

on all such theories by arguing that a poetics of fiction is neither possible nor desirable. It is very much to the credit of Mark Spilka and his fellow-editors on *Novel* that they opened their columns to Reed while profoundly disagreeing with his premise. The seven essays, taken together as they are printed here, certainly make for a fascinating and indeed historic debate, which Spilka sums up by saying that "a working poetics [of the novel], more loosely pluralistic than fixed, constantly tested, revised, and modified by experience, and so kept tentative and flexible, can promote the best kind of novel criticism, that which takes into account the novel's manifold nature and history as it makes its inevitably selective and partial illuminations." It would be hard to disagree with that.

The rest of the collection, if not as integrated as the first part, contains several equally good insights. At the risk of being invidious, I would single out Ian Watt's witty and moving "Reflections on *The Rise of the Novel*," which begins: "Having, long ago, grimly refrained from posting sundry devastating retorts to a few of [my] original reviewers . . . I finally decided that a few rather miscellaneous reflections about the composition, the reception, and the shortcomings of the book . . . might have enough general interest to justify exposing myself to the charge of self-important anecdote." They certainly do. Perhaps most interesting is the revelation that the book originally opened with a "thirty-five page heavily-footnoted methodological introduction" which "successive revisions eventually boiled down to one word": the famous "If" in "If we assume . . ." of the first paragraph. Watt's wry comment on this slaughter of the innocents is memorable, and should be painted in red letters on every critic's wall: ". . . introductions begin by being infinitely expandable and end by proving equally expendable."

Also well worth having is Graham Good's stylishly written reappraisal of Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* which, he argues, "still places the novel in what for us is an unusual light," that of "the art-form of sadness." There are several other fine essays, but it would be tedious to catalog them all. Regular readers of *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* will recall them easily to mind, and will be grateful to Mark Spilka for bringing together between two covers the best of the first ten years of a remarkable journal's work. If *Novel* does not quite seem

to have achieved its ambition—to foster "the kind of theoretical and critical support for fiction which poetry had received from the critical revolution in that field from the 1920's onward"—it has not been for want of trying. It is not simply that Spilka is no Leavis, the *Novel* too urbane to emulate *Scrutiny*: it is that the world of the 1970's is so different from that of the interwar years, and the complexity of the task where the novel is concerned so much greater, that no journal could have achieved such a revitalization single-handedly. But that is not to say it was not worth attempting, and one must be grateful to Spilka and his colleagues for what they have been able to achieve, the essence of which is preserved within the pages of this book, which span the first ten years of the journal's activity.

John Fletcher

ARMIN ARNOLD and
JOSEF SCHMIDT, EDS.
Reclams Kriminalromanführer
Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun.,
1978. Pp. 455.

Reclam's established series of "Guides" to a variety of art forms from Opera to Chamber Music, Stage Drama, and Radio Play, most of which have gone through several editions, has taken a new turn with this "Guide to Detective Fiction." It will be equally long-lived. Published in German, as all books in the series, this lightly-written work of curious lore reflects that delightful self-irony so often found in the detective genre itself. "Whoever wants to read a history of crime fiction in five minutes," as the editors beckon, is advised to consult the brief chronological table of works from 1679 (a Chinese collection of tales) to 1953 (Ian Fleming's "invention" of James Bond). Whoever is "not yet a crime-story fan" is cajolingly offered selected delicacies from a list of the "one-hundred best," most of which are "so gripping they can wean you off smoking." Here then is mass-produced literature for a hurried and harried world. The choice of

titles in this list (and perhaps elsewhere in the book as well) derives from "one subjective and two objective criteria": (1) the historical importance of the work; (2) stylistic quality and originality of content; and (3) whether the novel would appeal to the "present-day, German-speaking, central-European reader." Part I provides a glossary of often quite untranslatable foreign words which the German reader is encouraged to master (Fuzz, Gumshoe, Leg Work, Pulp, Whodunit), and then offers a thirty-page summary of detective fiction from "The first Murder" (Cain and Abel) to the present, theoretical typologies of the crime story, a note on "congenial crooks," commentary on the marketing of popular literature, and concludes with speculations on why one reads detective literature at all. Parts II and III consist of a concise "Lexicon of Authors" (by name and pseudonym, giving works and selected plot summaries), followed by thumbnail sketches of the genre and its typology "in countries and languages of greatest literary significance" (i.e. China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, West Africa). They conclude with a register of "Detectives and Crooks," and a selected bibliography of secondary sources. The editors, scholars who are known to possess—and actually to have read—literally hundreds of "Krimis" are the right persons for this enormous task.

This is one Reclam which should really be in English as well, for by far the majority of works and authors are British or American. While many of these cultural artefacts and current hits have been translated into German, a great many more seem to have been left untouched. Yet even where German versions appeared, to judge by the titles which the editors list, the translators took themselves and the genre all too seriously in missing the irony inherent in the craft. Thus Ballinger's *The Tooth and the Nail* (1955) was rendered as *Die grosse Illusion* (The grand Illusion, 1957), Raymond Chandler's *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940) became *Betrogen und gesüht* (Betrayed and Atoned, 1953); while Henry Kane's *Private Eye* (1959) turned out as *Schüsse im Gericht* (Shots in Court, 1962). Dick Francis's *Slay-Ride* (1973) came off somewhat better as *Ein Jockey auf Tauchstation* (Jockey at Diving Station, 1974), while the translator of Gore Vidal's [pseud. Edgar Box] *Death Likes it Hot* (1954) captured a hint of the ironic twist with *Immer diese Morde* (These Darn Murders, 1963). The novel *Soft-Boiled Yeggs* seems for obvious reasons not to have been translated at all.

On occasion the German translator "improves" on the original, as in the translation of Prather's *Dead Man's walk* (1965) as *Die Hexe mit den heißen Höschen* (The Witch in Hot-Pants, 1971). But this is rare indeed. Such problems of translation, market-appeal, subliterary fashion and "Rezeptionsgeschichte" are but some of the insights gained by reading this book. Indeed the obvious dominance of foreign literary novels in the German pulp trade is itself a significant social commentary which the Reclam volume tacitly provides. So is the apparent eagerness of Germans to consume American and British "goods" like Sam Spade, Mike Shayne, Hercule Poirot, Nick Carter, Charlie Chan, and Father Brown. Admittedly, they have no equal.

Experts in the field will find reliable data. Inquisitive newcomers will browse with enjoyment and profit, may even get caught by the lure, and may come upon some "surprises": Kingsley Amis, Beaumarchais, and Pearl Buck as purveyors of detective fiction; F. Scott Fitzgerald whose detective story, written at the age of 13, was published posthumously; or *Floating Admiral* (1932), written by an Author Collective of 14 writers including G. K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie, and Dorothy Sayers. One meets Hilaire Belloc whose "criminal elements" are neglected in the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Equally absent from the *Oxford Companion* is John Creasy who, Reclam informs us, was "the most important crime author of all time" with some 600 novels to his credit under 28 pseudonyms. Thus the Reclam volume raises questions of literary level and taste in documenting a type of fiction which, if not quite respectable ("salonfähig"), was at least certain of its readership and a guaranteed cash return.

Definitions and the limits of genre are particularly problematic in crime fiction as the editors readily acknowledge. Even the core can be regarded as a fringe area of some other type of fiction. But where we easily accept Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammet into the (sub)literary canon, one wonders if the editors have not gone too far in listing Alistair Maclean whose "best adventure novels (like *HMS Ulysses* and *The Guns of Navaronne*) contain elements of detective-spy novels." Certainly, the inclusion of Tarzan and Edward Wheeler's *Deadwood Dick* (1877) whose character of that name will be remembered by middle-aged readers as the gun-

slinging hero of Saturday-matinee serial westerns who teamed with Calamity Jane and Fearless Frank, seems to have left the world of Doyle, Poe, Pitaval, and Eugène Sue. If these are scientific flaws, they add to the value of this work. At least we see that writing has improved from the stark primitiveness of Wheeler's yarn, to the tautness and charm of Simenon's Maigret. Perhaps the Criminal novel offers a greater potential challenge to writers than the uninitiated reader might think. As one of the more promising German writers of the 1970's observed, publishing under the cryptic pseudonym—KY; "As soon as I saw that I wouldn't produce the great novel of the 20th-century I thought I'd have a go at the Krimi. By the time I discovered that this wasn't any easier, it was already too late (p. 220)." This is also the formula for becoming a fan, which the editors invite us to be. And with that, as their Preface ends, "So long, Watson" (p. 9).

Michael Hadley

KAREN L. GOULD

Claude Simon's Mythic Muse

Columbia, South Carolina: French Literature Publications, 1979. Pp. 152.

Karen L. Gould's *Claude Simon's Mythic Muse* focuses on Simon's extensive use of myth in three of his new novels: *La Route des Flandres*, *Histoire*, and *La Bataille de Pharsale*. Although the reason for focusing on these three works remains somewhat vague, it presumably is that explicit mythological references are more frequent in them than in other of the novelist's works. Overall, Gould succeeds admirably in establishing that myths play a crucial role in Simon's writing. Her most notable success is in comparing his use of myth to that of writers of antiquity and in considering his works against a broad spectrum of myth critics such as Jung, Durand, Eliade, and Campbell.

In addition to a brief introduction and conclusion, the book comprises four chapters: "Heroic Defeat and Discovery," "The Archetypal Feminine," "Symbolic

Spatial Journeys," and "Myth and History." Chapters I and II explore two privileged situations, war and love, in which the universality of human experience is exemplified. In both of these situations, the narrators of Simon's novels are shown to be initiated into the essentially nonrational nature of the world and thus to gain some insight into the continuity which exists between their own experience and that of men in all times and cultures. Explicit references by the narrators to such diverse mythological figures as Achilles, Cyclops, Leda, and Pasiphae are adduced in demonstrating the narrators' mythic awareness. And implicit references by the author to such archetypes as the Good Mother and the Whore are adduced in proving the author's overall mythic vision.

Chapter III is the most original part of the book. It treats spatial imagery in Simon's novels and relates this imagery to archetypes. Two fundamental spatial domains are discussed, the city and the out-of-doors. Both are shown to be chaotic, dehumanizing milieus which threaten to destroy man's sense of identity. Because of the destructive nature of these domains, man is shown to seek refuge: in the heavens when he is in the city, in shelters when in the country. Gould's discussion of such images of the city as the underworld, the labyrinth, and the spider web is enlightening; so too is the use she makes of Bachelard's criticism in discussing the symbolic significance of shelters.

But a number of criticisms can be directed at *Claude Simon's Mythic Muse*. The first is that it frequently dwells on subjects treated extensively by other critics. A case in point is the treatment of time and history in Chapter IV. A second criticism concerns the lack of precision and rigor in the definition and use of such important concepts as mythology, archetype, and myth, defined respectively as "a particular set of myths from a given society," "timeless human behavioral patterns," and "a symbolic psychological dimension." In this regard, a more extensive discussion of the theoretical bases of the book's method in an expanded introductory chapter would have been desirable. A third criticism concerns the book's fundamental assumption that Simon's narrators are committed to some sort of initiatory, transcendent quest for mythic understanding. Many readers may well feel that this assumption needs to be more convincingly argued. Moreover, there is a need to