

the non-Indian community and in its attempt to reshape inherited practices to make them regulate and define roles in the nuclear and extended family. Significant as it is, to draw attention to emotional adjustment and trauma in any detail is to shift the focus and write a very different kind of book. The “public” sphere is his concern, and in dealing with it so competently, the author has created a vantage point from which other writers can look at the different facets that make up the South Asian experience. *In the Further Soil* is a notable work, insightful and illuminating, and it is clearly essential reading for anyone interested in the field.

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Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Beyond the Classroom: Essays on American Authors*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1996. Pp. xvi, 267. \$58.50.

As reviewer-in-waiting, I found I had much in common with the author of *Beyond the Classroom*. I am also of the postwar generation of students and teachers, many of whom shifted from “British literature, which had been the staple of my formal study” (190) to what might be called post-Matthiessen American literature and to the New Critical “value of close reading, the significance of metaphor and symbol, the importance of structure and tone” (190). Like Sealts, I later saw “New Criticism replaced by New Historicism, close reading transformed into deconstruction, and aesthetic considerations giving way—for some at least—to various cultural, ideological, and even overtly political goals” but “still hold firmly to a more open and liberal conception” (190) of literary study. I share his interest in major authors of the American Renaissance. Like him I have tried to combine “experience in the classroom and the scholarship that good teaching must depend on—meaning both original research and assimilation and application of the ongoing work of others” (xii). And I even share his interest in railroads, to the extent of “an O-gauge operation in my own basement” (xiii).

Yet as reviewer I must ask: what kind of book is *Beyond the Classroom*, and what is it good for? It is not a unified critical study like, say, Sealts’s *Emerson on the Scholar*. Nor is it a systematic survey of significant information like his *Melville’s Reading*. Nor is it a teaching or reading edition like Sealts and Ferguson’s *Emerson’s Nature—Origins, Growth, Meaning*. Nor a scholarly edition like Hayford and Sealts’s genetic *Billy Budd, Sailor*. But it does bear traces of all of these.

Beyond the Classroom is chronological in several ways. It is a sequel to Sealts’s *Pursuing Melville, 1940-1980*. In itself it is a sequence of essays, several on Melville’s reading and shorter fiction as we might expect, ordered in three parts. Its checklists, again chronological, of books, of articles, and of reviews, chronicle the complete doings of what Wayne

Booth has called the *career-author*. And the moving dedication has its own chronological force.

Most of these chronologically ordered essays put into print versions of talks and other materials at one stage given "beyond the classroom" (190). The talks were often based, in their turn, on earlier material from Sealts's teaching and publishing. Perhaps the fullest example of this is "Innocence and Infamy: Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*," which was, progressively, notes and commentary from an edition (1962), seminar material printed as resources pamphlet (1983), public lecture (1984-86), chapter in *A Companion to Melville Studies* (1986), and finally chapter 5 of "Part One: 1982-1986" of *Beyond the Classroom*. Thus while the exact form of these gathered essays may be original with this book, much—sometimes most—of their content is not, and in this sense they are unoriginal, twice- or thrice-told tales. They also lack the subversive originality of such studies as Thompson's *Melville's Quarrel with God*, Irwin's *American Hieroglyphics*, or Rogin's *Subversive Genealogy*. But of course they do not intend it. They are, instead, essays of recapitulation, clarification, consolidation, and even celebration, of their topics. These essays are aimed at "diverse audiences, both on college and university campuses and beyond: groups of students and teachers, college alumni, Wisconsin lawyers, church congregations, and a town-and-gown group" (xi-xii), "nonspecialist listeners and readers" (xiii).

Gathered this way, and aimed this way, the essays begin to reflect wider purposes, spelled out during *Beyond the Classroom*. By and large, the book's concerns are those of the "liberal consensus" rejected, according to Frederick Crews, by the "New Americanists": "a small core of classics by (on the whole) well-connected white males, using those texts to celebrate moral earnestness, dense aesthetic texture, and a genial democratic idea of the American dream" (32). But for Sealts, quite unapologetically, "I shall never tire of such writers, nor absorb all that they have to teach" (xiv). His discussions of specific works by "such writers" also have another ambition: "I hope that these comments will contribute to discussions of the story and, beyond that, will give readers some idea of how literary scholars go about their business, not only in the classroom but also in the research and analysis that are part of our preparation for day-to-day teaching" (24). For Sealts, characteristically, such "research and analysis" should include "various analogues and possible sources in its author's experience, his reading, and his previous writing" (53); and, in *Beyond the Classroom*, it does. For "how such writers learned about the world, about themselves, and about their own craft is always a fascinating story" (65), one of the stories Sealts retells in this book.

Beyond the Classroom, with its chronological emphases, its recapitulations of Sealts's previous career, and its recurring statements of scholarly and teacherly principles, is also a kind of autobiography. As

such, it might even be read and judged in terms like those set by James Olney for his *Metaphors of Self*: by how much it displays "what forms have proved possible to humanity" and considers "'How shall I live?' If autobiography can advance our understanding of that question, and I think it can, then it is a very valuable literature indeed" (xi).

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- Vijay Mishra. *The Gothic Sublime*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994. Pp. x, 342. \$64.00; \$21.95 pb.

In recent years the sublime as a patriarchal discourse has come in for considerable attention and revision in such studies as Thomas Weiskel's *The Romantic Sublime* (1976), Steven Knapp's *Personification and the Sublime* (1985), Patricia Yaeger's "Towards a Female Sublime" (in Linda Kauffman's *Gender and Theory* [1989]), Peter de Bolla's *The Discourse of the Sublime* (1989) and Rob Wilson's *American Sublime* (1991). While Barbara Claire Freeman's and Vijay Mishra's more recent books on aspects of the literary sublime acknowledge such precursors, the two books could hardly be more different from each other. Mishra focuses on specific historical texts recognized as "Gothic," producing new insights into familiar texts and suggesting ways of reading the Gothic in relation to postmodernism. Freeman focuses on the sublime in more general terms, redefining it as a way of rereading mostly twentieth-century fiction by women. While the two writers share some inevitable common ground, treating Burke and Kant as important eighteenth-century theorists of the sublime, the only work of fiction they both treat is Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Neverthe-