

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.

Benjamin Pauley is associate professor of English at Eastern Connecticut State University. He is the author of essays on Daniel Defoe and William Godwin, and the editor of the website *Eighteenth-Century Book Tracker*.

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

of relationships that mediates between individuals and their world," a system that "evolves more slowly than the conditions that it processes," so that "cultural patterns tend to become inimical to individual life" (1). She then suggests a variety of "correctives," among them "aesthetic experience," which, when not just "complacent" or didactic, functions as a "'time-out' from the consolidation of sociocultural determinacies, a space of inner freedom," and thus operates as "cultural remission" (1).

Associating the aesthetic with "reprieve from social interaction, from needs of survival and pressures of self-advancement" (3), Toker maintains that there is a drift towards self-complacency or self-certainty within aesthetic "time-outs" that themselves need correction from textual "ethical effects" that have "the general effect of puncturing the reader's complacency" (4). Thus, the ethics of narrative form plays a double game: "as work-ethics it strives for the artistic feats that can *invite* cultural remissions; as ethics of interpersonal communication, it plants stumbling blocks that, on the contrary, *discontinue* such time-outs" (5). When there is a "high view" of human potentiality and motivation, the carnivalesque, with its stress upon liberating disruption and release of individual energies, tends to predominate. While the carnivalesque is a mode of "oppositonality," in the sense developed for narratology by Ross Chambers, that is, a "use of circumstances set up by [established] power for purposes the power may ignore or deny" (13, citing Chambers's *Room for Maneuver* [1991]), there are also "intermediate" and "oppositional non-carnavalesque modes" (17). So *Tristram Shandy* is predominately carnivalesque, *Tom Jones* oppositional but with carnivalesque features, and Jane Austen's work holds "examples of the non-carnavalesque oppositional" (18). Of course, there are diverse variations: *The Tale of Two Cities* is bitter carnivalesque and *Ulysses* is "radical self-carnivalization" (18).

While the schema has sufficient subtlety and flexibility to yield readings of some cogency and insight, as a global theory it seems limited in its frames of reference. It is odd that any work concerned with ethics, sociality, and affect published in 2010 would give the impression of being unaware not only of the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, but also of work in psychology and neuroscience that, building on Antonio Damasio's groundbreaking *Descartes' Error* (1994), elaborates entwinements of cognitive, affective, and ethical mental processing for which mirror neuron research has provided remarkably specific neural-physiological grounding. Certainly not every discussion of ethics and literature need be centred around Levinas, but his account of the ethical as what calls the spontaneity of individual freedom into question, thereby disrupting good conscience associated with personal and cultural self-complacency, and his treatment of tensions between the aesthetic and the ethical are very close to what Toker describes

as “puncturing the reader’s self-complacency” through “stumbling blocks” that “*discontinue ... time-outs.*” The readers most likely to be interested in Toker’s subject are those most apt to wonder how Toker’s analysis might be refined by engagement with Levinas or how Levinas’s treatment of the same issues might inform Toker’s claims and readings.

Similarly, it can only seem dated to ask in 2010 how narrative form works upon cognitive and affective processing without considering what mirror neuron research means for emotion theory, developmental psychology, language acquisition, and accounts of empathy and sociality. To separate narratology from cognitive science neglects a history of intercourse between the two fields that dates at least from Mark Johnson’s 1987 *The Body in the Mind* and runs through to Patrick Colm Hogan’s 2003 *The Mind and its Stories* and Lisa Zunshine’s 2006 *Why We Read Fiction*. Toker does not entirely ignore ethical philosophy and cognitive narratology: Martha Nussbaum, Stanley Cavell, David Herman, George Lakoff, and Mark Johnson are cited. But her limited engagement with their work only underscores her text’s isolation from current discussion on topics central to its subject.

The thinness of the philosophical underpinnings of Toker’s narratological schema leads to theorizing culture in abstract, ahistorical ways—as a force always only driving towards more repressive consolidations of sociocultural determinacies adversarial to both personal inner freedom and ethical concerns and sensibilities. This recuperates a stale “system vs. the individual” dynamic that has its roots in Rousseauian-Romantic thought and continues into post-structural analyses that both Levinas and cognitive, neuroscientific criticism complexly challenge or modify. The possibility that not all sociocultural determinacies are equally hostile to the ethical, or that narrative form’s eliciting of the ethical may itself reconfigure the determinate in ways more or less responsive, more or less pluralistic, is never entertained.

Toker’s individual readings vary in originality and insight. Her sympathetic reading of Fanny Price’s Portsmouth family’s life in *Mansfield Park* is a useful corrective of interpretations too apt to assume that Fanny’s viewpoint is normative, though her defence drifts towards the opposing error of seeing nothing at all wrong with the Prices’ bustling self-engrossment. The reading of *Tristram Shandy*, in which “remissions ... [of] aesthetically distancing cheerfulness ... are almost religiously oppositional” (66) straddles the divide between postmodern and religious-satiric readings of Sterne over the past twenty-five years. Toker’s narratological schema does not offer anything interpretatively new, but its programmatically negative view of culture obscures interesting possibilities evoked by thinking of the oppositional in terms evocative of religion of some determinate sort. Similarly, Toker’s account of *Ulysses* as a self-carnival “help[ing] us to break free from

the text-play itself just as this text-play helps us out of conventional deadwood attitudes and mental habits" (172) sheds no light on how Joyce's novel may do this while simultaneously giving us, in the revolving of Bloom's mind around Molly with constant affirmation and delight in her abiding singularity, despite his own hurt and pain, the most extraordinary attestation to both the ethical value and artistic fecundity of conjugal love.

As a tool among others, Toker's narratological schema has real but local usefulness. Its strange isolation from the ethical, cognitive, and affective discourses that ought to inform its conceptualization keeps it from escaping naive binary oppositions whose naturalization obscures both the subtlety and poignancy of how the ethical may inflect form in fiction.

Donald R. Wehrs, professor of English at Auburn University, is the co-editor of *Levinas and Nineteenth-Century Literature: Ethics and Otherness from Romanticism through Realism* (2009), has published articles and book chapters on eighteenth-century fiction, post-colonial literature, and critical theory, and is currently working on the relationship between ethics, cognitive science, and literary history.

Virginia H. Cope. *Property, Education, and Identity in Late Eighteenth-Century Fiction: The Heroine of Disinterest*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. viii+180pp. £50. ISBN 978-0-230-22023-2.

"Disinterest" is a term of multiple meanings and complex history. Defined in the *OED* in one sense as "that which is contrary to interest or advantage," alternatively it signifies "disinterestedness, impartiality," or, again, "absence of interest, unconcern." All of these meanings can be seen as coming into play in the context of the popular eighteenth-century character type that Virginia H. Cope dubs the "Heroine of Disinterest" (identifying the figure most closely with the domestic novel in which the main plot centres upon a contested female inheritance). In the work under review, Cope traces the development of this character type from the proto-example of Samuel Richardson's Pamela to Jane Austen's female protagonists (the end point, she argues, of the Heroine of Disinterest), with middle chapters treating relevant novels by Frances Burney, Elizabeth Inchbald, Ann Radcliffe, and the Godwin-Wollstonecraft circle.

A general aim of the book is to contribute to a growing recognition of the "cultural work" (to employ the author's own phrase) being performed by the eighteenth-century domestic novel. Without denying