

as Joanne Shattock remarks in her introduction, that the 19th century can no longer be accepted without qualification as simply an “*age of female novelists*” (p. 6). *Women and Literature in Britain, 1800–1900* is an example of cultural and/or gender studies in its best style, a fact that is underscored by the provision of a chronology juxtaposing socio-political, cultural and literary events affecting women in this century at the beginning of the book.¹ As the latest volume in a re-examination of women writers through the centuries², it is to be commended not only for its contribution to the field but also for indicating possible directions of future research.

BIELEFELD

MARTINA STANGE

Laurence Kitzan. *Victorian Writers and the Image of Empire: The Rose-Colored Vision*. Contributions to the Study of World Literature 104. Westport and London: Greenwood P, 2001, xii + 203 pp., £49.50.

Laurence Kitzan's book is not intended to be “literary criticism, but is a historical study that incorporates literature” (ix). The Associate Professor, who specializes in British and British Imperial History, might have pursued a truly interdisciplinary project, which embeds readings of literature in a profound presentation of imperial history. But Kitzan firstly denies any ambition to literary expertise, which unfortunately turns out not to be a form of understatement: “The literary criticism that does enter into my discussion is, intentionally, largely my own, as it has emerged from my own readings and discussions with students in a great many seminar classes on Victorian imperialism” (ix–x). Secondly, Kitzan fails to provide a substantial historical analysis, let alone a convincing definition, of imperial ideology: “Definitions of imperialism are tricky, because none exist that I find completely satisfactory, or that would meet with universal approval” (x). His idea of combining literary and historical studies is aptly summarized in the following quote: “Unless they are involved in the creation of sheer phantasy, the writers of an age write about what is happening, or, at least, their version of what is happening. One of the many happenings of the Victorian period and later was the development and sometimes growth of the British Empire ...” (175). Kitzan does not compare literary and historical or historiographical versions

¹ A useful guide to further reading is also provided at its end.

² The collection is the fourth in a series; all books provide further explorations not only of women's writing, but also of the discourses and cultures in which the women created them. *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700–1800*, ed. Vivien Jones, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).

of imperialism because fiction presented a rather positive vision of the empire anyway, which he takes to be a good reason “to ignore for the most part the evidence that the images being presented were distorted, or even false, and that the picture was not so rose-colored as it appeared” (xi). Kitzan runs the danger of mixing up the subject level and object level of his research when he takes the arch-imperial writer John Buchan as his guide to relevant topics rather than images of imperialism in “politics, economics, biography, and military activities” (xi) or topics of “gender, race, culture, space” (xi), which are beyond his interest. Instead, Kitzan focuses on the characterization of individual heroes and scenes of heroic action in travel writing and imperialist fiction, the foregrounding of danger, adventure, and profit at the expense of a subdued zeal to fulfill a humanitarian mission in the world on the implicit basis of Christianity. His choice of authors ranges from Kipling, Haggard, and Henty to Marryat, Ballantyne, Fenn, Kingston, and Strang. His cursory delineation of characters, relationships, scenes, and plots may be justified with run-of-the-mill imperial fiction, but less so with Kipling or Conrad, whose more ambiguous and subversive aspects mostly escape his attention. For no apparent reason other than his personal taste, Kitzan stresses the continuity of imperial fiction and its ongoing appeal to readers rather than the historical change in imperial fiction towards the end of the Victorian age. Not surprisingly, Kitzan finds that imperial adventure fiction serves to entertain and to educate young male readers, and to counteract any uneasiness about the British Empire. His comment on Buchan’s *A Lodge in the Wilderness* can be read as a characterization of his own book: “What results is not full-fledged debate, but series of set-piece recapitulations of pro-imperialist viewpoints . . . The discussion is to be a refresher course designed to reach some common grounds among a variety of opinions and to clarify some of the central ideas of imperialism” (62), which, by now, are too well known to be laboured again.

BAMBERG

MICHAEL MEYER

Earl G. Ingersoll. *D. H. Lawrence, Desire, and Narrative*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2001, 216 pp., \$ 55.00.

Robert Burden. *Radicalizing Lawrence: Critical Interventions in the Reading and Reception of D. H. Lawrence’s Narrative Fiction*. Costerus NS 130. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000, 378 pp., \$ 65.00.

These two studies read Lawrence’s fiction in the light of post-structuralist theory. They point out different levels of resistance in Lawrence’s works to theory and show that fiction has deconstructive effects on theory. Both scholars prefer an in-depth textual analysis to the dominant biographical approach, offering a psychoanalytic reading of the textual representations of desire and/or sexuality. Each study makes a significant contribution to a postmodern reading of Lawrence’s fiction – an undertaking that was long overdue.