

349

JOHN V. KNAPP

Introduction:
Self-Preservation and
Self-Transformation:
Interdisciplinary
Approaches to
Literary Character

The construct character has, until quite recently, been largely ignored by many literary critics. The reasons have as much to do with the limitations of critical views of psychological reality as they do critical fashions. By focusing on basically one psychological system (that of Freud) and its variations, critics have ignored the wealth of information found in mainstream psychology, justifying their lack of interest by pointing to the supposed incompatibility between the empirical sciences and the hermeneutical disciplines. However, since critics can learn from mainstream psychology, it is time for the two domains to commence negotiations.

365

KENNETH J. GERGEN

Textual Considerations
in the
Scientific Construction
of Human Character

The scientific psychologist no less than the author of fiction is confronted with the literary task of rendering human character intelligible. Focusing on the literary constraints governing scientific rendering permits a challenge to the traditional view of scientific accounts as being objectively superior to those of fiction. The scientific psychologist must solve textual problems in (1) transcending the common understandings of the culture while relying on these very understandings for intelligibility, (2) transcending the presumptions of human character embodied in the professional view of the scientist while sustaining these same views, and (3) injecting into an exotic, theoretical vernacular a sense of objective palpability. Specialized literary techniques are required in each case.

380

RICHARD J. GERRIG AND
DAVID W. ALLBRITTON

The Construction of
Literary Character:
A View from
Cognitive Psychology

Readers bring a broad palette of cognitive processes to the experience of literary character. Such processes operate with respect to the readers' causal analysis of plot events, impression formation based on categories and individuals, and immersion in literary worlds. The effects authors can achieve are both facilitated and constrained by the operation of these processes. Ian Fleming's novels about James Bond provide illustrations.

392

BARUCH HOCHMAN AND
ILJA WACHS

Straw People, Hollow
Men, and the
Postmodernist Hall
of Dissipating Mirrors:
The Case of
David Copperfield

The "absences" in the portrayal of David Copperfield do not stem from the impossibility of conceiving and portraying character, as postmodernist theory will have it. Rather, they arise from the ideological constraints that shape David's character. The logic of absences can be perceived only by confronting the configuration of the David who is *there* and relating it to the ideology he espouses: that is, a degenerate, high-Victorian form of the Protestant Ethic. Most extraordinary in his representation is the richness of the counter-pattern of banished impulses as these crop up in his doubles from within the repressions defining his existence.

408

JAMES PHELAN

Character and Judgment
in Narrative and in Lyric:
Toward an Understanding
of the Audience's
Engagement
in *The Waves*

Woolf's novel *The Waves* is a lyric novel because it invites the audience to enter into the perspectives and experiences of the six speakers without making judgments of them. This lyric participation highlights the mimetic component of the characters, but Woolf also calls attention to their artificiality, their synthetic status. Finally, though, both the mimetic and the synthetic components of character are subordinated to their thematic functions. *The Waves* explores the diversity and commonality of the six speakers' lives as they move from birth to death in a largely indifferent universe. Most generally, our dual awareness of the characters' intense vitality and obvious artificiality serves Woolf's purpose of simultaneously insisting on and questioning the significance of those individual lives.

422

DAVID FISHELOV

Types of Character,
Characteristics of Types

A coherent and consistent theoretical framework for a basic typology of characters in literature is needed. In order to overcome the various problems of some prominent existing typologies, two crosscutting distinctions may be used. These distinctions enable one to capture some basic features of the lifelike nature of characters in literature while accepting that these characters are "embedded" in a literary text. The first distinction makes use of the opposition of "flat" and "round" characters. The second distinction recognizes the textual and the constructed levels of the literary work of art. The opposition of flat and round can be applied to both levels. A character may get a flat or a round attention on the textual level of the literary work, and he may be perceived as flat or round on the constructed level. Consequently, four categories emerge: the "pure" type, the individual-like type, the "pure" individual, and the type-like individual.

440

GERALD MEAD

The Representation of
Fictional Character

Characters in fiction and film seem to possess a unique consistency and coherence, a special presence that allows us to recognize and understand them in a way that is different from the knowledge we have of people in real life. Referential criticism explains our understanding of fictional characters by invoking outside models, real people, psychological verisimilitude, cultural or ideological contexts. Textual criticism views character identity as relationships with other parts of a text and as a realization of narrative models. A representational stylistics would explain our awareness and recognition of fictional characters by analyzing features as a rhetoric of character representation.

453

URI MARGOLIN

The What,
the When, and the How
of Being a Character
in Literary Narrative

The articles by James Phelan, Gerald Mead, David Fishelov, and Baruch Hochman and Ilja Wachs in this issue may be placed in the larger context of the various areas of theory of character. Literary character is a theory-dependent entity, of which three varieties exist in current poetics: the synthetic, thematic, and mimetic (Phelan). Grounds for choosing among them in any individual case are both methodological and text dependent. Character as a mimetic unit always includes narrative agents and may include the narrator or textual speaker in general. Narrative agents can be characterized directly by the narrator or indirectly, through dynamic, static, and formal motives. In the latter case, the agent's properties must be inferred, employing inner literary and/or referential rules and models (Mead). Typologies of mimetic characters may be based on the textual means of their presentation or on literary stereotypes and social and psychological models. Combined typologies, employing both aspects, are also possible (Fishelov).

469

OKEY GOODE

Finding a
Character's Voice in
Smollett's *Roderick
Random*

The relation between the narrator's voice and characters' speech in the novel is essential to the presentation of character and theme regardless of narrative stance (first-person, third-person, omniscient, epistolary, etc.). Characters' and narrator's speech always embodies an ideology that the author can tacitly evaluate through the characters' relative attention to the sources of their own language, what M. M. Bakhtin calls the "speech zones" that constitute "heteroglossia" (diverse speech styles) in the novel. Standing as a paradigm of novels reliant on "verbal masquerade" (Bakhtin), Smollett's *Roderick Random* reveals the significance of heteroglossia as a vehicle of authorial evaluation of characters and as a structural principle. The first-person narrator, Roderick Random, encounters both alien and assimilable voices in the course of

the novel; his acceptance or rejection of varieties of discourse both evaluates the ideologies voiced by characters and guides him in his own adoption of a speech style. Because the author through wordplay, allusion, and rhetorical devices shows himself at times more aware of the sources of narrative language than does his narrator, Smollett constructs an ironic and evaluative dialogue with the reader about the narrator.

484

INEKE BOCKTING

The Impossible World
of the “Schizophrenic”:
William Faulkner’s
Quentin Compson

Although Quentin Compson’s narration in Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* has often been described as schizophrenic or psychotic, critics have rarely analyzed these aspects on the basis of actual passages of his text. Specific examples of his narration are used here to analyze an aspect of his character, his mind-style, and to reveal the double bind that makes it impossible for Quentin to create the “possible world” that satisfies his specific, personal need for structure and coherence. It becomes clear that Quentin’s needs are mutually exclusive to such a degree that he cannot succeed in creating a world in which it is possible for him to live.

498

Books Received

500

Notes on Contributors