

you will be grateful to Elizabeth Fallaize for writing it. She does an excellent job. The approach is straightforward and unfussy: after an introduction explaining how Beauvoir's views on women's issues developed over the years, there are individual chapters on the five novels and one on the short story cycles *When Things of the Spirit Come First* and *The Woman Destroyed*. A concluding chapter, "Points of Departure," argues that the story of Beauvoir's fictional writing is the story of an ever-increasing reduction of plurality of voice, and a loss of the authority conceded to the female voice: ". . . the evidence that she shared the perception of fiction as a male domain and that she had little sense of connection to a female tradition of writing is unmistakable . . . Beauvoir sought to place her writing in a masculine intellectual tradition" (179). Nevertheless, "almost despite herself," Fallaize concludes, "the treacherous woman's word creeps to the fore, and makes [Beauvoir's] writing part of the tradition of [what Doris Lessing terms] 'a literature or our own'" (184).

The book makes a good case for taking Beauvoir seriously as a novelist, but the question remains: is Beauvoir really a novelist at all? She is of immense importance in the history of women's liberation, not only for her book *The Second Sex*, but also for her courageous public stance on abortion when most terminations were illegal and severely punished in France. And she is of almost equal significance as a recorder of the social, cultural, and intellectual history of her country in the middle decades of the twentieth century, for her *Memoirs* will rank among the most valuable in French literature, on a par with Saint-Simon's.

But as a novelist she barely makes the third division, any more than Sartre or Drieu la Rochelle do. In this century, Camus, Gide, Malraux, Mauriac, and Simon are all a lot better than they, and are comfortably in the second division. But the first division is small indeed, with probably only Proust and Céline securely in it. She is in fact a victim of that peculiarly French intellectual's delusion, that any writer is capable of becoming a novelist. Other countries know better: a novelist is a writer, but not every writer is a novelist.

Naomi Lindstrom.

JEWISH ISSUES IN ARGENTINE LITERATURE: FROM GERCHUNOFF TO SZICHMAN

Columbia, MO.: The University of Missouri Press, 1989. Pp. 205. \$24.00

Reviewed by Robert DiAntonio

Through the long history of the Diaspora, Argentina stands as both a safe haven and a land of contradictions for its 300,000 member Jewish community. While, in general terms, Jewish life has flourished, there also have occurred violent anti-Semitic riots and subtler pressures brought to bear against Jews during eras of national tensions. From 1976-1983 many Jews were singled out by a dictatorial military regime whose atrocities against civil rights and personal freedoms are now widely documented.

From a literary perspective, but always considering the ever-changing sociopolitical undercurrents of the past century, Naomi Lindstrom analyzes eight representative works by important Jewish Argentine authors: "The eight texts

have been chosen to represent the diversity of the literary treatments accorded Jewish Argentine issues over a period of swift and profound historical change" (1).

The book begins with a long and insightful introductory chapter that "surveys major tendencies in Jewish Argentine literature together with the events of Argentine social history that most affected Jewish writers, their work, and its reception" (1). The following chapters, in an in-depth and scholarly fashion, treat "one of the least explored but intellectually challenging aspects" (dust cover) of contemporary Latin-American literary scholarship; the Jewish contribution to Argentine literary life. The eight works analyzed are: *The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampa*, a classic of Argentine fiction that long shaped the perception of Jewish life and attitudes; the Sabbath poems of Cesar Tiempo (Israel Zeitlin); *It's Hard to Start Living*, an award winning book by Bernardo Verbitsky; *Making a stand* by David Viñas, one of Latin American's best known works of fiction; poetry by José Rubinovich and José Isaacson; two contemporary and innovative novels by Ricardo Barnatan and Mario Szichman; and a final postface that summarizes the literary tendencies related to Judaic fiction since the military takeover of 1976.

Lindstrom emphasizes how the Argentine myth of state has always placed great values on the assimilationist aspect of its culture. While on the one hand, the country welcomed large number of Jewish immigrants between 1889 and 1910—mainly hoping to populate and stabilize the rural areas—there also existed the perception that these "rusos," Russians, a generic term for all Jews, need only "take care not to disrupt preexisting national life with their alien ways" (5). Much of Argentine Jewish literature deals with the attempt of individual writers to come to terms with their own and their country's unique cultural identity.

One of the book's most interesting aspects concerns the presentation of the controversy that continues to swirl around *The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampa* by Alberto Gerchunoff, a classic work that forms part of the national myth of state. In 1911, Gerchunoff's rhapsodic book about life on the Jewish agricultural communes was written to celebrate the country's centennial celebration. For years the work stood as a lyrical tribute to hard-working, grateful immigrants: "The elegant prose portrays life on the pampas as the realization of a rapturous dream and as the way Jews could best become part of the Argentine nation's existence and the creators of Zion. The novel accords a complex poetic treatment to social realities not inherently amenable to such rhapsodizing" (4).

Throughout the book Lindstrom deals with the affect of this work and the reaction to it by younger Jewish writers and social critics: "A major complaint about Gerchunoff's work is that it inaccurately shows Eastern European Jewish immigrants receiving an unreserved welcome and adapting easily to Argentine life. Gerchunoff omits historical realities that would add a negative note. He understates the conflicts between Jewish settlers and the long-standing population. At the same time, he exaggerates the human ability to discard, without ill effects, behaviors that help sustain personal and group identity. His characters cheerfully abandon Jewish observances and folkways" (51). Other issues that are dealt with in an equally authoritative manner are the urban Jewish ex-

perience, cultural contradictions, the new novel as access to Cabala, and a questioning vision of Judeo-Argentine history.

Jewish Issues in Argentine Literature adroitly summarizes and comments upon challenging issues related to both literary and social concerns as well as presenting a close reading of fictional works that deserve a wider readership. The book expands the focus and our knowledge of Latin-American literary criticism to encompass the important role of Jewish Argentine writers. Writing from a somewhat marginal perspective, many of the authors studied are shown to be able to perceive sociopolitical truths that are often lost to those who occupy the mainstream. The book will also be of interest to the general reader who wishes to learn more about a Diaspora community whose uniqueness is underscored throughout Lindstrom's text.

John Hildebidle

FIVE IRISH WRITERS: THE ERRAND OF KEEPING ALIVE

Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1989. Pp. 245. \$29.50

Richard J. Thompson

EVERLASTING VOICES ASPECTS OF THE MODERN IRISH SHORT STORY

Troy, NY.: Whitston, 1989. Pp. 105. \$15.00

Reviewed by Frank L. Ryan

Almost fifty years ago Sean O'Faolain lamented the absence of a tradition in Irish fiction that adequately expressed Irish nationalism and other matters. However, after O'Faolain's statement the five writers under consideration certainly created enough fiction to provide the material for a tradition and it remained for scholarship to determine whether or not a tradition had emerged. Professor Hildebidle's study is part of that scholarship. It contends that as a group these five writers "represent the most important voices in a distinct generation of Irish fiction writers, those who began their active careers in the decade after the appearance of *Ulysses*." Within this context the study has two major goals: (1) to uncover new meanings in the writers and (2) to prove that Kate O'Brien and Elizabeth Bowen are central, not peripheral, figures in the tradition.

In the first instance Professor Hildebidle succeeds admirably because of the similarities he discovers among the five. The most notable of these similarities are a shared language of disillusionment, perception of changes from "stasis to change to stasis" in Irish history, and attempts "to consider life as it is actually lived" in Ireland. The new meanings emerge principally from the analysis of each writer within the contexts of the analyses of the others. For example, the disillusionment of O'Flaherty's characters is not isolated from that of the other writers' characters, and therefore rendered static, but integrated and thus made dynamic in the complex relationships which result.

Of the other goal I speak more hesitatingly. The inclusion of O'Brien and Bowen is strained. Hildebidle himself seems uneasy about having them write