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of *L'Escole des Filles* (1655). Links between Cleland's works provide some sense of his life as a patterned progression: for example, his writings on politics, physiology, and philology between 1757 and 1787 comprise a quest for 'the foundations of bodily health, national identity, and the true meanings of words. His assault on the degeneracy of his own times takes the form of a search for lost origins' (p. 217). This varied output was itself a kind of conformity: all professional authors in the middle of the eighteenth century were 'miscellaneous writers' (p. 144). Despite his cosmopolitan tastes and use of French sources, Cleland emerges as that favourite contradiction in terms: a typically English eccentric.

UNIVERSITY OF READING

CAROLYN D. WILLIAMS

A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation. By NANCY EASTERLIN. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2012. xiv+324 pp. \$65; £34. ISBN 978-1-4214-0472-1.

Nancy Easterlin's comprehensive and ambitious monograph aims to explain and—just as importantly—to exemplify in practice an evolutionary and cognitive framework for literary studies. The author is an acknowledged leader in this field, and her book clearly demonstrates her impressive knowledge of evolutionary and cognitive psychologies.

Easterlin's five chapters consist of firstly an apologia for the biocultural approach, and then four successive chapters of explanation and application, focusing respectively on narrative theory, ecocriticism, embodied cognition, and sexual selection. A variety of textual objects are chosen for illustrative readings, including poetry by Wordsworth and Coleridge, Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and shorter fiction by Raymond Carver and D. H. Lawrence. One cannot fail to be impressed by Easterlin's erudition, which extends from the neurochemistry of love to the nitty-gritty of Romanticist textual scholarship.

At the heart of Easterlin's monograph is her attempt to bring cognitive and evolutionary psychological accounts of aesthetics into a productive dialogue with literary criticism and interpretation. But there are clearly subsidiary objectives as well. Easterlin denounces what she perceives as a covertly political reluctance to make aesthetic value judgements: the more inclusive process of canonization in recent years, she argues, 'creates the illusion that discriminating judgements between works have been avoided, when in fact the criteria for value judgements have merely shifted from the aesthetic to the political' (p. 40). Affective response is also rehabilitated, as when Easterlin asserts, in a reading of Carver's short story 'I Could See the Smallest Things', that readers will find the representations of slugs in the text disgusting because these creatures are 'like things that, according to evolutionary psychology, humans find universally disgusting—rotten meat, decaying flesh, blood, pus, soft tissue' (p. 213).

These are merely simple examples of the way in which, throughout Easterlin's monograph, the psychological components of literary response and interpretation are given greater theoretical significance than is typical in contemporary scholarship. In readings of far greater complexity and nuance, Easterlin invokes attachment

theory, accounts of extended mind, and many other theories besides, all of which serve in her view to oppose 'poststructuralist constructionism', which she numbers among 'repressive ideologies' (p. 218).

There is much to admire in Easterlin's extraordinary synthesis of biocultural literary approaches; anyone working in the field as student or researcher will get a great deal of intellectual stimulation from her text. There are caveats. Some degree of parochialism is apparent in Easterlin's rhetoric of tension between biocultural and constructionist approaches. This local intradisciplinary dispute (with its political connotations) tends to suppress investigation of a potential cognitive and evolutionary account of constructionist mechanisms. Furthermore, Easterlin allows contentious psychological subdisciplines to speak with an *ex cathedra* authority in her text. There is little evidence of humanities-informed critique of the cognitive-evolutionary expertise employed in her readings. Her monograph accordingly lacks the ambition of the 'critical neuroscience' movement, which reflects from multiple humanities and social science disciplines on the dangers of contemporary 'neuroideology'. Perhaps future work in the biocultural mode will include more of a reciprocal dialogue between the behavioural and the human sciences.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

GAVIN MILLER

Hemingway in Africa. Ed. by MIRIAM MANDEL. (Studies in American Literature and Culture) Rochester, NY: Camden House. 2011. xxvii+398 pp. £45. ISBN 978-1-57113-483-7.

The main intention of this comprehensive study of Ernest Hemingway's African writings is exceeded by the content of the volume, which includes not only an informative and challenging introduction as well as nine critical essays, but also two bibliographies: one covering the books that Hemingway owned about Africa, natural history, hunting, fishing, and exploration; the other an annotated bibliography of criticism since 1989 on the author's African-based work. In addition, there is an accurate chronology of Hemingway's two trips to Africa, in 1933–34 and 1953–54, both dedicated to safari in present-day Kenya and Tanzania. Miriam Mandel argues in her introduction that the transient and unsettled nature of safari paradoxically offered Hemingway's restless soul an ideal sense of home, at an extreme psychological distance from the author's conservative upbringing in Oak Park, Illinois. Home as journey and discovery is then allied to creativity and inspiration in Hemingway's life of travel, and home as constant displacement and liminal space is associated with his African narratives' explorations of sexuality, gender, and spirituality. Several essays in this volume examine how Africa also inspired Hemingway to experiment with new genres, crossing boundaries of fiction and non-fiction as well as mixing travelogue, autobiography, memoir, psychological analysis, ecological debate, and teleological treatise. Mandel's orchestration of the volume's factual information, biographical chartings, bibliographic tools, textual analyses, and theoretical insights is certainly to be commended, even though she proposes only a modest aim: to open new avenues of critical debate and to