

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.

She returns for the funeral of her father and confronts her mother with the news of her illegitimate baby daughter. Part Two is set mainly on the Scottish Isle of Islay. It shows the breaking up of Catherine's disastrous relationship with the volatile, alcoholic Englishman Dave, the birth of their daughter, and Catherine's move to Glasgow. The book ends with the triumphant radio performance of her first long classical composition.

Guided by numerous flashbacks, we witness Catherine's road to musical maturity and female self-confidence. Her parents and her music teacher, Miss Bingham, foster her talents, and along the way famous composers such as the Chinese Huang Xiao Gang and the Ukrainian Anatoli Melnichuck tangibly shape her auditory perception. Gradually, Catherine abandons both the dogmatic Catholicism of her narrow-minded parents and the male perspective of her mentors, finding "a voice of her own" as a composer (248). Notwithstanding her apostasy, which has deepened the estrangement between her and her parents, she enters the male domain of composing a mass.

In painful detail, MacLavery shows Catherine's emotional struggle with motherhood. Paradoxically, with accepting the traditional role as a mother, Catherine takes one crucial step towards independence. A day on the beach with her baby daughter Anna turns out to be a sort of "turning point" (231). Out of the blue, a surge of well-being takes hold of Catherine. The squealing sounds Anna produces when feeling the incoming waves appear like music to Catherine. Involuntarily, the musical inspiration that had gone with the pregnancy returns to her: "Here there was such silence. Not silence, but appropriate noise. Catherine sat there by the sea, lost in her ears. *Pre-hearing*. Suddenly she heard a sound. A gentle tremolo of strings of different tones" (213).

She begins composing her first masterpiece which she will call *Vernicle* and dedicate to her daughter. Pushing the symbolism to its limit, MacLavery has Anna take her first cautious steps on the beach. Just as Anna learns to walk, Catherine learns to find her own pace, too. Once Catherine has come to terms with motherhood, this acceptance of natural forces sets her musical potency free and makes her ready for departure. She finally takes the pivotal decision to separate from her drunkard lover, leave Islay, and return to the mainland.

Grace Notes is first and foremost a novel about music. It abounds in musical references and it displays the complexity of a musical structure, as Wagnerian leitmotifs are delicately developed and effectively repeated. The central leitmotif of two contrary principles contained in one, illustrated by the linguistic phenomenon of homophones and the Catholic dogma of transubstantiation, culminates in the gripping description of the performance of *Vernicle*: "The same thing could be two things. Transubstantiation. How could the drum battering of the first movement be the same as the drum battering of the second movement—how could the same drumming in a different context produce a totally opposite

effect? The sound has transformed itself. Homophones. Linseed oil. Lynn C. Doyle. Bar talk. Bartók—the same sound but with a different meaning” (275).

In Northern Ireland, the Lambeg drum is *the* musical symbol used by Unionist Protestants to demonstrate their supremacy over Roman Catholics. In Catherine McKenna's *Vernicle*, the effect of the drumming changes from an outburst of terror and “disintegration” (272) in the first movement to “pure sound” and “fierce joy” (276) in the second. With the Protestant Lambeg drum used for positive ends by a female Catholic composer, Bernard MacLaverty brilliantly expresses his utopia of *convivence*: a peaceful coexistence of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland on a regional scale, of men and women on a global scale—the fruitful synthesis of the cosmic forces of “*yin and yang*” (223).

In philosophical profundity, *Grace Notes* clearly surpasses any of Bernard MacLaverty's previous works. It is a stirring book on the immeasurable power of music and an important piece on womanhood—although written by a man.

Manuel Scorza

The Sleepless Rider

Trans. and introduced by Anna-Marie Aldaz

New York: Peter Lang, 1996. Pp. 175. \$43.50

Reviewed by Evelio Echevarría

Between 1970 and 1980 Peruvian indigenist Manuel Scorza (1928–1983) published a cycle of five novels, of which *El jinete inmóvil* (1977) and its present English translation, *The Sleepless Rider*, are the third in either language. The purpose of the cycle was to fictionalize the rebellion that several Quechua clans organized early this century in the central Andes of Peru to defend their ancestral lands from oppressive landlords and foreign mining companies aiming at dispossessing them. The title of the novel belongs to a physical peculiarity of its main character, Raymundo Herrera, an elder of the Yanacocha clans, who cannot, and must not, ever close his eyes, for he is the guardian of the precious Royal Deed, with which in 1705 the king of Spain confirmed the legal rights of the clans over their lands. For being agrarian, this is then a true indigenist novel. But in the end, the almighty Royal Deed turns out to be useless in the face of the bullets, the armed forces dispatched by the oligarchy to impose might over right. The story ends with the massacre of the Yanacocha highlanders, a typical finale for this type of novel, the first of which, *Wata Wara*, was written in 1904 by the Bolivian author Alcides Arguedas.

The Sleepless Rider, however, is different in two respects. Unlike the usually grim and tragic Spanish-American indigenist novel, Scorza's *Sleepless Rider* contains humor, a rare trait within *indigenismo*. A few of its characters are