

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.

Thus, in approaching James's travel writing, Tanner seizes upon a phrase from *English Hours*—"there is a presence in what is missing" (9)—and employs it as rationale for James's occlusion of particulars, blurring of distinctions, and resistance to analysis, in favor of the invocation of a generalized and purposefully vague "sense" of place. Independent of the usual geographies of place found in travel writing, Tanner tracks what seems to be figural in James's descriptions—places of absence, ruin, emptiness, a strangely yet necessarily depopulated landscape. Significantly, then, James's complaints about his native country's flatness, openness, and lack of depth in *The American Scene* become less a matter of cultural antagonism than a question of textualizing potential, the presence or absence of a reservoir of possibilities for construction. Tanner's method here is psychoanalytic and deconstructive, yet without fanfare, and thus encourages a re-reading of the travel literature freed from the constraints of critical posturing.

Turning to the criticism, Tanner's thesis is that despite James's rather clearly demarcated formal connections to the novelistic practice of his contemporaries, James's criticism precisely eludes such formal classifications, heading instead toward an immersion in the larger sense of critical attention, of a living within the "house of fiction" that amounts to what for James was the only real method of criticism, one which redistributes the roles between artist and critic. Tanner here acknowledges what is clear in the fictions yet so seldom practiced by his critics: that James complicates and dislocates our ordinary distinctions between fiction and nonfiction, between art and "the real." He proceeds on this basis to offer a careful rhetorical analysis of James's essay on Besant, concluding that it contains, in fact, a statement of the end point of James's critical views—that no theory can hope to account for the myriad ways in which writing operates. James's criticism itself explodes in metaphor, in a deliberate avoidance of exclusion and prescription. Through a kind of quadrangulation of James's critical essays on George Eliot, Turgenev, Balzac, and Flaubert, all of which identify and seek to avoid a particular novelistic excess, Tanner explores with especial sharpness the nuances of the critical question of James's realism; and yet paradoxically provides a reading of James's theory of the novel that is itself architectural and schematic, amid insistences that James's own was not.

Tanner's reading of the autobiographical texts, wherein he notes how the scenic imagination displaces and, in fact, replaces conventional chronology or narrative sequencing, affords him the opportunity for extended meditations on the resonance of certain words—on "flush," on "others"—that mirror and complement James's own meditations on the lingering sense of experience, the resonant scene of memory. In method these essays are quietly deconstructive, presenting rare glimpses of Henry James as a scene-making exhibitionist, a venturer into the erotic, self-deprecating, playful, humorous. And despite an occasional tone of breathless admiration, they are themselves examples of

admirable criticism—engaged, assured, elegant, enormously suggestive, always lucid, and often brilliant.

Ian Wojcik-Andrews

*Margaret Drabble's Female "Bildungsromane": Theory, Genre, and Gender*

New York: Peter Lang, 1995. Pp. viii + 224. \$49.95

Reviewed by Jane Campbell

This book, Volume 6 of Peter Lang's series *Writing About Women: Feminist Literary Studies*, has a promising subtitle and an engaging project, that of applying Marxist-feminist analysis to Drabble's novels. In his first four chapters, Ian Wojcik-Andrews discusses, in general terms, female appropriation of the *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlerroman*; "family matters" (marriage) in Drabble's first novel, *A Summer Bird-Cage* (1963); housework in her second, *The Garrick Year* (1964); and "narratives of community" (Sandra Zagarell's term) in *The Needle's Eye* (1972). Chapter Five, "The *Bildungsroman*: Violent Conventions, Female Relations," returns to these three novels and sets them beside examples of male-centered *Bildungsroman*. In a subsection entitled "Mothers and Daughters," there is a brief discussion of Drabble's *Jerusalem the Golden* (1967); two additional subsections are labeled "Childhood and Children" and "Notes Toward a Pre-Oedipal Theory of Genre." Chapter Six, "The *Bildungsroman* as *Künstlerroman*: Autobiography, Memory, Identity," begins with the marginalization of the female by Wordsworth, Mill (surprisingly), and Wells, moves to Drabble's representation of women writers in her first novel, and concludes with a summary of Drabble's own journey as a writer; here, *The Middle Ground* (1980) is introduced into the discussion, with the assumption that its heroine, Kate, can be identified with its author. A brief chapter, "Toward a Marxist-feminist Theory of the *Bildungsroman*," concludes the book.

There are some very good things in this study. The author's concentration on the two earliest novels (which are still critically neglected) produces a convincing demonstration of the decentering of the marriage plot by a new kind of narrative based on female relationships, and the exploration of women's work in *The Garrick Year* and of the importance of money in both texts is helpful in showing that there is more to interest a Marxist-feminist critic in these books than has been supposed. Equally well done is the description of the capitalistic entrepreneurship of the two fathers, Mr. Phillips and Mr. Bryanston, in *The Needle's Eye*. But I found the author's principles of inclusion/exclusion unclear and its organizing premises sometimes difficult to discern. If the story of young women's development in relation or opposition to the marriage plot is the focus, why is *The Millstone*, with its challenge to the bourgeois family ideal, omitted? (Its heroine elects to be a single parent and discovers love through nurturing her child.) In any discussion of *Künstlerroman* in Drabble, surely *The Waterfall*, with