

BRIEF MENTIONS

MICHAEL GRODEN

Ulysses in Progress

Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977. Pp. 235. \$13.50.

Michael Groden describes in *Ulysses in Progress* a reading of Joyce's novel based on three major stages of composition that he uncovers following careful study of multiple revisions found in prepublication documents. Groden's book itself is a model of critical composition, beginning with an Introduction in which he briefly mentions each of the three stages—the interior monologue stage, the stage of parody styles, the stage of new styles and revision of earlier episodes—the middle stage serving as a bridge between the other two; presents a stemma of *Ulysses*; and lists documents he has used and their locations. An ensuing chapter develops each of the three stages of composition more fully, describing them in some detail. The major portion of the book, however, is concerned with illustrating the three stages by means of certain particularly appropriate sections of the novel. Thus "Aeolus" serves as the exemplar for the early stage; "Cyclops" for the middle stage; and "Circe" to "Penelope" serve as exemplars for the last stage. The complex final stage of composition involved, according to Groden (as well as new styles) only *partially* reworking earlier episodes so that in effect we find stages superimposed upon earlier ones, "a palimpsest" in his words. Groden concludes that "if Bloom, Molly, and Stephen achieve the status of myths at the end of 'Ithaca,' this is possible because of both the realistic grounding of the first nine episodes [early stage] and the erosion of that grounding in the next eight." (63) Such a development involved a shift from realism to symbolism and from characters to schema. (204)

Writing on the book jacket concerning this study of the evolution of Joyce's text, Phillip Herring is doubtless right in stating that Groden's will be "the standard work on this subject for many years to come." Not only Groden's own distinguished research, but the host of well-known

Joyceans, mentioned in the preface, whom he has consulted, give proof of the authority of the book, one which began as a dissertation under the direction of Princeton's A. Walton Litz.

Perhaps most useful of all is Groden's inescapable conclusion that any unilateral interpretation of the style of *Ulysses* is now impossible. The uncovering of the three stages of composition precludes such judgment. At the same time he admits that the "notebooks and drafts may be less helpful than we might wish regarding meaning of the Homeric parallel and Joyce's attitude toward his characters" (203) and that these "documents carry us now closer to Joyce's basic assumptions than the final version." (202) This statement forms the basis of my only question about such studies. Like Unamuno, who wrote, "We are as short of Quixoticism as we are long on Cervantism" (*Our Lord Don Quixote*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967], p. 454), I am sometimes tempted to feel that we are as short of Bloom's humanity as we are long on Joyce's pedantries. Michael Groden's fine book must, of course, be read on its own terms, as a study of style. As such it is a paradigm.

Margaret Church

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA

Captain Pantoja and the Special Service

Translated from the Spanish by Gregory Kolovakos and Ronald Christ

New York: Harper & Row, 1978. Pp. 244. \$10.95.

Mario Vargas Llosa (1936) is Peru's best known living writer of fiction and one of the leading novelists of the much-touted "boom" in Latin-American letters during the 1960s. His fourth novel to be translated into English, *Captain Pantoja and the*

Special Service (1973) is also his most popular among readers of Spanish, probably because of its rollicking humor. Pantoja is a diligent young army officer who, because of his exceptionally fine record as an administrator, is sent to Peru's northeastern tropical region on a secret mission, the purpose of which is to organize a squadron of prostitutes referred to as "Special Service." It seems that a series of rapes has been committed by lonely soldiers stationed in this remote zone, and high-ranking officers in Lima reason that the prostitutes would satisfy sexual appetites and thus reduce tensions between civilians and military personnel. Although less than enthusiastic about his new post, Pantoja flies to the tropical city of Iquitos where, despite many obstacles, he makes his unit the most efficient in the Peruvian army. Meanwhile, a spellbinding prophet called Brother Francisco has mesmerized a growing sect of religious fanatics, whose rituals include the crucifixion of animals and human beings. The novel is brought to a climax by the death of Pantoja's beautiful mistress, one of the prostitutes, and his dramatic funeral oration revealing the army's role in prostitution. By way of punishment, he is transferred to the remote highlands of Peru where, it is suggested, he continues to represent the epitome of military efficiency.

Captain Pantoja . . . might be described as an absurd novel enriched by strong doses of irony and the grotesque, its protagonist typifying the absurd hero who never gives up in the face of adversity. A victim of irony throughout the novel, Pantoja elicits the reader's guffaws because of his puritanical nature and his serious, analytical approach to his scabrous assignment, but ultimately he merits sympathy and respect. The frequent juxtaposition of his ludicrous antics and Brother Francisco's barbarous crucifixions, moreover, create clashing emotional tensions similar to those produced by grotesque art.

Because of his emphasis on avant-garde structural techniques, Vargas Llosa has been regarded as the technologist of the Latin American novel. *Captain Pantoja* . . . not only utilizes a montage of military reports, dream sequences, letters and radio broadcasts, but also fuses narrative prose with two or more interwoven dialogues dramatizing the different plot threads. The result is an impression of

dynamic movement that serves to accelerate the flow of events and heighten ironic contrasts.

In his dissection of Peruvian society, Vargas Llosa satirizes the military organization as well as the corruption, hypocrisy, and cliché-ridden language of his fellow countrymen. A difficult book to translate, *Captain Pantoja* . . . loses some of its impact in the English version. Still, it should be greatly enjoyed by American readers with a taste for absurd humor and innovative narrative devices.

George R. McMurray

HILDEGARD EMMEL

Der Weg in die Gegenwart: Geschichte des deutschen Romans. Vol. III. Berne: Francke (Sammlung Dalp 106), 1978. Pp. 214.

The third and final volume of Professor Emmel's history of the German novel covers the years from the end of World War I to about 1970. The book has three parts; the first is devoted to the time of the Weimar Republic, mainly to novels by the following authors: Erich Maria Remarque, Arnold Zweig, Lion Feuchtwanger, Alfred Neumann, Alfred Döblin, Jakob Wassermann, Franz Werfel, Joseph Roth, Anna Seghers, Hans Fallada. The second part is entitled "Romankonvention und totalitärer Staat"; under this heading the author analyzes novels written in Germany during the Nazi period, novels written in exile, and the modern novels written in the German Democratic Republic by authors like Anna Seghers, Johannes Bobrowsky, Christa Wolf, and Hermann Kant. Western novelists treated in this chapter are: Elias Canetti, Bert Brecht (*Dreigroschenroman*, *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar*, *Tui-Roman*), Ernst Jünger, and Thomas Mann. The third chapter is the most convincing one: Ms. Emmel analyzes the most important novels written since 1950—works by Heinrich Böll, Hans Erich Nossack, Wolfgang Koeppen, Max Frisch, Günter Grass, Martin Walser, Uwe Johnson, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Arno Schmidt.