

active member of Marc Chagall Center of Judeo-Brazilian studies in Porto Alegre, on the editorial board of the Israeli publication *Noah*, and a regular contributor and commentator on national, social, and artistic matters in local journals newspapers. In brief, Moacyr Scliar is fast becoming a Brazilian national treasure and a source of pride during one of his country's most difficult political moments.

Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie, eds.

*FAULKNER AND THE CRAFT OF FICTION*

Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989. Pp. xv & 226. \$32.50 & \$15.95

Reviewed by K.J. Phillips

Originally presented at the 1987 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference at the University of Mississippi, these essays retain the fresh and direct style of oral delivery as they present Faulkner in relation to literary tradition, literary theory, and social context.

Looking at the way Faulkner uses traditional pastoral and heroic modes, Cleanth Brooks argues that Faulkner successfully gives us Ike Snopes as pastoral faun in *The Hamlet* and women and blacks as unexpected heroes in *The Unvanquished*. Moreover, by making Bayard a hero for *not* firing, Faulkner is not just using *The Unvanquished* to glory in Confederate deeds of derring-do, as is usually thought.

Also locating a tradition, Christopher LaLonde situates the traveling salesman who narrates the last chapter of *Light in August* in 19th-century American oral humor. True to his genre, the salesman types Lena first as a sex object and then as a deceiving woman. Although LaLonde does say that Faulkner was "knowingly depotentiating and delegitimizing" the salesman's opinion, this critic at times conflates author and narrator, assuming that Faulkner felt a "certain allegiance" with the salesman's doubts because the first part of Faulkner's relation with Estelle ended in "betrayal" (102-03). LaLonde thus concludes that if Lena has come a "fur piece" on foot, "in some sense she has gone nowhere at all," because of Faulkner's supposed sympathy for the salesman (103). Instead, LaLonde might have pointed out how far Faulkner does in fact change stereotypes by making Lena's primary goal *not* to get a legitimate father for her child, as everyone expects, but rather to travel—a quest or wandering motif usually reserved for men.

Two essays, by Philip Weinstein and Donald Kartiganer, draw heavily on current literary theory, in a way that genuinely illuminates and applies these philosophical ideas. In "The Vertigo of Faulknerian Identity," Weinstein shows how *Absalom, Absalom!* "uncannily responds" to the Marxist theories of Althusser and the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan (183). In Althusserian terms, Quentin becomes "a porous container of others' throw-away discourse"; in Lacanian terms, Quentin is "precariously poised between Imaginary mergers and Symbolic distinctions" (174, 182). Weinstein deploys these theories most astutely when he shows how characters like Quentin and Henry Sutpen have internalized their culture's Symbolic order or ideological scripts to the extent that they constitute a painful and inalienable selfhood. But I would prefer that Weinstein object more to Lacan's assignment of language itself (and not

just the dominant culture) to men--the Symbolic as "paternal field"--as if women have not helped invent language and have not also desired to apeak (182).

Similarly drawing on philosophy, Kartiganer offers a mini-lesson in Western civilization by reviewing conceptions of "repetition" from archaic societies to the deconstructionists. Starting with Eliade's claim that archaic societies confer sacredness by seeing a new event as the repetition of an earlier act, Kartiganer moves on to Judeo-Christian expectations for historical, not cyclical time, which nevertheless repeats an event foretold. Kartiganer especially uses Kierkegaard's definition of "repetition forward," or "the potential for reexperiencing the past in a new key," to explain Faulkner's habit of retelling the same story within books and from one book to another, all with revisionary impulse (29). As *I Lay Dying* rewrites *The Sound and the Fury* in a comic key, and within the book, the Bundrens simultaneously "fulfill [Addie's] originating narrative and revise its significance, transforming a procession of the dead into progress of the living" (38). Kartiganer defines Darl as "the utterly ungrounded being--he who has no past, no mother, no authority" (43). The family expels Darl the way the book finally has to pretend to coherence, although it has allowed glimpses of "undecidability" or nothingness (45). The one irony of this lucid and graceful essay lies in the fact that while Kartiganer seems to favor a Nietzschean denial of validating origins, he himself returns almost compulsively to the familiar sanctioning voices heard so insistently in literary theory: Plato, Freud, Nietzsche, Derrida.

Judith Sensibar in "Faulkner and the Fictions of Love" partly corrects this insistence on the same few male voices as the originators of all our important ideas by sketching future areas of study about four female influences on Faulkner's creativity: his white and black "mothers," wife, and daughter. Sensibar argues that the theatricality, costuming, and even melodramatic "scenes" which Faulkner and his wife played to each other were something "enjoyed" by both of them and, "contrary to popular conceptions, fueled his creativity" (135).

In "Compulsive and Revisionary Repetition," Richard Moreland "repeats" Kartiganer's interest in the way Faulkner tells a story over, in this case, "Barn Burning" and *The Hamlet* as retellings of the scene of the child at the door in *Absalom*. Moreland argues that Faulkner only recognizes "different voices"--of poor whites, blacks, and women--in the later retellings. But it seems to me that Thomas Sutpen, not Faulkner, is the one compulsively repeating the exclusion of an outsider. Faulkner clearly conveys in *Absalom* that Sutpen should have recognized Bon as the excluded boy at the door.

Like Moreland, John Matthews looks for social and economic issues, considering them in the device of framing stories from certain narrators' viewpoints. But at the same time the frame adds historical context to the supposedly universal loss of unframed narratives, the device also lets a narrator like Quentin, in three short stories, try to cover over the history that the frame discovers. I would prefer that Matthews distinguish more between Quentin's subterfuges and Faulkner's undercutting of them. For instance, when Matthews insightfully catches Quentin betraying "white dread about the confusion of opposites," he might have added how carefully Faulkner merges opposites pre-

cisely in order to upset the status quo (80). Robert Hamblin counters Matthews's and Moreland's insistence on social context by underlining that Faulkner turns to his own "postage stamp of native soil" only to "sublimat [e] the actual into apocryphal" (168).

In a less classifiable but interesting essay, Beth Dyer Biron points out how French translations of Faulkner often fail to capture Southern culture and miss metaphysical implications. She faults the translations, mainly by Coindreau, for losing biblical allusions by not using equivalents in French Bibles, for smoothing out Faulkner's innovative syntactical patterns, for turning concrete language abstract, and for varying Faulkner's purposeful repetition. Benjy's pasture, for example, becomes "prairie" ("meadow") and "pré" ("mead"), when the French word "pâturage" would have better preserved biblical associations with Hebrew scapegoat and New Testament lamb.

The only unsuccessful essay for me was "Faulkner's Patriotic Failure," where William Meyer, Jr. insists that America, particularly the North, has had a "Religion of Vision" and that Faulkner feels guilty for having to choose between this "hypervisual" ideal and the South's "hyperverbal," aural, lyrical "thunder of hooves" (105-07). This rigid dichotomizing of sight and sound leads Meyers to some outrageous allegorizing: the "fallen sister" whom Jason repudiates is the "hyperverbal South" and the incest which Quentin fears is the coupling of northern "America the Beautiful" with "Old World South" (111-13).

Margaret Drabble

*A NATURAL CURIOSITY*

Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989. Pp. 309. \$24.95

Reviewed by Nora Foster Stovel

Margaret Drabble's latest novel, *A Natural Curiosity* (1989), forms a sequel to its predecessor, *The Radiant Way* (1987). *The Radiant Way* featured three female friends—Liz Headleand, psychiatrist, Alix Bowen, social worker, and Esther Breuer, art historian—and traced their multiple lives in contemporary London, culminating in the capture of a mass murderer, Paul Whitmore, "The Horror of Harrow Road," a specialist in severed heads. As Drabble explains in her Author's Note, "*A Natural Curiosity* is a sequel to *The Radiant Way*, and picks up some of the characters and stories, while adding others." In *A Natural Curiosity*, Drabble pursues Alix Bowen and Liz Headleand's sister, housewife Shirley Harper, to Yorkshire, while abandoning Esther Breuer in Italy. Drabble explained that she felt certain that Alix would be curious to visit the murderer in his Yorkshire prison. Moreover, many readers complained that Shirley Harper was neglected in *The Radiant Way*. So Drabble remedies that omission in *A Natural Curiosity* by following Alix and Shirley to Northam—the setting for her 1965 novel *Jerusalem the Golden*, based on Drabble's own home town of Sheffield—in a narrative that picks up where the previous one left off—*The Radiant Way 2* ?

Drabble's habit of recycling characters has caused critics to accuse her of writing "soap operas." But Drabble, like Virginia Woolf, wants to convey the web of human relations. And her recent narratives, with their multiplicity of