

The achievement of the twenty-two contributors to this volume is considerable, the quality of performance generally high. Most of their essays are superb, and many will become sources where other scholars will find responsible judgments and significant interpretive material. The bibliographical resources will surely be useful to researchers, particularly the section devoted to individual stories. Professor Bryer and his colleagues have made a worthwhile contribution to Fitzgerald studies.

John S. Brushwood

*GENTEEL BARBARISM: EXPERIMENTS IN ANALYSIS OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH-AMERICAN NOVELS*

Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1981. Pp. xi + 241

Reviewed by: John M. Kirk

John Brushwood's new study continues the trajectory of his other landmark works, *Mexico and Its Novel* (1966) and *The Spanish-American Novel* (1975), both standard reference books in all libraries. The latest work takes on a double challenge, being both a survey of representative works from the nineteenth century, and too constituting a series of varied experiments in literary analysis. In both ventures (albeit with a few literary omissions) Brushwood is successful. The actual work is a series of independent essays written on eight major (and some minor) novels, preceded by an excellent introductory overview of literary movements in the nineteenth century, with a detailed concluding essay that assesses his approach to the work in question. A thorough, well-researched bibliography completes the study, making it an invaluable tool for all interested in this generally neglected backwater of Spanish-American literature.

Brushwood's perceptive comments, chatty insights, and unobtrusive suggestions all contribute to the success of this study. A mine of information on even the most esoteric aspects of this period, Professor Brushwood provides a superb analysis of these novels.

Two fundamental criticisms that could perhaps be leveled at the study are Brushwood's fascination with his variety of analytical methods, and his selection of material to be studied. To take an example of the former criticism, while his chapter on *Marta*, complete with his skillful usage of Barthesian codes, yields a superb interpretation of the Colombian work, his earlier chapter on *Martin Rivas* seems overly dependent on implementing Floyd Merrell's analytical techniques, and as a result appears to have been examined in a mechanical, somewhat distorted fashion. Concerning the choice of material studied by Brushwood, he explains in his Preface that they were chosen largely because they lent themselves most easily to the analytical procedures themselves. Unfortunately, this results in short shrift being given Lizardi's *El periquillo sarniento* or Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdés*, while more obscure works receive a more profound treatment.

Having noted that, one must add that the (many) advantages of this work clearly outweigh the disadvantages. Brushwood's virtuoso performance—consisting of a variety of techniques of literary analysis—and his profound knowledge of Spanish-American letters, combine to make this a major stepping-stone in nineteenth-century research. While perhaps lacking in the breadth of his earlier works—and in particular his landmark 1975 survey—this study is destined to join the other companion volumes on library shelves, for Latin-American literary specialists ignore it at their peril.