

his knowledge of contemporary literary techniques, history, mythology, anthropology, sociology, and his own experience. These statements apply as well to other regions Bestard has explored just as carefully, namely, Mexico City (where he lived for twenty-seven years) (*La calle que todos olvidan*, 1982), the "Bajío," the area northwest of Mexico City (*En la piel del agua*, 1992), and Latin America as a whole (*La obsesión de Germán Ortega*, 1990).

In general, the stories deal with the Bech family in twentieth-century Beyualé along with other topics, which range from the conflict between so-called progress and the traditional Mayan way of life ("A distancia de una señal") to the federal Mexican government's lack of tact with the provinces ("El manatí"). Also, there are stories about misunderstanding the uniqueness of some minorities living on the peninsula, such as gypsies ("El viejo rodar de los gitanos") and Orientals ("Legado de dragón"). In addition, "El candor del cielo" deals with a flabbergasted non-Mayan whose wife's kidney stones have been successfully cured by a healer, a so-called *curandera*. Finally, readers will find "Los fantasmas de Simona" deliciously sensual. All in all, the stories are of high quality and should undoubtedly prove interesting to undergraduates and graduate students.

Besides the stories and their summaries, Daniel provides us with an introduction to Bestard's Beyhualé, a classification of Bestard's total output from 1966 to 1993, a handy glossary of regional terms, and a selected bibliography which should prove priceless to anybody interested in Bestard.

This anthology is a most welcome achievement in the development of the currently fledgling but extremely promising study of Bestard and Yucatecan literature in North America. This book is recommended to any library with an interest in Mexican literature, contemporary Mayan culture, and ethnic relations.

Alwin Fill et al., eds.

New-Found-Lands: Festschrift für Harro Heinz Kühnelt zum 70. Geburtstag
Tübingen: Narr. 1993. Pp. 274. DM 58

Reviewed by Axel Knoenagel

New-Found-Lands is a Festschrift honoring Harro Heinz Kühnelt, Professor of English at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. As such, its contents encompass the themes and research interests that have marked Kühnelt long and distinguished career: the relationship between literature and other art forms, the place of British and American literature in Germany and Austria, and the role of Austrian authors in England and America. With one exception, all of the articles in this collection were written by students or colleagues of Professor Kühnelt.

In his essay, "The Style of Exiles," Manfred Markus attempts to salvage Arthur Koestler's novel *Arrival and Departure* from the traditional negative critique. He points out that Koestler was not only expressing himself in a foreign language—as many exiles did—but also aiming at something different from high

art: "Koestler, as a novelist of ideas, had no reason to search for aesthetic uniqueness" (71). The literature of exile aimed, and aims, after all, primarily at conveying a political message.

Also concerned with politics, although from a very different angle, is the essay "To Be or Not to Be Taken Seriously," in which four British fictionalizations of Adolf Hitler (by Richard Hughes, George Steiner, Roald Dahl, and Beryl Bainbridge) are examined. Essentially, the essay consists of four book reviews which are then synthesized into basic statements about solving the elementary problem which lies "in the perspective from which to tackle his personality" (96). The four texts attempt to present a fictionalized Hitler in private rather than political contexts and consequently open spaces for revision of the traditional view of Hitler as exclusively a historic factor, but, as the author emphasizes, the political and historical realities hardly allow for such playful revision.

A very different kind of politics creates the context of Helga Ramsey-Kurz's essay, "Writing Back from Another Centre." Concerned with the critical stance toward that body of writing commonly subsumed under terms such as "Commonwealth Literature" or "New Literatures in English," Ramsey-Kurz argues that such terms are inappropriate since they "perpetuate a Eurocentric chronology of literary history" (147), whereas in reality "Commonwealth writers, instead of conceiving themselves as marginalized colonial subjects, enter a literary discourse that takes place in a cosmopolitan, or international, context" (149). Ramsey-Kurz reads a novel by Janette Turner Hospital as an example to suggest the invalidity of traditional views on Australian cultural self-understanding: "The intricate ensemble of character in *Charades* serves to examine and eventually transcend Eurocentric notions of time and space, history and geography and to offer an Australian historiography as an alternative" (149-50).

Finally, a very interesting essay from the point of view of fiction studies on Walker Percy's *The Thanatos Syndrome* aims at demonstrating that "the novel appears to be almost a fictional exemplification of Eric Voegelin's concept of 'gnosticism' in *The New Science of Politics*" (43). Unfortunately, Arno Heller wrote his article in German, thereby depriving many international readers of his insights, which place Percy firmly in modern philosophical discourse: "What was suspected of being a part of a neoconservative restoration a few years ago, today proves to be a plausible diagnosis of a situation generally considered negative. . . . Eric Voegelin and Walker Percy share the diagnosis and therapy of this development, since both view modernity as a process of deterioration and advocate the opening of the self to the buried transcendent sources of being as the only plausible alternatives" (59; my translation).

In its mixture of themes, genres, and languages, *New-Found-Lands* is a very mixed bag. Almost every reader will find something to criticize about the book, which is mostly concerned with texts from the margin rather than the core of the canon. But just as many will find some new and interesting material in these essays.