

Die Dämonen. After a protracted break in its composition, Doderer resumed work on *Die Dämonen* at the end of April 1951 by re-reading the chapters composed in the 1930s and did not write any new material until September of the same year. He claimed that working on *Die Posaunen* cleared the way for his resumption of work on the major novel. Thus, when Bachem says of *Die Posaunen*: "In the polycentric or mosaic technique and in the choice of title, Doderer looks back to *Die Strudlhofstiege* and *Die Dämonen* but also anticipates his uncompleted tetralogy *Roman No VII* [sic]" (my emphasis, p. 114), he not only makes a mistake in chronology, he also makes a wrong assessment of *Die Dämonen*. Those chapters written in the 1930's followed a linear pattern and were part of Geyrenhoff's "Chronik." Only in the 1950s did the omniscient author become the narrative voice, offering a multi-perspective view of the events of the novel.

There are certain areas of Bachem's study where I would query his interpretation. He insists (pp. 29-30) quite emphatically on the fact that the events of *Die Bresche* (1924) took place in Vienna, but the unnamed city is probably Brussels. Second, his examination of *Ein Mord den jeder begeht* (1938) suggests that Conrad Castiletz was aware from the outset that he was responsible for the death of his sister-in-law, Louison Veik. But the novel hinges on the fact that Castiletz's search for the unknown murderer reveals that he himself, however unwittingly, is the guilty person. Third, Bachem considers that the "Ouverture" to *Die Dämonen* was "written from the fictional viewpoint of 1955" (p. 95), but it was in fact composed in 1935 and remained unchanged in the final version of the 1950's.

Besides the fact that the "Bibliography" should have been updated (the latest entry is dated 1976), there is also a distressingly large number of typographical and syntactical errors in the work. It is unfortunate that careless editing and proofreading spoil what is otherwise an informative study and a valuable introduction to the author and his work.

E. C. Hesson

ROBERT E. HEGEL
*The Novel in Seventeenth Century
 China*
 Columbia University Press, 1981.
 Pp. 336. \$20.00.

The author's first book and, happily, a very good one, *The Novel in Seventeenth Century China* is a groundbreaking critical analysis of the best seventeenth century novels intended for an elite or highly literate audience. They are Chin Sheng-t'an's edition of *Water Margin* (*Shui-hu chuan*), the anonymous *Merry Adventures of Emperor Yang* (*Sui Yang-ti yen-shih*), Yüan Yü-ling's *Forgotten Tales of the Sui* (*Sui shih i-wen*), Tung Yüeh's *Tower of Myriad Mirrors* (*Hsi-yu-pu* or "Supplement to *Journey to the West*"), Li Yü's *The Prayer Mat of Flesh* (*Jou-p'u t'uan*) and Ch'u Jen-huo's *Romance of the Sui and the T'ang* (*Sui T'ang yen-i*). All have been the subjects of Hegel's earlier writings, except for *Water Margin* and *The Prayer Mat of Flesh*. Thus to a degree the book is a synthesis and refinement of previous findings updated in view of recent publications, especially by Frederic P. Brandauer, John C. Y. Wang, Nathan K. Mao, and Liu Ts'un-yan. Hegel employs a variety of critical approaches, such as psychological, textual, sociological, and comparative, yet achieves unity through chapter organization and his primary focus on themes, characterization, and historical context. The result is a clear demonstration of why these works can be regarded as the outstanding novels when the Chinese novel was developing into maturity as an indigenous fictional form. Few could question his choice of works as representative of the relatively sophisticated subgenre. Although Hegel often mentions popular novels and romances intended for less educated audiences, he does not treat them in detail.

The opening chapters provide background information on late Ming-early Ch'ing socioeconomic conditions, printing and publishing, literacy, politics, intellectual history, the social role of novelists and the various ways that they approached their art. The middle chapters discuss individual works, usually two to a chapter, under reflective titles, such as "Political Realities, Fictional Garb," "Man as Responsible Being," and "Self as Mind or as Body." The final chapter on the novels' legacy concludes that the authors were reformists hoping to improve their society through fiction. Hegel offers some parallels to the rise of the novel in England at roughly the same time and

shows how these novels influenced later Chinese fiction. Appendices on source materials for certain novels with complex textual histories, as well as a valuable bibliography, extensive notes, glossary and index, round out the book.

Hegel writes with vigor and clarity, rarely hedging or equivocating. An example of his style is his verdict concerning Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty, the antihero of *Merry Adventures of Emperor Yang*: "Yang stands convicted of the willful, selfish disregard of role and responsibility, of arrogance in the face of Heaven, of cruelty to his subjects, and of futile self-delusion." Although this partly echoes the judgment of Confucian historians and the reaction of most Chinese to the emperor's excesses, one hardly can criticize Hegel for beating around the bush.

Probably the principal attraction of this book (which with a handsome dust jacket showing a fine woodcut illustrating one of the novels, plus half a dozen other woodcuts, is aesthetically very pleasing) lies in the clarity of the author's style. Hegel has the ability to inform both the general and specialist reader while retaining their interest. He does not seem to grope for interpretations; instead they appear to have been formed with care. As a result, one often encounters fresh insights, particularly either as offshoots of others' ideas or as refutations of them. Although not necessarily the first to suggest that Li Jü's *The Prayer Mat of Flesh* is a satire of "genius-beauty" popular romances, Hegel's expert treatment settles the issue. Li's purpose is not only to expose harmful sexual behavior and the decadence that contributed to the demise of the Ming dynasty, but also to make fun of didactic popular romances crowding the marketplace in the 1660's. This is further evidence for dating the earliest extant edition of what some have called China's most pornographic novel to 1693 instead of 1633. The section on *The Prayer Mat of Flesh*, the volume's highlight, is the best critical discussion of this key work available in English.

This book makes a real contribution to our knowledge of Chinese fiction as the novel neared maturity. The author has sifted through a great amount of primary and secondary source material to produce the most readable and important book on premodern Chinese fiction since C. T. Hsia's *The Classic Chinese Novel* (1968). *The Novel in Seventeenth Century China* establishes Hegel as the leading scholar-critic of his generation.

Richard Hessney

JACQUES DARRAS

Joseph Conrad and the West: Signs of Empire

Translated from the French by Anne Luyat and Jacques Darras. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1982. Pp. 158. ISBN 0-389-20071-9

This is a study of the "intimate duplicity," the "fission" running through Conrad's "stories" (p. 1), from "Youth" and "Heart of Darkness," through *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo*, to *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*. Conrad is said to articulate "a fork—diabolic tongues running after their problematic unity" (p. 7), in linguistic monuments which are obliterated as they are erected. Subsequent to an examination of "Heart of Darkness"—this takes up approximately half of his book—Professor Darras comes to argue that, from *Lord Jim* to *Under Western Eyes*, Conrad "tries to show us that the Western viewpoint is haunted by a negative and deathlike presence which his irony has the role of revealing in all its excessive manifestations." What Conrad makes us see is "the lack of harmony between a force and its vectors" (p. 144) in literature as in politics.

"The good critic is he who relates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces," Conrad approvingly cites Anatole France in *A Personal Record* (Dent collected Edition, pp. 95-96). He goes on in the same essay to add that "as long as distinguished minds are ready to treat it in the spirit of high adventure, literary criticism shall appeal to us with all the charm and wisdom of a well-told tale of personal experience" (p. 96). Professor Darras's study shows such a distinguished mind at work. Erudite, allusive, and imaginative, *Joseph Conrad and the West* delights as it informs. Like Conrad's own works, this study has a "poetry" of its own.

The most salient feature of Professor Darras's book is its sincere linguistic playfulness. Again and again, he calls our attention to words, their etymology, their associations, their sound, their multiple meanings. These are but a few examples: "*Seignelay*, *saigne-les*" (p. 5); "weary/wary" (p. 20); "methodical (or Methodist, perhaps?)" (p. 26); "Fault, why not fatality?" (p. 33); "exotic, exautic" (p. 33); "vanished/varnished" (p. 58); "to visit/visitation" (p. 59); "Knights/nights" (p. 61); "icono-