

The reader leaves *Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel* wanting more of this kind of thing and less of the literary sources. The exhaustive analysis of *Grandison* and *Cecilia* could surely have been sacrificed for a fuller development of the final provocative but frustratingly short chapter on *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*. Fergus's contention that, having firmly established Austen's direction by tracing her development through *Pride and Prejudice*, she need provide only a brief analysis of the three novels that follow is not borne out by the experience of reading the chapter. Where it is convincing, as in its treatment of the theme of judgement in *Mansfield Park*, the reader is left wanting more detail; where it appears to be skating on thin ice—as in its suggestion that Jane Austen excuses Mrs. Elton from moral judgement—the reader feels the need for more evidence.

Jan Fergus has a lot to say about Jane Austen, too much in fact for this short book. Her decision to emphasize Austen's literary roots and the development of her art rather than her mature achievement was not, in my view, the best way of accommodating her material to the length available to her. The book that results from this decision includes too much that is trivial or only tangentially illuminating, and too little of the close reading which produces almost all of its original material. Readers of Jane Austen should certainly not ignore *Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel*, but they may want to do some judicious skimming.

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Reclams Science Fiction Führer
Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun.,
1982. Pp. 504.

Science fiction is enjoying considerable popularity in the Federal Republic of Germany where nearly 500 new science fiction titles are published annually. *Reclams Science Fiction Führer* takes cognizance of that fact by providing an overall perspective on science fiction, by tracing its roots, determining its trends and offering an evaluative commentary. Such an encyclopedia should

be particularly useful to a reading public that relies for much of its material on translations from Anglo-American sources.

The format is straightforward and functional: authors are listed in alphabetical order and short bio-bibliographical notes are provided for most. Prominent writers receive closer attention: An initial overview of their oeuvres is followed by summaries of their most significant works, generally revealing insight and perspicaciousness. The appendix lists important science fiction magazines and provides a glossary of technical expressions, mostly English coinages, a short bibliography, and an index of authors and pseudonyms.

The *Science Fiction Führer* lists some 811 authors from 27 countries. Over 50% are U.S. writers, 16% are British, close to 9% are from the Federal Republic of Germany, 4% from the German Democratic Republic, and 2% from pre-1945 Germany. The rest of the world is represented by small percentages: the U.S.S.R. with 4.3%, France with 3.4%, Italy and Austria with 1.5% each, and numerous countries with a single entry. There are no representatives from Africa, one from Asia (Japan), two from South America and four from Australia. Not only do these percentages reflect the Anglo-American preponderance in the field of science fiction, they also point to science fiction as primarily a Western phenomenon that may be closely linked to the rise of Western technology. That German writers constitute the third largest group (nearly 15% if one includes East-, West- and pre-1945 Germany) does not indicate their relative importance in the scheme of science fiction; it is rather to be attributed to the fact that the authors of *Reclams Science Fiction Führer* have a special interest in and concern for science fiction developments in the Germanies.

All significant writers are represented. That includes such classical science fiction authors as Edward Bellamy, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Karel Čapek, Jack London, J. H. Rosny, Jules Verne, and H. G. Wells. It further encompasses the group of writers, now well established, who first reached prominence between the 1920's and 1950's, such as Isaac Asimov, Raymond Bradbury, John W. Campbell Jr., Arthur C. Clarke, Robert Heinlein, Eric Frank Russell, Clifford Simak, Olaf Stapledon, and John Wyndham. And it comprises the host of authors who have made significant contributions to the genre since the 1960's, including Brian Aldiss, J. G. Ballard, Gregory Benford, James Blish, Benjamin Bova, John Brun-

ner, Samuel Delaney, Philip K. Dick, Daniel F. Galouye, Ursula Le Guin, Michael Moorcock, Frederik Pohl, Cordwainer Smith, Theodor Sturgeon, Jack Vance, Gene Wolfe, and Roger Zelazny.

While the authors of *Reclams Science Fiction Führer* report equitably on past and present works of science fiction, their special interest and sympathy concerns the new wave writers who have done much to expand the scope of science fiction in the last decades. To be sure, there are many themes shared by old and new science fiction: the exploration of new worlds, threats from extraterrestrial life forms, space travel with its concomitant dangers, time shifts and time travel, the legendary old scientist as savior, interest in and elaboration of space gadgetry (i.e., hard-core science fiction), etc. More important similarities are shared when science fiction is utilized as a critique of contemporary society and a warning concerning the future impact of present developments as exemplified by Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Although such similarities reveal the common tradition and concerns of science fiction, they also serve to highlight the change of emphasis in modern science fiction. Among contemporary writers there is frequent emphasis on ecological concerns (Alan Dean Foster); the death of utopian hopes is repeatedly stressed (Thomas M. Disch); multiple perspectives and realities are explored (Philip K. Dick, Brian Aldiss); alternate life-styles are depicted in future histories (Gordon R. Dickson); feminist concerns are given prominence (Ursula Le Guin, Vonda N. McIntyre, Joanna Russ, Alice Sheldon); the issues of pollution, misuse of data, modern colonialism, genetic control, and the mismanagement of resources are raised (John Brunner); the satirical tradition is perpetuated (Frederic Brown, Thomas M. Disch, John Sladek); common science fiction practices are satirized (Nelson Bond, Barry Malzberg, John Sladek); an antiwar stance is taken (David Garnett); space mythologies are created (Ursula Le Guin, Jack Vance); one can even speak of social science fiction (C. M. Kornbluth) and of anthropological science fiction (William Golding); the problems of overpopulation and thought control are investigated (Frederik Pohl); symbolic and archetypal significance is adduced (Algis Budrys). In addition, there are numerous attempts to depict the world after a nuclear disaster in catastrophic novels; a corollary to that theme has been the exploration of mutants and

mutation (John Wyndham). The sword and sorcery tradition in space has come into existence (Fritz Leiber) and the element of fantasy has gained considerable importance. In short, science fiction today is capable of exploring all facets of human concern since it is not bound to outer space and interstellar technology, but may well concern itself with exploring spaces of the mind and the psyche, or with any of the multifarious dilemmas facing mankind, not unlike other forms of prose fiction.

The accounts provided of three early and significant practitioners of science fiction in Germany might be of special interest to the German reading public. They are Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915), Kurd Lasswitz (1848-1910), and Robert Kraft (1869-1916). Scheerbart, who founded an unsuccessful publishing house for fantastic literature in 1892, is described as a writer of fantastic tales with a philosophical bent as illustrated by his novel *Lesabéndio* (1913). Lasswitz approached the problems of a rapidly advancing technology in terms of a Kantian perspective. The work that best embodies his ideas is *Auf zwei Planeten* (1897; *On Two Planets*). The adventurer Robert Kraft, author of numerous tales of adventure, published an interesting post-doomsday novel in 1910, entitled *Die neue Erde* (*The New Earth*).

Among contemporary German writers of science fiction Carl Amery and Michael Ende are mentioned prominently. Among the French, similar note is taken of Gerard Klein and Robert Merle. Stanislaw Lem, Poland's most prominent science fiction writer, is deservedly treated at some length as are the Soviet writers Arkadij and Boris Strugackij and the Czech Josef Nesvadba. One may wonder, however, whether science fiction writers from communist countries are given the kind of attention they deserve. While a "school of science fiction" in the GDR is referred to on several occasions, no elucidation on that matter is provided and the East-German writers mentioned in this connection are dealt with in cursory fashion. The prominent Soviet writer Aleksandr Beljaev (1884-1942) is treated with equal negligence. Although recognized as the "father of the Soviet scientific literature of fantasy" and described as the equal of H. G. Wells, none of his works is individually discussed.

There are some additional misgivings. Since science fiction is never defined and since the meaning of "fantasy" is not explained either, a degree of confusion seems inevitable. For example, of Marcel Aymé it

is said, "He belongs to fantasy rather than to science fiction" (p. 25), while fantasy is treated in most instances as a subgenre of science fiction. Such fuzziness leads to the anomalous inclusion of Lewis Carroll, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and Franz Kafka in the sphere of science fiction. However, the most notable criticism concerns an omission with serious practical consequences—this reference work is without a title index! Nevertheless, *Reclams Science Fiction Führer* succeeds admirably in providing an intelligent and informed introduction to and survey of science fiction past and present.

Manfred W. Heiderich

DAVID LEACH, ED.
Generative Literature and Generative Art: New Essays
Fredericton: York Press, 1983.
Pp. 47. \$8.95.

A collection of essays that self-reflexively mirrors in its origins the generative process that each article explores, *Generative Literature and Generative Art*, edited by David Leach, grew out of a colloquium on the topic at Wright State University in 1979. The impetus for the colloquium was a studio art class in which Leach introduced generative theory and techniques, using as his point of departure Bruce Morrissette's "Post-Modern Generative Fiction: Novel and Film," published in 1975 (*Critical Inquiry*, 2, No. 2, 253-62). Following a preface and introductory essay by Leach on parallel methods of generation in literature and the visual arts, the book contains articles by Diane Kirkpatrick on generation in the visual arts; by Bruce Morrissette on the theory and practice of generative techniques and their implications; and by Karlis Racevskis on contemporary interpretations of the creative process. The final section is a "dialogue" by Alain Robbe-Grillet, translated by Racevskis, on the concerns about which Robbe-Grillet was writing and speaking at the time: the relationship between images and texts and the generative capabilities of both (for the artist, the writer, and the perceiver), the recuperation of contemporary stereotypes (often visually portrayed, in signs and pos-

ters) and the liberation that results from their ludic treatment in the text—with implications for the creative artist's role in society as well as for the generation of art works.

In Morrissette's 1975 article which underlies many of the essays in this book, he distinguishes between "situational generators" and "linguistic generators." The concepts behind the terms, as Morrissette points out, are closely related to those in the theory and practice of the French critic and novelist Jean Ricardou. Particularly in his *Pour une théorie du nouveau roman* (Seuil, 1971, pp. 92-93; see also pp. 119-23, 221-24), Ricardou outlines two methods by which a word can generate another word. Using the French terms, the *signifiant* is the aspect of the word as sign, the signifier; the *signifié* is the semantic referent, the thing to which the word refers, the signified. In the process of translation, for example, Ricardou points out, it is a given word's *signifié* which generates a *signifiant* in the new language. In the complementary process, first outlined by Raymond Roussel and used today by Ricardou and others, a given word's *signifiant* generates a new *signifiant* to which it is related by sound (rhyme, homonymy) or by appearance (a re-arrangement of the same letters); the tangible result is the *signifié* of the newly produced *signifiant*. Ricardou's first procedure, hinging as it does upon the given word's *signifié*, is referential, as is Morrissette's "situational generator." The second procedure, in which the given word's *signifié* plays no role in the production of the new word, is non-referential; Morrissette's "linguistic generator" is its equivalent.

In applying Morrissette's categories to contemporary visual arts, Diane Kirkpatrick transforms "linguistic" and "situational" to two methods of generation she discerns in her field: closed analytic structures and open "organic systems." For the former category (related to non-referential or "linguistic" generation)—the "closed analytic structure which becomes a generator as each of its possible internal relationships is explored and made visible" (p. 17)—she offers Josef Albers's nested squares exploring the ways juxtaposed colors affect one another as probably the best-known example, and also analyzes more recent work by Frank Stella, Sol LeWitt, Dorothea Rockburne, Jennifer Bartlett, and Doug Huebler. For her second or "open" category (comparable to referential or "situational" generation), she describes a system that "creates one work or idea and uses that to generate the next" (p. 17), or later "gen-