

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

the discourse within *Ulysses*, Benstock freely draws upon a range of sometimes mutually contradictory theoretical models. Suggesting, without prescribing, how one can use these methods, he invites his readers to reconsider traditional responses to various elements within the work.

Benstock's heuristics stand out as equally nontraditional and strikingly effective. In pursuing his investigations time and again his essays concentrate on the same chapters and even on the same specific passages to underscore the range of alternative responses inherent in the constitution of its discourse. These reconsiderations of familiar selections produce a dual effect. Such close scrutiny directly confronts the primacy of interpretations offered by other readers, and the repetition also subtly calls into question Benstock's own readings from other chapters. The result does not so much undermine his credibility as enforce the concept of multiplicity, suggesting that the ideal reading does not produce a single privileged interpretation of the work but rather lays out options for a range of potential responses open to the reader.

In successive chapters Benstock explores the possibilities inherent in compositional features like free indirect discourse, topological evocation, parallaxic perspectives, and indeterminate allusiveness. While dealing with each of these factors of the narrative in a highly sophisticated fashion, he eschews the heavy-handed invocation of jargon that lesser critics deploy to render even the most obvious conclusions opaque. Instead, Benstock encourages his readers to extrapolate from the observations that he offers them. While clearly delineating alternatives, he refuses to succumb to the hobgoblin of logical consistency to produce a reductive response of his own.

Overall, Benstock's *Narrative Con/Texts in Ulysses* reminds readers of the importance of close reading without foreclosing options available through nonlinear interpretative thinking. His book combines the best features of the critical heritage of interpretations of *Ulysses* with the fresh insights that accrue from imaginative applications of nontraditional methodologies. For both readers new to Joyce's canon and those intimately familiar with the primary and secondary sources, this work will offer a range of opportunity for increased aesthetic pleasure.

W.P. Kinsella

*Box Socials*

Toronto: Harper Collins, 1991. Pp. 222. \$24.95

Reviewed by Don Murray

W.P. Kinsella's new novel, *Box Socials* (1991), celebrates rural community life in Alberta during the depression and the early years of the Second World War. *Box Socials* does for the farmers (most are descendants of Scandinavians and Ukrainians) of the Six Towns, west of Edmonton, what *Moccasin Telegraph*