

*Smiles on Washington Square* thrives on circularity: the telling proceeds in a series of concentric circles. Jerome Klinkowitz accurately characterizes what goes on here as "antinarrative." While Federman seems to have tired somewhat of his earlier experiments with disrupting the appearance of his text, he still emerges from his latest novel as an experimentalist par excellence. For example, the tentative nature of reality with a "story that cancels itself as it goes" (words from *Take It or Leave It*) seems to survive intact from the early fiction. Federman makes interesting use of the present tense through much of his narrative, capturing the illusion of what Gertrude Stein once called "a continuous present."

Despite the claims on the dust jacket, I personally find less of Beckett in *Smiles on Washington Square* than in the rest of Federman's work. It is difficult to ignore a term like "seedy optimist" (p. 11) which clearly recalls Beckett's "seedy solipsist" from *Murphy*, but there are fewer of these echoes here than in *Take It or Leave It* or *The Twofold Vibration*. The writer who comes to mind for me is Marguerite Duras.

Bruce Morrissette

*NOVEL AND FILM: ESSAYS IN TWO GENRES*

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985. Pp. 181

Reviewed by Paul J. Schwartz

*Novel and Film* brings together twelve essays published by Bruce Morrissette between 1962 and 1975. As James Lawler explains in the volume's "Foreword," the publication of *Novel and Film* commemorates Morrissette's retirement from his Chair at the University of Chicago and pays tribute to an eminent scholar who during the last thirty years has brought intelligence, clarity, and originality to the analysis of contemporary fiction. Morrissette's name is frequently associated with Alain Robbe-Grillet (who incidentally pays tribute to Morrissette in his 1984 autobiography), and it is therefore not surprising that Robbe-Grillet to a great extent dominates this latest volume; his novels, films, and essays are cited in almost every chapter.

It is a difficult task to weld together disparate articles. Lawler, in his "Foreword," warns us not to expect them to "elaborate a single argument." Morrissette has edited them to produce unity, and has made an effort to bring some of the older articles up-to-date and to eliminate or apologize for ("as I have mentioned earlier") repetitions. However, there remain some awkward restatements of the same arguments (for example, the comparison of the transition following the hotel room scene in *La Jalousie* to a cinematic *fondue* occurs repetitiously on pages 19 and 32), and a few failures to cite obvious recent examples of techniques discussed (the essay on "Games and Structures in Robbe-Grillet" makes no allusion to OULIPO, which is nonetheless mentioned in Chapter One; and Perec's *Un Homme qui dort*, also mentioned in Chapter One, is not cited among the examples of "You" narrations in Chapter Nine).

Perhaps the most interesting essays are the second, "Aesthetic Response to Novel and Film," in which Morrissette studies historically the interactions of the two genres from the points of view of film makers and writers on one hand and critics on the other, and the sixth, "Topology and the *Nouveau Roman*," in which Morrissette discusses "topological" features such as holes, ellipses, and Kleinian unfolding as models for narrative technique. Also of great interest are Chapters Ten, "Interior Duplication," which contains a thorough history of the technique commonly referred to as *mise en abyme*, as well as an analysis of its uses in contemporary French fiction; and Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine, which form a unified subset of essays; an insightful discussion of "Modes of Points of View" introduces more specialized analyses of two particular forms of narration, the "Alienated 'I'" and "Narrative 'You'."

These and the other essays provide clear and original commentary on the techniques of novel and film and continue an important lineage of critical inquiry into the nature of creativity.