

consequent, senseless stuff" (quoted by Bilik on p. 162 from *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, p. 58). Arthur Cohen in his book *In the Days of Simon Stern* calls for a complete religious commitment and his "fortified ghetto" becomes a response to the hostile outside world.

In summary, one cannot but agree with Ms. Bilik that "Despite considerable efforts of mind, the events of the Holocaust past remain as they were, untransformed and inexplicable . . . the Holocaust is apprehended rather than comprehended in the consciousness of the survivors" (pp. 186-87).

While Ms. Bilik exhibits professional expertise and analytical ability, she occasionally makes startling statements. Thus she writes about Isaac Bashevis Singer that his "background, education, experience, and philosophical bent equip him to be relatively at ease with the difficult subject of the Holocaust" (p. 113). Somewhere else, speaking of one of Singer's heroines, she asserts that "Tamar cannot be said to be ennobled by her suffering" (p. 125). One wonders why the degradations and horror which the saintlike Tamar had witnessed should have an "ennobling" influence, just as one is at a loss to find *any* background as qualifying one for being "at ease with the subject of Holocaust."

Miriam Roshwald

MARY LEE BRETZ

La evolución novelística de Pío Baroja

Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1979. Pp. 470

It is Mary Lee Bretz's bold claim that her mammoth study achieves what all other Baroja criticism has failed to accomplish more or less: to trace a coherent, albeit uneven, chronological evolution in Baroja's fiction between the years 1900 and 1920 in the areas of "artistic intentionality, narrative technique and stylistic devices" (p. 12). To trace this development Bretz examines each work under five separate subheadings: aesthetics, technique, characterization, ideology, and style.

The fiction of 1900-1901 (*Vidas sombrías, La casa de Aizgorri, Las aventuras, inventos y mixtificaciones de Silvestre Paradox*) shows a

mixture of conflicting ideological content and looks back to nineteenth-century literary models, but there are some elements which will persist throughout Baroja's work: the open-structure novel, anticlericalism, and a "relativist vision." The experimental period continues until 1903 with *Camino de perfección* and *El mayorazgo de Labraz*. The former dwells on an individual protagonist, the latter on society. Both introduce the fundamental ideological struggle of Baroja's subsequent fiction: Nietzschean vitalism against Schopenhauerian quietism. If *Camino de perfección* presents a partial victory for the Nietzschean ideal, in the second novel Baroja resists this attraction and moves towards a more personal morality. The trilogy *La lucha por la vida* (1903-1905) represents the emergence of Baroja's personal novelistic style, the maturation of the "open novel" and a closer approach to the lower social classes. Ideologically, Baroja is gradually losing faith in any Nietzschean vitalism and developing a cynical pessimism. This despair becomes nihilistic in the next two years (1905-1907) with *La feria de los discretos, Paradox, rey, Los últimos románticos, and Las tragedias grotescas*. The disordered narratives, satire, caricature, escapism to other cultures and ages, reflect this trend, but by the end of *Las tragedias grotescas* Baroja has recovered an interest in social reality, now considering individual effort more important than ultimate victory. The mature novels of 1908-1910 (*La dama errante, La ciudad de la niebla, Zalacaín el aventurero, and César o nada*) chronicle the progress of this effort which however ends in failure, with a return to a grey social-realism style (apart from the escapist *Zalacaín el aventurero*). *Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía* (1910), *El árbol de la ciencia* (1911), and *El mundo es así* (1912) are Baroja's most accomplished works: the novelist's attitude is now one of stoicism as he has abandoned the search for values. Irony has now replaced satire, external description psychological analysis. The historical novels of the series, *Memorias de un hombre de acción* (1913-1920), are escapist, whilst in *La sensualidad pervertida* (1920) Baroja tends to defend his previous novels, reveals autobiographical details, and theorizes more on aesthetics and the novel genre. Such is the general outline of Dr. Bretz's argument.

Clearly a lot of research time and effort has been put into this study, but unfortunately there is very little of lasting value for Baroja studies. The shifts of direction in Don Pío's "novelística" have been gen-

erally known and recognized for some time. To maintain, as Dr. Bretz does, that these shifts can be considered an evolution is in general terms probably a true enough statement, but in actual fact Baroja's novels display a bewildering mixture of progression and regression both in form and content. Any attempt to chart the details of this pattern will inevitably lead to some confusion. And Dr. Bretz comes close to admitting this when, on the defensive, she reminds the reader that Baroja's work "is not a homogeneous and uniform whole" (p. 292). Indeed the constant cross-references and ongoing summaries of her argument are also tantamount to such an admission.

Naturally, the task that Dr. Bretz set herself in the first place was a formidable one simply because Baroja was such a prolific writer, and because she herself has chosen to examine the question of evolution from all angles. A smaller canvas would have been preferable. The unfortunate consequence of Dr. Bretz's choice of topic is that many observations rarely go beyond a factual statement. Her discussion of the different narrative perspectives used in *César o nada* (pp. 362-63) is a good example: a vapid conclusion fails to highlight the considerable artistic effects that Baroja is able to achieve by the sophisticated manipulation of this device. Two other interesting ideas (the influence of Baroja's art-life dilemma on his landscape descriptions, pp. 141-43, and the nature of Baroja's dramatic scenes, p. 198) could have also been profitably expanded. Shortage of space is not really a valid excuse as a great amount of paper has been devoted to plot outlines and the labyrinthine presentation of divergences of opinion amongst the critics on almost every aspect of all the novels considered. Reliance on critical clichés, poorly defined concepts and terms are further weaknesses that detract from the book's claimed merit.

The book is pleasant and easy to read with very few typographical errors (pp. 195, 196, 230, 253, 275, 332, 359). Two important items of criticism have been omitted from the Bibliography: Donald Shaw's substantial introduction to his Pergamon edition of *El mundo es así*, and Carlos Longhurst's brilliant Critical Guide on the same novel.

In short, Dr. Bretz's bold initial claim is really not substantiated by the subsequent development of her argument.

Peter A. Bly

FRANK McCONNELL

The Science Fiction of H. G. Wells
Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1981. Pp. 235

In his foreword to this volume, the second in the Oxford Science-Fiction-Writers Series, general editor Robert Scholes outlines what students and teachers may expect from the project as a whole: ". . . a criticism serious in its standards and its concern for literary value but willing to take seriously a literature based on ideas, types, and events beyond ordinary experience" (p. vii; my emphasis). Professor McConnell's study earnestly realizes the second of these *desiderata* by focusing on Wells's ideas, particularly as they work in the "scientific romances." In the first chapter, "A Very Ordinary Brain," Professor McConnell proposes that Wells is an "heir not only to the Victorian apotheosis of Will, but its Darwinian negation" (p. 10). The publication of both Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* and Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859 is offered as an eloquent temporal coincidence suggestive of the paradox Wells grappled with for more than a half century. The maker of *The Time Machine* (1895) and *Mind at the End of Its Tether* (1945) never deviated from his belief in "the immutability of history and the omnipotence of will" (p. 28). Professor McConnell consistently sets out the thesis of a continuous dialectic of opposition and reconciliation in Wells's thought, to refute the conventional dissociation of the early Wells (an imaginative skeptic) from the later (a sanguine rationalist) one.

As the above suggests, *The Science Fiction of H. G. Wells* makes a contribution to literary and intellectual history. The one-paragraph account of 1895, for instance, bringing together Louis and Auguste Lumière, Georges Sorel, Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Roentgen, and Oscar Wilde (p. 36), is as illuminating as it is succinct; and the background for Wells's rejection of "dead-end Romanticism" (p. 39) and aestheticism—these set spirit and art in irrevocable opposition to science—is outlined clearly. Such background materially sustains Professor McConnell's argument for a union of wit and imagination in Wells. On occasion, *The Science Fiction of H. G. Wells* goes beyond the paraphrasing of history and concept, to genuine analysis, as here: "An ancient Greek philosopher wit-