

both a writer and a cultural figure is too well communicated throughout this collection to have the collection's title obscure this excellent focus.

I also wonder about this collection's somewhat awkward situating of itself as "offer[ing] a (mainly) non-Caribbean, North Atlantic reading of [Lovelace's] fiction" (Schwarz, Introduction xii). Although an acknowledgement of the collection's limitations can be quite important, Schwarz's announcement that "I have never heard a parang band, danced the Bamboula, nor seen a stickfight, and I guess this is true for many of the contributors to this collection" (Introduction xviii) can seem rather jarring, especially since the essays themselves do not seem to preserve this sense of 'outsiderness.' The essays are not concerned with viewing Lovelace from a distinctly North Atlantic perspective, but instead work to elucidate Lovelace's position within Trinidad itself. With, for example, Schwarz's own exploration of folk forms (religion and dance) and the comparison of Lovelace's work with the work of various other Trinidadian writers (namely, C. L. R. James in Alan Love's essay and Lawrence Scott in Patricia Murray's), this collection demonstrates careful research which has mitigated, though perhaps not solved, the problem of having almost solely non-Caribbean contributors.

As I hope is apparent, my concerns with this collection come not in response to weaknesses in the collection itself, but rather to its reluctance to see and communicate its own importance. This collection is a vital contribution to scholarship on Lovelace not only in furthering critical discussions but in motivating interest in Lovelace's lesser known works. Furthermore, it offers engaging essays that work well together to produce a collection that is unified in ways that few essay collections accomplish. Readers of this collection need not worry about any of its potential weaknesses since it offers many strengths.

Veronica Austen

Gill Plain and Susan Sellers, eds. *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. \$125 (U.S.).

A History of Feminist Literary Criticism, a collection of essays edited by Gill Plain and Susan Sellers, provides "not a 'post-feminist' history that marks the passing of an era, but rather a 'still-feminist' one that aims to explore exactly what feminist criticism has done and is doing from the medieval era to the present" (1). The editors rightfully represent their "freshly commissioned chapters" (3) as both accessible introductions and invaluable resources—due to the depth and breadth of the authors' engagement with the original source

materials—for veteran scholars, delivering on this promise with thorough yet stimulating readings of the “divergent, dissonant, and challenging encounters” (3) that comprise feminist literary criticism.

The first section, “Pioneers and Protofeminism,” concentrates on the literary heritage and the foundational theorists that preceded and influenced second-wave feminism. While Carolyn Dinshaw cautions that it is “crucial *not* to regard” Geoffrey Chaucer’s, Christine de Pizan’s, and Margery Kempe’s works as “protofeminist” (24, emphasis in original), she illustrates how their texts “have informed modern and postmodern feminist preoccupations with gender” (24). Helen Wilcox focuses on how in the Renaissance and the seventeenth century women’s “increased literary production in private and public, and their active participation as consumers as well as creators of texts, . . . gave shape to the prevailing questions of subsequent feminist literary criticism” (40). On the other hand, Susan Manly traces how Mary Wollstonecraft’s writing is a response to specific pieces of misogynistic, male-produced literature (e.g., Milton, Rousseau, and Burke), before demonstrating how certain writers from Wollstonecraft’s own era through Victorian times—from Maria Edgeworth to John Stuart Mill—reflect and expand on her feminist tenets. After reporting on the politics of feminist literary criticism in Virginia Woolf’s era, Jane Goldman explicates the major arguments of Woolf’s key feminist essays, focusing primarily on her feminist manifesto, *A Room of One’s Own*. In addition to elucidating Simone de Beauvoir’s “famous distinction between sex and gender” (86) in *The Second Sex*, Elizabeth Fallaize focuses on how Beauvoir “tie[s] the myths [of Woman] into an analysis of power relations within the couple, placing sexuality at the heart of the mystery of the other and trying to gauge the potential of the couple for the near-impossible state of reciprocity” (94).

The second section, “Creating a Feminist Literary Criticism,” is perhaps not as engaging as the first section but more helpful to scholars in need of concise yet comprehensive histories of second-wave feminism. Mary Eagleton’s “Literary Representations of Women” and Helen Carr’s “A History of Women’s Writing” provide overviews of the debates from the late-1960s and 1970s regarding feminist canon (re)formation, literature, theory, and identity politics. Linda Anderson reports on the discord surrounding the efficacy of “Autobiography and Personal Criticism” to “deconstruct the unity and hegemony of the critical subject and its claims to objectivity” (139), thereby “empowering otherwise marginalized groups” (140). Arlene R. Keizer’s history of black feminist literary criticism concludes that it is “characterized by the dynamic interplay between the work of literary recovery . . . and the work of theorising [sic] black women’s social positioning and liter-

ary representations of black female experience” (164). And Caroline Gonda sets out to debunk various myths of origin surrounding lesbian feminist criticism by illustrating that it “pre-dates the rise of second-wave feminism” (170). Finally, Calvin Thomas’s engrossing “Men and Feminism” tackles the incongruity of male feminist scholarship by demonstrating how the “linguistic turn” of the mid-twentieth century and the “rectal turn” in the 1990s has enabled men to engage with and contribute to feminist literary criticism, while acknowledging that “whether or not such theoretical studies qualify as feminism or do anything at all to assist transformative feminist critique remains quite open” (203).

The essays in the third section, “Poststructuralism and Beyond,” “introduce ... a ‘paradigm shift’ in feminist literary criticism ... in which the meaning of ‘woman’ as a signifying term is subject to its most radical destabilizations” (210) by poststructuralist, psychoanalytic, French, postcolonial, queer, and technological feminist scholars. Claire Colebrook traces poststructuralist feminist literary critics’ debt to and deviations from Western metaphysics in order to contextualize and examine their contributions to creating and destabilizing the idea of “woman.” Madelon Sprengnether takes on Freud’s critics by illustrating “how time-bound, yet also useful, his texts have proved for feminists who have laboured to detect the loopholes in his arguments regarding sexual difference(s) and practices, and the construction of social authority, while also proposing flexible, productive and challenging alternatives” (253). In order to combat the impulse to conflate Cixous’s, Irigaray’s, and Kristeva’s writings as monolithic French feminist criticism, Judith Still untangles their respective theoretical arguments and then provides an overview of each author’s more recent writings. By “making the existing social relations that produce hierarchical difference visible” (298), Chris Weedon argues that postcolonial feminist criticism can destabilize “a Eurocentric gaze that privileges Western notions of liberation and progress and portrays Third World women primarily as victims of ignorance and restrictive cultures and religions” (289). Heather Love provides a fascinating history that explains how queer theory’s emphasis on desire as political is both indebted to and different from lesbian, gay male, and feminist concerns. And Stacy Gillis maintains in “Feminist Criticism and Technologies of the Body” that “Understanding gender—both in terms of identity and representation—as technological provides one escape route from the reification of the Enlightenment body [read white male]” (333).

Although this collection works to summarize feminist literary criticism’s history, Susan Gubar’s postscript reminds us, “‘feminism’ has not, alas, become antiquated” because “the gains inside the academy have not been

matched by comparable changes outside it” (340). *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism's* seventeen essays illustrate how feminist literary criticism has and therefore can continue to adapt to and reflect women's concerns within every era, including our own.

Kate Faber Oestreich

Stephen Clingman. *The Grammar of Identity: Transnational Fiction and the Nature of the Boundary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv, 266. \$120.00.

Stephen Clingman's *The Grammar of Identity* unfolds a comparative reading of literary fiction in English that ranges around the globe and reaches back to the mid-nineteenth century. As a South African-born University of Massachusetts professor, Clingman remarks, in his preface, his personal investment in the theory his book develops: a theory of identity as navigation, articulated through novels that construct a transnational form of fiction, which he dubs *transfiction*.

Theoretically, Clingman takes cues from Benedict Anderson and Arjun Appadurai, on the national and the global; from Homi Bhabha and James Clifford, on hybridity and mobility; from Walter Benjamin, on the idea of constellation; from Levinas, on the ethics of encounter; and from Freud, on the uncanny—and on metonymy, the representative connections and contiguities which assume a central importance for his reading of transnational traversals, both social and psychological.

Clingman brings a similarly eclectic group of authors into dialogue with each other: Caryl Phillips, Salman Rushdie, Anne Michaels, W. G. Sebald, J. M. Coetzee, and Nadine Gordimer—but also Joseph Conrad, Charlotte Brontë, and Jean Rhys. The works of these writers “become an inner map of our world where the transnational is still a space of crossing”—a theoretical crossing that entails the critic's practical crossing of “prevailing categories of analysis ... the modern and postmodern, the colonial and postcolonial.” He continues, “The idea is to set both Sebald and Rushdie together, and to put them both in relation to Conrad [for] a different kind of navigation ... to see if it can tell a different kind of story” (31–32). The co-ordination of canonical “world literature” and postcolonial texts takes a fresh approach to comparative studies in English literature, in part through the priority he places on metonymy and the poetics of contact and boundary-crossing.

Clingman's poetics of the transnational carries a modest cost, in the odd