As long as one attempts to read *Decade of Novels* as a comprehensive or representative study of American fiction of the 1970s, one will necessarily be disappointed, in particular if one is not willing to discard the insights of modern literary theory. But if one considers the book simply as a collection of essays on fiction published in the 1970s and thus approach the book with different expectations, one will find several studies that are well worth considering.

Lois Marie Jaeck
Marcel Proust and the Text as Macrometaphor
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990

Luz Aurora Pimentel
Metaphoric Narration: Paranarrative Dimensions in A la Recherche du Temps Perdu
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990
Reviewed by Anthony R. Pugh

This must be the first time that the University of Toronto Press has published two books on the same author as successive items in its prestigious Romance Series, where they are numbered 60 and 61. Not only are they both on Proust; they have very similar titles. The temptation to choose one over the other must have been great, but luckily the Press resisted it, as both studies are excellent, and despite the apparent overlap in subject, they are completely different from each other.

Dr. Jaeck takes as her text a famous remark of Proust in *Le Temps retrouvé* that truth comes when the writer "en rapprochant une qualité commune à deux sensations . . . dégagera leur essence commune en les réunissant l'une et l'autre pour les soustraire aux contingences du temps, dans une métaphore." She argues that the function Proust attributes to metaphor applies to the way the whole novel is structured; the text therefore becomes a "macrometaphor." Explicitly or implicitly Proust is constantly drawing separate things into a close relationship, so that we are able to see what constitutes the essence of those things. The demonstration serves also to explicate a remark of Ricoeur, that literary texts function like metaphors.

Dr. Jaeck first explores fully the context in which the remark quoted above is made, that is, Proust's account of involuntary memory. Jaeck suggests that our reading of *La Recherche* follows the same path as the narrator's exploration and final understanding of this phenomenon. Then she goes back to the first part of the novel, *Du côté de chez Swann*, and shows how a careful reading should alert us to all manner of parallels and counterpoints which give us the thematic kernel of the whole novel. She compares this to the first stage of involuntary memory, when we are conscious of our joy, but cannot yet explain it. Then, in the longest portion of her study, she follows eleven pairs of themes through the entire novel, showing how the parallels made between disparate

elements lead us to understand their essence, which is precisely the understanding Proust attributes to metaphor. The pages on homosexuality and those on works of art in *La Recherche* I found particularly revealing, but everything is related to the argument in a wholly convincing way.

Dr. Jaeck's presentation is rigorous, systematic, and unfailingly illuminating, not only on Proust, but on the metaphorical nature of all literature. Frequent recapitulations of the argument, and multiple uses of the same key examples, make it extremely easy to follow.

While Dr. Jaeck's reflections on metaphor appear to grow out of an intelligent and perceptive reading of Proust's novel, Dr. Pimentel, from the National University of Mexico, presents her equally perceptive discussion of Proust as an illustration of a well thought-out theory of metaphor, which starts from Genette, but takes us one stage further along the road to understanding this important literary phenomenon.

Dr. Pimentel argues that metaphor involves the confrontation of different semantic fields, which are forced to interact, and to yield rationally satisfying meaning. Elements which do not contribute directly to this satisfying meaning are assimilated by "contamination," and bring to the text something which escapes the rational intelligence. We thus have, directly or retrospectively, a "stereoscopic vision of the narrative reality."

In the first part of her study, Dr. Pimentel analyzes a simple metaphor, and shows how the reader copes with it. There are three movements in the reader's response: to perceive the allotropy, recognized as an incoherence; to revalue it, as we reestablish coherence; also to expand the intersection of two planes to cover both, as we accept (without rationally understanding) the dimensions given by suppressed meanings. All this creates one complex effect. The metaphoric reading is not always dictated by an initial metaphor, it can be imposed retroactively, and our first, literal reading is left in tact.

She goes on to show that this works for larger narrative sequences, making for a metaphoric articulation of a narrative text. The text is organized in such a way that there is a "paranarrative dimension" in counterpoint, either immediately apparent or inserted retrospectively. This dimension can be analyzed. It affects the shape, the meaning, the richness of the text.

In Part Two, Dr. Pimentel discusses *La Recherche* in the light of this theory of metaphor. Following Genette, she discusses the question under three main headings: temporal structures, narrative modulations, narrative voice, associated respectively with récit, story, and narration.

Dr. Pimentel's text is dense, and tightly reasoned, but clear. If at times the reasoning tends to the abstract or the systematic, with quite a heavy concentration of Genette terminology in the second part, this impression is quickly dissipated by the examples, which are extremely well chosen, and very well analyzed. This is true both of the wide-ranging examples adduced in Part One, and of the passages from Proust studied in Part Two. The examples (considered ex-

haustively, in a manner which I found passionately interesting) which she uses to back up the different stages of her theory, shed brilliant light on well-known passages: the sick traveler, the tombstones, Odette's salon, the "moments privilégiés," the relation of "Un Amour de Swann" to the other affairs. The highlight is her third chapter on Voice, in which a most penetrating analysis of the relationships between "Un Amour de Swann" and the Marcel-Albertine affair on the one hand, and the Charlus-Morel affair on the other, uncovers the complexity of the "metaphorical" dimension of our reading of Proust. We are obliged to give the first story a retrospective reading, in exactly the same way as we reinterpret sentences in the light of subsequent metaphors.

I too resist the temptation to play one book off against the other. Each offers riches, both to the reader who is particularly interested in the nature of metaphor, and to the reader whose chief joy is to explore the infinite suggestiveness of the patterns within the text of Proust's inexhaustible novel.

Bernard Benstock
Narrative Con/Texts in Ulysses
Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991. Pp. ix+234. $39.95
Reviewed by Michael Patrick Gillespie

Despite the lip service that many students of Joyce have given to the questions (if not the answers) raised by poststructuralist literary theory, only a few critics have shown the ability to apply those methods in a fashion that results in real insights rather than merely a recapitulation of received wisdom. More often than not, one alternately encounters readings that adopt the vocabulary of new critical thinking while slavishly adhering to conventional methodologies or responses that simply employ the terms of poststructuralism to articulate familiar conventional interpretations. Over the years the work of Bernard Benstock has proven a welcome exception to this trend, for he has shown himself fully able to strike a balance between the necessity of addressing innovative epistemological concepts and the imperative of generating new responses rather than of recycling timeworn views. In his most recent book, *Narrative Con/Texts in* Ulysses, Benstock lays out patterns for responses to Joyce's novel that allow one to derive new interpretations of that work through a methodology neither slavishly conventional nor willfully disingenuous.

With a prose style that remains disarmingly straightforward, this study establishes itself almost from the first page as determinedly nonpolemical. While continually calling attention to central narrative features that generate meaning, the organization of Benstock's book enforces his unwillingness to impose, even provisionally, the form of closure that inevitably must result from privileging a particular interpretive approach. Instead, the seven chapters that constitute this volume emerge as a series of independent analyses, related not by a common thesis that each seeks to affirm but rather joined by an interest in a common general theme: narrative mutability. As he situates the operation of