

referring to Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, and other fashionable theorists. She explains that she has become concerned with "the affective pressure" of George Eliot's "form, language, and imagination"; she emphasizes her "growing recognition" of George Eliot's "powers of feeling and of thinking" (p. 10). Perhaps the ten essays do show a widening of interests, but readers should be thankful that through the years Hardy's criticism has remained consistently clear, sensitive, and sensible—and, therefore, a pleasure to read.

Some distinctions are inevitable. I cannot express much enthusiasm for Hardy's analyses of particular chapters of *Middlemarch*: the third essay in *Particularities* deals with Ch. 30 of the novel ("It is with local form as well as with small detail that I am here concerned," p. 39) and should remind readers of overly specific New Criticism in which the critic tries to do the work which belongs to the fairly perceptive reader. Ch. 9 of *Particularities* is a commentary on Ch. 85 of *Middlemarch*—a commentary which originally appeared in *NCF* along with analyses of the same chapter by J. Hillis Miller and Richard Poirier. Divorced from its original context, Hardy's reprinted essay loses some of its point. Although "Rituals and Feeling," "*Middlemarch* and the Passions" ("the two essays most evidently concerned with affectivity," p. 10), "The Reticent Narrator," and "Objects and Environments" probably all made very good lectures, I believe that four other chapters qualify more readily for a place among Hardy's best printed work. In Ch. 1 she deals very skillfully with a major problem in *Middlemarch*, "the unhappy consequences" of George Eliot's "restricted treatment of sex" (p. 27) in the Ladislaw-Dorothea rather than Casaubon-Dorothea relationship; and in Ch. 3 she deals equally well with another central problem, the much-discussed ending of *The Mill on the Floss*. "*Middlemarch*: Public and Private Worlds" is a clear and persuasive treatment of George Eliot's sense of history, "the Carlylean continuity in which yesterday continues history into today" (p. 108); and the final essay, originally delivered at the George Eliot (Centennial) Conference at Rutgers, 1980, is a fine treatment of "George Eliot's imagining of imagination" (p. 192). This final essay proves that after approximately twenty-five years Professor Hardy is still a careful and wise reader of George Eliot and is still capable of making familiar texts seem in need of immediate rereading.

Robert Brody and Charles Rossman, eds.

CARLOS FUENTES: A CRITICAL VIEW

Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1982. Pp. 221. \$19.95

Reviewed by: John M. Kirk

For the last fifteen years, since the publication in 1958 of his novel *La región más transparente* (translated in English as *Where the Air is Clear*), Carlos Fuentes has dominated the Mexican literary scene, and has been one of the major half-dozen writers of Latin America who have guided the *nueva novela* to its present position as one of the world's most dynamic literary currents. Fuentes has certainly published more than enough material to warrant a series of critical essays such as this selection by renowned Fuentes specialists: ten novels (among which *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*—*The Death of Artemio Cruz*, *Cambio de Piel*—*A Change of Skin*, and *Terra Nostra* stand out), three collections of short stories, two theatre pieces, four anthologies of essays, and an extremely intuitive study of the contemporary Spanish-American novel.

This critical anthology is a useful collection of articles by leading Latin Americanists, who seek to examine various facets of Fuentes's work. The strong and weak points of the editors' selection revolve around the nature of topics on which the contributors focus. On a positive note there are superb insightful analyses by Richard M. Reeve ("The making of *La región más transparente*: 1949-1974") and Lanin A. Gyurko ("*La muerte de Artemio Cruz* and *Citizen Kane*: A Comparative Analysis"), while at the other end of the scale are rather bizarre and pedantic pieces by Margaret Sayers Pedan ("Forking Paths, Infinite Novels, Ultimate Narrators") and George Gordon Wing ("Some Remarks on the Literary Criticism of Carlos Fuentes"). On the whole, though, the level of analysis of the contributors is quite high—largely because they examine aspects of Fuentes's work which are not normally studied (such as Manuel Durán's evaluation of Fuentes as an art critic, or Merlin Forster's perceptive study of Fuentes's two dramas, or Gloria Durán's article dealing with the use of dolls and puppets in his work).

It is quite obvious that the high quality of contemporary Latin-American literature has justifiably earned an excellent reputation in North America for the likes of Gabriel García Márquez, Alejo Carpentier, Mario Vargas Llosa, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, and perhaps another dozen or so writers. Unfortunately for English-speaking readers, this explosion of literary talent (known in Spanish as "el 'boom' de la nueva novela") has arrived—by means of translations—a decade after the actual "boom" reached its peak in Latin America. There are, however, advantages for the North-American audience in this situation, not the least of which is the ability to concentrate critical attention on a handful of these writers, savoring the exceptional quality of their writing. Moreover, whichever way one shuffles the eighteen or so writers whose work warrants further examination, it is clear that Carlos Fuentes figures prominently in any honest selection. Given this reality, the Brody-Rossman critical anthology—when combined with the (superior) collection of essays edited by Helmy Giacomani (*Homenaje a Carlos Fuentes* [New York: Las Américas, 1971]), is a useful tool to evaluate the work of Carlos Fuentes, and deserves wide academic distribution.

Penny Boumelha

THOMAS HARDY AND WOMEN: SEXUAL IDEOLOGY AND NARRATIVE FORM

Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982. Pp. 178. \$24.95

Reviewed by: Peter J. Casagrande

Penny Boumelha's book alters our view of Hardy's women, that remarkable group that, as Boumelha notes, has intrigued Hardy's readers from the first. In a chapter on "sexual ideology" in England between 1850 and 1900, Boumelha describes the sexual views and practices of the English middle class. In another on women writers and the new fiction of 1880-1890, she describes the coming-out of women novelists at the end of the century. She writes a separate chapter on Hardy's fiction between 1871 and 1886, as well as chapters on *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders*, *Tess*, and *Jude*.

Identifying in Hardy's fiction an "androgynous voice" (p. 32) that permitted Hardy to make "aphoristic and dismissive generalizations about women" and at the same time "to attempt to make the central female characters the subjects of their own experiences, rather than the instruments of the man's" (p. 32), Boumelha offers a balanced and probing account of Hardy's at once sympathetic and skeptical treatment of his heroines. In fact, Boumelha does not always achieve this balance, as, for example, in her discussion of *The Return* as a "collision" (p. 61) of three literary modes attached to the major females in the novel (romantic tragedy: Eustacia Vye; pastoral: Thomasin Yeobright; realism: Mrs. Yeobright). Her concern with colliding modalities nearly overwhelms her strong interest in Eustacia's struggle to express her passionate nature in a repressive, male-dominated society. It is to reduce to near insignificance Hardy's daring depiction of Eustacia's hunger for love to urge simply that Bathsheba "displaces her active feelings in a way . . . distinctively female in a male-dominated society" (p. 55). On the other hand, to approach Eustacia as a woman who "finds her potential for effective activity cripplingly limited" (p. 56), is itself interesting, both as an example of the working of the sexual ideology of the age, and as a human phenomenon.

Boumelha's effort to describe Hardy's modal experiments and his uncertainty with his heroines is more successful in her discussion of *The Woodlanders*, probably the most neglected of Hardy's major novels. In Boumelha's view, *The Woodlanders* is, like the earlier novels, a troubled mixture of mainly pastoral but also tragic, realistic, and melodramatic effects (p. 100). Given this melange, a reader can only with difficulty keep in sharp focus Grace's character within the rustic versus urban polarity that dominates, especially since this polarity climaxes with Giles Winterborne's death. This death of an exemplary male diminishes, according to Boumelha, "the residual tragic potential of Grace's situation" (p. 105). Hardy, of course, acknowledged a difficulty with the making of Grace; it is instructive to consider that this difficulty may have arisen from Hardy's inability to construct, out of varied and contending generic elements, a "coherent [female] personality or psyche capable of ordering these elements" (p. 114).