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

reconcile such an interpretation of Simon's narrators with the author's frequent and vehement disclaimers about the psychological or philosophical importance of his novels.

Doris Y. Kadish

JEANNETTE KING
Tragedy in the Victorian Novel: Theory and Practice in the Novels of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and Henry James
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978. Pp. 182. $14.95.

In this book Jeannette King describes some Victorian attempts to cross traditional ideas of heroic tragedy with realistic portrayals of everyday life, in particular the efforts of George Eliot, Hardy, and James. Her first three chapters deal with some of the critical background to their work, and the final chapters study representative novels usually selected from early, middle, and late periods in each novelist's career.

The book's central thesis is that tragedy is defined by its dramatic structure as much as by its themes, and any cross-fertilization of tragedy with the novel may produce an unsatisfactory hybrid. Tragedy idealizes human greatness, whereas the novel attempts to depict life as it really is; tragedy represents a sequence of events, complete, Aristotle says, in itself, while the novel shows the continuity of life, implying what occurs after the curtain has fallen. It follows that George Eliot, Hardy, and James faced difficult problems, both theoretical and practical, in trying to create a tragedy of modern, everyday life. Tragedy in these novels is a condition instead of an action: life, not death, is tragic. Dr. King goes on to argue that the lives of ordinary characters are blighted by various deterministic influences— human relationships, institutions, and heredity. Women in particular, she says, are made to be passive and weak, and so represent as a special case the tragic condition of men as well as women for all three novelists.

From the discussion of particular novels, Dr. King draws her conclusions about the achievement of each writer. She finds that the claims of continuing life in George Eliot overpower the effect of tragedy and, as a result, tragedy is shown to be only a part of life. In contrast, Hardy was influenced by Shakespearean as well as Greek models, and adapted the novel's themes and structure to the traditional idea of dramatic tragedy. In the most rewarding of these chapters, she shows how James, in turn, recognized and exploited the parallel conflicts between the artificial structure of tragedy and the continuing life of the novel on the one hand and his characters' choice between a life of purpose and a life of freedom on the other.

The problem this book raises is more complex than Dr. King seems to allow, probably too vast for any one book to manage. Nevertheless, one really expects to find some indication that the Victorians were not the first to create this hybrid; apart from one reference to Richardson's *Clarissa,* no attention is paid to eighteenth-century domestic tragedy and its influence on fiction. Similarly, Aristotle and a few quotations from Shakespeare are an unduly limited basis for Victorian tragedy, blended as it was with melodrama and clumsy pathos arising from outrages against lower- and middle-class dignity. Dr. King's book is useful within its limits, but those limits prevent it from fulfilling the claim of its short title, *Tragedy in the Victorian Novel.*

John Miller

GIOVANNA CAPONE
Canada, Il Villaggio della Terra: Letteratura Canadese di Lingua Inglese.
Bologna: Pàtron Editore, 1978. Pp. 213.

This book, the first of its kind to be published in Italy, proposes to survey the Canadian literary imagination in both its chronological development and in its central themes, as expressed by some of the major writers in English. Approximately half the study is centered on fiction.