

farm hand. The Argentinean *gaucho* met a similar fate. In *Don Segundo Sombra*, Güiraldes portrayed the passing of the virile herdsman of the pampas, and in doing so foretold the advent of the modern, faceless man of today.

Güiraldes's work is a *Bildungsroman*. It is the story of Fabio, a waif who strikes up a friendship with Don Segundo Sombra, a unique gaucho who embodies a solitary and fatalistic kind of heroism, who calls for a return to traditional values and the love for the land and for freedom. After years of apprenticeship under don Segundo, Fabio becomes an accomplished gaucho. However, by then frontier life in Argentina has come to an end. Fabio has no choice but to assimilate into modern society, an embodiment of the gaucho who has become a mere shadow of a heroic past. The novel evokes the loss of the frontier, and Güiraldes takes leave of it with the tenderness of a poet, reviewing scenes of country life one by one. His apparently loose scenes are subtly interwoven by the evolution of Fabio, the waif who turns into an idealized frontiersman.

This English version expertly translates the art of Güiraldes who, while in Paris, assimilated the polished techniques of contemporary European avant-garde writers. Güiraldes's firsthand knowledge of the pampas enabled him to authentically portray Argentinean pastoral life and folklore. The second part of this book, "Background & Criticism" (80 pages), effectively complements the novel itself, with six studies by American and Argentinean critics, that balance biography, character study, and structural analysis. There is also a Selected Bibliography of almost 280 entries.

At the time of publication of *The Virginian* and *Don Segundo Sombra*, both American and Argentinean readers were left with a feeling akin to remorse for something of value which had been lost. What was lost was the frontiersman, who represented the link between modern man and the land. Thus, both novels buried irretrievably one world and foreshadowed another, that of the alienated man of today.

Diane Roberts

*Faulkner and Southern Womanhood*

Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1995. Pp. 264. \$18.00

Reviewed by Patricia Pacey Thornton

As we look back on the twentieth century, it becomes clear that the two most profound changes in America have been the growing confusion and radical redefinition, the "earthquake upheavals" (13), of gender and race. Diane Roberts's *Faulkner and Southern Womanhood* is a critical examination of the

treatment of both sexual and racial identity in one of the century's best fiction writers.

Roberts illustrates Faulkner's engagement with his society and his time as well as his troubled, sometimes contradictory, attitude toward both race and gender. The study is organized around six familiar representations of Southern women—the Confederate woman, the Mammy, the tragic mulatta, the new belle, the “night sister” or spinster, and the mother.

In each of the six chapters, Roberts begins by examining the stereotypes in the culture of the South, then looks at the image as it is portrayed in literature and popular culture, and ends by discussing Faulkner's re-examined and revised roles. Although Faulkner at times adopts the inherited Southern stereotype, at his best he shows the fluidity and dissolution of stereotypes and boundaries. As Roberts says, “Women can slip toward masculinity, ladies can slip toward whorishness, white can slip toward black” (xiv). Faulkner illustrates the breakdown of the “hostile binary of supposed opposites” (72)—white and black, male and female.

Although all the chapters offer fresh and stimulating discussions of Faulkner's texts, the best chapter is perhaps the one on the “Mammy.” Roberts defines the Confederate woman as “the seamless, elevated, desexualized white classical body constructed to suppress the feminine” and the “Mammy,” her opposite, “the food-giving, fecund, grotesque body endowed with all the messy physical properties found distasteful in white woman” (89). Roberts traces Faulkner's early “embarrassing burlesques” (49) to the complex, problematic portrayals of Dilsey Gibson and Molly Beauchamp. As she says, “the achievement of Dilsey in *The Sound and the Fury* is to ruthlessly deconstruct, then reassemble the Mammy in the degenerate New South” (57).

Roberts also presents refreshing views of the “tragic mulatta,” the woman caught between race, gender, and class who becomes the accessible sexual receptacle. She is “a spectre, a skeleton in the closet of the plantation South” (89). Clytie of *Absalom, Absalom*, for instance, “offers a glimpse into a world on the brink of racial and sexual collapse” (100). As the mulatta dissolves the boundaries between black and white, “the new belle” and the “night sister,” Roberts affirms, usher forth a new bisexuality combining feminine desire with masculine strength.

The final chapter makes some interesting comparisons with Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. The white mother in Faulkner's fiction, Roberts says, “betrays much anxiety about the place of childbearing and childrearing in the modern woman's life: these women reveal an alternating romanticism and rage” (192). She illustrates how both Caroline Compson and Addie Bundren reject sentimental motherhood and yet each rules their family “from her bed” (197).

There have been innumerable articles and several books written on Faulkner's treatment of women—notable among these have been Sally R. Page's *Faulkner's Women: Characterization and Meaning* (1972), David Williams's *Women in Faulkner: The Myth and the Muse* (1977), and Minrose C. Gwin's more recent books, *Black and White Women of the Old South: The Peculiar Sisterhood in American Literature* (1985), and *The Feminine and Faulkner: Reading (Beyond) Sexual Difference* (1990). However, Roberts's book is a significant addition to the ever-expanding body of criticism examining Faulkner's treatment of gender. Hers is a fresh and a feminist reading. For instance, she resists seeing the female body as corrupt as many of Faulkner's characters do. As she says, "Rather than being evil, these women are victims, brutalized by their culture, and to some degree by Faulkner's text" (130).

The book is a revision of a doctoral dissertation completed at Oxford University; it is solid and scholarly. Roberts has obviously read widely in Southern culture, literature and Faulkner criticism. It is however, also a lively, stimulating, even provocative look at Faulkner's characters. It is a book that the serious student of Faulkner will want to read and re-read.

Tony Tanner

*Henry James and the Art of Nonfiction*

Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1995. Pp. 112. \$22.50

Reviewed by George Bishop

A decade ago Tony Tanner published a slim volume entitled *Henry James: The Writer and His Work*, wherein he deftly toured through James's life and fictions. Now he has returned to examine a much less frequently treated aspect of James's art. *Henry James and the Art of Nonfiction* is composed of a series of three lectures delivered at Georgia Southern University in 1993. In this book, Tanner does us the service of taking James's nonfiction all of a piece, and strives for a view that would synthesize these disparate and apparently subordinate productions, from the perspective of a deeply read scholar of James.

Tanner's section titles—"Henry James and the Art of Travel Writing," "Henry James and the Art of Criticism," "Henry James and the Art of Autobiography"—are revelatory, in that the emphasis on each as a separate genre, and James's peculiar relation to that form, is subsumed by our attention to the "art" therein invoked. Tanner's assertion is no less than that, as with the novel, James "transformed" the nonfiction genres he worked in. If the travel essays seem too occasional, the criticism too unsystematic, or the autobiography too fragmentary to support this view, then we have missed the point: James's subtle aesthetic, his quirky and playful and utterly devoted attention to "art," is as much in evidence in these writings as in the major fictions.