

where else. Particularly impressive are the details of family life and the oppressive atmosphere of General Villegas, the village where Puig grew up. Levine is quite perceptive about both sides of Puig's influences; here are Hollywood's presentation of the real world and a romanticized paradise, and both his literary background (Puig's acquisition of foreign languages and his broad reading during the Boom) and Freudian background (his cousin B  b  , who would become a psychologist, instructed him early in theories of homosexuality). Levine is very thorough, moreover, to keep us abreast of which people in Puig's life became incarnated as characters and which events he fictionalized. At times the biographical and the critical impulses clash, such as when Levine, narrating the tortuous process by which the Spanish edition of *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* gets published, neglects to tell us how it ended up at Jorge Alvarez. Although she has an excellent sense of which traits of the author appear acted out in the novels, her contention that Molina and Valent  n (of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*) represent two sides of Puig seems unconvincing to me. *Manuel Puig and the Spider Woman* deserves high praise for its insights about the literary process that go beyond Puig's own work. It should remain an essential reference on Puig, a writer who, in Goytisolo's words, "knew no other commitment than the one he had contracted with writing and with himself." [Keith Cohen]

Alexis Lykiard. *Jean Rhys Revisited*. Stride Publications, 2000. 281 pp. £11.95.

Impressionistic, roving, idiosyncratic, Alexis Lykiard's *Jean Rhys Revisited* is not a scholarly book, yet scholars and readers alike will find much of interest in its observations of Rhys, whom Lykiard befriended during the last years of her life, and in its perceptive reading of her work. A Greek-British novelist, poet, and translator, Lykiard is a writer's writer, well and widely read, and his insights into Rhys's work are peppered with allusions to Rilke, Gissing, Duras, and others, as well as to various critical studies of Rhys. The book is best read as an appreciation, as one writer's homage to another, informed by Lykiard's clear affection for Rhys and his careful, comprehensive knowledge of her work. The chapters, often as brief as a page or two, have titles like "Dreams and extremes" and "Her and not her," and the volume closes with an original poem inspired by what Lykiard describes as the visit of Rhys's ghost. This unusual, elegantly written treatment offers vivid descriptions of Rhys in her late years (and a handful of previously unpublished photographs), and insightful, sensitive readings of her fiction. Given Lykiard's own good but minor reputation, however, it is surprising that *Jean Rhys Revisited* often dwells less on Rhys than on the various trials of the author himself, particularly as a writer in rural isolation and as a true Rhys initiate forced to contend with feminist critics and "hackademic" know-nothings who inevitably misconstrue her work. Lykiard's hubris occasionally amuses, as when he notes that "bafflingly enough" Rhys chose to have one of her stories reprinted without incorporating his suggested

changes. In sum, Lykiard's warm tribute offers a great deal that illuminates Rhys and her work, and much that does not [Joy Castro]

Arthur Saltzman. *This Mad "Instead": Governing Metaphors in Contemporary American Fiction*. Univ of South Carolina Press, 2000. 232 pp. \$39 95

Metaphor is the holy grail of literary art—an intriguing amalgam calling attention to itself not only as a carefully crafted linguistic prize but also as a mysterious and elusive truth. Arthur Saltzman's *This Mad "Instead": Governing Metaphors in Contemporary American Fiction* examines the successes and failures contemporary novelists meet when using metaphor in the construction of their fictional worlds. Saltzman begins with the notion that "language is an especially suspicious artistic medium and must be frisked for the meanings it smuggles," and while figurative language resides more comfortably in the world of poetry and poetics, because it is both expected and anticipated, fiction employs metaphor no less strategically or effectively. Although the approach to metaphor may be slightly different in the contemporary text due to philosophical changes in how we view the stability of language, nevertheless "metaphor aspires beyond the role of ornamentation to become a means of knowledge." Saltzman's selection of authors focuses on the past fifteen years of contemporary American fiction and represents a diverse cross-section of the landscape—Paul West, Don DeLillo, Steven Millhauser, Paul Auster, William Gass, Kathy Acker, and John Updike. In each of these authors, Saltzman envisions the employment of metaphor as a point of departure rather than an end in itself, an opportunity for the examination of language's seeming ambiguity. Contrary to indictments against contemporary fiction's lack of moral reliability, Saltzman very convincingly argues that these authors move beyond linguistic ornamentation and/or mere literary playfulness to provide an underlying structure or method of inquiry governed by a dynamic and extraordinarily active search for meaning. For anyone who believes that contemporary fiction has somehow failed to live up to its literary predecessors, Saltzman's book shines a remarkable light, not only on individual texts but on the very language of their construction. [Anne Foltz]

Douglas Glover. *Notes Home from a Prodigal Son*. Oberon Press [Canada], 1999. 171 pp. Paper: \$17 95

In this new book Douglas Glover includes essays on Christa Wolf, Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, and Hubert Aquin; three interviews and a memoir; and three considerations of the nature of fiction and one on comedy. In them, he establishes paternity, explanations and justification for the non-narrative novel, what Glover refers to in one essay title as the novel as poem. Again and again he cites John Hawkes's much-quoted remark that the enemies of the novel are "plot, character, setting, and theme." And he