

content or argumentative progression, to increase textual coherence, and to emphasize certain aspects of content by diverging from established conventions of form (cf. 332). Only 6% of Wilbur's and 17.8% of Bishop's poetry forego, according to Albers, a reliance on patterns of stanza, rhyme or meter (cf. 341). While Bishop tends to use the stability of formal structures to compensate for or come to terms with the chaos or difficulties of the issues with which her poetry deals, Wilbur uses form to express the inner logic of issues that are addressed in his poems as well as the process of understanding these issues.

Unlike so many poetry critics, Albers relies on extremely thoughtful close readings (rather than biographical or historical contexts) and manages to reveal in this manner the speculative (and sometimes wrongheaded) nature of other commentaries. This study is therefore a much needed reminder that it is the original primary text (with all its aspects of content and form) that should be at the center of literary studies. Only after the solid and enlightening groundwork done by Albers should the findings of this close reading be used to elucidate the text's references to extra-textual issues.

Bearing in mind that the purpose of Albers's book is to demonstrate the centrality of formal elements in the poetry of Bishop and Wilbur, he cannot really be faulted for not going into all facets of the poets' oeuvre, omitting, for example, any references to Elizabeth Bishop's short stories or translations. One would wish, however, that the book had been written in English in order to foster the international reception that this meticulous, eye-opening study deserves. A must-read for any scholar interested in Bishop, Wilbur, or formalist American poetry.

Duisburg-Essen

Josef Raab

FREDRIC JAMESON, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005), 431 pp.

For those already familiar with Fredric Jameson's writing on Utopia and science fiction, the real value of his recent *magnum opus* lies in its first part, which is taken up by "The Desire Called Utopia," a new 233-page essay that reviews and updates the positions adopted in the reprinted essays collected in the second

half of the volume. For readers new to this line of Jameson's work, it may come as a surprise that the author of one of the standard works on postmodernism is an avid reader of science fiction and frequent contributor to *Science Fiction Studies*. For the benefit of both types of readers, this volume for the first time assembles a representative and thought-provoking sample of Jameson's writing on the topic.

Jameson's interest in science fiction centers on the utopian imagination of the genre, and his discussions of Utopia and science fiction are inextricably intertwined. His by far most influential contribution to *Science Fiction Studies*, the 1982 essay "Progress Versus Utopia; or, Can We Imagine the Future," already clearly states his core argument concerning the politics of Utopia. Drawing on the work of Darko Suvin, Jameson argues that science fiction enables a historicizing of the here and now and thus acquires the capacity to "defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present" (286). In the process, science fiction finds its "deepest vocation," which is "over and over again to demonstrate and to dramatize our incapacity to imagine the future, to body forth [...] the atrophy in our time of what Marcuse has called the *utopian imagination*, the imagination of otherness and radical difference" (288-89). It is in this respect that science fiction inherits "the true vocation of the utopian narrative," which is "to confront us with our incapacity to imagine Utopia" (293).

This sums up Jameson's basic position on the function and meaning of utopian discourse and is the common thread that links the twelve essays collected in the second part of *Archaeologies*. These writings testify to the wide range of Jameson's intellectual concerns and cover an impressively broad selection of utopian texts: from More's foundational *Utopia* (1517) to Kim Stanley Robinson's alternate history *The Years of Rice and Salt* (2002), with a particular emphasis on three of Jameson's favorite writers: Robinson, Ursula Le Guin, and, most prominently, Philip K. Dick, the "Shakespeare of Science Fiction" (345) to whose work Jameson dedicates the only previously unpublished essay in part 2, "History and Salvation in Philip K. Dick."

Throughout his writing on Utopia and science fiction, Jameson reminds us of the need to distinguish between two utopian projects: that of the clearly defined Utopian program as we find it in More or Plato, and that of a less clearly definable utopian impulse theorized

most comprehensively by Bloch. While the utopian impulse is detectable in a wide variety of cultural phenomena ranging from political and social theory to literary texts and other cultural artifacts, the Utopian program constructs a radically different world that puts our own powers of imagination to the test. Hence, the necessity of an oft-noted "geopolitical secession of the Utopian space from the world of empirical and historical reality" (39), from King Utopus's great trench to the alternate realities of science fiction.

Jameson's insistence on the radical alterity of utopian worlds also allows him to distinguish categorically between Utopias, anti-Utopias, and dystopias. Anti-Utopias are texts like Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or Huxley's *Brave New World*, which are, Jameson contends, aimed at discrediting utopian and, more specifically, socialist visions of a better future. Dystopias such as William Gibson's *Sprawl* trilogy (*Neuromancer*, *Count Zero*, *Mona Lisa Overdrive*) are not negative Utopias. For unlike Utopias, dystopias do not project a radically different world. Instead, they tell a story of the near future that is extrapolated from the present state of affairs. More often than not, Jameson argues, such narratives invite us to rejoice in the debased world we are forced to live in.

Jameson's aversion to dystopian narratives in general and cyberpunk fiction in particular also comes to the fore in his useful brief outline of the history of science fiction. Building on Isaac Asimov's identification, in 1962, of three successive stages in the development of science fiction (adventure, science, sociology), Jameson adds three additional stages: subjectivity (Dick, Le Guin), aesthetics (Samuel Delany), and cyberpunk (Gibson) (91-94). Jameson emerges as a fervent advocate of the full variety of science fiction, with one significant exception. Throughout his writing on utopia and science fiction, Jameson stresses the ideologically baleful nature of (dystopian) cyberpunk, which he already in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* characterized as "the supreme literary expression if not of postmodernism, then of late capitalism itself."<sup>1</sup> Jameson reiterates this judgment in "The Desire Called Utopia," where he adds that the (sub)genre "revels in

<sup>1</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1991) 419n1.

the demonic energies of the 'sprawl' and of metropolitan excess in ways that are certainly celebratory and often proto-Utopian" (161). Jameson consistently singles out Gibson's work for critique, which makes it all the more interesting that his review of Gibson's most recent novel, *Pattern Recognition* (2003), which is also included in *Archaeologies* (384-92), seems at least cautiously sympathetic.

The new essay, "The Desire Called Utopia," likewise introduces a number of fresh perspectives on Utopia and science fiction. Jameson embarks on "a study of Utopian fantasy mechanisms [...] which eschews individual biography in favor of historical and collective wish-fulfillment" (xiii) and characterizes the utopian text as "collective wish-fulfillment" (84). In doing this, he draws on Coleridge's distinction between imagination and fancy to distinguish between truly utopian imaginations of the social and architectonic structure of a radically different world and the secondary elaborations of utopian fancy, which manifest themselves in the invention of a multitude of details—such as B.F. Skinner's transparent lunch tray—within the utopian world. At first, Jameson seems to bring the full weight of Coleridge's dismissive stance on fancy to bear on the second option, which he aligns with what he considers ineffective tinkering with the present system and diagnoses as a symptom of "the waning of the Utopian impulse, the enfeeblement of Utopian desire [...] which saps our political options and tends to leave us all in the helpless position of passive accomplices and impotent handwriters" (55). Later in the essay, however, Jameson insists on the dialectical interrelatedness of utopian imagination and fancy and stresses "the necessity of an interplay or cooperation between the division of labor of these powers" (227). Jameson's turn to questions of collective psychology now also begins to inform his take on anti-Utopianism, which he characterizes as "the fear of Utopia" (211).

Jameson in his new essay also reconsiders the political function of Utopia, arguing that "[t]he Utopian form itself is the answer to the universal ideological conviction that no alternative is possible, that there is no alternative to the system. But it asserts this by forcing us to think of the break itself, and not by offering a more traditional picture of what things would be like after the break" (232). In the light of a renaissance of utopian thinking at the beginning of our new millennium—think

of the recent shift from talk about anti-globalization to *altermondialisme* or Eric Bihl and Volker Freystedt's equilibrium concept and its potential future implementation in French-Polynesia—Jameson de-emphasizes our ideological entrapment and highlights the ways in which utopian thinking invites us to reflect on both the need for and the difficulty of imagining systemic rupture. Jameson here proposes a somewhat more optimistic view of the possibility of radical systemic transformation: on the essay's final page, utopian thinking becomes "a rattling of the bars and an intense spiritual concentration and preparation for another stage which has not yet arrived" (233).

As in much of his other writing on science fiction, Jameson in "The Desire Called Utopia" fervently denounces anti-Utopianism, be it in the form of Jameson's privileged object of hate, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, or Lyotard's and other post-structuralist theorists' equation of (utopian) totality and totalitarianism. To this reviewer's knowledge, this essay is, however, the first place where Jameson acknowledges Utopia's potential complicity with another repressive historical configuration: "My own feeling is that the colonial violence thus inherent in the very form or genre itself is a more serious reproach than anything having to do with the authoritarian discipline and conformity that may hold for the society within Utopia's borders" (205). This is not developed in any detail, but it registers Jameson's awareness of not only the possible pitfalls of utopian closure but also those of utopian foundation.

As we may expect from so perceptive a reader and critic of cultural theory, *Archaeologies* as a whole also takes us on a tour of the history of ideas on Utopia, ranging from Adorno's minimalist program—"that no one shall go hungry any more" (qtd. in *Archaeologies* 172)—to Ernst Bloch's dedication to unearthing traces of the utopian impulse in the most unsuspected places (Ku Klux Klan costumes, museums, Goethe's *Faust*), to Herbert Marcuse's thoughts on the utopian character of aesthetics and their source in Schiller (152-53), and, most important for Jameson's own theorizing on Utopia, Louis Marin's *Utopiques: Jeux d'Espaces*, which he discusses at length in "Of Islands and Trenches: Naturalization and the Production of Utopian Discourse." That essay is second in importance only to "Progress Versus Utopia," and it is, together with "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture"—Jameson's ingenious Blo-

chian discussion of *Jaws*, *The Godfather*, and their sequels—the most glaring absence from *Archaeologies*.

While the present reviewer does not share Jameson's aversion to dystopian fiction and suggests elsewhere that one might want to adopt a less dismissive stance on its politics of representation, only one additional shortcoming of *Archaeologies* needs to be mentioned here. The new essay, "The Desire Called Utopia," has a rather meandering structure and rapidly moves from one line of argument to the next, sometimes within the same section, and with only few transitions between. The essay might have benefited from more editorial assistance. Still, this is a minor point, for Jameson's text sparkles with his customary intellectual brilliance and, like *Archaeologies* as a whole, addresses political and aesthetic issues that are topical once again and likely to remain so for years to come.

Göttingen

Philipp Schweighauser

BERND HERZOGENRATH, ed., *The Films of Tod Browning*, (London: Black Dog, 2006), 238 pp.

Being called a 'cult director' can be a mixed blessing. It usually indicates a following of loyal fans but may also create a certain resistance against academic forms of analysis. This collection of articles on the films of 'cult director' Tod Browning—among them *The Unholy Three* (1925), *Dracula* (1931), and *Freaks* (1932)—might thus find itself in an awkward position, yet it squarely places itself in the field of serious film scholarship. In his introduction, Bernd Herzogenrath alludes briefly to Browning's 'cult status,' regarding it as the result of his obsession with mutilation, deformity, and abjection, but this remains the only, and rather cursory, invocation of the cult theme. The general frame of reference is the discourse on auteurism which connects most of the articles—although not without certain ambiguities to which I will return. Indeed, in many respects Browning and his films deserve a more comprehensive treatment as the variety of themes and approaches in this collection show.

The book almost has the appearance of a cult object in itself. It is not your run-of-the-mill collection of essays but a richly illustrated and enticingly designed book that includes production stills, screen shots, full-page photographs,

and even a section with color plates, mostly of movie posters (also included are a selected bibliography and an index). This elaborate design not only seeks to do justice to the visuality of the film medium, it confidently addresses a global audience. Part of the credit for this professional job must go to the London based publisher Black Dog as the editor Bernd Herzogenrath indicates in his acknowledgements.

The collection of essays brings together twelve articles; six are grouped under the heading "Themes, Topics, Approaches," while the remaining six are close readings of individual films from the late 1920s and the 1930s, thus putting an emphasis on the second half of Browning's career. One peculiar fact applies to both sections, the length of the individual articles varies remarkably (from seven to twenty-one pages), making some inevitably more far-reaching and comprehensive than others. After a brief introduction, the first section begins with an overview of Browning's work by Vivian Sobchack, written in 1974 and drawing primarily on newspaper reviews. For different reasons I find this an odd choice and since this represents one of the few critical points about the collection I'd like to return to it at the end of this review.

Most of the essays in the first section see a strong link between Browning's work and the cinematic pre-history of the circus sideshow, magic shows, and the theater. Boris Henry postulates that Browning's films have a slapstick background. Matthew Solomon stresses the importance of stage magic, which Browning had been involved with prior to his film work. Many of his films deal with theatrical situations in the widest sense—with performances, magic shows, and spectacular forms of presenting the body—, yet Solomon argues that Browning modernizes the sense of magic by exposing how the magic tricks work. This is often done to create comic effects but may also, as Stefanie Diekmann and Ekkehard Knörer show, be a subtle way of reflecting on the apparatus creating illusions. Theatricality is thus not only a theme in Browning's films but becomes a means of establishing, and dismantling, intermedial connections between the cinema and its precursors. Although Diekmann and Knörer find no evidence of a direct link, they see strong parallels between Browning's work and the sensational Parisian theater of Grand Guignol, a theater of fear and horror to which he adds the stance of reflexivity.

Nicole Benez shifts the focus from the performance space to the performance itself by writing primarily about the collaboration of Browning with Lon Chaney in eleven films, an actor known for his stunning ability to change his bodily appearance. The versatility of Chaney's physical mutations are regarded as a crucial component in Browning's peculiar version of a 'cinema of attractions' in which the stunning body effects may easily prevail over narrative interest. Chaney stands in the tradition of the Delsarte code of gestures but manages, as Benez argues, to transform it into figures "that, far from any grammar, genuinely deal with the unspeakable" (111).

Alec Charles investigates continuity errors and other directorial 'flaws' which happen in Browning's work since it belonged in many cases to the financially underdeveloped sector of B-movies. Drawing on Freud's concept of the uncanny, Charles suggests that these 'flaws' may add to the disconcerting atmosphere of Browning's films, yet he also seems to imply that the continuity errors were intentional on Browning's part (and could even be read as an anticipation of Sergei Eisenstein's work?). In this case, I found that the strong auteurist bias creates an exaggerated defensiveness about criticism of Browning's work (shared by some of the other contributions)—here, the charge of directorial incompetence—, while a psychoanalytic approach is taken to counter these charges, where historical and institutional research into the details of B-movie productions might have yielded more interesting insights.

In the second part, individual films are analyzed in depth. There are two short essays on *Iron Man* (1931) by Leger Grindon and on *Mark of the Vampire* (1935) by Matthew Sweney, which postulate that these films should be seen as important steps in Browning's work. Among the longer contributions, Robin Blyn takes *The Unholy Three* (1925)—a story centered around Professor Echo, a ventriloquist—as a case in point how the transition from silent to sound technology was dealt with in the films of the 1920s. Both the cinema and the ventriloquist can disentangle body and voice so that this character serves as a means of reflecting upon changes in self-perception brought about by technology.

In his close analysis of *Where East Is East* (1929), Stefan Brandt draws on postcolonial theories to demonstrate that Browning's film not only reproduces but investigates the myth of the Orient. While the film recounts the story

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American  
Studies

A Quarterly

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the German Association  
for American Studies by

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Volume 52 · 4 (2007)

Universitätsverlag  
WINTER  
Heidelberg



AMST

Archaeologies of the Future , Jameson's most substantial work since Postmodernism, Or. 3.5 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews. See all formats and editions Hide other formats and editions. Price. New from. A non-apologetic review of the science fiction genre through the eyes of America's leading postmodernist thinker. You will need to bring your knowledge of the Western Canon and contemporary philosophy with you in order to fully appreciate this text. Its division into books I and II enables regular science fiction readers to access straight forward reviews in Book II. Expect to learn from this book and don't expect him to enshrine SF into the Western Canon but rather to provide you with an understanding of the zeitgeist of the history of the genre and ourselves. But Jameson's engagement with the Utopian problematic goes back to the early 1970s and Part Two of Archaeologies of the Future is a welcome collection of essays spanning four decades. The central aporia of the content of the Utopian imagination is reached thus: "the more surely a given Utopia asserts its radical difference from what currently is, to that very degree it becomes, not merely unrealizable but, what is worse, unimaginable" (p. xv).