ing Sterne's Irish qualities despite his English socialisation, the argument is turned around: "Perhaps it is an illustration of the old saying that we are all Irish in the eyes of God" (93).

Eagleton peppers his explorations with frequent side-remarks which might at most elicit a faint smile in a round of literary academics: "One would not pass up a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Haversham [*sic*] for an evening with David Copperfield" (149). Speculative characterisations are added to popularise the topic: "If [Dickens] were alive today he would carry an electronic organizer and could be separated from his mobile phone only by a crowbar" (157). Where humorous anecdotes suffice there is no need for a coherently constructed argument.

However popular in style, Eagleton ultimately confounds the expectations raised by his publisher. *The English Novel* is not an undergraduate English studies introduction. He does not provide publication dates to any of the novels discussed and consistently refrains from providing references to his quotes, a practice students seeking for guidance in this book should certainly not adopt. The same goes for a conspicuously absent bibliography. Instead of leading the way, Eagleton takes his reader on an aimless ramble along with the established authorities of novel writing – "as we have seen" is a common phrase – but one might marvel whether the novice will be able to gain much insight.

Barbara Simpson (Berlin)

Arno Löffler and Eberhard Späth, eds. **Geschichte der englischen Kurzgeschichte**. Tübingen und Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2005. vi, 388 pp. Pb. € 22.90. ISBN 3-8252-2662-X.

Sabine Buchholz. **Narrative Innovationen in der modernistischen britischen Short Story**. Studies in English Literary and Cultural History, 8. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2003. 407 pp. Pb. € 38.50. ISBN 3-88476-587-6

Löffler and Späth's excellent collection of essays presents the history of the English short story in Great Britain and Ireland in the 19th and 20th centuries. The essays do not merely follow a chronological order. Each contribution succinctly delineates key aspects of the short story of a particular country, era, genre or author in context and briefly discusses major examples. Two comprehensive introductory essays delineate short story theories and the literary market for short fiction. The survey on the Victorian short story (Dickens, Gaskell, Trollope, Eliot, and Meredith) is complemented by articles on detective stories and Gothic tales in the 19th century. For example, in the chapter on Victorian Gothic fiction, Franz Meier explores the sentimental and Romantic cultural contexts which gave rise to the Gothic novel, and the Victorian mass entertainment that Gothic narratives cater to. He explains the evolution of Gothic fiction with frequent references to stories and novels as a move towards urban and middle-class settings, as a turn from the supernatural towards subjective psychology, and as a tendency towards ambiguity and hybridity, which locates the evil other within the self.

The editors privilege the development of the late Victorian and the modernist period. Apart from an overview of that era they also assigned many articles on individual

authors, such as Kipling and Conrad, Henry James, James Joyce, Woolf and Mansfield, as well as Forster, Lawrence and Huxley. These presentations of individual authors combine a biographical with a contextual approach and take the opportunity to analyze several stories each, revealing artistic variety and growth. Silvia Mergenthal, for example, relates Mansfield's and Woolf's artistic developments to each other, to impressionist painting and to film. Mergenthal is convincing in her argument that these authors influence each other and develop modernist techniques in ways similar to their male peers but that the women writers add a specific critique of patriarchal society through their female protagonists' perspectives. While Woolf stresses her own marginalization in spite of belonging to the cultural elite, Mansfield suffers from double marginalization due to her colonial descent.

The subsequent parts of the volume have more ground to cover, a task they accomplish very well: humorous short stories (revealing occasional overlaps concerning Waugh and Pritchett with the section on stories between modernism and postmodernism), science fiction, postmodern short fiction, postcolonial stories, short stories from Ireland in the 20th century, and from Wales and Scotland. Erhard Reckwitz solves the daunting task of covering the mass of heterogeneous postcolonial short stories in a masterly manner. It is impossible to deal with his subject matter in the chronological and comprehensive way chosen, say, for Irish or postmodern stories. He argues that most of the postcolonial stories fall into the basic categories of the existentialist model of literature as a political weapon and the postmodern negotiation of (neo-colonial) representations. Reckwitz convincingly analyzes in detail one short story each under the paradigm of Black militant resistance and liberation (James Matthews), the white liberal discourse of embarrassment and concern (Nadine Gordimer), the discourses of diaspora (Ben Okri) and of hybrid multiculturalism (Salman Rushdie). It would have been a welcome addition if, apart from the four stories discussed, he would have added important anthologies for further reading, such as Charles R. Larson's *Under African Skies* (1997) or Stewart Brown's and John Wickham's *Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories* (1999).

Löffler and Späth's valuable publication is very well structured and highly readable except for the essay on Henry James, which is too close to the convoluted style of the stories it discusses. It is a pity that the volume was not written in English, complementing Barbara Korte's remarkable history cum anthology, *The Short Story in Britain* (2003), which takes the longer historical perspective and locates the beginning of short stories in the 16th century. The target audience of the edition under review, German students, will discuss the material in courses and exams in English, and the volume would also deserve international readers.

In her more specialist study on the modernist story in Britain, Sabine Buchholz concedes that the turn from the representation of external reality to that of internal reality in Modernism is a commonplace. However, she maintains that the innovative forms and functions of the British Modernist short story have not met with adequate attention so far because primacy was given to Modernist novels and to Modernist short fiction from the United States. She assumes that the marginalization of the form adds to that of gender because she finds many stories of great interest from 'minor' female writers, who have even been neglected by feminist scholars.

I find her argument of the marginalization of the genre a little bit more convincing than that of gender. Buchholz argues that the short form allows more radical departures from traditional narrative patterns than the novel. She mentions, for example,

that taking a child's perspective would be too naïve and restrictive for a novel but quite adequate for short fiction (232). Possibly Buchholz harbours a paradoxical preference for a consistent focus in radical experiment. While it is true that experimental novels would hardly sustain one perspective throughout the text they would have more options to combine various forms of focalization and styles. In addition, I wonder whether it was easier to publish James Joyce's *Ulysses* than experimental short fiction in one of the little literary magazines of the time. Buchholz's argument of marginalizing women's short fiction seems to fly in the face of recent literary studies because the widely acknowledged figureheads of Modernist short prose are Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield. It is remarkable that, in order to reverse that imaginary imbalance in gender, Buchholz, who is generous in her inclusion of women, rules out James Joyce because he did not live and publish in Great Britain most of the time. It seems that her selection of British stories mostly by female authors is as much a consequence of the material at hand as of the author's intention to reverse the alleged gender bias. Buchholz deals not only with the usual suspects – Woolf, Mansfield, and Dorothy Richardson – but deservedly puts neglected authors, such as Stella Benson, Mary Borden, Mary Butts, Anna Kavan and Henry Handel Richardson in the limelight.

Buchholz begins with a comprehensive and balanced overview of the social, cultural and literary context and history of Modernism and the Modernist short story. Then, she discusses the state of the art in research on short story theory and narratology. The highly systematic discussion of postclassical narratology and possible worlds theory presents fruitful concepts which surpass the rigid binary differences of structuralist narratology and question the absolute distinction between narrator and focalizer. Her definition of plot derives from possible worlds theory as a dynamic network of relationships between real and virtual worlds conceived by narrators and characters (101). While the extension of the concept of plot to events within the mind (102) seems helpful to analyze Modernist fiction, the definition of plot as a meaningful, coherent, and linear sequence of real and virtual events (102) reverts to traditional definitions of the term, which much Modernist fiction seems to leave behind because it questions meaning, coherence and linearity. Buchholz's subsequent replacement of what has been called the "Plotlosigkeit" (360-61) of Modernist fiction by the rather vague concept "Plothaltigkeit" diminishes somewhat the innovative potential of Modernism.

However, Buchholz is very convincing when it comes to analyzing short stories in depth. Her section on reducing plot in favour of impersonal subjectivity amply documents varieties of displacing objective time and space by the subjective perception of these dimensions (106-23, 339-59). The chapters on experiments in focalization are illuminating. She explains how the blurring of boundaries between narrators and focalizers, the merging of focalizers, post-mortem perspectives, and radical information gaps are particularly challenging to the readers' constructions of meaning. The choice of focalizers among marginalized characters, such as children, dying people, drunks and madmen, questions social stigmata and cultural norms rather than denouncing the outsiders.

In spite of Buchholz's sophisticated approach, the analyses are not clouded by jargon. This very comprehensive and lucid study with its numerous analyses of individual stories in context reads extremely well and will be profitable to a large variety of academic readers. It would be desirable to give Sabine Buchholz the opportunity to edit an anthology of women's Modernist short fiction in order to make accessible a balanced selection of interesting short prose including 'minor' writers.

Michael Meyer (Koblenz)