

Krasnov, a native of the Soviet Union who has been living abroad for nearly two decades now, has provided us with a fresh look at Solzhenitsyn that differs from that of a Western critic and is devoid of the entrophy of most Soviet critics.

Vasa D. Mihailovich

## DAVID MINTER

*William Faulkner: His Life and Work*  
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. Pp. 325.

With the proliferation of books about Faulkner and his fiction, it might be easy to overlook a text that attempts to deal with both in one relatively short volume. However, David Minter's *William Faulkner, His Life and Work* is a book that deserves attention.

As Minter says, the focus of his book is double, "On one side, I recount Faulkner's life and try to convey the sense of it; on the other, I discuss his published and unpublished writings and try to illuminate them" (p. 9). Not intended to present new biographical material or new interpretations of the novels, this study is still fresh and original in its successful attempt to portray Faulkner's life and art as an interrelated whole. Although we know that Faulkner wanted his private life to be "abolished and voided from history" (p. 103), most of us, like Minter, share a desire to know the man's life as well as his writing even if as Shelley Foote said, "Writing to him was what living was all about" (p. 247).

Unlike Michael Millgate's excellent work, *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (1966), Minter's book intertwines and balances the writer's life story and the writer's lifework. Like a story, the book is entertaining and readable; like a critical study, it is solid and scholarly. The biography draws heavily from Joseph Blotner's *Faulkner: A Biography* (1974), but it also adds material absent in Blotner such as the Hollywood affair between Faulkner and Meta Doherty Carpenter, the story contained largely in *A Loving Gentleman* (1976). Both the life and

work have been widely and carefully researched—Minter has studied the novelist's essays, interviews, published and unpublished letters, poems, stories and novels as well as almost all of the critical material available to him to demonstrate the close relationship between the "flawed life" and artistic achievement.

In Minter's book, we see how the life affected the work and how the work affected the life. We see Faulkner as the son of incompatible parents and the beginnings of his artistic career in poetry; we see his search for adventure in the war and his early versions of the artist. A fair amount of attention is devoted to the women in his life—Estelle Oldham, Helen Baird, Meta Doherty, Joan Williams, and his daughter, Jill—and Minter is careful to show the role they play in his art as well as in his life. The period of great artistic achievement is fully explored. We see his struggles with the distractions of family, women, and money as he tries to attain "a room of his own and long hours in which to write" (p. 193). We also witness the trips Faulkner makes to New York, to Hollywood, and eventually to Sweden in 1950 to accept the Nobel Prize. With Minter, we lament the decline of his powers, as we applaud the deserved, belated recognition.

Attempting to "locate initiatory and shaping experiences" (p. 10) and to "discern deeper faces," (p. 10), Minter makes speculations but they remain cautious and convincing. He suggests for instance that in *Light in August*, Faulkner "worked hard on a story about a calm birth and a terrible death in an effort to master a painful memory" (p. 133), the memory of the death of his first child. In *The Sound and The Fury*, he felt that Faulkner "took possession of the pain and muted love of his childhood—its dislocation and vacancies, its forbidden needs and desires" (p. 104). In fact, one of the theses that unites the study is that much of Faulkner's work deals with something close to his own experience, the situation of "inadequate parents and wounded children" (p. 156). Minter illustrates this in *The Sound and The Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Absalom, Absalom!* as well as other novels and stories. Of the critical interpretations of Faulkner's novels in Minter's book, the most valuable is his examination of his favorite novel, *Absalom, Absalom!*

Although Minter's book is not as stimulating or as controversial as John Irwin's *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and*

*Revenge* (1975), nor as comprehensive as Joseph Blotner's two-volume biography or Cleanth Brooks's companion volumes, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (1963), and *Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond* (1978), it is a compact, well-balanced, well-informed study of Faulkner and his fiction. Its value lies in its deft handling of the man and his art in a single volume.

Patricia Thornton

## HERMANN LENZ

*Tagebuch vom Überleben und Leben*  
Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag,  
1978. Pp. 317.

Hermann Lenz's *Tagebuch vom Überleben und Leben* ("Diary of Survival and Life"; 1978) is the latest addition to a number of autobiographical works which deal with his life before, during, and after the Third Reich, such as *Verlassene Zimmer* (1966, "Deserted Rooms"), *Andere Tage* (1968, "Other Days"), and *Neue Zeit* (1975, "New Time").

*Tagebuch vom Überleben und Leben* deals with the years 1946-1948 in postwar Germany. Eugen Rapp, the protagonist of *Tagebuch*, returns to his parents' home in Stuttgart after the Second World War, and after spending one year as a prisoner of war in the United States. He finds that many of his relatives who have lost their homes are now living with his parents. Eugen's wife Hanne, who is half Jewish, protects the family from being evicted from their home by the government and from having to share their apartment with other fugitives. Although the family suffers from hunger and cold, Eugen considers himself lucky because he is now able for the first time in his life to do what he always wanted to do: to write. However, by writing, Eugen manages to isolate himself from the daily struggles and the misery that surround him. His talent as a writer is later discovered by a publisher who tries to bring the outside world into Eugen's small room.

When friends tell him about the contemporary scene in Germany, about literary movements and groups of other writers, Eugen refuses to have any contact with them, and prefers the privacy of his dreams and visions. But soon Eugen discovers that his time of freedom will eventually come to an end because of the necessity to earn a living. The book ends with the time of the currency reform in Germany, a sign of hope for everybody but Eugen who is now compelled to work for a living.

As in Hermann Lenz's previous narrative works (see S. Dickson, "The Novels of Hermann Lenz," *IFR*, 7 No. 1 [1980], 39-42), *Tagebuch* includes some of his favored motifs: the Hapsburg monarchy, Vienna at the turn of the century, the Roman empire, and the Romantic movement. The theme of withdrawing into a world of dreams and reminiscence which appears in several of his stories, is always at the center of his latest work.

Sibylla Dickson

## ROGER EBBATSON

*Lawrence and the Nature Tradition: A Theme in English Fiction 1859-1914*  
New Jersey: Humanities Press,  
1981. Pp. 271. \$40.00

In this study, Roger Ebbatson analyzes the nature tradition in the English novel, beginning in 1859. He regards this year as a cultural watershed because man's place in nature became a major concern that was developed with increasing urgency as a counterpoint to the encroachment of industrialization. The nature tradition in the English novel at this time was derived partly from Romantic and Transcendentalist belief in man's deliverance through union with the cosmos. This optimistic view of nature, however, had been undermined in late Victorian times by German rationalism, biblical criticism, geological and palaeontological theory, and by utilitarian logic; *The Origin of Species* further reinforced the view of the universe as "a vast mechanism of cause and effect, acting