

description in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Bal analyzes the description of Rouen, characterized by a lack of action verbs and few events, as typical of Flaubert's evocation of places. In a structural remarriage of form and content, she interprets the description as a type of discourse which ironically parallels the *vide* in Emma, her *s'ennuie à mourir*. In Chapter IV Duras's *L'Après-midi de M. Andesmas* is said to invite the critic to analyze the three-hour time period itself. Using Genette's categories for analyzing narrative temporality (chronology, duration, frequency), Bal examines the interplay of many different *durées*: past, present, future; the use of shadow as an icon of the threatening aspect of the father's lonely wait, paralleling the progressive character of time; the use of the haunting refrain sung in the village, concretizing the stagnation of time. Bal concludes that the apparent temporal simplicity of the novel hides an extremely refined narrative technique, the rigorous and ordered chronological aspect of the story hiding a profound temporal disorder. Thus, time is seen to be the unique event in this story, filling the novel with its significations.

Part of the value of *Narratologie* is its interest for different audiences. Bal's attempt to combine various structuralist and semiological concerns, particularly through application of Peirce's concept of iconicity, will give food for thought to partisan theoreticians. Those interested in Colette, Duras, or Flaubert may wish to read only the related chapters for the interpretations given. In my estimation, Bal is particularly original and insightful on Duras. For pedagogical purposes this book is excellent. Traditionally inclined teacher/critics may fault Bal for her remarriage of form and content ("Have we not always done so?"). However, she illustrates beautifully how the minute tearing apart characteristic of structuralist endeavor can provide students with a systematic methodology for discovering the complexity (the interdependence of elements) and the overall beauty of a literary text themselves. The flaws of *Narratologie* are largely endemic to the fact of its being (an evoked) dissertation. The morass of definitions and theoretical material work against an overall unity and integration. My other criticisms lie within the realm of personal preference. Is a structural analysis really less naïve than another (p. 3)? Can analysis and interpretation actually be separated? Do we have to have all the

new terms (focalization to the 2nd degree!)? Can ever more precise definitions and categories truly resolve or explain literary ambiguity or interpretative plurality? If narrative only becomes possible to the extent that a story "won't tell" (Shoshana Feldman), will narratology not have to continue in the direction suggested by Bal, to resist the comforting categories of static models?

Mary E. Ragland-Sullivan

ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS

Afterjoyce: Studies in Fiction After Ulysses

New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. Pp. 201.

Robert Martin Adams has produced three studies of James Joyce. The first, *Surface and Symbol* (1962), a truly memorable analysis of the manipulation of realistic detail in *Ulysses*, was directed toward skilled readers concerned with the substance and texture of Joyce's artistry. The second, *James Joyce: Common Sense and Beyond* (1966), an insightful survey of Joyce's work as a whole, was directed to the "perceptive reader" who wished "to gain a footing in Joyce" (Random House, p. ix). The latest, *Afterjoyce* (1977), an attempt to trace Joyce's influence in modern fiction, seems directed to uninformed students in "several undergraduate classes at the University of California, on whom some of these ideas were first tried out" (to these students, but not to his colleagues nor to scholars who have dealt with the subject, Adams expresses gratitude, p. xiii).

Afterjoyce shortchanges the students—to say nothing of readers at higher levels. Anyone who studies Nabokov or Barth, for example, cannot but be aware of Joyce's presence behind and even within their diverse fictional constructs; an assessment of the nature and extent of Joyce's influence should open new areas of understanding and lead to further, productive studies. But Adams—surely, one would think, the right man for the task—simply

does not deliver: his method is neither responsible, nor systematic, nor scholarly; rather, it is willful, self-indulgent, almost careless. There are two major problems.

First, Adams leaves "influence" undefined—and therefore unlimited: "Let the word 'influence' mean whatever its various appearances will justify, for us it is more sinuous and various than six titles will encapsulate, or sixty" (p. xii). The key term means anything or nothing. It is a semantic blank under which Adams loosely and briefly (only Beckett, Gadd, and Nabokov are treated in more than twenty pages) comments on writers whose work "reminds" (e.g. pp. 178, 187) him of Joyce. Influence is not properly traced or analyzed at all. In some instances it is not even claimed: between Joyce and Virginia Woolf there is "congruence, perhaps, not influence" (p. 77); with Broch there is "affinity" (p. 145); with Borges "it's a left-handed, third-cousin kinship, defined as much by antithesis as by sympathy" (p. 193). In others, "influence" is so minimized one wonders why it was raised at all: with Döblin and Broch, Joyce's "influence is heavily diluted with other thematic and technical considerations; one sees it quickly, but comes almost as quickly to the end of it" (p. 134); neither Durrell nor Burgess is more than a "fringe-Joycean" (p. 166); Borges "is no more a real descendant of Joyce than he is a proper writer of fiction" (p. 190). Or a delicate, protective game is played, with "influence" asserted, qualified, and finally withdrawn: José Lezama Lima's *Paradiso* is an undoubted instance of Joycean influence" (p. 179), but Lima's "relationship to Joyce, however close or distant, makes itself felt chiefly as an afterthought" (p. 180), and ultimately "transcends all questions of influence and even inspiration, but can only be intimated under the loose formula of affinity" (p. 184). The effect of these maneuvers is to bewilder the reader, and to leave the whole issue unresolved because not seriously explored.

The second problem follows from the first. Unwillingness to define the key term leads to refusal to justify selection of subject: ". . . I have not tried to draw this sprawling, disorderly subject into a proper historical straight line, but simply freed the subject to take its own shape by flowing where it seemed to want to go. On the other side, the principle of economy also applies; all discussions of 'the modern novel' begin perforce by discarding 90 percent of the specimens, and there is no

reason to multiply them when all perceptions are tentative" (p. xiii). The "shape" the subject assumed in "flowing" includes Joyce in relation to Woolf, Faulkner, Beckett, Gadda, Döblin, Broch, Nabokov, Durrell, Burgess, Pynchon, Lezama Lima, Barth, O'Brien, and Borges (with some the connection admittedly tenuous, even non-existent). Why these and not other writers in whom Joyce's presence is clearly discernable, for whom his work was decisive, perhaps formative, such as Farrell, Bellow, Roth, John Gardner, Donleavy, David Jones, Cummings, James Plunkett, Muriel Spark, Stoppard, Behan, Böll, Grass? The answer is that the "principle of economy" evidently justifies "discarding" them. In short, Adams blithely touches on writers who remind him of Joyce and ignores those who do not—or writes about those he wants to and dispenses with those he does not.

In *Afterjoyce* the soul of Robert Martin Adams meanders among masterpieces, near-misses, or works peripheral. The critic chats about them in a "hasty and superficial way" (p. 36—the book is replete with such self-protective admissions). The Guggenheim Foundation provided the "leisure to assemble" this "wildly oversimplified" and "very perfunctory discussion" (pp. xiii, 9, 57), and the Oxford University Press has published it. But surely readers indebted to Adams's earlier work, which aroused their respect and admiration, rightly expect much more than impressionism masquerading as literary history.

James L. McDonald

CHARLOTTE F. GERRARD

Montherlant and Suicide.

Madrid: Studia humanitatis, 1977.

Pp. 68.

The theme of suicide, a thorny question at best, be it in literature or psychology has pursued us for time immemorial. Montherlant has proved himself an author worthy of literary interpretation and criticism, but often obstreperous to the critic. To tackle the question of suicide, and Montherlant—both as an author and as a