Literary scholarship in the last two decades has been characterized by an enormous proliferation of critical theories - and an increasing distance between theory and practice. In many students this leads to a feeling of helplessness as concerns the 'application' of current theories to the literature they are reading. In college and university seminars that try to bridge that gap, the seventeen currently available volumes of Ross C. Murfin's 'Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism' have meanwhile become standard text books, because most of them combine a well-edited literary text with a selection of five critical readings from different theoretical perspectives. With additional surveys of the biographical, historical and critical background of the primary text (by the editor of the individual volume), and with general introductions to the theories represented, as well as a useful glossary of critical terms (by the editor of the series), each of these volumes contains a veritable desk-library for students and a good basis for class discussions.

Margot Norris's most recent volume on James Joyce's *Ulysses* is another example of the series' successful editorial concept. The fact that it is the third title in the series dealing with Joyce (after earlier volumes on "The Dead" and *A Portrait of the Artist*) suggests that the Irishman's works lend themselves more than many others to a vast variety of critical approaches.

Nevertheless, this volume differs from most other works in the series in one respect: due to the substantial length of *Ulysses* it does not reprint the primary text. The three most recent essays in the collection refer to the readily available Gabler edition. Norris refrained from an adaptation of the volume's older papers to the Gabler edition, however, as this might have endangered their original arguments (cf. viii); a fact that shows once more just how precarious the status of any text of *Ulysses* is today (and maybe forever).

The choice of critical theories in a collection like this is, of course, always a matter for debate, but the new volume, like its predecessors, gives a balanced cross-section of contemporary theoretical approaches represented by well-known scholars in the respective field. Deconstruction and reader response criticism are represented by two eminent (part time) colleagues of Norris at the University of California, Irvine: Jacques Derrida and Wolfgang Iser. Their contributions to the volume are shortened or revised versions of earlier essays that can already be considered 'classics' of Joyce scholarship. The rest of the authors
contribute original essays written for the purpose: feminist and gender Criticism is represented by Vicki Mahaffey, psychoanalytic criticism by Kimberley J. Delvin, and Marxist criticism by Patrick McGee.

Prior to their readings of the novel, however, Norris provides the student of Ulysses with two introductory essays that are excellent starting points for novices, and a welcome brush-up for initiates. The "Introduction" proper is subtitled "Biographical and Historical Contexts" but is in fact mainly a useful sketch of Joyce's life, with special attention being paid to Ulysses. The second preparatory essay, on the other hand, entitled "A Critical History of Ulysses," is in fact more than just that: its first part provides an overview of the novel's mythological background, listing, for example, the episode titles (but regrettably nothing else) from the famous Gilbert/Linati schema and providing a short plot summary with the most important Homeric references. Part II then drafts a history of scholarship from the 1920s to the present, including important general works on the author and his work, but focussing mainly on Ulysses, which, over the centuries and in the context of various theoretical 'vogues,' has indeed proven "a poetic chameleon, a text for all critical seasons" (31). The final sections mention recent bibliographical and editorial projects, devoting almost a page to a defence of the Gabler edition, but unfortunately confining the "introductory guides for students" to a footnote (37, n7). The concluding seven-page "List of Works Cited," on the other hand, can be recommended as a good working bibliography for seminars.

After almost 50 pages of introductory material, the next 200 pages or so are devoted to the five critical approaches mentioned above. Each of the essays is prefaced with an introduction of about 20 pages by the series editor Ross C. Murfin that characterizes the respective theory and sketches its history, its various subdivisions, major concepts and representatives. As the chosen theories in the 'Case Studies' series overlap, these 'reader-friendly' introductions are often based on earlier versions; they are all carefully updated (and often enlarged), however, and reflect the present state of development in the respective 'school.' They end with a short sketch of the ensuing essay, mentioning its main arguments, without, however, dispensing the student from the need to study the original; and they all provide up-to-date bibliographies containing key-works and introductions to the respective theories, as well as examples of related approaches to Joyce.

The concept of the series, the introductions to the work and those to the theories as well as the glossary at the end of each volume, are all carefully adapted to the needs of "college students" and "undergraduates" (v) as the intended readership of the series. All these prolegomena will be especially welcome as means of allaying at least some of the initial fears that these readers may feel in the face of Ulysses. But although the overall design of the volume succeeds in this respect, the soothing effect is almost certainly counteracted by the choice of the initial essay. Without any doubt, Jacques Derrida's "Ulysses Gramophone: Hear say yes in Joyce" is one of the most brilliant treatments of Joyce's novel and an outstanding example

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of "deconstruction." But students who have just proudly finished their first reading of *Ulysses* might well be discouraged in their further research, by being faced with so much writerly *jouissance* at a time... Derrida's 1984 lecture begins where *Ulysses* ends - with the word "Yes"/"Oui" - and it ends with the sobering insight that "everything we can say about *Ulysses* [...] has already been anticipated [...], everything has already happened to us and has been signed in advance by Joyce..." (89-90). In between, it produces what a reader of Derrida rightly expects: a dazzling display of ingenious wordplay, witty conceits and intelligent paradoxes on gramophones, telephones and postcards, on yeses, ayes and e-yes, and above all on the question of translatability. (That the essay itself is necessarily presented in translation and thus needs heavy annotation from its very first pages doubtless adds to its self-referentiality - but hardly to its 'readability."

After Derrida, the "shortened and simplified" (viii) chapter from Wolfgang Iser's reader-response classic *The Implied Reader* ("Patterns of Communication in Joyce's *Ulysses*") makes almost easy reading. The paper specifically analyses the frustration of reader expectations in Joyce's novel: *Ulysses*, according to Iser, provides a wealth of detail without actually achieving "realism"; its title refers to the Odyssey but the book contains not a single Homeric character. In close analyses of four chapters ('Telemachus,' 'Nestor,' 'Aeolus' and 'Ithaca') Iser shows how aporetic patterns of presentation in *Ulysses* create "gaps" ("Leerstellen") that are waiting to be filled by the reader. Furthermore, the novel, according to Iser, makes its reader aware of the limitless possibilities of interpretation and of the ultimate indeterminacy of reality: "He/she will begin to distrust the convenient patterns he/she has been building and will eventually himself/herself perceive that they are nothing but the instruments he/she uses to grasp and pare down the mass of detail" (126).

The rather clumsy attempt at 'political correctness' in the handling of gendered pronouns throughout Iser's essay seems almost outdated in the light of Vicki Mahaffey's ensuing paper entitled "*Ulysses* and the End of Gender." Just how much has happened in the field of Feminist and Gender Studies becomes obvious when one compares the series editor's introduction to this theory in the present volume with the corresponding text in his own volume on *Heart of Darkness* ten years earlier, which was only half as long and did not even mention the term 'gender.' Mahaffey's essay is a good example of these new developments. Not unlike Iser, she stresses the capacity of *Ulysses* to frustrate reader expectations: in her case, those of traditional gender clichés. Conventionalized stereotypes are subverted in order to "expose the gender system itself as an arbitrary and inadequate fiction" (153). Paying close attention to the text, Mahaffey shows that the three main characters, Stephen Dedalus, Leopold, and Molly Bloom, totally contradict the conventional conceptions of a youthful or grown-up male hero, as well as a typical heroine (who is caricatured in Gerty MacDowell instead). Contrary to Gilbert and Gubar (cf. 163f, n11), for instance, Mahaffey reads *Ulysses* therefore not as a misogynist but as an (almost) feminist piece of literature (cf. 168).

Kimberley J. Delvin represents psychoanalytic criticism with her article "'I saw that picture somewhere': Tracking the Symptom of the Sisters of Lazarus." Inspired by a remark of Freud's (in *The Ego and the Id*) about "optical mnemonic residues" as clues to the unconscious (quoted 187), Delvin takes a closer look at

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Leopold Bloom's highly 'visual' thinking. More specifically, she examines the protagonist's pictorial associations in connection with the "signifier 'Mary'" (190) and thus starts an impressive tour de force through Ulysses, during which she discovers many interesting and often surprising connections between themes and motifs in Joyce's novel. Her journey begins in the "Lotus Eaters" episode, where Bloom's thoughts wander from a pin affixed to a letter from Martha Clifford to a slightly obscene street song sung by two prostitutes, and further to a religious painting of Jesus with Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus (cf. 190-91). From there Delvin takes us on through "Aeolus," "Lestrygonians," "Cyclops" and "Circe", inspecting several other "Marys" on the way, together with their various visual associations in Bloom's mind. This mind, which constantly subjects women to the male gaze and other sexual exploitation, is presented as a rather misogynist one in Delvin's essay; and it is interesting to note how her position in this respect contrasts with Mahaffey's point of view in the preceding paper.

The final section in the volume introduces a Marxist perspective with Patrick McGee's "Heavenly Bodies: Ulysses and the Ethics of Marxism." McGee, who in this essay is himself blurring the boundaries between public and private discourses, sees Ulysses as doing just that. In accordance with Walter Benjamin's statement, that "[d]iscretion [...] has become more and more an affair of pretty bourgeois parvenus" (quoted 221), McGee reads Joyce's novel as a "monumental act of indiscretion" (222) which makes the "real' human body" (222) and its functions an irreducible reference point for all major characters. There are different ways of relating to the body, however: whereas Stephen's relation to it is always mediated by language, for example, Bloom wants to experience its pleasures rather than know its meaning (cf. 125). Starting from these basic assumptions, McGee discusses questions of ideology/hegemony, representation, aesthetics and desire, and finally even offers the relationship between Leopold and Molly Bloom "as a model for a Marxist ethics of the body [...] in the sense that it allows for the possibility of human freedom under the rule of desire as the absolute condition of unconditional demand" (235). McGee creatively and freely combines concepts from authors as diverse as Benjamin and Althusser, Eagleton and Adorno, Lacan and Gramsci, Foucault and Jameson - and his paper will send many a student back to the excellent introductory chapter or on to the glossary. The last essay thus returns to the level of complexity and ingenuity of the first; and it is fitting therefore that McGee, after questioning his own affiliation to Marxist Criticism, concludes with a tribute to Jacques Derrida's deconstruction as a related form of ideology-critique (cf. 236-37).

This cross-reference is not the only one in the volume; and it is a proof of the editor's judicious choice of texts that the reader can easily relate them to each other. Thus McGee in a parenthesis (233) refers to the 'visuality' of Bloom previously treated by Delvin, and to Lacan (226-27), who is also referred to in Delvin. The latter, conversely, touches on gender issues that have been the main topic in Mahaffey. And Mahaffey, as has been noted above, is almost as interested in reader expectation as Iser. The volume thus gives its readers an idea not only of the specific differences between various critical approaches, but also of their many interrelations.

http://www.as.uni-hd.de/prolepsis/00_9_mei.html
When they reach the concluding glossary of this well-balanced and often demanding volume, the students (for whom it is primarily, but surely not exclusively, designed) will actually have read two books: a thorough and variegated introduction to *Ulysses* - and a practical guide to major trends in contemporary literary theory.

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**REVIEWED BY:** Franz Meier

**AFFILIATION:** Universität Regensburg

**E-MAIL:** franz.meier@sprachlit.uni-regensburg.de

**CONTACT ADDRESS:** Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Regensburg, D-93040 Regensburg, Germany

**FAX NUMBER:** (0941) 9434992

**PHONE NUMBER:** (0941) 9433462 (Office)

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