

criticism or to scholarly commentary composed solely in the service of some limited and limiting ideological perspective or dogma.

Richards, however, never abandons a guiding precept for Hesse studies in his own evaluation when it comes to examining Hesse's works in general and *Steppenwolf* in particular: the need to employ, at least in part, a Jungian hermeneutic in the interpretive task. As Richards himself puts it: "some knowledge of Jung's theories is an unavoidable prerequisite for interpreting texts which owe as much to Jung's psychology as ... *Steppenwolf* do[es]" (111). Indeed, as Richards's book illustrates, if there is a unifying constant in Hesse studies, it seems to be a preoccupation with readers' urgency to explore and perhaps resolve the enigma of the human condition—if not the deliberate application of a Jungian perspective itself—particularly when it comes to readers' assumptions that the Self is less likely a harmonious unity than a composition of dualities, including elements of good and evil, male and female, etc.

This study's fascinating account of the critical history attending the reception of *Steppenwolf* recognizes that, for all the profusion of variegated critical responses of the past, not much new in this field of inquiry has been generated in recent years. This current lull in *Steppenwolf* criticism suggests to Richards that "Hesse scholarship now appears to be in a period of consolidation and synthesis" (146). That little of merit or note has been generated of late should not lead anyone to believe, however, that little or nothing of interest and challenge is forthcoming in the field. In fact, interested readers may look forward to the publication of Steven D. Jackson's doctoral thesis of 1995, "'The Lonely, Hungry, Sad Steppenwolf': Hermann Hesse's Lost Gothic," in which the author examines *Steppenwolf* as a work broadly representative of, and at least partially indebted to, the Gothic tradition in Western literature.

Richards's book is testimony to the convulsiveness and unpredictability that are the defining traits of much Hesse research—especially with respect to *Steppenwolf*—traits that, in the hands of skilled and insightful critics, promise to open to us new and exciting directions.

Patricia Ingham

The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel

London and New York: Routledge, 1996. Pp. 197. \$59.95 \$16.95

Reviewed by Jane Campbell

In this book Patricia Ingham refines and develops the work of her two earlier books, *Thomas Hardy: A Feminist Reading* (1989) and *Dickens, Women and Language* (1992). Her new study examines six novels—*Shirley*, *North and South*, *Hard Times*, *Felix Holt*, *The Unclass'd*, and *Jude the Obscure*—in relation to the interlocking

Victorian discourses of gender and class. Using Bakhtin's semiotic theory as her basis, Ingham argues that Victorian novels moved progressively toward a disentangling of the two sets of signs which at the beginning of the period disempowered women and the working class together, subjecting both to a paternalistic narrative provided by an authoritative masculine voice. By the end of the century, she finds, the splitting of the conventional sign for "woman" into fallen woman (assumed to be working class) and "womanly" middle-class angel breaks down; both male and female members of the working class attain voices as individuals as they are freed from the linguistic codes which have enclosed them; and the gender and class affiliations of the narrator undergo parallel changes which facilitate this process.

In *Shirley* and *North and South*, the two earliest novels examined, Ingham shows how the romance plot—apparently following a conventional pattern by which "class conflict is displaced onto divided middle-class lovers and industrial peace is equated with the domestic harmony provided by marriage with a womanly angel" (48-49)—is subverted. In *Shirley* Ingham identifies a double-voiced discourse, as the masculine perspective of the plot contends with the feminine critique of the angel's confinement within domesticity. Furthermore, in this novel the "governess" figure, an ambivalent one in relation to class, is represented by a man, Louis Moore. Here, despite the plot, gender relations do not stabilize class conflict. However, although middle-class woman speaks for herself, the working class remains silent. A somewhat similar pattern is exposed in *North and South*, where the struggle between Margaret Hale and Thornton is seen by Ingham as one over the language by which the workers are identified: Margaret's objection to their being called "hands" symbolizes a fundamental disagreement about the discourses of paternalism and of the "struggle for existence," both of which were used to keep workers in their place. Margaret wins, partly by moving out of domestic enclosure into the public sphere and thus risking being perceived as "an actress not an angel, potentially a fallen woman" (67). Although the issue of the strike, ostensibly at the story's center, is not resolved by the marriage of the lovers, the transgendering begun in *Shirley* occurs not only in the relationship of Margaret and Thornton but also in Gaskell's feminization of two male characters, the working-class Higgins and Margaret's father. The narrative perspective is neither conventionally feminine nor authoritatively masculine, and Margaret's occasional use of working-class dialect further destabilizes the middle-class angel sign.

In *Hard Times*, Ingham continues, the reader's expectations of a clash in which workers will be victorious are thwarted as the narrative moves to the private sphere to focus on Louisa Bounderby. Ingham points to the ambiguity surrounding Louisa as a middle-class woman; Louisa subverts the dominant ideology by appearing as a sexualized being, neither fallen nor unfallen, and her repression as a woman links her with the suffering workers. Despite Dickens's fear of social upheaval, shown here by his failure to resolve the class issue by

open conflict—indeed, although Stephen Blackpool, a worker, does speak, his use of dialect reveals him as childish and confused, thus confirming the stereotype—the feared disturbance of the status quo is brought about indirectly by Louisa.

In the three novels from the second half of the period Ingham notes more diverse terminology in the discourse and points especially to the prominence of the crucial term “gentleman” and to the splitting of the working class into the respectable and the unworthy, incorrigible “residuum.” She finds androgynous or ungendered narrators in all three novels, and shows that both women and workers eventually speak for themselves rather than as members of polarized groups.

In *Felix Holt*, as in *Hard Times*, the class struggle is not fully worked out. Eliot, however, making language a significant subject for discussion, uses two narrative voices, a masculine voice which speaks about politics and law, working to redefine “radical,” and a feminine one associated with the tragic experience of Mrs. Transome. Through the conservative sexual politics of the masculine narrator Eliot reverses Brontë’s and Gaskell’s use of marriage as the reward for responsible factory owners, introducing instead a plot where marriage figures “the harmonious future for workers who, like women, recognize their nature as inferiors and their duty to stay put” (128). But this perspective is countered by Mrs. Transome, who is able to speak for all women through her understanding of imprisonment in narrowly defined gender roles. Working-class women, however, still remain voiceless, and Felix hardly typifies the working-class male. In her interesting chapter on *The Unclassed*, the least known of the group, Ingham describes the narrator as both unclassed and ungendered; the two linguistic systems are untwining, and the conventional signs for woman are dismantled by Gissing’s radical rewriting of “the two icons that held together the interlocking of class and gender” (152), the fallen woman and the angel. Ingham locates the concluding stages of the process in *Jude*. Here, the narrator, “an unmanly outsider who says the unsayable” (163), gives working-class individuals a voice. Jude, who shares the narrator’s qualities, is mismatched with Sue, who as a New Woman resists marriage and paternalism, and who represents, Ingham asserts, both fallen and conventional woman, both working class and middle class. Unlike its predecessors, *Jude* matches its plot with its discourse: Hardy refuses to provide an ending which “underwrites the status quo,” instead demonstrating through plot that “the story of working-class individuals signifies brutal inequality” (182).

I enjoyed and learned from this book, which is clearly written, cogently argued, and virtually free of typographical errors. I have reservations, however, about a tendency to be reductive, understandable in view of its modest length and ambitious scope; sometimes, too, the argument seems somewhat strained. Ingham’s examination of *Hard Times* would be more satisfying, I think, if more

discussion of the two working-class “angels,” Sissy and Rachael, were offered as well as some account of how the lisping speech of Sleary relates to the halting discourse of Stephen. The book’s multivocality needs more elaboration. Similarly, the analysis of *Felix Holt* would be enriched by more attention to Esther’s speech in defense of Felix, which brings feminine language into dialogue with masculine legal discourse. A more obvious and surprising omission, given Ingham’s title, is that the French theorists of *l’écriture féminine* are not mentioned: Cixous’s assault on binary opposites, at least, seems to demand some notice. Nevertheless, *The Language of Gender and Class* makes a significant addition to our knowledge of its double subject.

Bernard MacLaverty

Grace Notes

London: Jonathan Cape, 1997. Pp. 278

Reviewed by C.J. Ganter

With a number of prestigious awards to his name, the Northern Irish writer Bernard MacLaverty is generally considered one of the foremost representatives of modern Anglo-Irish prose and a master of the contemporary short story. Since his first collection, *Secrets and Other Stories* (1977), he has written three further anthologies as well as children’s books, radio plays, screenplays, and television scripts, but it is undoubtedly his second novel, the widely acclaimed, haunting *Cal* (1983), that he is best known for. MacLaverty’s popularity as a writer of fiction was bolstered by the congenial film versions of *Cal* and his first novel *Lamb* (1980), which MacLaverty himself had adapted for the screen. Small wonder that his lucid and unpretentious style of writing has often been characterized as cinematic. With sensitivity and an eye for detail, MacLaverty often depicts the ordinary plight of ordinary people against the background of Northern Ireland.

Fourteen years after *Cal*, Bernard MacLaverty has returned to the long prose form with his third novel, *Grace Notes*. In terms of subject matter, his readers may initially feel like they are treading on familiar ground. We come across concerns dealt with in previous works, such as isolation and loneliness, the conflict of the generations, and the sectarian gulf in Northern Ireland. However, with the portrayal of the Northern Irish composer Catherine Anne McKenna, this author offers his most ambitious piece of writing to date. By giving voice to a young woman on her quest for female selfhood, MacLaverty has dared to broach a topic for which a male writer can easily get into hot water.

Grace Notes is a bildungsroman which consists of two parts, presented in a chronologically reversed order. Most of Part One takes place in the Catholic community of a small Northern Irish town where Catherine McKenna grew up.