

Sukenick or Raymond Federman, among others, are not mentioned in her study, even though their metafiction, like actualism, derives from the same new physics.

On one level Strehle argues that actualism's formal innovations are the artistic equivalents of the new physics, yet on another level she rejects metafictional works that do not have one foot firmly and visibly planted in the old reality. Actualism, she argues, must blend fiction and modern physics with direct references to Einstein, Heisenberg, relativity, uncertainty, and discontinuity. Although such references within a novel confirm the writer's awareness of some of the implications of the new physics, why should they be essential to a definition of the genre? Overtly or covertly metafiction already incorporates the physics Strehle values and the connections she defines so well. "Actualism," she says, "describes a literature that abandons the old mechanistic reality without losing interest in the external world." However, metafiction, no matter how extreme its formalism, always teaches us that reality is defined and structured by the signifying system. Foregrounding the system does not eliminate the reality it strives to replace. The gap between the signifier and the signified exists, to be sure, but that doesn't mean that the signified has been eliminated. Metafiction, like abstract art, rivals nature precisely because it does not want to copy it. But such fictions, no matter how abstract or experimental, and despite their formal insistence, are never "pure" self-reflexive artefacts. The problem is always one of *representation* because "the false mirror" of art, as René Magritte's title and painting of an eye suggest, is inevitably arbitrary and subjective.

Although I don't think actualism as a term will catch on, nor do I think it's needed, Strehle has produced an informed, scholarly, and intelligent book that delineates the interrelations between physics and literature, particularly American literature. Her chapters on *Gravity's Rainbow*; *The Public Burning*; *JR*; *Cat's Eye*; and *Paradise* are cogently presented and wonderfully written. They are interesting and compelling analyses of each author's work. Despite our disagreements on terminology, *Fiction in the Quantum Universe* is an important contribution to our understanding of fiction in the postmodern era.

Janet Egleson Dunleavy, ed.
Re-Viewing Classics of Joyce Criticism
Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991. Pp. 229
Reviewed by Michael Groden

It might seem like a parody of the so-called "Joyce industry": fifteen commissioned essays by prominent critics discussing not Joyce's writings but other critics, *Re-Viewing Classics of Joyce Criticism* works quite well, however, to demonstrate the continuing vitality of the best pre-1960 criticism. Overall, the book provides the beginner and experienced critic alike with a good introduction to a different critical era when, in Janet Dunleavy's words, "the variety of ideas to be examined was limited only by curiosity, imagination, and a reader's willingness to find new puzzlement, insights, and delights on every page." The essays cover book-

length studies of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* (Bernard Benstock on Richard M. Kain's *Fabulous Voyager*, Patrick A. McCarthy on Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's Ulysses*, Clive Hart on Frank Budgen's *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*, Michael H. Begnal on Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson's *Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*, Bonnie Kime Scott on Adaline Glasheen's *Census and Third Census of Finnegans Wake*, Suzette A. Henke on the essays collection *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* by Samuel Beckett and others, Fritz Senn on James S. Atherton's *The Books at the Wake*), general studies of Joyce's life and career (Morton P. Levitt on Harry Levin's *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction*, Richard F. Peterson on William York Tindall's *James Joyce: His Way of Interpreting the Modern World* and *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce*, Melvin J. Friedman on Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce*, Michael Patrick Gillespie on Hugh Kenner's *Dublin's Joyce*), and studies of more specialized topics (Thomas F. Staley on William T. Noon's *Joyce and Aquinas*, Mary T. Reynolds on William M. Schutte's *Joyce and Shakespeare*, Shari Benstock on David Hayman's *Joyce et Mallarmé*, Ruth Bauerle on Matthew J.C. Hodgart and Mabel Worthington's *Song in the Work of James Joyce*). Alan M. Cohn's bibliography of additional pre-1960 Joyce studies concludes the volume.

The essays share a common format. Each contains an account of the book's original context and impact and some consideration of its subsequent and continuing relevance, and each contains a substantial summary of the book's contents. Each author offers minor quibbles about the book but acts as an advocate for its enduring strengths and continuing importance. (Hart's essay, for the most part reprinted from his introduction to a 1972 reprint of Budgen's book, is entirely different and seems out of place here. Henke's essay on the multi-authored *Our Exagmination* separates the few still-valuable essays from the many other ones in the book). The essays close with a series of rhetorical variations on the following statement (like the others, this one is fully justified by the essay's arguments): "No critical study is the last word on an author, but [this book] remains a seminal work in a distinguished body of criticism that has illuminated Joyce and his art." Even though the format tends to flatten the essays into a series of summaries with a mission, the essays are valuable as introductions to books that many of us, depending on when we began studying Joyce, have forgotten, tended over the years to overlook, or never read at all. Less successful is what Dunleavy mentions in her introduction as the "links . . . between contemporary critical writing and the classics of Joyce criticism." Too often, the authors settle for easy praise of their "classic" writer either for, as one writer puts it, being "innocent of the jargon that has been spread like a compost heap on the modernist novel by some of its recent critics," or for, as another writer says, "long before writers like Jacques Derrida called into question traditional linear critical responses . . . deconstructing Joyce's works." There is, regrettably, little attempt at critical or theoretical engagement between the old and the new (Shari Benstock's essay on Hayman comes closest), and this absence is a missed opportunity.

I wish there had been less "review" and more "re-view" in the essays. The summaries of the books contents sometimes tend to dominate the essays, and the less interesting ones read like book reviews written from the perspective of the forty or sixty intervening years. The more interesting are precise in their assessments of what the book added to Joyce criticism, how it changed the direction of

the criticism, and what survives as valuable. Even the best essays cannot eliminate a certain sameness to the collection that might have been reduced at least somewhat had some of the assignments been offered to younger critics, for whom the books under consideration come from a more distant past and more remote critical assumptions than they do for the authors in the book. But if *Re-Viewing Classics of Joyce Criticism* has to some extent missed a chance to present as lively a critical and theoretical engagement between the present and the past as it might have, it nevertheless offers a valuable guide to the Joycean critical past for both newcomers and jaded veterans.

Susan J. Napier

Escape from the Wasteland: Romanticism and Realism in the Fiction of Mishima Yukio and Oe Kenzaburo

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991. Pp. 258. \$28.00

Reviewed by Daniel L. Wright

Prior to World War II, two literary traditions could hardly be more distinctive for their differences than those of Japan and the Western world. The postwar world, however, has seen a remarkable convergence of the two in terms of style as well as substance. Each has underscored themes of personal alienation, cultural transformation and loss, and apprehension about the future. Each is remarkable for its more-than-occasional indulgence of semi-pornographic strains of erotica and romantic wistfulness for bygone times. And each is notable for its almost uniform commitment to a realistic style that only recently has begun to be eclipsed by more imaginative and innovative narrative forms. Susan Napier's new book offers a lucid, eloquent, and insightful analysis of all of these features in an invigorating excursion through the works of two of Japan's most distinguished postwar writers.

Escape from the Wasteland: Romanticism and Realism in the Fiction of Mishima Yukio and Oe Kenzaburo is a refreshingly articulate study of high scholarship. One always is impressed with prose so carefully considered and refined as this; unfortunately, in an academic publishing world dominated by euphuistic rhetoric and arcane jargon, the occasion for such pleasure is rare. There is much more than mere style to commend Napier's work, however. Napier's book offers a penetrating and convincing analysis of points of convergence in Oe and Mishima and is especially illuminating in the demonstration of the association of Oe and Mishima with the Decadent tradition in Japanese literature such as is particularly well represented by another prominent postwar writer, Sakaguchi Anko, or perhaps Ishikawa Jun. Mishima and Oe, however, may not be as closely linked to Decadent tradition, though, as to the tradition of authoritarian fiction such as is represented by writers of the ideological novel or *roman à thèse*, for both Oe and Mishima generate their work with eyes focused on political concerns and cultural crisis. As Napier attests, "Obviously, the writings of Oe and Mishima are far more complex than a simple ideological novel; but they do contain a message that can be reduced to two basic components: The first is that