

European Connections

Elizabeth Russell (ed.)

Loving against the Odds

Women's Writing in English
in a European Context

Peter Lang

22

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edited by
Peter Collier

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'European Connections' is a new series which aims to publish studies in Comparative Literature. Most scholars would agree that no literary work or genre can fruitfully be studied in isolation from its context (whether formal or cultural). Nearly all literary works and genres arise in response to or at least in awareness of previous and contemporary writing, and are often illuminated by confrontation with neighbouring or contrasting works. The literature of Europe, in particular, is extraordinarily rich in this kind of cross-cultural fertilisation (one thinks of medieval drama, Romantic poetry, or the Realist novel, for instance). On a wider stage, the major currents of European philosophy and art have affected the different national literatures in varying and fascinating ways.

The masters of this comparative approach in our century have been thematic critics like F.R. Leavis, George Steiner, and Jean-Pierre Richard, or formalist critics like I.A. Richards, Northrop Frye, Gérard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov, but much of the writing about literature which we know under specific theoretical labels such as 'feminist' (Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler), 'marxist' (Georg Lukacs, Raymond Williams) or 'psychoanalytical' criticism (Charles Mauron, Jacques Lacan), for instance, also depends by definition on taking literary works from allegedly different national, generic or stylistic traditions and subjecting them to a new, comparative grid. The connections of European with non-European writing are also at issue—one only has to think of the impact of Indian mythology on Salman Rushdie or the cross-fertilisation at work between a Spanish writer like Juan Goytisolo and the Latin American genre of 'Magical Realism'. Although the series is fundamentally a collection of works dealing with literature, it intends to be open to interdisciplinary aspects, wherever music, art, history, philosophy, politics, or cinema come to affect the interplay between literary works.

Many European and North American university courses in literature nowadays teach and research literature in faculties of Comparative and General Literature. The series intends to tap the rich vein of such research. Initial volumes will look at the ways in which writers like Thackeray draw on French writing and history, the structure and strategies of Faulkner's fiction in the light of Proust and Joyce, Goethe's relation to the Spanish picaresque tradition, Victorian reactions to Eugène Sue, and George Mackay Brown's interest in Hopkins and Mann. Offers of contribution are welcome, whether studies of specific writers and relationships, or wider theoretical investigations.

Proposals from established scholars, as well as more recent doctoral students, are welcome. In the major European languages, the series will publish works, as far as possible, in the original language of the author.

The series editor, Peter Collier, is a Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, and Senior Lecturer in French at the University of Cambridge. He has translated Pierre Bourdieu (*Homo Academicus*, Polity Press, 1988), Emile Zola (*Germinal*, Oxford World's Classics, 1993), and Marcel Proust (*The Fugitive*, Penguin, 2002), has edited several collections of essays on European literature and culture (including *Visions and Blueprints*, with Edward Timms, Manchester University Press, 1988, *Modernism and the European Unconscious*, with Judy Davies, Polity Press, 1990, *Critical Theory Today*, with Helga Geyer-Ryan, Polity Press, 1990, and *Artistic Relations*, with Robert Lethbridge, Yale University Press, 1994), and has written a study of Proust and art (*Mosaici proustiani*, Il Mulino, 1986). He is a member of the British branch of the International Comparative Literature Association.

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