

The Tower and the Quintessence of Porterism" and "Last Flight to Byzantium: Patrick White's *Memoirs of Many in One*."

All the essays include, of course, "Works Cited" bibliographies. Yet it is worth pointing attention to the especially useful and lengthy bibliography of several pages developed by Dieter Riemenschneider for his essay, "Literary Criticism in Australia: A Change of Critical Paradigms." Riemenschneider is Professor of English literature at J. W. Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt, Germany, and has edited, among other books, *Critical Approaches to the New Literature in English*.

Before concluding this review, it is appropriate to note that Bruce Clunies Ross, not previously referred to, and Werner Senn are credited inside the volume as being "Editors" of *European Perspectives* together with "General Editor" Giovanna Capone. Only Professor Capone, though, is credited on the cover and she alone introduces the collection.

HERBERT C. JAFFA

Tania Modleski. *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Post-feminist" Age*. New York: Routledge, 1991. pp. 160. \$39.95; \$13.95 pb.

Tania Modleski's recent work, *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age*, offers a provocative discussion of the ways in which challenges posed to patriarchal culture by the feminist movement are quietly being neutralized through strategies of appropriation and denial, both in academia and in popular culture (particularly film), through the premature proclamation of a "postfeminist" climate. Modleski argues that one of the implications of the rise of gender studies as an alternative or more "democratic" application of the methods of feminist scholarship is that feminist struggles may appear to be relocated to an unlikely site within the patriarchal project. She suggests that recent texts which "focus on the question of male feminism as a 'topic' for men and women to engage . . . are bringing men back to center stage and diverting feminists from tasks more pressing than deciding about the appropriateness of the label 'feminist' for men" (6). While Modleski welcomes solidarity with males who support the aspirations of the feminist movement and is occasionally critical of women scholars (particularly Elaine Showalter) who appear, in her view, too ready to replace a rigorously feminist agenda with a less woman-centered focus, she raises a concern that the more positive potentials of gender studies might be subordinated to anti-feminist agendas. She argues convincingly that the neologism "postfeminist" prematurely forecloses on the promise of viable social change inherent in feminist questions and points out that anti-essentialist arguments can operate to serve patriarchal strategies of "divide and conquer," by reducing possibilities of organizing around the category "woman," while failing to address the

issues of race and sexuality that such arguments ostensibly raise in the first place.

Feminism Without Women moves on from its discussion of the political implications of academic debates over the condition and viability of feminist scholarship to expose a complementary anti-feminist subtext in popular culture. Modleski argues that in such an apparently feminized film as *Three Men and a Baby*, the image of potentially "kinder, gentler" males "works to efface female subjectivity by occupying the site of femininity" (7), while figures like Pee Wee Herman or the adolescent "man," Josh, in *Big*, posit flight from commitment and responsibility as an appropriate male response to feminist demands for accountability. (Significantly, this analysis of the cultural function of the Pee Wee Herman character would seem to be borne out by subsequent public response to the media scandal surrounding Paul Reuben's arrest.) Modleski goes on to demonstrate that strong female characters are both undermined and implicated in films promoting war and racism, (*Top Gun*, *Full Metal Jacket*, and *Gorillas in the Mist*), thus exposing the ways in which anti-feminist strategies are part of a broader oppressive agenda. Ways of "thinking and feeling about mass culture are so intricately bound up with notions of the feminine," she argues, "that the need for a feminist critique becomes obvious at every level" (23). According to Modleski, the inclination among culture critics to see the public as feminized in its submission to mass culture is hardly an argument for the inauguration of a "postfeminist" era. Rather, she would suggest that the tendency to apply the term "feminine" in ways that reinscribe traditional associations with weakness comprises yet another power play that raises oppressive initiatives on the backs and in the name of women.

While Modleski's text does not pretend to offer a comprehensive analysis of the backlash against feminist thought, her examples provide compelling evidence that a retrograde "postfeminist" attitude is gathering momentum. By observing and exposing some of the more insidious manifestations of this attitude in academic circles and the entertainment industry, she cautions against thoughtless acceptance of a label that activist feminists themselves could not endorse. *Feminism Without Women* comprises a series of observations about the implications of the inauguration of a patriarchally constructed "postfeminist" era and invites resistance to these tactics from feminists and feminist supporters. The text argues for the performative value of women's speech acts and decries the new trend to dismiss women's perspectives and voices under the assumption that the goals of feminism have been achieved, and hence, are no longer relevant. The work is constructed as a series of provocative observations of and challenges to complacency in the face of strategies that appear to support feminist goals, while working to counteract them.

Feminism Without Women would serve to provoke lively and productive discussions in both women's studies and gender studies courses alike. No doubt, such discussions would point out some of the problems with the text. For example, feminist students might object to the reduction of the work of Elaine Showalter and other prominent feminist critics to their points of complicity with the patriarchal label "postfeminist," without acknowledgement of their more positive accomplishments. Gender studies groups might explore the potential for conflation of "homosocial" and "homosexual" in a critique of homophobic Western culture (in the discussion of the film *Dead Poets Society*), or may wish to examine the implications of Modleski's position on anti-essentialist arguments to the study of gender constructions. The chapter on pornography is bound to incite lively discussion from all quarters.

Feminism Without Women admits to a tone of "worry" (22) about the direction of recent academic and cultural responses to feminist thought. The text offers a warning against abandoning the potential contributions of feminist theory and practice at such an early moment in the exploration of what may be achieved. Certainly, it is beholden upon scholars in the fields of women's studies and gender studies to address the questions outlined by this text, and for the academic community to hold itself critically accountable to the concerns raised.

MARIE LOVROD

Charles A. Hallett and Elaine S. Hallett. *Analyzing Shakespeare's Action: Scene Versus Sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991. pp. xi, 230. £27.95.

As a performance-theory text, this book will appeal primarily to readers directly involved with the production and performance of Shakespeare's plays. The authors of *Analyzing Shakespeare's Action* assume some familiarity on the part of their readers with the subject and its terminology; however, the clarity of their argument and discussion makes this a very readable book, accessible also to the non-specialist. A particularly apt quotation from Henry Fielding prefaces the volume: "It becomes an author generally to divide a book, as it does a butcher to joint his meat, for such assistance is of great help to both the reader and the carver." *Analyzing Shakespeare's Action* is concerned with the division of the acts and scenes of Shakespeare's plays into smaller dramatic units, and the division and organization of the contents of the book itself are exemplary and of great help to the reader.

Theatre practitioners and literary scholars alike generally consider the scene to be the smallest unit of a play. But the Halletts identify, within both acts and scenes, still smaller units of action which they call the beat, the sequence, and the frame. Chapter I re-examines the scene to question "the widespread assumption that to analyze a *designated scene* is to analyze an *action*" (1), and finds that while the scene is not always a