tral texts, and begins his conclusion with an analysis of a short story by Grace Paley, he challenges traditional understandings of the Holocaust (where regardless of being on the uniqueness or universal side of the debate, most of the canonical texts are male-authored), and provides one more reason why anyone interested in the Holocaust, and in cultural studies, should pay attention to this book.[2]

ADRIENNE KERTZER

NOTES

[1] In a letter to *The New York Times Book Review* when *Maus* appeared on the fiction bestseller list, Spiegelman protested, "It's just that I shudder to think how David Duke — if he could read — would respond to seeing a carefully researched work based closely on my father's memories of life in Hitler's Europe and in the death camps classified as fiction" (LaCapra 145).

[1] Given the marginal status of children's literature, the place of Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* in children's reading may only confirm the masculinity of the Holocaust canon.

WORKS CITED

LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Memory after Auschwitz.* Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1998.

~

Brenda Maddox. *Yeats's Ghosts: the Secret Life of W. B. Yeats.* New York: HarperCollins, 1999. Pp. 474. US $32.00, Can $46.50.

In the "Introduction" to her new biography of Yeats, Brenda Maddox comments that Yeats invented himself so many times and so successfully that he is "difficult to capture between two covers" (xiii). This elusiveness, and, I might add, allusiveness, becomes especially apparent because Maddox focuses not only on his marriage to George in 1917 and the spirit communicators that the couple quickly encountered, but also, though not exclusively, on the many different relationships Yeats had with various women in the years preceding and following. We encounter, for example, the most detailed analysis so far of the haunting influence his mother had on his life both before and after she died. Maddox's treatment recalls the spectre of the mother tormenting Stephen in Joyce's *Ulysses.* The relationship with the sisters Yeats, Lily and Lolly, is also presented in more detail than appears in many prior biographical treatments of Yeats such as those of Ellmann, Jeffares, Hone or the recent excellent biography by R.F. Foster which, of course, in its defense, covers only the first half of Yeats's life. Though William M. Murphy's fine book *Family Secrets* does provide us with a parallel treatment of Lily and Lolly and their artistic enterprises, Maddox is better at telling the story of the poet and his mother. Also moving in and out between the covers with Yeats in *Yeats's Ghosts* are, among others, such women as Olivia Shakespear, in several incarnations, Mabel Dickinson, Margot Ruddock, Edith

Shackleton Heald, Dorothy Wellesey, Ethel Mannin and of course the Gonnes, Iseult and Maud. Behind all of these floats the ghost of the Pre-Raphaelite woman in whose ideal of beauty Yeats was perilously entangled. Maddox is careful to set all this material in the context of the political, occult, social, economic, and even medical and dental circumstances of the times.

Since most of these liaisons and relationships are dealt with in some detail, it is somewhat surprising that Annie Horniman and the problems of the Abbey Theatre are barely mentioned. Similarly surprising is that while Yeats's social, political, emotional and business contacts with Lady Gregory and Maud are described adequately and with precision, Maddox is not nearly as elaborate nor as detailed as R.F. Foster in her treatment of Yeats's experience with these two women. What is new in *Yeats's Ghosts* is that Maddox sees not Maud but rather Willy as the one with the sexual problems. Similarly innovative is Maddox's careful and sensitive description of Yeats's involvement in the life of Iseult Gonne both before and after both of their marriages. Consequently, when the reader encounters these many reinventions of Yeats in the letters and documents surrounding all of these many women and others, it becomes apparent that the ghosts in the Yeats story are not just those Yeats referred to as "George's Ghosts." And so, the British edition of the manuscript titled, *George's Ghosts: A New Life of W.B. Yeats*, published at the same price by Picador and as a different book, with different pagination, paragraphing and prelim pages as well as better quality paper, photos and hardback cover, nevertheless has a less appropriate title. Even the "Epilogue" in *Yeats's Ghosts*, regarding Yeats's skeleton, reveals ghosts constantly disappearing and reappearing in the several graves in which Yeats was buried. Maddox is quite good on the problems involved in identifying just whose bones lie in Drumcliff Churchyard. This book, then, is about the ghosts of Yeats, and the ghosts around Yeats, including his family and especially George, who served as secretary, wife, lover, friend, teacher, medium, business manager, real estate agent and even nurse and mother to Yeats in his later years.

The George in *Yeats's Ghosts* is a much more varied, tolerant and stronger figure than I have encountered elsewhere. In fact, as in *Nora*, her book on Joyce and Nora Barnacle, Brenda Maddox has modified (mostly male) criticism's view of the "great" man and his life by providing a distinctly woman's perspective. Her account of the Yeats's honeymoon at the Ashdown Forest Hotel is a good example. Maddox sees the relationship largely from George's point of view, arguing, with a moderate amount of success, that George used perhaps mostly the ruse, perhaps sometimes the reality, of communication with the spirits to sustain Yeats's interest in young married life, more specifically sex and children. At one point she argues that the auto-

matic script became "an exotic exercise in family planning" (97) that allowed George to control her marriage. Sceptics will be delighted. Similarly startling is Maddox's revelation that the expected baby is spoken of in the script as alternately a Messiah or Redeemer "like Christ or Buddha" (98) and that earlier, George had used astrology to attempt to entrap Yeats into marriage.

On the other hand, the George Yeats we encounter, though imperfect, is not basically a mean or dishonest person. Maddox shows us a woman who, living with a difficult, eccentric, famous, sometimes arrogant and selfish man, managed, more often than not, with a great deal of intelligence, discretion, tolerance and magnanimity. Yeats was not nearly so sensitive in his dealings with the opposite sex. Maddox's account of an incident involving Margaret Graham-Perry Gregory, wife of the recently killed Robert Gregory, reveals the especially female recognition by both Maddox and George that a woman who had just lost a child and a husband should not be publicly insulted over dinner in her own family home by a famous, large and powerful family "friend." Maddox also provides much detail concerning the manner in which the Yeatses decorated their many dwellings.

Sometimes, however, Maddox is less than persuasive. For example, she forgives Mabel Dickinson's attempts to use the threat of pregnancy to force Yeats to marry her. Maddox reasons that menstruation is an uncertain process and that Dickinson simply missed her period and genuinely believed she was pregnant. Yeats and his psychic friends were not fooled. In another passage Maddox interprets "The Second Coming" from an "obstetrical" (131) point of view, suggesting that the rough beast in the poem came to fruition as a result of Yeats's concerns about the development of Anne Yeats in her mother's womb. In fact, if there is a weakness in *Yeats's Ghosts*, it is Maddox's tendency to use biographical details too aggressively to analyze poetry. Accordingly, her treatment of Yeats's possible apprehensions about fatherhood results in a misreading of "The Dolls." Maddox places too much emphasis on the negative portrayal of the infant, but overlooks the disagreeable qualities of its artificial alternatives, the dolls themselves. Her references to Yeats's mother to develop a Freudian analysis of "Among School Children" and the origins of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" and "Leda and the Swan" are similarly flawed. On the other hand, the idea that Yeats was dramatically affected by the absence of maternal love is a view worthy of more exploration. On the other hand again, Maddox overstates her case in declaring that this is *the* "secret of Yeats" (189).

More positively, the reader, as opposed to perhaps the scholar, cannot help but be delighted with the manner in which Maddox establishes settings and characters like a fiction writer. Especially memorable are the many descriptions of Yeats and also the deathbed scene that closes chapter sixteen.

Maddox's sense of humor and wit are also attractive. Examples are her comments regarding the use of the name George by Yeats and Lady Gregory and her description of Yeats as "phallically challenged" (298). Her parenthetical explanation of Bricriu's withered right hand in *The Only Jealousy of Emer* is hilarious.

This is clearly an author who has done careful research, and who loves the variety of life, the traditional subject matter of history (i.e. military and political and religious history) and the personal and domestic detail. Unfortunately, sometimes she loves not wisely, but too well, and the exotic and even outrageous are foregrounded. Nevertheless, this book is an enjoyable and informative read that will undoubtedly result in a good deal of rereading, uninventing and reinventing by both the naïve explorer of Irish Culture and the committed academic.

DANIEL S. LENOSKI

WORKS CITED

Ellman, Richard. *Yeats: The Man and the Masks.* New York: Dutton, 1948.

Foster, R.F. *W.B. Yeats: A Life, I The Apprentice Mage, 1865-1914.* Oxford and New York. Oxford UP, 1997.

Hone, Joseph. *W.B. Yeats, 1865-1939.* London: Macmillan, 1962.

Jeffares, A.N. *W.B. Yeats: Man and Poet.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949.

Maddox, Brenda. *Nora: A Biography of Nora Joyce.* London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988.

Murphy, William Michael. *Family Secrets: William Butler Yeats and His Relatives.* Syracuse UP, 1995.

~

Michael Simpson. *Closet Performances: Political Exhibition and Prohibition in the Dramas of Byron and Shelley.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998. pp. xvi, 470. $55.00.

The Acknowledgments at the beginning of Michael Simpson's book commence as follows: "Rather than saluting the many who have selflessly assisted with this work, it would almost be more pleasurable to acknowledge those few who might have helped but did not, especially since they may even have the temerity not to know who they are. The corporate ethic and professional self-preservation unfortunately forbid such an indulgence, and I must settle for ingratiation" (xi). Unfortunately, both the ponderous style and the supercilious, archly contrarian persona are characteristic of the whole book, which is almost five hundred pages long.

The style may be mandated, in part, by the persona; it recalls the linguistic terrorism familiar from the days of deconstruction, a school to which Simpson owes a qualified allegiance. It is certainly marked by what Veblen might call conspicuous complexity — especially in a kind of expletive construction to which Simpson is addicted: e.g., "*How* Hunt's essay and the *Examiner* as a whole coordinate these contradic-