

nosząca w przeważającej mierze wnioski interesujące, trafne, przekonujące, niekiedy nowatorskie. Omówienie łączy autor z oceną, wychodząc ze słusznego założenia, iż funkcjonalność znaczeniowa technik narracyjnych przesądza o sukcesie artystycznym. Wykazuje udane bądź chybotliwe posługiwanie się narracją w wielu utworach — waloryzując te w swej przeważającej większości nie budzą zastrzeżeń. Rozdział ostatni przynosi użyteczne podsumowanie zasadniczych wniosków pracy. W trakcie wywodu Lothe umiejętnie odnosi się do poglądów badaczy — odmiennych, zbliżających bądź tożsamy — na poruszane przez siebie kwestie. Wiele jej wartości realizuje się na płaszczyźnie szczegółowych sądów interpretacyjnych. Do najciekawszych partii należą rozdziały: 2 — przeprowadzający świetną analizę kontrastowną narracji w *Jądrze ciemności* i *Grze losu*, oraz 3, 5, 6, 9 i 12 — prezentujące odpowiednio błyskotliwe i interesujące charakterystyki narracji w *Placówce postępu*, *Opowieści*, *Murzynie z załogi „Narcyzna”*, *Lordzie Jimie* i *W oczach Zachodu*. Słabsze nieco są rozdziały 4, 8 i 10, poświęcone narracji *Tajnego wspólnika*, *Smugi cienia* i *Nostromo*: zbyt dygresyjne, w znacznym stopniu nie dotyczące kwestii należących do problematyki narracji sensu stricto (aczkolwiek również przynoszące wiele wartościowych analiz i ciekawych stwierdzeń). Natomiast rozdziały 10 i 11, charakteryzujące narrację *Nostromo* i *Tajnego agenta*, ujawniają brak panoramicznego spojrzenia, ujęć syntetyzujących, wyróżniających zjawiska typowe dla narracji całej powieści. Mimo swych mankamentów *Conrad's Narrative Method* jest niewątpliwie pozycją wartościową, wypełniającą jedno z nielicznych luk w Conradologii, stymulującą do przemyśleń i dalszych studiów nad dokonaniem jednego z największych mistrzów narracji w literaturze światowej.

Wiesław Krajka Lublin

Elizabeth Abel. VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THE FICTIONS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

If the pre-1989 Virginia Woolf scholarship may be said to have lacked a professional, psychoanalytical study, Elizabeth Abel's book is

certainly one to make up for this deficiency. As the title itself suggests, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* is just as much about Woolf's novels as about the psychoanalytical texts of the time. During the period between 1910–1930, the two decades crucial for the novelist's development, the classic discourse of psychoanalysis was being formed. It was the time when the work of Freud was introduced England (nota bene first printed by Hogarth Press), as well as the period of a sudden growth of the London psychoanalytical culture, centered around Melanie Klein and her revolutionary lectures. The interplay between these two modes of discourse: the novelistic and the psychoanalytical is the founding structural principle of Abel's work. The author points in the Preface that her book is "less concerned with influence than intertextuality", and that she will consider the novels side by side with the theoretical "fictions", consistently upholding an even balance between the two. That kind of approach is perhaps surprising to a reader accustomed to standard critical analysis, where the emphasis usually lies on the literary work, its meaning elucidated by the pertinent theory. In Abel's study there exists two-way interaction, literary and theoretical texts mutually illuminating each other. The author describes this correspondence in the following way: "by alerting us to certain recurrent but submerged narrative tensions in Woolf's texts, psychoanalysis helps make us the discerning readers she desired. Woolf's fiction, in turn, de-authorizes psychoanalysis, clarifying the narrative choices it makes, disclosing its fictionality."

In accordance with this underlying assumption, the study begins with a chapter devoted exclusively to the discussion of the theoretical component of the analysis. It introduces the concept of "gendering of the narrative" as prominent in the fictions of psychoanalysis. Abel begins with pointing out to Virginia Woolf's special preoccupation with "re-telling the past in installments, and notices that this process is necessarily affected by the gender of the person "re-telling" the story. The author proceeds to conclude that the tension between the patriarchic and the matriarchic origins that constitutes the basis for the work of Freud and Melanie Klein, respectively, is something Woolf was aware of and something her texts exhibit. The remaining part of the study is a detailed



documentation of the above thesis. Abel conducts an examination of Woolf's novels as containing narratives deeply engaged in the psychoanalytical discourse, and exemplifying such key oppositions as father/mother, sexuality/hunger, and Oedipal/pre-Oedipal.

Mrs. Dalloway is the first of the novels analyzed from this perspective. Chapter two of the study presents the work in terms of Clarissa's evolution from Bourton to London, a journey away from the idyllic pre-Oedipal world of adolescence and emotional closeness primary to the separation with the mother and to the breaking of other female bonds. Abel examines how Clarissa's narrative exhibits a sense of loss and sacrifice created by marriage, childbirth, and the move into London's patriarchic world governed by the Bradshaw principles of Conversion and Proportion. Abel proceeds to define Elizabeth Dalloway as a product of this new male-centered environment, her story being a father-daughter narrative, as opposed to Clarissa's account of mother loss. Such interpretation of these literary narratives is intertwined with an analysis of Freud's three essays on female sexuality, presenting female development as an involuntary but required movement towards the father and away from the mother.

Abel continues by applying a similar viewpoint in her considerations about *To the Lighthouse*. She sees the novel as crucial for determining Woolf's definite psychoanalytical stance, and devotes two subsequent chapters of the book to the study of James' and Cam's patricentric narratives of growth and loss, both treated as Oedipal fictions of socially required separation from the mother. Played against them is Lily Briscoe's story, clearly matricentric in nature. Chapter 4, particularly impressive in its original insight, deals with the representation of the mother's presence and, more significantly, her absence as evidenced in the space of the canvas.

The next important stage in Woolf's evolution is marked by her discursive texts: *Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*. Abel examines the former as Woolf's most direct and overt expression of her matricentric orientation, while presenting the latter works as foreshadowing a turn in the novelist's perspective (the female protagonist is a "daughter of an educated man") brought about by the onset of fascism

and its appropriation of the mother figures as part of its otherwise patriarchal ideology. The author concludes her study with the analysis *Between the Acts* as reflecting Woolf's "unwilling turn" to the patricentric world of Freud.

Abel's study is almost flawless in its scholarly precision. Her meticulous analytical eye moves from intertextual to sentence levels with ease and logic, providing necessary formal links making her intent clear for the reader at every step. The book's transparent organization is of extreme importance considering the complex and arcane subject. Abel, aware of its subtle nature, presents her argument forcefully and convincingly, yet is careful to avoid far-reaching conclusions and oversimplification. One might object to her selection of the texts considered, especially not including a work as crucial as *The Waves*. The author's original insight and solid critical scholarship might contribute significantly to our understanding of this text, still mysterious and escaping exhaustive interpretation.

Justyna Kostkowska, Lublin

POSTMODERN FICTION — A Bio-Bibliographical Guide Edited by Larry McCaffery, Greenwood Press — New York, Westport (Connecticut), London Greenwood Press Inc., 1986 ss. 604 + XXIII.

„Proza postmodernistyczna — przewodnik biograficzno-bibliograficzny” powstał przede wszystkim z myślą o literaturoznawcach zajmujących się literaturą współczesną, jednakże przejrzysty, encyklopedyczny układ materiału oraz charakterystyczna dla większości badaczy amerykańskich jasność i precyzja wywodu nadają tej książce znacznie bardziej uniwersalny charakter, niż można by sądzić po trudności poruszanych w niej zagadnień. Studentom „Przewodnik...” służyć może jako podręcznik historii literatury ostatnich 25–30 lat, czytelnikowi zainteresowanemu po amatorsku humanistyką zastąpi niejeden „specjalistyczny” tom wprowadzający powierzchownie w problematykę nowoczesnej prozy i krytyki, a wszyscy inni — fachowi i niefachowi odbiorcy — traktować mogą wspomnianą książkę jako opatrzone wnikliwymi komentarzami słownik współczes-