

familiar with the critical scene in America will feel somewhat restive, and those not familiar with it will wonder if that is all there is too it.

Second thoughts about this chapter, however, as likely betray my own critical idiosyncracies as reflect problems in Lernout's exposition. Overall, *The French Joyce* provides a witty, erudite view of critical methodologies that have exerted a profound influence on literary interpretation over the past three decades. It provides a wonderful antidote to the alternately dour and reverential tones of works usually devoted to the topic, and it will surely be an important force for years to come in epistemological and hermeneutic debates on responses to Joyce.

Gene H. Bell-Villada

*GARCIA MÁRQUEZ: THE MAN AND HIS WORK*

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990. Pp. 247. \$29.95 & \$12.95

Reviewed by Harley D. Oberhelman

Readers familiar with Bell-Villada's insightful *Borges and His Fiction* will find his latest critical study, *García Márquez: The Man and His Work*, equally meritorious. It traces the major forces that have shaped the Colombian writer and skillfully integrates his personality and politics with his literary creations. Divided into eleven chapters, the first five deal with the contemporary novel, Colombian geography and history, and the life, politics, and literary formation of García Márquez. The fifth chapter, "The Readings," is a useful overview of the presence of such writers as Kafka, the Greek tragedians, Rabelais, Faulkner, and Woolf, as well as the Bible itself, in García Márquez's prose fiction. Chapters 6 through 10 deal with his major novels and the short story collections.

Perhaps the most innovative section is chapter 11, a survey of the Colombian writer's influence on the contemporary fiction of the United States. Bell-Villada contends that the novels of such writers as John Nichols, William Kennedy, Robert Coover, and Alice Walker would not have been possible without the originating presence of the classic *Cien años de soledad* (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*). Kennedy and Coover have published serious essays on the work of García Márquez. Other contemporary writers including Norman Mailer, Lois Gold, and Anne Tyler mention his work and its impact on their own fiction.

Chapter 6, which deals with *Cien años de soledad* (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*), and chapter 9, an analysis of *El otoño del patriarca* (*Autumn of the Patriarch*), demand special mention. Both chapters show a mastery of the novels as well as knowledge of the principal critical studies these works have inspired. Chapter 10 studies three novels focused on love. The section dealing with *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* (*Love in the Time of Cholera*), merits special attention for its depth and useful analysis. Because its publication was

coincidental with the appearance of this study, *El general en su laberinto* (*The General in His Labyrinth*) is only mentioned briefly.

This erudite study contains a valuable select bibliography, and under the heading of "General Works" contains 128 items the author describes as sources that in some way went into his general thinking of this book, whether or not the works were cited in the text or in the notes. The present reviewer found the work to be accurate and complete, even with the correct year of the birth of García Márquez (1927). Of special value is the fact that this study relates the Colombian writer to contemporary global literature and political currents. It is a critical text for the general reader as well as for the literary scholar. It reads well and demonstrates the polish and élan of its author.

Carole Gerson

*A PURER TASTE: THE READING AND WRITING OF FICTION IN ENGLISH IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CANADA*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989. Pp. 210

Reviewed by Alex Knoenagel

For critics who consider a work's context an essential tool in determining the text's meaning and value, there always exists the problem of properly establishing the relevant context. People who study nineteenth-century Canadian fiction from a contextual point of view will find a valuable aid in Carole Gerson's book. Only a few texts published in the first decades after Confederation have been canonized, and very few of these are novels. Gerson's examination of the conditions—social as well as aesthetic—under which novelists such as Sara Jeanette Duncan (1861-1922), John Richardson (1796-1852), and Rosanna Leprohon (1829-1879), to list just the more familiar authors, wrote their novels and under which their books were received shows convincingly the reasons for the weak position nineteenth-century fiction had, and continues to have, in the Canadian literary canon.

Canadians attempting to publish fiction in their own country in the nineteenth century were, as Gerson aptly shows, faced with an array of problems: "Throughout the nineteenth century the reception of literature in Canada was steered by nationalists who . . . advanced the familiar notion that 'A national literature is an essential element in the formation of national character'" (8-9). However, the social, cultural, and economic conditions of life in Canada were not at all conducive to the aesthetic demands with which authors were faced. As Gerson shows, Canadian novels were measured by the degree to which they emulated the standard set by Walter Scott's novels. Quite understandably, this standard was practically impossible to reach, since from the predominant English-Canadian point of view Canada was a country without a usable mythology. Consequently, Canadians determined to write about their own country "were confronted with the problem of creating the highly refined, lengthy Victorian prose narrative, whether realistic novel or imaginative romance, out