

invention of new writing strategies, to be forged out of a vacuous culture of aestheticism, a new modernist idiom, and out of the limited expressive possibilities of mass culture" (163). West becomes Strychacz's ideal author since he "negotiates in complex ways between satirizing a powerful mass culture and acknowledging an allegiance to its possibilities for formal innovation" (164).

Strychacz concludes his study of *The Day of the Locust* by relating the novel's use of the media world to recent theories of postmodernism which argue for the collapse of the barriers between various cultural modes. Referring to the authors discussed in the book, Strychacz claims justifiably that they "anticipate the radical interweaving of media, narrative modes, and voices supposedly characteristic of postmodernism, and in many cases make problematic the kind of simple high/mass culture dichotomy accepted by both adherents and detractors of the usual perspective on modernist writing" (203). Strychacz arrives at this conclusion after a very informed and informing debate that, in its implications, goes far beyond the frame set by the book's title and provides stimulus for further discussion.

Maurice Cranston

The Romantic Movement

London: Blackwell Publishers, 1994. Pp. vi + 169. US \$39.95

Reviewed by Evelio Echevarría

The novel "is almost by definition, romantic," states Maurice Cranston (151), and, indeed, the majority of the writers he presents were famous novelists. The point of departure for his portrait of Romanticism is Rousseau's *La nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), which inaugurated in France a series of controversies (which also involved musicians) that would soon give renown to the Romantic movement. Since such controversies traveled abroad, after Chapter 1, "The First Romantics," the author moves on to briefly survey the emergence and development of the new literary school in the major Western nations: in Germany ("a reaction rather against rationality," 21), England, France, Italy, and Spain (a "uniquely rich pre-romantic literature," 135). The all-too-brief Chapter 7, "Late Romanticism," covers Russian, Polish, Scandinavian, Latin American, and American romantic manifestations. As for the United States, Cranston dismisses its Romanticism in less than three pages on the grounds that the country "was too much the creature of the Enlightenment . . . for Romanticism to be readily appreciated there" (145). This intense chapter comes to an end with observations on the relationship between Romanticism and music (a favorite topic in this book), the positivistic reaction against Romanticism, and the recurring traits of the latter that still persist in Western art today. The book closes with a Selected Bibliography of Critical Works (there are ninety-seven entries) and an Index.

Non-academic readers and literature professors alike will be grateful to Cranston for providing so much information about the international development of Romanticism with such concision. True, the brevity of each chapter does not allow the author to expand on some of the sweeping statements he has made, and these are left open to debate. But of his succinctly expressed opinions, several are worth studying in greater detail. One is the obvious alliance between Romanticism and nationalism, which in several cases led to the foundation of new nations. Another is the relationship between literature and other arts, particularly music, which in several countries followed a parallel development. A third concerns the impact that both the sentimental and the historical novel had upon the literary renaissance that came to the Western world after the Napoleonic years. Cranston's book abounds with speculations on the origins of this literary school, with a clear focus on the rather heroic few who launched it in their respective countries.

Saad Elkhadem

Five Innovative Egyptian Short Stories / Khams Qisas Misriyyah

A Bilingual Edition: English / Arabic

Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1994. Pp. iv+25+22. \$9.95

Reviewed by A.F. Cassis

Five Innovative Egyptian Short Stories is a 1994 release of previously published works by Saad Elkhadem—all original, delightful, and masterly crafted. Short, compact, and sometimes technically demanding, the works—plausible, fascinating, and entertaining anecdotes of Egyptian life in mid-century—evoke in the reader who has had some contact with Egyptian life what the Irish critic and short-story writer Sean O'Faolain once called the "recognition of the familiar," a basic requirement for pleasure in the short story. The reader is also jolted and challenged by the seemingly innocuous anecdotes and recognizes the disturbingly social and moral implications behind these apparently innocent and coherent "slices" of life.

"Pigs," originally published in Arabic in 1967 and in translation in 1977, is the story of a sexually starved clubfooted intellectual. Though "cultured and educated," the young man has a feeling of inferiority because women shun him. His dedication to "principles and values" is finally confronted by the demands of the flesh, and in this conflict the male "macho" manifests itself in an apparent contempt for women. The story is narrated from the point of view of the protagonist, in the form of an indirect interior monologue, à la Virginia Woolf, except for the fully punctuated conversation, in ellipsis, which intrigues the reader.