (1988) and *Merryn* (1992) reveal the complex problems faced by these writers (and others like Jurek Becker and Maxim Biller) in their endeavors to make their Jewish identities visible to a large German-reading public—and to other Jews as well.

For Gilman, the most common, distinguishing mark of Jewish identity in Jewish writing is the damaged body as the image of the damaged soul, and it is symbolically represented through images of circumcision or the Jewish star. In his final chapter, "Representing Jewish sexuality," he traces different theories of circumcision as they developed from Biblical times to the present. He then covers a wide range of contemporary Jewish writers (including American and English, male and female) to demonstrate how circumcision is used in different ways as the mark of their characters' sense of isolation and distance from the Aryan body. While some of the German Jewish writers maintain that the damaged body of the Jew cannot be made whole in contemporary Germany, because their self-doubts are aggravated by racial tensions and xenophobia, a good many, according to Gilman, maintain that Jews have no choice but acculturation if they choose to remain in the Galut.

As one of the first studies of contemporary Jewish culture in Germany, Gilman's fascinating book presents provocative theses that need greater attention. Indeed, he himself has edited with Karen Remmler another important study, *Reemerging Jewish Culture in Germany* (New York University Press, 1994), which covers many other aspects of contemporary Jewish experiences that concern theater, film, religion, and politics in greater detail. Gilman's great strength lies in his incisive interpretation of the psychological dilemma of contemporary Jewish writers within a changing socio-historical context. Most important, his book is also a superb testimony, a witnessing of the vital resurgence of an unusual Jewish culture in today's torn but united Germany.

University of Minnesota Jack Zipes

Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920's by Ann Douglas. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995. Pp. xiii + 606 $25.00.

In 1977 Ann Douglas made an impact on American Studies with *The Feminization of American Culture.* While a few reviewers found it a bit too disdainful of popular fiction by nineteenth-century American women writers who were then getting their first real scholarly attention, the book made a very significant contribution to critical discourse of the next decade. According to Douglas, the replacement of a virile Calvinist culture with a market-oriented sentimentalism, in which the middle-class woman writer and a weakened and euphemistically inclined clergy were the guiding forces, was the dominant tendency in nineteenth-century American popular culture. As she summarizes her own theme two decades later, it was to document "the matriarchal ethos at work in the arenas of reform, theology, literature, and gender definition."

Now comes Douglas's second book, a large and informative tome based on wide reading and reflection and generally a delight to read. *Terrible Honesty,* which takes its title from a phrase of Raymond Chandler's, is a study of two intersecting thrusts in New York—and, more generally, American—culture. One is the creative contribution of African Americans to cultural life of the 1920's, the creative interactions in the arts then between black and white in America, and America's "celebration of its black-and-white heritage," that developed along with the "cultural emancipation of America from foreign influences." The second is a psychoanalytic paradigm, what Douglas sees as a matricidal impulse mostly on the part of white writers and artists, in effect the killing off of the Titaness, the "powerful white middle-class matriarch of the recent Victorian past," whose coming to power Douglas, of course, had narrated in *The Feminization of American Culture.*

The historical chapters on black and white writers and musicians are the most convincing and interesting, although they are based less on original research than on an intelligent and widely ranging synthesis of masses of existing scholarship on the Harlem Renaissance and modern American culture. One of the assets of the book, in fact, is a remarkable bibliographical essay at the end which will be a splendid resource for future students of the period. The chapters themselves include assessments of the intersection between artistic and political issues as seen in, for example, the at times quite negative influence of the female suffrage movement—often racist in practice—on black progress, the ambivalent relationships between new white immigrant groups and African Americans, and the Silent Protest Parade of 1917. They include concisely informative passages on ragtime, blues, and jazz with well chosen anecdotes on such artists as Mamie Smith, Eubie Blake, and Bessie Smith, mixed with similar sketches of Irving Berlin, Fred Astaire, or Bix Beiderbecke. The psychoanalytic argument too often seems forced. Perhaps that is because it rests on our taking Douglas's first book as the fundamental operating assumption of the second, on our taking the ascension of the Titaness and the feminization of culture as the main pattern of nineteenth-century America. Even those scholars most enthusiastic about that book, however, may feel that it is made too prominent a pretext for *Terrible Honesty*. It is not clear, moreover, but for the Freudian and Jamesian trappings, that the argument is significantly different at its core from older arguments about the rejection or displacement of Victorianism or Puritanism or some other prewar "ism" by the post-war or Lost or Jazz or Roaring Twenties generation. Then again, the discussion of three influential "Outside Insiders" as Douglas calls them—Freud, William James, and Gertrude Stein—seems inadequately integrated into what follows, except as it allows her, at opportune moments, to seize on an idea from their writings—such as James's notion of the "return of the repressed"—to clarify a pattern in her narrative. Finally, Douglas forces her case too often in asserting, not showing, some of her claims, such as that parricidal patterns are really matricidal underneath, or that knowing Freud was more profoundly affected by the matricidal theme of the *Oresteia* than by the parricidal theme of the Oedipus story, about which he published more fully, can help clarify the pathology of America's 1920's. Similarly, to argue that the Great War, like so much in the decade that followed, became a war against the mother is to lump a diverse medley of cultural, economic, and political values under the name "Mother" that might as easily have been called something else.

Douglas's contention is that her two patterns are intertwined. Liberation of African American cultural life into a broader environment, simultaneous with the emergence of the United States as a world power, depended on or at least took place in tandem with the overthrow of the Victorian matriarch and with all the resulting irreverence of the decade. When New York became the city where the action was, and when the United States became an economic power and also began to reverse the cultural flow that even in the 1920's sent American writers off to Europe, and when African American writers and musicians became public figures and partners with white artists in the rich cultural life of the decade, then displacement of the nineteenth-century Titaness was an underlying factor—although whether causal agent or result is not always clear. Whether the thesis is necessary for us to understand the activities and episodes Douglas so engagingly and meaningfully presents is doubtful; even whether it guides us toward significant new insights about them is questionable.

There is a looseness about the book that is both strength and weakness. It allows Douglas to draw connections between diverse cultural phenomena, but also leaves a reader at times wondering how to connect some parts with each other. A discussion of Neo-Orthodox theology in the second chapter seems disconnected from almost everything else, except perhaps as an example of the repudiation of the genteel religion and "Pollyana" fiction of the previous generation. A long discussion of mind-cure movements, including Christian Science and the obsession of Mark Twain and Freud with Mary Baker Eddy, while connected in the text to a section on James and his, in effect, anti-Hegelian feminization of psychological inquiry—itself passé in the highbrow pessimism of the more Freudian 1920's—seems conveniently irrelevant once Douglas's topic becomes the Harlem Renaissance. There is, perhaps surprisingly, almost no reference to the visual arts, which were lively in New York in the decade. The literary sections are strong and very fair in detailing the ambivalent relationships of writers like Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes to patrons such as Nancy Cunard, Charlotte Mason, and Carl Van Vechten, and in assessing the role in the Harlem Renaissance of writers such as Wallace Thurman, Nella Larsen, and Countee Cullen. While there is a section on the importance of non-New Yorkers such as T. S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway to New York intellectual life, and an obligatory coverage of the Algonquin group and Eugene O'Neill, there is no indication of the significance of contributions from newer immigrant groups as reflected in the work of Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, or Michael Gold.

In some ways *Terrible Honesty* is like the books Howard Mumford Jones used to write, such as *O Strange New World* and *The Age of Energy*, full of fascinating information brought together in an engaging narrative without a radically new persuasive rethinking or resynthesis of a period. *The Age of Energy*, in fact, covers the period just prior to that discussed by Douglas, and energy is also a theme of hers, energy as a key to the new successes and pathologies in American culture, to modern manias, to the connection between the psychologies of Freud and James, who both valorized energy. The book has something in common even with the older literary surveys by Van Wyck Brooks such as *The Flowering of New England* and *The Confident Years: 1885–1915*, the latter of which again like Jones's book covers the period preceding Douglas's and as with Jones's notion of "energy" seems, with "confidence," to provide a metaphor as useful to this study of the 1920's as it had been for a study of the earlier period. Brooks's books, now rather dated, were not analytical but rather narrative and discursive, and provided more lively anecdotal information about literary life in America than have the histories that followed. Douglas provides more synthesis and analysis but recaptures a narrative strength lost in recent literary studies. If as a whole it is, while perhaps even more engaging, less satisfying than her first book, this may be due to the strong social and economic evidence shoring up her main thesis in *The Feminization of American Culture*; the psychological argument and speculations of *Terrible Honesty* rest on shakier ground.

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