

Moreover, his quest for love and freedom is implied by the inhibitions and feelings of self-doubt which he carries with him from his former life, his heavy "wings of lead." For example, although he wishes to form friendships and intimate relationships with European women ("I would be the happiest man on earth if one of them agreed to marry me" [7]), whenever an opportunity arises, he bungles it by appearing ill at ease and intimidated, and by acting in a clumsy manner—a pattern of destructive behavior that intensifies his sense of alienation, isolation, and emotional dislocation. He comes under intense pressure to remain loyal to his traditional Muslim culture and at the same time to observe the norms of the European secular society in which he now lives. He cannot placate the one without violating the norms of the other. Each pulls him in a different direction. This clash between two different (and in many respects irreconcilable) cultures—traditional Arab-Islamic versus secular Western—pushes him to the brink with tragic consequences.

Earlier Arabic treatments of the theme of the East-West encounter and portrayals of exilic experiences have been relatively sketchy, presenting mainly two-dimensional characters. This novella, notwithstanding its brevity, is an exception. It provides a vivid portrayal of the harsh realities of exile as experienced by the protagonist (and by the growing numbers of Arab and other Middle Eastern people). *Ajnihah min Rasâs* is undoubtedly one of the most sophisticated treatments of the theme of displacement in modern Arabic literature to date. It also represents one of the most sustained attempts to utilize the stream of consciousness technique in that literature. The writer makes extensive and skillful use of this technique as he probes the tormented mind of his protagonist. The result is a highly artistic and gripping literary work.

Paul Delany and George P. Landow, eds.  
*Hypermedia and Literary Studies*  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991. Pp. 352

George P. Landow and Paul Delany, eds.  
*The Digital Word: Text-Based Computing in the Humanities*  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993. Pp. xii + 362

Reviewed by Michael Groden

The computer revolution is still only beginning. Word-processing programs have dramatically changed many scholars' writing habits and routines, but for the most part these programs are basically extensions, even if powerful ones, of pens, pencils, and typewriters. It is in such areas as data storage and retrieval, alternative systems for composing text, and hypertext and hypermedia that the computer can bring about greater changes, and most humanities scholars are only starting to investigate these potentials. Books such as *Hypermedia and Literary Studies* and *The Digital Word* are good introductions to the technology's possibilities, and curious investigators who consult these two essay collections should find ample provocation to think about ways in which the projects described here and the vi-

sions of the future that the technology inspires in the authors might be adaptable to their own concerns and interests.

The essays in *Hypermedia and Literary Studies* explore the possibilities of hypertext and hypermedia, computer-based organizational systems in which blocks of text (verbal, visual, aural) are connected by links and in which the user has considerable freedom to choose which links to follow. Hypertext has tremendous potential for transforming the ways in which literary works are presented. On a diskette or CD-ROM, or at a site on the Internet, the text of a work can be surrounded by annotation, criticism and scholarship of various kinds, other related literary or nonliterary works, film or audio versions, etc. Users can follow links that provide almost instantaneous connections from one part of the central work to any of these other items or from one item to another; the work then becomes part of a vast network or web. As Delany and Landow point out in their introduction (and as Landow argues in more detail in his book *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992] or Jay David Bolter suggests in *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing* [Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1991]), hypertext is important in at least two ways: (1) it puts the work in a variorum-like context, with the many parts of the apparatus easily accessible in a variety of ways, and (2) it reflects a model of human thought processes that is different from the linear, logical progression of print-based books, in this case a model based on associational logic and connections. Computer projects such as the "webs" of Dickens and Tennyson's *In Memoriam* that Landow has produced (on diskettes; both Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems, 1992) place works written for the print medium into a hypertext context with all its new potentials; another use of hypertext can be seen in a work of fiction such as Michael Joyce's *Afternoon* (on diskette; Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems, 1987), which was written specifically for the medium and explores the medium's possibilities from the ground up.

*Hypermedia and Literary Studies* contains a few essays of obvious interest to scholars of fiction, including Stuart Moulthrop's discussion of his hypertext version of Borges's story sequence "The Garden of Forking Paths," Delany and John K. Gilbert's description of a hypertext presentation of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, and Joseph Feustle's essay on his project involving the fin de siècle Spanish writer Rubén Darío. But any of the discussions of particular works and authors—included are articles on hypertext projects involving the Bible, Greek literature, Shakespeare, and emblem books from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—give illustrations of hypertext in action, and the various general articles explore the possibilities and problems that this new system opens up. Anyone interested in the potentials of hypertext for reading, criticism, and scholarship or pedagogy will benefit from the range of issues and texts that these essays explore.

*The Digital Word*, the editors' follow-up collection, moves out from hypertext into other uses of computer technology. Essays in this volume discuss such matters as information retrieval (both on a personal and on a public scale), text-management software, text markup systems (which is crucial for the big question of how to make projects compatible among the various specific environments that exist now—DOS, Mac, UNIX, World Wide Web—and others that will exist in the future), uses of the Internet and other on-line services for personal and public pur-

poses; and specific issues such as reading, composition instruction, scholarly critical editions, and computer-assisted criticism. Delany's essay "From the Scholar's Library to the Personal Docuverse" considers how a scholar might combine texts that exist in his or her personal computer and others that are available at public sites on the Internet in order to create a "personal docuverse" (defined by Delany as "a large collection of electronically stored and linked documents, connected to a computer network") that can be linked and searched however the scholar may choose. Using Joyce as his example, Delany outlines various models for such a docuverse. In another essay, Ian Lancashire argues that computer assistance on a critical study of Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* might be far less mechanical than such studies are usually assumed to be.

In general, the essays in *The Digital Word* assume more knowledge of and commitment to computer technology as a way in which scholarship will be conducted in the future than do the essays in the earlier book; they are more technical and discuss more specialized issues. The essays tend to be more about the form that critical and scholarly work might assume in the computer than about the content, but one of their most important messages is that the technological form has a profound effect on content. Both books contain a good deal of useful practical information for people wishing to begin using computers or to use them in more sophisticated ways, and both books are very good places for scholars working on fiction, or for literary scholars of any kind, to begin exploring some of the likely directions in which criticism and scholarship are likely to move in the next few years.

Feng Jikai

*The Three-Inch Golden Lotus*

Translated from the Chinese by David Wakefield

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994. Pp. 239

Reviewed by Jeffrey Twitchell

In the prefatory chapter to this novel on foot binding (originally published in 1985), Feng Jikai inserts a cautionary quatrain against jumping to conclusions about the story and its rather sensational subject matter: "If you're looking for lies, then all becomes lies;/If you're looking for truth, then all becomes truth;/But when you're really into the story,/You can't tell the difference between the two" (3). For foreigners, and a good many Chinese too, foot binding was a highly resonant symptom of the backwardness and cruelty of Old China. *The Three-Inch Golden Lotus* begins with a harrowing description of the actual process of binding in its most severe form, and the novel makes clear the general degradation of women's position in traditional Chinese society. Yet Feng is not primarily concerned with resurrecting an old evil as a means of commenting on issues of women's lot in China. As a social practice or political issue, foot binding is long dead, although one can still see some of its now elderly victims in many areas of China, and it has its analogue in the current debates over female circumcision. Granted the cruelty of the practice, the novel is more interested in what can only be called the culture