

world peoples in Europe seems genuine enough, Racault appears to find what he considers the vulgarization of the robinsonade unforgivable.

Although most of the essays in the volume have been published separately, and although some sections are repetitious, it is a valuable study, not only for the interpretations of individual works but also for the varied viewpoints. The readings of More's *Utopia*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and Verne's *L'Ile mysterieuse* against the historical background suggested by each work are excellent. Racault argues that they all comment mainly by way of absence. For example, Crusoe is on his island during almost the entirety of the reigns of Charles II and James II. There appears to be no political commentary, yet, as Racault suggests, in the failure of absolutism, the establishing of toleration, and the gradual development of contractual relations, politics plays a critical role on Crusoe's island—a role it could not play in England at that time. Similarly explorative are Racault's discussions of the relationships of the writings of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to *Robinson Crusoe*. As I suggested at the beginning of my review, there have been other studies of this kind, but none with such original insight into the potentialities of the subject.

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Leon Guilhamet, *Defoe and the Whig Novel: A Reading of the Major Fiction*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2010. 243pp. US\$56.60; CAN\$70.75. ISBN 978-087413-089-8.

Leon Guilhamet proposes an alternative story of origins for the eighteenth-century English novel, one that considers "Whig culture" to be the most important influence on the development of the form, and one that considers Daniel Defoe to be the key figure in its rise. Even after his withdrawal from direct political activity, Guilhamet argues, Defoe maintained his commitment to Whig revolutionary principles, but "transferred his political, cultural, and social concerns to the realm of fiction." Taken together, Defoe's major works of fiction "create a series of Whig myths, which helped to form British culture in the early eighteenth century and influenced it far beyond that time" (15).

At the same time that he pursues a reconceptualization of the rise of the novel, Guilhamet wants to demonstrate that Defoe was a more accomplished writer of fiction than he has sometimes been given credit for. Though he often wrote in haste, Guilhamet insists, Defoe displayed a consistent sense of purpose in his novels. Charges that he advanced contradictory ideas as occasion (or financial need) demanded stem, in large measure, from the confused state of the Defoe canon after a half-

century of “irresponsible and impressionistic additions” to it. Then, too, Guilhamet suggests, critics who dismiss Defoe’s prose as slipshod are losing sight of the author’s skill in adapting his style to fit the voice of his narrators. Guilhamet aims to provide a firmer basis for recognizing Defoe as (in Maximillian Novak’s phrase) a master of fictions by bringing “a more careful application of hermeneutics” to Defoe’s work (16). The major fiction holds a privileged place in Guilhamet’s account not simply because he sees it as Defoe’s most mature and accomplished work, but also because those novels are widely accepted as being genuinely by Defoe.

Following his introduction, Guilhamet offers two chapters that serve as background for his use of broad terms like “Whig culture.” In a framing chapter on “The Whig Revolution,” Guilhamet seeks to bring into view “a pantheon of ideals and structures ... [that] formed the basis of Whig intellectual and emotional attachment to the multifaceted cause of democracy” (21). The headings under which he ranges his discussion (namely, “Liberty,” “Property,” “Captivity,” “Trade, Commerce, and Imperialism,” “Education, Feminism, and Marriage,” “Sincerity,” “The Dutch Model,” “Whig Heroes,” and “Repentance”) are sensible enough, and they establish themes to which he returns in his readings of the novels. At an average of two pages per heading, however, none of the topics comes as fully or as sharply into view as one might wish, given the scope of the arguments meant to rest upon them.

The second of Guilhamet’s background chapters, “Defoe and the Whigs,” revisits the same list of headings in order “to indicate some of the links between those ideas and Defoe’s attitudes prior to the creative period when his major fiction evolved” (46). Guilhamet has certainly read his Defoe: he cites both Defoe’s poetry and his non-fiction prose (with forays into the novels as well). With its somewhat fragmented sprint through Defoe’s pre-1719 works, however, the chapter does not quite arrive at a fully persuasive account of the Whig principles that are supposed to provide the thread that readers are to see running through Defoe’s thought and writings in Guilhamet’s subsequent discussion.

The remainder of the book is devoted to chapters on *Robinson Crusoe* (that is, the first of the *Crusoe* novels), *Captain Singleton*, *Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, *Colonel Jack*, and *Roxana*. These chapters are, on the whole, more satisfying in their execution than the early chapters establishing the Whig context. There is some special pleading: *Crusoe’s Farther Adventures* and *Serious Reflections* are excluded because they “do not advance the development of the Whig novel in a substantial way” (93), while *Captain Singleton* is elevated to “major” novel status because it can be shown to be “an instance of [Defoe’s] primary achievement: the creation of the Whig novel” (197–98). (Novels are “major” or not, then, based on their aptness for the thesis.) There are also moments when Guilhamet’s zeal for exegesis can make the thread of his argument

hard to follow: some excursions (like the comparison of *A Journal of the Plague Year* to Josephus's *The Jewish War*, for example) might profitably have been spared for the endnotes. But his readings of the novels are generally cogent and sensitive to the dynamics of Defoe's fiction. The chapters on *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, in particular, stand out here, arguing persuasively for the ways that Defoe overlays Whiggish social thought atop scriptural patterns of fall and redemption.

Guilhamet's book makes a plausible case for seeing Defoe's works as Whig novels. Whether he has made the larger case for Defoe as the originator of "the Whig novel" is less certain, however, as no other novels are discussed. That "aspects of the pattern of scriptural, cultural, and political elements, which [he has] identified in Defoe's fiction, can also be found in the work of Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne," for instance, is more asserted than argued (200). Guilhamet's otherwise laudable decision to focus on the careful reading of Defoe's texts runs him into difficulties here, as it has prompted him to eschew the kind of reconstruction of cultural dialogues that would be required to support the broader claims he wishes to make in closing. One might contrast Guilhamet's approach with Abigail Williams's minute reconstruction of Whig networks and Whig/Tory literary debates in *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture, 1681–1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

The book's conclusion is suggestive to be sure, and the foreshortened history of Whig culture that Guilhamet presents in broad strokes there has an air of plausibility about it (as do his claims for Defoe's place in that history). Guilhamet's readings of Defoe's novels will need to be supplemented by other kinds of investigation and analysis, however, before the merits of the larger case that he projects can truly be weighed.

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Leona Toker. *Towards the Ethics of Form in Fiction: Narratives of Cultural Remission*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010. x+240pp. US\$54.95. ISBN 978-0-8142-1122-9.

Leona Toker aspires to provide a topology of forms that may be elicited by ethics within fiction, at least within modern Western narratives. Through readings of canonical, mostly English-language writers (Hawthorne, Fielding, Sterne, Austen, Dickens, Eliot, Hardy, Conrad, Joyce, Kafka, and Salamov), Toker seeks to correlate degrees of carnivalization (in Bakhtin's sense) with varying relations between the ethical and what Toker calls "cultural remission." Toker argues that culture is a "system