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Inhalt

ZAA · XLIX. Jahrgang 2001 · Heft 1 · 1. Vierteljahr

Editorial	1
Artikel	
SIEGFRIED WYLER	
Colour Names and Text	3
A. D. HARVEY	
English Gravestones as Cultural History	17
HANS OSTERWALDER	
Polymorphous Sexuality Versus the Family: Forms of Living Together in Caryl Churchill's Plays	29
KLAUS-DIETER GROSS	
The <i>Crucible</i> as Drama and as Opera	44
REINGARD M. NISCHIK	
The American Western of the 1960s: Diversification, Specialization, New Beginnings	59
Miszelle	
Recht – Gesetz – Literatur	
Dieter Paul Polloczek, Literature and Legal Discourse. (<i>Michael Kilian</i>)	
Laura Hanft Korobkin, Criminal Conversations: Sentimentality and Nineteenth-Century Legal Stories of Adultery. (<i>Eveline Kilian</i>)	67
Buchbesprechungen	
Martin Kuester, Gabriele Rist and Rudolf Beck, eds. The New Worlds: Discovering and Constructing the Unknown in Anglophone Literature. (<i>Rolf Althof</i>)	73
New and Newly Edited Oxford Reference Works:	
Elizabeth Knowles, ed. The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.	
Margaret Drabble, ed. The Oxford Companion to English Literature.	
Very Short Introductions Series: British Histories. (<i>Barbara Korte</i>)	77

Buchbesprechungen

Renate Schruff. **Herrschergestalten bei Shakespeare: Untersucht vor dem Hintergrund zeitgenössischer Vorstellungen vom Herrscherideal.** Studien zur englischen Philologie, 35. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999. 299 pp. 5 Abb. Pb. DM 156.00. ISBN 3-484-45035-5.

The book is intended as a contribution to the ongoing controversy surrounding the concept and images of kingship in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and the manner in which it informs Shakespeare's plays. As the subtitle indicates, the "background" of contemporary constructions of kingship is analysed in some detail. Various kinds of texts are consequently discussed which were predominant in those controversies during the later decades of the last century: examples of the mass of political writing discussing the good prince, the thriving mirror of princes' literature and courtesy book tradition, but also 'texts' of a different kind like royal entries and pageants easily readable as politically significant celebrations of monarchy.

Schruff is perfectly aware of the political changes affecting English rulers from Henry VIII to Charles I. She does not discuss them as such at great length, but in a nice move opens her book with a brief analysis of royal portraiture which reflects the deepening crisis of the monarchy. Thus, Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII of around 1536 displays a very direct, immediate, almost threatening presence, while van Dyck's equally famous portrait of Charles I of almost exactly one hundred years later shows the king in armour on horseback, surrounded by allegorical ornamentation, a figure removed from his immediate surroundings showing clear signs of the increasing tendency, under the Stuarts, towards transcendence and apotheosis of royalty. Elizabeth I's 'Ditchley' portrait of around 1592 by Marcus Gheeraerts seems to bridge the gap between the extreme views of rulership mentioned above. The black-and-

white reproduction is even less adequate in this case than in the others, but the Queen can still be seen dominating both the political and the natural world, including the biological reality of her own body: with light and shadow banned from the virgin Queen's face by royal order, this face shines in timeless perfection and masklike beauty, trying to hide the fear of her rapidly advancing old age and the succession crisis looming ahead.

It is hard to quarrel with Schruff's choice of plays from the Shakespeare oeuvre. Most plays are mentioned, many more than once, in various contexts, and since the book is structured by contexts, not by plays or groups of plays, the absence of an index proves a serious handicap. Not very surprisingly, the history plays are privileged, particularly *Henry V*, *Henry IV*, *Henry VI* and *Richard II*. So are *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*, while the Roman history plays, surely highly relevant in the context, and the tragedies as well as the bulk of the comedies have been given a comparatively low profile. Since there is practically no play without at least some problem of rulership or other, a selection had to be made in order to avoid too much repetition. Schruff does this by tracing systematically the clusters of metaphors (head, helmsman, shepherd, sun, physician, father, gardener and so forth) originating in the legal fiction of *The King's Two Bodies*, that equally well-known and specifically English attempt at explaining the unavoidable gap between the princely ideal propagated by the conduct books and the realities of the life of princes so brilliantly described by Ernst H. Kantorowicz in his seminal book of that title. The two aspects foregrounded are hierarchy and its inalienable complement, interdependence.

Those of Shakespeare's rulers who reject the interdependent network of relationships at court, their nobles and advisors who have to balance the frailties of the body natural, are

shown to fail. Schruff sees this as a rejection of the absolutist tendencies emerging under the early Stuarts. She also quite rightly mentions the court masque as the perfect expression of the Stuarts' insistence on the king's god-like charisma and status and as the form of political theatre creating *The Illusion of Power* (Stephen Orgel's seminal book of 1975 which curiously remains unmentioned) so eagerly embraced by them. But she sees no trace ("keine Spur", 202) of that ideology on Shakespeare's stage. In the limited sense that Shakespeare did not himself write any masques – as far as we know – this is true. But he was certainly well aware of the new genre. Not only did he introduce masques into *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Henry VIII* as aristocratic stage spectacles necessarily transporting aristocratic ideology, but masques also became a more pervasive structural element in *The Tempest*. Here the masque form is mimetically appropriated in act IV, scene i only to be subjected to a violent inversion reversing the conventional movement from disturbance to aristocratic harmony by Caliban's final appearance – not on the stage but, more dangerously, in Prospero's mind.

But this submission only goes to show that we are indeed dealing with an ongoing discussion. Anyone interested in, or in need of, information concerning Renaissance thinking about rulership – Machiavelli and Castiglione are of course included – will be well served by this study.

Günter Walch (Berlin)

Gabriele Rippl. **Lebenstexte: Literarische Selbststilisierungen englischer Frauen in der frühen Neuzeit.** München: Fink, 1998. 339 pp. 5 Abb. Pb. DM 58.00. ISBN 3-7705-3345-3.

Margaret Cavendish, Ann Fanshawe, Anne Halkett and Mary Rich all wrote their own lives in the 17th century, and the reasons that enabled them to turn their female selves into script must be analysed, Gabriele Rippl argues, in relation to three different contexts: changes

in the generic possibilities of autobiographical writing, cultural constructions of selfhood, and the specific social situation of women in 17th-century England. Since the conventions of autobiography 'naturally' assumed a male self, women's 'lives' represent a challenge to theories of the genre because they rarely display such features as a coherent concept of identity or an autonomous authorial self-fashioning. To do justice to women's texts, the notion of 'autobiography', conflicting and protean as it is, has to be replaced by a spectrum of various types of autobiographical writing and discourse which in turn depend on diverse writing traditions. There are many ways to fashion the self, and Rippl specifically contrasts a culture of radical Protestant truthfulness with a courtly model of culture in the humanist tradition that draws on the dichotomy of being and seeming. Female writers use these models, adapting them to their specific situation as women in a patriarchal society. They both apply and transgress existing rules to express their selfhood in syncretistic texts that combine different generic patterns. Rippl argues that such types of autobiographical texts written by women and indeed by a few men are not only interesting in themselves but that they also represent the historical 'missing-link' between the older romance form and the novel as it developed in the 18th century (305).

Rippl first turns her attention to Margaret Cavendish, an eccentric aristocrat who is the exception that proves the rule. Her writing responds quite unequivocally to a masculine, courtly tradition. Fame is her goal. Thus, she writes texts in 'masculine' genres and is interested in science; she corresponds with eminent contemporaries and loves theatrical display. When, in her autobiography *A True Relation of my Birth, Breeding, and Life* (1656), she stylises herself as particularly bashful, Rippl sees this as a transformation of the modesty topos familiar from classical rhetoric through a 'discourse of singularity'. This gains additional political significance through the element of insecurity expressed by a royalist in times of civil war. Cavendish's approach is baroque in its celebration of an exaggerated 'fancy' which seeks to replace an unnatural and artificial 'learned judgement' with 'natural wit unrestrained' (129).

The next chapter focuses on Ann Fanshawe's *Memoirs* (1676), a revised family book or diary. While Fanshawe's meticulous account of her experiences as a diplomat's wife has long been used as an historical source, Rippl presents an innovative analysis of this text as a literary work in its own right. Fanshawe chooses as her 'writing mask' the image of the exemplary wife who feels it is her duty to guard the genealogical memory by writing an account of her deceased husband's life for the benefit of their son. She draws on diverse writing traditions such as romance, devotional literature, epic and exemplum as well as on the diplomatic report and on biographical genres like the 'portrait' or 'character', the family chronicle and travel literature. While Cavendish's texts are strongly imaginative and transgressive, the most conspicuous feature in Fanshawe's *Memoirs* is an idiosyncratic combination of genres which paves the way for new developments in literature (138).

Anne Halkett's *Memoirs* (1677–78, first printed in 1875) present a synthesis of various literary genres which comes closest yet to the received idea of an autobiography. Here it is the focus on the inner life of the protagonist as well as the investigation of the psychology of feelings and relationships which anticipate prominent features of the 18th-century novel (185). The text, organised around three love stories, is occasionally apologetic in tone. In order to invest the events of her life with meaning, Halkett relies on the romance pattern but extends it to include an emphasis on psychology and a close attention to nuances of setting. The fictional elements are supplemented both by historical details from the civil war and a prominent discourse of devotion (211–12). With her synthesis of various literary patterns, Halkett moves beyond the syncretism of Fanshawe to develop an individual and future-oriented prose style.

The two final chapters are concerned with autobiographical texts by Mary Rich, her *Specialities* and her *Diary*, which are again characterised by a syncretistic approach. The autobiography starts as a romance and develops into a devotional discourse. Rippl reads the descriptions of how Rich conquered serious illnesses as a specifically female variety of a well-known romance motif – the slaying of the dragon (239)

– while divine providence is introduced to legitimize female self-assertion (247). Rich's *Diary* must be seen in the context of female mysticism which is employed to transcend the rational style of Puritan diaries and to introduce an affective eccentricity and an ecstatic corporeality denied to women in a secular context.

Rippl offers a committed, undogmatic, and sensitive analysis of specific texts and individual female authors. Carefully setting these in the context of contemporary literary developments, she never needs to resort to what are ultimately unhelpful generalisations. Her theoretical approach is sophisticated but never gratuitous, and solid socio-historical background information as well as ample quotations from the primary texts ensure that her work is also suitable as an introduction to writing by women in the early modern period. More attention could have been paid to the question of how we should envisage the influence of obscure and forgotten texts on the history of thought and literature, but in view of what the study achieves this is a minor point. Finally, what makes the book such a good read is the vigour and curiosity which Rippl shares with her 17th-century female authors.

Ina Habermann (Erlangen)

Gustav Klaus and Stephen Knight, eds. **British Industrial Fictions**. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000. viii, 212 pp. Pb. £ 14.99. ISBN 0-7083-1597-6.

There is a certain paradoxical edge, duly noted by the editors, to the publication of a volume on British industrial fictions at a time when traditional industrial production has largely vanished not only from the former 'workshop of the world' but also from many of the other European countries. However, the intention of this book, "part honorific obituary, part rescue archeology", is to trace in roughly chronological order from the early 19th century to the present "how writers responded imaginatively to the impact of industry upon human lives in Britain, how they saw people coping with and resisting the demands made upon them, how they detected at once human waste and slum-

bering potential beneath so much degradation, how the dream of a juster, healthier, more dignified life was never lost" (3).

The fifteen papers have different foci. Some authors deal with specific kinds of work: I. Haywood carefully investigates the plight of needlewomen, whose problem of having to top up their meagre income from casual prostitution, the popular press "shifted discursively onto the more manageable grounds of sexual morality and away from the failures of political economy" (8); H.G. Klaus engagingly reconstructs the admittedly fragmentary evidence of "the shipbuilders' story". Others re-read certain 'canonical' classics: V. Cunningham stresses Disraeli's linguistic politics in *Sybil, or The Two Nations*, G. Day elucidates the contradictory function the idea of 'high culture' has in Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philantropists*, and K. Bell concentrates on Arthur Seaton's relationships with his machines and women in Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Again, some evaluate specific authors like James Hanley (J. Fordham) or Agnes Owens (I. von Rosenberg), others concentrate on regional varieties of industrial fiction: I.A. Bell on Scotland, R. Meyn and J.A. Davies on Wales, A. Croft on Teeside. S. Knight's apt observation that Welsh women wrote "with less certainty and more hesitation than the men" which makes their writing particularly valuable because of its "unsimplistic thoughtfulness" (164) is borne out by his reading of texts by Kate Roberts, Menna Gallie and Margot Heinemann. Also, some specific topics and theoretical problems are broached: M. Sanders traces "the emergence of the 'accident', as both concept and fictional trope" (24). The idea of the 'accident', he argues, "effectively decouples causation and intention. In doing this it legitimates the principle of 'accountability without culpability', through the creation of an 'as-if' situation, in which neither party is blamed, or held to be at fault, but one party agrees to behave as if they were responsible" (26). Against this background, Sanders provides interesting readings of Yonge's *Heartsease*, Dickens's *Hard Times* and Gaskell's *North and South*. S. Dentith asks the question, "Why should the novel be considered such an appropriate form for those aspiring to give an account of working lives, and of the lives

gathered together by industrial society?" and argues that it "provided, as one of its characteristic modes, the use of irony" (99) and, thus, was "especially hospitable to the ironic or sardonic tones of working-class speech" (109). Unfortunately, he does not discuss the possibility that writers may have preferred the novel because its form appealed to their readers. J. Fordham reads James Hanley's novel *The Furies* as a contribution to literary modernism, but his result is somewhat disappointing: the contention that "the essence [sic?] of working-class modernism" is "the textual representation of a socio-cultural complexity and irresolution" and as such "refuses the temptations of any bourgeois closure and asserts a new priority of struggle and process" (122) is correct as far as it goes but does not take us far enough.

Comprehensive as this collection may appear, there are two slightly irritating limitations: firstly, there is no contribution on Northern Ireland, and this omission is left unexplained. Secondly, the reader gets too little extra-literary information and argument: when reading about industrial fictions I am not only interested in how they have reflected their social contexts but also how different media and institutions have furthered (or impeded) their distribution, how they have been received by their reading public and, most importantly, what kind of relative impact they have had (on their readers' mentalities and ways of life) in comparison with other cultural products. But these provisos apart, this is a very useful collection from which everyone interested in industrial fictions will surely profit.

Jürgen Kramer (Dortmund)

Adrian Frazier. **George Moore, 1852–1933**. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000. xx, 604 pp. 31 illustrations. Hb. £ 29.95. ISBN 0-300-08245-2.

George Moore was one of the most controversial writers at a period when 'controversy' seemed almost a byword for literary production. At the same time, he was an influential force in many areas – more so than is often realised today. He published some sixty volumes of prose