

There are two irritating minor flaws. Zipes does not even touch upon the purely literary aspect of the problematic attempt to recreate modern fairy tales in a tradition of bookish literacy. And for a reader unfamiliar with German history, many of the authors' names mentioned in the introduction carry little or no meaning. A few capsule characterizations would have added more depth to the introduction of what is an excellent collection. (E.g., Hans Blunck (12), a *völkisch* nationalist, while publishing fairy tales became president of the Reichsschrifttumskammer (1933-1935); Lisa Tetzner (17f.), who had been director of the children's program of Radio Berlin and emigrated to Switzerland, managed to write a series of very successful books for young readers after 1940, thus truly carrying on, or even expanding on, this tradition.) The translation is very commendable and admirably conveys the different uses of the language of enchantment by modern authors. Illustrations by such prominent artists as George Grosz and Joachim Ringelnatz enhance the texts; an appendix with short portraits of the authors, and a concise bibliography, conclude the volume.

Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron

*SURREALISM*

Trans. by Vivian Folkenflik

New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. Pp. 227

Reviewed by Steven Winspur

To write a history of Surrealism is a thankless endeavor for two reasons. First, as Dr. Chénieux-Gendron points out, Surrealism was not a system of thought, but rather a constantly changing program for a new way of living. Consequently, it cannot occupy a place within the history of ideas since it challenges the very split between philosophy and everyday living on which intellectual history is based. Second, the Surrealist movement in France repeatedly rewrote its own history, so that in order to chart the movement's development one must constantly untangle events from their subsequent rationalizations. Chénieux-Gendron's book, which first appeared in French in 1984, is the best study to date of France's longest lasting literary movement in the twentieth century. It avoids the two obstacles I have just mentioned by showing how the central concepts elaborated by Surrealism (the poetic image and objective chance, among others) gain their coherence only when inserted into the overall ethical program that was set out by Breton, Péret and fellow group members.

Built around three main chapters, Chénieux-Gendron's study successively traces the movement's official genealogy (its preferred writers among the Romantics and Symbolists), the three periods in its history (1919-1932, 1932-1940, 1940-1969), and the various debates that characterized each period. While the first decade of the movement was largely devoted to reflections on automatism and a theory of the poetic image, the 1930s saw investigations into what the Surrealists called "objective chance" (namely, occurrences that unveil our own creative power of agency) and into black humor, and the 1940s and

1950s were given over to studies of the importance of myth in the development of all cultures. Although the book focuses on the French Surrealist group, there are also pages on the related movements that appeared in other countries throughout the 1930s. The connections between Surrealist writing and other arts (even the rarely considered field of music) are also intelligently explored.

The major strength of this work is its thoroughness. By analyzing not only the major works of Surrealism, but also the countless reviews and pamphlets that appeared throughout the movement's fifty-year existence (many of which are extremely hard to find), Chénieux-Gendron has accomplished a monumental task. Her bibliography alone is a gold mine for any student of the movement, and her discussions of the conflicts with Marxism and psychoanalysis are likely to become authoritative for quite a few years.

Despite its appearance, Surrealism was not merely a variant of Romanticism. Even though both movements emphasized the imagination's ability to restore our innocence, Surrealists did not equate this with rediscovering a prior state of Edenic purity. Rather, it meant forging a new innocence vis-à-vis our own acts, and hence acting freely, unfettered by guilt. Breton's 1930 title "Il y aura une fois" says it all: "Once upon a time (a coded invitation to the powers of imagination) there *will be*" the real.

David Stern and Mark Jay Mirsky, eds.  
*RABBINIC FANTASIES: IMAGINATIVE NARRATIVES  
FROM CLASSICAL HEBREW LITERATURE*  
Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1990. Pp. 364  
Reviewed by Miriam Roshwald

". . . in the history of Jewish literature before the nineteenth century a negative attitude towards imaginative writing has been the rule more often than the exception . . ." (16). "Mere stories and profane matters" was the derogatory judgment on narratives not related to the interpretation of the Torah and its moral teaching. This does not mean, however, that the play of imagination and the creative impulse are absent from rabbinical literature. The Midrash, or homiletical interpretation of the Bible, is replete with narrative which, though intended to perform a pedagogical role, fall into recognizable genres of imaginative writing. Parables, allegories, legends, tales, and folklore found their way into the legal discussions and homilies. "The biblical narrative thus became for the rabbis a giant screen upon which they projected the story of their own existence. Responding to the most subtle, latent possibilities of meaning in Scripture, these exegetes allowed their narrative imagination to blossom in the cracks of the biblical text, sometimes literally inside the empty spaces separating words or atop the wavy scribal crowns adorning letters" (7).

The present volume consists of sixteen texts of such imaginative narratives, covering nearly seventeen hundred years, starting with the second cen-