to works of imagination, as in the introduction to her discussion of Coetzee's novel: "The utopian impossibility of ever achieving neutral, free being for any (textual) identity *comprehended* within the communicative frameworks of narrative and language; the crucial need for dialogic interaction on the part of situated social subjects if they are to prevent the totalizing colonization of their plural spaces or voices; the wholly unsatisfactory (because suicidal or pathological) condition of silence or self-mutilating denial of voice which would be necessary to escape the interlocutory narrative construction of (textual) identity; and, finally, the inherently political nature of the positioning that occurs in the readerly occupation of characterological and authorial voice" (p. 252). This kind of writing does not do justice to Worthington's critical intelligence.

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Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction. Edited by *Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997. Pp. vi+518.

I had expected to review enthusiastically Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's first edited collection, which contains several essays by well-known scholars in queer studies, as well as contributions by graduate students and assistant professors. Yet as I read this collection of eighteen essays, I kept waiting to find the "force, the originality, and in many cases the beauty of these pieces" (p. 1) that Sedgwick promises in her introduction. Instead, I discovered unresolved problems in the field of queer literary studies: the assumption that a queer reading of a novel in and of itself should merit an essay, the tendency for queer readings to depend on paraphrase, and the use of the novel as an occasion to reflect on extraliterary concerns. These problems repeatedly prevent the authors from developing their most interesting insights.

Two essays stand out because they rise above these problems. The first, Sedgwick's introduction, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading: or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is About You," addresses the impoverishment of the "hermeneutic of suspicion" that emerged in the eighties and has arguably become the dominant mode of the nineties. Sedgwick is such a powerful critic of literary studies and of sexuality because she recognizes where interpretive possibilities have been foreclosed and points to how they might be reopened. In a characteristic moment, she attacks the tendency in

feminist and queer uses of psychoanalysis to assert "the inexorable, irreducible, uncircumnavigable, omnipresent centrality, at *every* possible psychic juncture, of the facts (however factitious) of 'sexual difference' and 'the phallus' " (p. 1). Against this tendency, she reminds critics of how psychoanalysis has examined "personhood, consciousness, affect, filiation, social dynamics, and sexuality" in ways that are not always "organized around 'sexual difference' at all" (p. 11). She points to Melanie Klein and Silvan Tomkins as thinkers who have offered intriguing roads not taken by contemporary psychoanalytic criticism. Her argument is not that we should close our Lacan and open her Klein, but that literary critics have allowed a routinized shadow of psychoanalysis to prevent engagement with the complexity of psychoanalytic speculation.

The other outstanding essay in the collection is Cindy Patton's "To Die For," which is nominally about Laura Z. Hobson's *Gentleman's Agreement* (1946) and the 1947 film based on it, but is really about citizenship, queerness, and the Cold War. She analyzes the postwar development of the "empathic citizen," who is characterized by "his (principally) affective relation to nation and comrade," by considering the "legal distinction between kinds of aliens, a surprising use of a 'female' entertainment as a political vehicle, and the specific construction of the anti-anti-Semite" (p. 332). Patton's essay provides the best historical explanation I have seen for why identity politics has been so restricted by American nationalism. Some of her formulations might be debated, especially her distinction between communism as a political problem and homosexuality as a social one during the Cold War. Admittedly, in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1954 that she analyzes, such a distinction obtains. Yet, in practice, "immoralities" such as homosexuality were hardly "apolitical" in an era in which one could be thrown out of government service for engaging in same-sex relations. Nevertheless, I valued the intellectual ambition of this essay because it sets out to change how we understand the civil rights movement, the relationship between communists and queers, and the problems of identity politics in ways that have implications for contemporary queer politics.

The other essays cover a range of French, British, and American novels: Toni Morrison's *Beloved*; Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*; Henry James's *Ambassadors* and *Portrait of a Lady*; William Gibson's *Neuromancer*; Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*; Henri Balzac's *Cousin Pons* and *Cousin Bette*; Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton*; T. H. White's Arthurian novels; Benjamin Constant's *Adolphe*; A. C. Swinburne's *Lesbia Brandon*; George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*; James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* and Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets*; Melvin Dixon's *Vanishing Rooms*; Virginia Woolf's *The Years* and *Between the*

Acts; and Willa Cather's *Professor's House*. Yet a sameness runs through the analyses of these extraordinarily different texts because most writers assume that the novels themselves justify a discussion of queerness. Surely the critic's goal should be more than simply to provide one more reading of a well-known text by pointing out its queer resonances. Since few of the authors provide a reason to care about the novels chosen, let alone queer readings of them, their essays feel undermotivated, as if it were inevitably time for queer readings to be the successors to psychoanalytic, feminist, Marxist, or deconstructive ones. Sedgwick's work has shown how good queer criticism can do far more than provide one more reading: it can change the ground of reading itself. Few essays in this collection attempt such a change, or even show much awareness that they might be held responsible for it. Although the collection's subtitle promises "queer readings," the readings have little of the paradigm questioning that the adjective "queer" promises.

Paraphrase drives these readings as if plot were the inescapable ground of queer novelistic analysis. The collection is filled with blocks of summary; Stephen Barber's long descriptions of *The Years* and *Between the Acts* in his "Lip-Reading: Woolf's Secret Encounters" is one, though not the only, example of this problem. Questions of style, narrative structure, sociohistorical setting, or intertextuality are often subordinated to questions of who did what to whom. At times, it seems as if authors follow a formula whereby any scene containing characters of the same gender automatically becomes a site for submerged homoeroticism. Only occasionally, as in Joseph Litvak's discussion of waste and Jeff Nunokawa's of boredom, does novelistic queerness find other outlets than scenes between men or between women.

This collection's disappointing quality may arise from the difficulty of constraining queer studies within the relatively narrow limits of literary criticism. Literary studies have played a large role in queer studies almost by chance, since literature is only one small aspect of queer history and culture. In her earlier work, one of Sedgwick's claims has been that "the relation of gay studies to debates on the literary canon is, and had best be, tortuous" (*Epistemology of the Closet* [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990], p. 48). But why should gay studies bother with the tortuousness of literature at all, if one reads a novel only to use it as a springboard for other concerns? No one in this collection ever justifies locating queer studies within literary studies, especially within studies of the novel. Instead, the quality of the writing generally improves when the writers move away from literature to address their real topics of interest. Tyler Curtain's remarks on the Turing test, Renu Bora's speculations on gayness and texture, Jacob

Press's discussion of Theodor Herzl and the homoerotics of the Zionist movement, and Maurice Wallace's investigation on queerness and dance could make fine points of departure in themselves, without the crutch of a novel. The perceived obligation to talk about a literary text prevents these writers from developing their most exciting insights.

Other objections might be made: the work on lesbianism is thin, for example, and there is no treatment of those postcolonial novelists who have produced some of the most interesting representations of queerness in twentieth-century literature. I suspect that such cumulative problems will be less apparent to most readers because collections are usually not read cover to cover. Instead, readers will select essays on novels in which they are already interested, and, for such readers, the mere fact of a queer reading may suffice. But after reading the entire collection I felt that queer studies will take flight only when writers free themselves from "the reading" to focus on the topics that interest them most.

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Reason and the Nature of Texts. *James L. Battersby.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. Pp. xi+198.

About a decade ago, almost every new contribution to literary theory was poststructuralist in its orientation. This sort of work still dominates literary theory, yet there are more and more exceptions, and we now have an impressive corpus of recent metacritical works defending the kind of rational-empiricist tenets that can be associated with contemporary analytic philosophy. A few salient examples are such book-length works as Mette Hjort, *The Strategy of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Truth, Fiction, and Literature* (Oxford, 1994), Anders Pettersson, *A Theory of Literary Discourse* (Lund, 1990), Horace L. Fairlamb, *Critical Conditions* (Cambridge, 1994), Alex J. Argyros, *A Blessed Rage for Order* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1991), and Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge, 1990), as well as a number of anthologies, such as Nancy Easterlin and Barbara Riebling (eds.), *After Poststructuralism* (Evanston, Ill., 1993), Mette Hjort (ed.), *Rules and Conventions* (Baltimore, 1992), Dwight Eddins (ed.), *The Emperor reDressed* (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 1995), and Reed Way Dasenbrock (ed.), *Literary Theory after Davidson* (University Park, Penn., 1993). Although Battersby does not systematically discuss the