

stands out, in Oberhelman's view, as an element shared by both authors. Although "Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon" and "Montiel's Widow" do recall some of the imagery found in Hemingway's "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," Oberhelman's attempts to connect these tales thematically are less convincing.

The Colombian's later short fiction reveals scant influence of Hemingway, in this reviewer's opinion, although Oberhelman does find interesting stylistic affinities between "After the Storm" and "Last Voyage of the Ghost Ship." Hemingway's descriptions of the "Lost Generation" resonate in García Márquez's most recent collection of tales, *Strange Pilgrims*, many of which portray Latin American expatriates living in Europe.

In his conclusion, Oberhelman underscores the journalistic experience of both Hemingway and García Márquez, an experience that strongly influenced their literary styles and their reliance on visual imagery. A major difference between the two is that whereas Hemingway sought "the real thing" in order to engage his readers, García Márquez "incorporated into his writing the transcendental and arcane components of reality, all equally valuable, to his way of thinking" (41).

Oberhelman's book provides a valuable source of information for scholars seeking to pinpoint examples of Hemingway's influence on García Márquez. Moreover, this study convincingly demonstrates that Hemingway, more than any other writer, taught García Márquez the mechanics of good writing.

Marcel Cornis-Pope

Hermeneutic Desire and Critical Rewriting

New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. Pp. 357

Reviewed by Ileana Alexandra Orlich

The unifying theme of Cornis-Pope's *Hermeneutic Desire and Critical Rewriting: Narrative Interpretation in the Wake of Poststructuralism* is the interplay of hermeneutic desire and critical reconstruction in the interpretive process. By encouraging students to question the hermeneutic, end-stopped mode of interpretation, the book provides the finer tools of critical theories to reach a more nuanced understanding of the acts of appropriation, reformulation, and self-recreation involved in reading. Starting from a comprehensive examination of recent theories of narrative (reader-oriented, deconstructive, feminist, and sociosemiotic), Cornis-Pope's book formulates an effective interactive model of literary interpretation and pedagogy exploring fruitfully the tension between different modes/phases of reading and critical reformulation/rewriting. The latter part of the book foregrounds Cornis-Pope as a theoretician/teacher who argues successfully that a literary pedagogy premised on critical reformation and a focus on the reader's own articular strategies will encourage students to approach creatively a wide diversity of texts by articulating their own strategies, thereby bridging critical theory and practice, production and reception of texts. This theoretical and methodological argument is organized around a cluster of poststructuralist readings of Henry

James's narrative and critical practice and two experimental seminars emphasizing the readerly dynamic of a literary pedagogy.

After defining the process of rereading from theoretical positions as diverse as those of Barthes, Riffaterre, Iser, de Mann, and J. Hillis Miller among others, Cornis-Pope argues that critical theories should play a prominent role in the interpretation of narratives whose discursive and presentational level (almost entirely concealed during a first reading) they reveal. The next four chapters (2-5) contrast critical theories and rival programs "of how readers make sense of narratives, examining their hermeneutic and rhetorical presuppositions, their dominant *interpretive plots*." The focus is on a pedagogy of reading that gives the voice of the critic/teacher/student the unlimited sovereignty "to read the text indefinitely" (39).

In chapter 2, suggestively titled "The Figures Readers Make," Cornis-Pope discusses interactional models of reading texts as "semiotic 'blueprints' for endless performances of meaning," from Iser's *implied reader* as a network of response-inviting structures and Fish's *Is There a Text in This Class?* to Culler's semiotic of reading; and from Mailloux's emphasis on the text negotiated through socially grounded acts of interpretation (reemplotment) to the more recent Crosman Wimmers's views of critical theories as "the study of exchange between text (the printed work) and reader, [with] the completed, final text constituted in and through the act of reading" (74). Chapter 3 explores deconstruction and literary pedagogy and argues successfully that deconstruction, as a strategy of attentive reading, "would engage students in a rich production of texts ranging from textual parody to critical rewriting and from interpretive gloss to self-critique" (109).

The next chapter, "Feminist Signifiers in Male Texts," highlights feminist criticism—from the interpretive work of Elaine Showalter and Sandra Gilbert to the more theoretical approaches of Alice Jardine and Naomi Shor, among others—not "just [as] another way of reading books" (123), but as a radical cultural theory, a political mode of participating in the production and reception of texts, which foregrounds a woman-centered practice of signification and an emphasis on women's role as semiotic articulators of a positive feminine identity. While focusing on such Jamesian narratives as *The Portrait of a Lady*; *Daisy Miller*; *The Princess Casamassima*; and *What Maisie Knew*, which reflect, in Teresa de Laurentis's words, "the engagement of the reader/subject in certain positionalities of meaning and desire" (121), Cornis-Pope articulates a new critical perspective that allows feminine subjects a more constructive use of the available signifying strategies. In chapter 5 Cornis-Pope examines poststructuralist narratology and reading and argues that in the wake of poststructuralism "critical reading is no longer an ancillary activity, but has become an active, self-ordering process which leads to a reformulation of textual and readerly grids" (163). In addition, he foregrounds the sociosemiotic contributions of the "textual, cultural, and ideological" narrative circuits and explores most engagingly the "participative" (non-distanced and empathetic) and "polemical" (an account of the determining forces and desires underlying every act of literary construction) aspects of poststructuralist reading by discussing James's *The Figure in the Carpet*.

The practical implications of Cornis-Pope's theoretical erudition become apparent in the last three chapters of the book which detail the pedagogical advantages of a critical practice focused on the processes of textual articulation and the interpretive apparatus that takes charge of literature, exploring and renewing it. While stressing "acute" versus "limp" criticism, chapter 6 foregrounds many of the narratological problems and the advantages of a pluralistic, recreative hermeneutics reflected in the readerly dynamic experienced by students in the *Figure in the Carpet* seminar Cornis-Pope conducted. The results of the students' efforts "to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct the story itself and their individual readings of it" (235), reported by Cornis-Pope in chapter 7, are intriguing and gratifying: one reader/writer sees James's text as "a crazy Easter egg hunt" (235); another as "an asymmetrical relation between creative writing and criticism" (261); and yet another perceives Vereker as "the sly craftsman and prophet of a new religion of absence" (243). To the students' papers, Cornis-Pope adds his own rhetorical-deconstructive reading, "not in order to arbitrate between them, but rather to emphasize their divisiveness" (245) and, no doubt, to highlight the merits of an education focused on a pluralistic ideology of writing/reading, rather than an ideal critical stance.

The last chapter of *Hermeneutic Desire and Critical Rewriting* provides Cornis-Pope's own strategies for refiguration (rewriting). Acknowledging from the start the disruption between a naive participative first reading and a critical rereading/rewriting in any seminar that teaches literature, the author demonstrates his own procedure in his "Approaches to Literature" class. This procedure innovatively turns to advantage the low reading involvement of sophomore students by asking them to pause periodically while reading and respond to questionnaires distributed to them before the first reading. Designed to disturb "the calm inertia of the diegetic process," these questionnaires elicit a form of critical response, however inchoate. They are quickly followed by more explorative second-reading questionnaires that fuel hermeneutic reading—i.e., "Who can be sure of what secrets are hidden inside *The Turn of the Screw*?"—and result in the obvious device James uses to keep us constantly reading, searching for the hidden answers. And in the process, as one of Cornis-Pope's students points out in what seems to have been a challenging and engaging seminar, we keep adding "another turn of the screw" (284) by revealing meanings that add a further dimension of truth in fiction and disclose an important connection between narrative technique and fully informed critical reading.

Hermeneutic Desire and Critical Rewriting manages to dispel the false notion that what seems legitimate in the rarefied atmosphere of theoretical speculation is largely irrelevant in the cruder light of classroom practice. Its strength lies in the scope of its application as a heuristic tool which enables students to trace, through reading and rewriting, a text's mode of signification by converting their own analyses—shaped by the cultural texts and interpretive plots in which they participate—into a critical rewriting/remodeling of texts. Cornis-Pope's grasp of the critical theories and fully articulated strategies of teaching infuse an element of dynamism in the traditional definitions of literary criticism and pedagogy. Written with pedagogical élan and scholarly polish, his book will be welcomed by those who want a guide (complete with forty-three pages of notes and refer-

ences of works cited in the text) illuminating the relationships of narrative theories to a literary pedagogy.

Mario J. Valdés, Daniel Javitch, and A. Owen Aldridge, eds.
Comparative Literary History as Discourse: In Honor of Anna Balakian
Bern: Peter Lang, 1992. Pp. 388. \$85.95
Reviewed by Allan Reid

This *estschrift* pays fitting homage to Anna Balakian (b. 1916), one of the preeminent comparativists of the twentieth century. Besides its honorific function, the volume also represents a substantial review of the state of comparative literary history as a discipline: its history, its nature, some of its key problems, and its place in the humanities and the broader scholarly arena. As such, it should be of interest not only to comparativists, but to all those engaged in the study of literature whether from a national, historical, generic, or text-centered orientation. Two of the articles are written in French, the remainder in English. Their quality is generally quite high, which is not surprising given the list of contributors. Although two or three are not as compelling or original as the majority, none of these articles could be considered negligible. They are well distributed among sections which are more coherent and intentional than is the case with many such compilations.

Besides the Introduction by Mario J. Valdés, there are six thematic sections consisting of from two to six articles. Part I, entitled "Historical Background of Comparative Literary History," examines "the internal history of the discipline," and certain controversial problems associated with it. Here we encounter such figures as Irving Babbitt and the Schlegel Brothers. Part II, "Toward a Theory of Comparative Literary History," is the most interesting from a general and theoretical perspective. The articles in this section discuss a wide range of questions including the problem of the centrality or primacy of comparative literary history, the need for a personally grounded approach to literature, the relationship between literature and *contemporaneity* in the context of social discourse, and a more traditional and deterministic presentation of literary history in terms of universals.

Part III "Historiographic Problems in the Reconstitution of Literary Periods," revisits a number of literary and cultural periods and movements and analyzes their identities and roles as the basis for the study of comparative literary history. These studies range from the broadly comparative (the European Baroque) to strictly differential (Belgian symbolism). While they offer some new insights into specific literary periods, there is no attempt to radically alter currently available notions of literary periodization as such. That, in itself, is not disappointing, insofar as there is evidence of creative application of existing methodologies and principles. On the other hand, some of these articles, such as Marc Angenot's do try to alter the way literature itself, comparative and otherwise, is viewed.