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gradual difference between heaven and earth, though Kuester's argument does not make it entirely clear how this would have prevented the fall. Rather than a symptom of the fallen state of human nature, ambiguous and thus already fallen language precedes the fall itself (203), in fact, becomes the immediate cause of the fall (167). In the end, "to repair the ruins of our first parents" becomes possible not through a re-

Kuester presents a multitude of carefully documented secondary sources to support his argument. Indeed, much of the study reads like a compendium of quotations on Milton's use of language from secondary literature and Kuester's independent argument gets at times rather short shift. By far the most readable and interesting is the section on the godgame, for the word become flesh. This reunification of signifier and signified as "words with power" (20, 94, 203, derived from N. Frey) is explored in Paradise Regained.

To show then, as Kuester tries to do, that the language employed by a postlapsarian writer to express prelapsarian language and divine utterances is in effect postlapsarian, is simply to prove the obvious. Though Kuester mentions the issue in passing (119-120, 138) and appears to suggest that Milton was not an adherent of the accommodation theory, his treatment of the issue is not adequate.

Stefanie Lehbridge (Tübingen)


Alison Case explores the connections between gender and narrative over a period of two hundred years, from Richardson to Stoker. Her approach is informed by recent trends in feminist narratology, which focus on narrative voice and gendering on the level of discourse rather than story - on the "gender dynamics of narration, in texts by either men or women" (12). Case foregrounds the convention of "feminine narration" which is "characterized by the restriction of the female narrator to the role of narrative witness; that is, by her exclusion from the active shaping of narrative form and meaning [...] or from what I shall term plotting and prefiguring" (4). This convention may apply to male narrators, but it represents the usual, "unmarked" case for female narrators and serves for example to convey a sense of immediacy and authenticity otherwise difficult to achieve in a more controlled narrative. Conversely, females exercising narrative control are shadowed by the negative image of the female plotter, and feminine virtue is equated both with the inability to plot and to tell a meaningful story. This Pamela/Shamele pattern functions as the narrative equivalent of the angel/whore dichotomy. With regard to female authors, Case argues further, the sense of immediacy created by feminine narration is particularly apt to invite the biographical fallacy. Autodiegetic narrators are central to this study, since they prominently appear both as created and creators within the fictional world. In spite of the long period she covers, Case refuses to offer "master-narratives" of the development of feminine narration and its wider significance for cultural history. Instead, she offers close readings of crucial texts in chronological order, like stepping stones in the murky waters of lived experience and its literary representation.

If Richardson's epistolary novels, Clarissa more so than Pamela, negotiate the heroines' (narrative) agency, divorcing female voice and credibility from material plotting, Brontë's Jane Eyre may be read as a rewriting of Pamela which redeems the plotting woman, shadowed, to be sure, by the evil plotter Bertha Mason. Working both "within and against the conventions of feminine narration" (106), Jane Eyre revolutionizes the form. This new emancipatory potential is registered in Barrett Browning's Aurora Leigh. Here, the autobiographical 'broken tale' which emerges from the clash of the conventions of Künstlerroman and romance recounts the struggles of a female artist. Conversely, discussing the interaction between feminine and omniscient narration, Case shows that in Bleak House and Little Dorrit as well as in Armadale, both Dickens and Collins offer conservative corrections of Jane Eyre, embedded in the larger context of the Victorian debate about autonomy and determinism. The documentary novels of Collins and Stoker also work along these lines. Both The Woman in White and Dracula "stage a gendered struggle for narrative mastery" (147), acknowledging modern complexities but ultimately encouraging readers to read against the female voice.

The earliest pieces in this book were already published ten years ago, and this patchwork character occasionally shows. Accordingly, the bibliography is more dated...
than necessary, even given the usual delays of the publishing process, and the individual chapters do not always reach the sophistication of the introduction. This is not as bad as it might be, however, since the interpretations of individual works clearly form part of a coherent project. Case presents an important argument and combines analytical rigour with interpretive intuition. The book is well written and, rather than burying the primary texts in critical discourse, encourages readers to take a fresh look at them in the light of Case's ideas.

Ina Habermann (Erlangen)


West of Lisbon in Belém, where the estuary of the River Tejo opens into the Atlantic, the monastery St Jeronimo was built, in the sixteenth century, in memory of Vasco da Gama's discovery of a sea route to India. Appropriately, the great explorer who later immortalized his name in the great epic of the Lusitania. The parallel placing of their tombs suggests an equally conspicuous relation of their legacies in national memory and myth; the maritime discoverer side by side with the epic poet, the seafarer and the singer as complementary contributors to a common project - political and literary empire building. As a matter of fact, the building of the monastery was financed through a special tax known as "pepper money" levied on all income from the Portuguese spice trade celebrated in Camões' epic. This is just one example of the many ways in which European cultural monu-

ments, in architecture no less than in literature, are often materially based on profits of imperial trade connections in the wake of maritime adventures. However, such profits also involve crucial dangers. What Marlowe's merchant of Malta proudly presents as the basis of his wealth ("Mine argosy from Alexandria, / Loaden with spice and silks, now under sail," Li.44-45) can quickly turn to ruin and defeat, as Shakespeare's merchant of Venice comes to learn when he must fear his "gentle vessel's side / Would scatter all her spices on the stream" (I.32-33). For all their promise of economic power, imperial sea routes have also been regarded as potential perils, because the constant cultural exposure and encounters they effect might inadvertently infuse the heart of Europe with uncanny others. Spice seems to offer the perfect figure of this ambiguity. No other commodity can so strikingly represent both the attraction of exotic luxuries and colonial riches as well as, on the other hand, the threat of foreign contamination, potential degeneration and, literally, unpalatable horri-

ness. Because spices have no nutritional substance, their use is entirely aesthetic, a matter of refined taste and wealthy ostenta-

tion. Objects of desire, they have always been the target of suspicion and reformist zeal. The Poetics of Spice by Timothy Morton now sets out to investigate this double legacy.

In a series of five chapters, freely ranging across historical and material contexts, the author undertakes what he announces as "an experiment in the literary and cultural history of the commodity" (3). After some preliminary theoretical considerations, Chapter 2 begins this project by examining poetic discourses on trade and commercial enterprise (drawing, roughly in this order, on works by Joyce, Keats, Milton, Philip, Camões, Coleridge, Dryden, Dyer, Blackmore, Thompson, Darwin, Shelley, Saddam Hussein). Chapter 3 focuses on conspicuous consumption and the use of luxuries as negotiated in ekphrastic and related texts (drawing, among others, on Keats, Shelley, Mandeville, Apicius, Mil-

ton, Williams, Shakespeare, Moore, De Quincey, Eliot, Warton, King, TV advertisements). Chapter 4 explores the rhetoric of slavery and abolitionism in textual negotiations of sweetness and sugar (cf. More, Cowper, Stedman, Coleridge, Moseley, Beckford, Grainger, Southey, Shelley, etc.). Chapter 5, finally, reads the poetics of spice as an emblem for poetry (cf. all of the above, and many more).

The field is vast and the topic fascinating. But the 'experimental' treatment they receive here is, at best, provocative through flashy formulations, mostly generalized through cursory discussion or erratic reference, and often downright irritating. The author is an established scholar of Shelley and romanticism and seems to be most at home when his reflections centre on this period. At other points he manages, in the space of a single paragraph, to move his dis-
cussion from Milton, via Eden, the Song of Songs, Chaucer's Rovamont of the Rose and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" to the Ordin-

azioni of Peter III the Great of Aragon and twentieth-century breath mints. Dazzled readers trying to follow such bold moves are frequently offered explanations like the following: "The signs spice, spicy and so forth spice a line of verse without being marked or particularised, say as 'cinnamon' or 'pepper.' The role of spice as a re-mark, a mark that marks other marks as such, is ekphrastic in the precise sense that it appears to reveal at once a textual and an extratex-

tual effect. Spice in its ekphrastic mode appears to free the reader from the text only by subduing her or him even more strongly to the grasping of the text as a text, especially insofar as its vagueness and generality has the magical blend of specificity and ineffa-

bles sensuousness" (130).

This gives a fairly precise taste of Mor-
ton's recipe, freely mixing spurious puns with half digested deconstruction and highly verbalized claims of literary learning, all served in the hope of subduing the reader through vagueness and generality. I, for one, find this academic diet neither magical and sensuous nor this argument persuasive and productive. Taken apart, the sentences cited offer little substance. Like most of the fragmentary readings presented here, they simply lack specificity.

Morton's central idea and oft-repeated insight is that spice, in European cultural discourse from the early modern to the romantic period, functions as a self-reflexive figure of figurative language. This is interesting and challenging and, indeed, might stimulate a series of relevant readings - if only it were tested, in each case, against the rhetoric and ideology at work in a particular text. Morton's method, though, is not concerned with providing evidence for a fore-

gone conclusion. To cite just one example, his reading of James Grainger's The Sugar-

Cane (1764) fails to recognize the poem's unease with neo-classical decorum. As a pro-slavery tract for the sugar trade, Grainger's text just serves him to exemplify conventional rhetoric. Morton thus makes the premise of his argument the result of his analysis. In this way, unlike its central object and concern, The Poetics of Spice mainly shows the dangers of cultural traffic in ex-

otic goods. If there were a tomb for promising but disappointing academic studies, this book should be shelved there.

Tobias Döring (Berlin)


In her immensely popular novel The Sor-
rrows of Satan (1895), Marie Corelli depicts Mavis Clare, an angelic, sweetly feminine writer of immensely popular novels who is beloved by the public and reviled by reviewers. Mavis Clare, deeply committed to her art, considers the defamations of the press beneath her contempt; she serenely feeds her bad reviews to a flock of tame pi-

gions whom she has named after the most important literary magazines. This portrait