

by-your-leave-ism, don't-mind-if-I-do-ishness of pedestrians on the streets vexes motorists," 2). There are his characteristic word plays such as *seine Gehilfenleistungen bei vorliegender Handschrift* ("his performance as assistant with the manuscript at hand"), *eine Art Herzkäfer* ("A sort of darling little lamb," 141), and so forth. But the greatest challenge was to maintain the fluidity of style, the constant change of perspective of the narrator/robber, and the almost endless series of puzzling pastiches. There is a very good monograph on the subject, Thomas Bolli's *Inszeniertes Erzählen. Überlegungen zu Robert Walsers "Räuber"-Roman* (1991), using Todorov's system of different categories of literary discourse. He provides a very lucid insight into Walser's "reflektierende Rede" (above all the playful manipulation of the reader). Susan Bernofsky has achieved what every good translator aspires to: Her work reads like an original English text. The contemporary relevance of this author's work is illustrated by a Montreal production of "La Promenade" (*Der Spaziergang*) at the Usine C théâtre in 2005 with a virtuoso performance of Paul Savoie. The cover of this attractive volume shows a watercolor portrait of young Robert Walser as Karl Moor by brother Karl Walser (1894).

Psiche Hughes, ed.

*Violations: Stories of Love by Latin American Women*

Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. Pp. 186. \$45.00 \$19.95

Reviewed by Michael Hardin

In her introduction to *Violations: Stories of Love by Latin American Women*, Psiche Hughes establishes four categories of violation: "infringement of the social code; infringement of the religious code; indictment of historical and political structures; and perversion of the sexual ethos." Hughes's delineations of these categories provide socio-historical contexts for the stories in this collection, and thus some insight into the justification for her thesis. However, the categories overlap to such a degree that when she attempts to locate a particular story within a specific category, it is hard not to argue that it could just as easily fit one or more other categories.

The first story of the collection, Cristina Peri Rossi's "To Love or to Ingest," is a wonderful first-person narrative about a long-distance, anonymous affair. The narrator details the erotics of sex and eating, and even muses on the notion of eating either one's lover or one's enemy. While the beloved is a woman, the narrator's sex is not given until the final page or two, where we discover that the narrator is Carlos, a man. So what is the violation? Until we discover that the narrator is male, the violation appears to be that the relationship is homosexual. Given Peri Rossi's other writings, a homoerotic narrative would not come unexpected. So do we read this as a closeted narrative (and thus not a violation), or is the violation that Peri Rossi is writing as male (although not very convincingly), or is the violation that sex and ingestion are equated?

The story that deals most overtly with the homoerotic is Alicia Steimberg's "Young Amatista." Amatista and her friend, Mariolina, spend most of the story exploring their own and the other's sex in mutual masturbation. This story is the most overtly sexual and explicit. Even this story, however, seems reigned in by the fact that the two girls talk extensively about a male cousin while the sexual experimentation occurs, in effect bringing in the specter of heterosexuality within a highly homoerotic narrative.

The only other story that deals in any way with female-female desire is Elena Poniatowska's "Love Story." Teleca, the well-to-do protagonist, continuously berates and harasses her servant, Lupe. Again, the story is splendid, but the violation never leaves the protagonist's mind. If this is a "love story," then the love is based on domination. Thus, Teleca merely takes on the conventional male role and Lupe is placed in the conventional female role, and there is thus no violation of the social order. Since Teleca neither mentions nor acts upon her desire for Lupe, there is no violation of class or race difference either. The violation in the story is that Lupe defecates on Teleca's bed before she quits. However, that violation is not related to love, since Lupe cannot stand her mistress. This story also highlights one of the glaring omissions in this collection, the dearth of stories by or about working-class or poor women as well as Indian women or women of African descent.

One writer, Amonía Somers in "The Fall," does incorporate the full essence of violation. The narrative centers on an Afro-Uruguayan male who is seduced by a statue of the Virgin Mary. The statue speaks to him, kisses him, and asks him to caress her entire body in order to melt the wax and thus liberate her. Ultimately, she allows him to have sex with her; this act liberates her into spirit and kills him, although this too is liberating, since he is being hunted by the authorities for murder. This Mary not only engages in sex, she chooses a man who represents the epitome of a social pariah: being poor and a black criminal. In addition, she speaks of the hypocrisy of the Church, "I have to go on living their lies, with this stupid smile they have put on my face."

The cover of *Violations* depicts a woman and a man, both with European features and dressed in formal attire and jewels. Unfortunately, most of the examples of violation within the collection are bourgeois and do not threaten the great taboos within Latin America. The other shortcoming of this collection concerns the geographical limitation of the stories: of the sixteen stories, twelve come from three countries (Argentina, Mexico, and Uruguay) and one each from Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, and Peru. Writers from Central America, Chile, the Caribbean, and northern South America, for example, are not covered, and, given their numbers, I find myself disappointed by their absence. Overall, the stories are wonderful, but I keep getting frustrated by the fact that the selection hardly explores the stated theme of violation.