# THE CRITIC AS NOVELIST

*In the new spirit of criticism as performance, a number of literary critics have gone so far as to take up novel-writing. Michael Levenson explores the creative works of four of these enterprising intellectuals and finds that each overcomes not only the constraints of his or her theoretical past but the traditional division between creation and analysis.*

BY MICHAEL LEVENSON

Misleading to call it a movement, and still worse to think of it as a program, but we now have seen enough minor literary eruptions to suspect that it is a cultural symptom that bears some reflection: this burst of novel-writing from people who have lived the conceptual life, the life of method and argument, who often carry leather cases, or who give public lectures and contribute essays to learned journals. In the past five years, some of the world's leading literary critics have turned novelists, and at the same time turned from the coterie audience gathered in the universities to the wider public made up of anyone who wants to read. Why do they do it? What do they want? Are they merely slumming in the bad streets of the imagination? Or are these just new cases of a few gifted people who always hoped to grow up to be novelists and decided to act before it was too late?

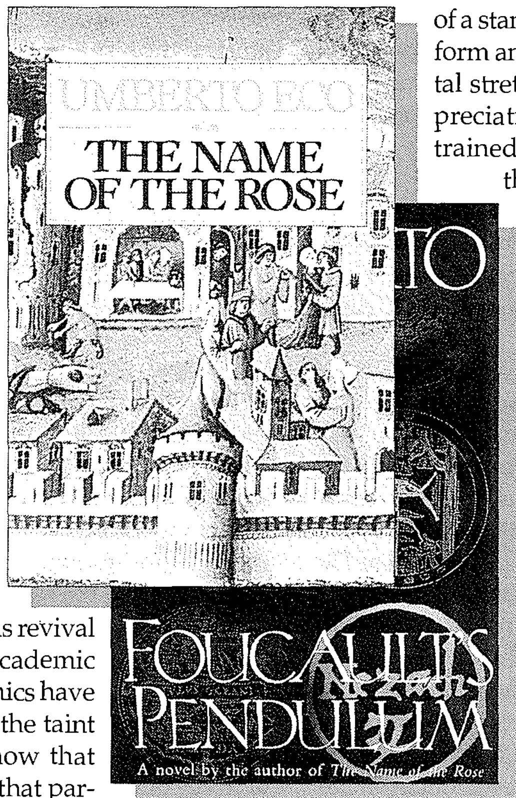
Literary critics are not alone in suddenly feeling the charm of novel-writing; it happens to historians and journalists, among others. But I intend to give reasons for taking the literary academic drift of the tide with special seriousness. I'll start by proposing a story of this century, inevitably a story with many chapters left out. It begins with the old provocations of modernism, especially those forbidding experiments of the third decade—Joyce's *Ulysses*, Woolf's *The Waves*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Pound's *Cantos*—works more than willing (in T. S. Eliot's phrase) to disturb and alarm the public. This they did.

One slowly building consequence of those literary agitations was the creation of criticism, criticism as we know it now—professional, sophisticated, ambitious. In significant respects, the modern professoriate within the humanities is one of the lasting (though inadvertent) achievements of the avant-garde. It is scarcely an accident that this century has seen the emergence of these rival siblings: a revolutionary avant-garde intent on speaking a new word, and an academic establishment that has perfected the skills of interpretation. Indeed, the academic standpoint must often be seen as a defense against the aggressions of modernism.

With the great postwar expansion of the university and with the exciting lure of interdisciplinary collaboration, the critical project took on ever more heady ambitions. Hopes of a grand synthesis—among, say, Marx and Freud and existentialism—led to the vision of a Total Theory, an exhaustive

method that would take into account all relevant details on the way to its definitive interpretations. Jean-Paul Sartre gave one version of this comprehensive system of explanation, Herbert Marcuse another, and Northrop Frye a rival third. Theirs was a great dream of the 1950s and early '60s, when it seemed possible that many disciplines would meet in a grand methodological union.

But the theory project has fallen into a crisis. The dream of a Total Theory is no longer able to soothe any deep academic sleep. It just hasn't worked out: There were too many fissures in the great globe of perfect understanding. Total Theory has itself become a primary target of theoretical attack; the very idea of a seamless explanation that would find a home for every detail of a life, a text, an epoch now seems charmingly quaint.




With the fading of the missionary goal there has emerged a conspicuous revival of individualism in academic life. Of course, academics have never been free from the taint of self-interest. But now that it's so hard to believe that particular essays and books are part of some unfolding collective structure, everywhere you look you see eye-catching individual display. The dazzling feat of interpretive ingenuity, the bravura reading of a well-worn text, the memorably witty lecture, even the rhetorically bold introduction to the witty lecture, now comprise the intellectual currency of academic life: the public working of the quick mind as high theater.

No longer convinced that their academic labor is leading anywhere in particular, scholars give themselves to self-contained gestures of critical power. So, with the consummate dexterity of a practiced performer, new historicist Stephen Greenblatt (University of California, Berkeley) takes his audiences from the trial of a hermaphrodite to the green woods of Shakespearean comedy. And with a keen sense for the intellectual funny bone, Sandra Gilbert (Princeton) and Susan Gubar (University of California, Davis) leaven their feminist historical revisionism with the hilarity of a stand-up comedy duet. To perform an act of criticism at full mental stretch, to do so before the appreciative glances of one's well-trained colleagues, to provide through the course of an evening one full measure of conceptual edification—this now often seems sufficient, the best that can be hoped for. Indeed, there seems to be a general acceptance of the fact that as fast as it may be moving, literary criticism isn't headed anywhere in particular.

Tongues needn't cluck at this development; it's no worse than many others. Moreover, it has freed intellectuals for more daring swoops of thought, more adventurous tones of voice. You hear in the popular press the horror stories of violent rumbles between strong and weak political correctness factions, and you cringe. We all cringe. But this is what happens when the cauldron bubbles—it spatters the walls.

With the vogue of criticism as performance, with the shattered confidence in Total Theory, with the admiration accorded to individual virtuosity at the expense of common enterprise, the idea of criticism as a science (vintage 1966) seems a picturesque relic of a

simpler time. Many now have unlearned the compulsions of Total Theory, and some have come to yearn for pleasure that *no* theory can give. Who can be surprised if the writing of novels suddenly seems an irresistible lure to these restless academics?

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In the 1960s and '70s, Italian scholar Umberto Eco was one of the bright young things who set out to bring into literary criticism the bracing rigor of the harder sciences. *Semiotics*, the theory of the sign, was Eco's special subject at a time when the model of linguistics seemed to open the prospect for a newly systematic study of both literary texts and the wider text of culture. The great project, as he put it, was "to explore the theoretical possibility and the social function of a unified approach to every phenomenon of signification and/or communication" from film to food to fashion.

Eco couldn't have known that just as he was perfecting the house of semiotics, Jacques Derrida was gnawing through the foundations. Eco's work has always been a fountain of distinctions—distinctions between open and closed works, between the rights of the text and the responsibilities of the reader. He was never rigid in his schematism, but he had a strong penchant for an analytic precision captured in clipped, numbered paragraphs with boldface headings. When Derrida's deconstruction nibbled away at the clarity of the structure, Eco suddenly found himself marked as a stick-in-the-mud believer in determinate meanings, forced to argue that in the theoretical rush of the past three decades "the rights of the interpreters have been overstressed."

It had no doubt been exhausting labor to work slowly at the foundations of a general theory of the sign, but how much more fatiguing it must have been to be obliged to defend at every step the legitimacy of the project, and how wide the sky must have seemed when Eco let himself out of the theory coop and wrote his first novel.

Once *The Name of the Rose* (1980) had become an international publishing sensation, nothing seemed more natural than that Eco the theorist should have found a home as a novelist. As a journalist for daily and weekly papers and as a distinguished professor, Eco wrote criticism that carried him into many disciplines across many centuries. He wrote about Thomas Aquinas and Superman; he studied the history of monsters and devised a theory of lists. When he began to put his novel together, he had the many resources of his large and eccentric knowledge. The history of the church, medieval philosophy, the Sherlock Holmes canon—all this, among much else, could come into romping play in the form of a historical/detective/Biblical/philosophical mystery plot, where each murder shimmers across the centuries, from the Apocalypse to Dr. Watson.

Having taken one whack at the novel, Eco did not stop. In *Foucault's Pendulum* (1988), an even more extravagant plot tempts the haunted minds of its principals—a great Plan stretching across many centuries, through many countries, into many sects and secrets. The Templars, the Rosicrucians, the Masons, the Jesuits, the Shiites, the Nazis—all get knitted into the interpretation of a secret history. Everything, or almost everything, seems to connect into an endless web that only one massive explanation can reveal. The book is a tour de force of encyclopedic learning, and at the same time an unmasking of the pathology of interpretation.

Eco says that when he writes his fiction, he leaves his critical self back in the closet; let others play at explanation. But at least one of Eco's critical preoccupations—or their very nemesis—is clear. In both of his big novels, the

*Michael Levenson, professor of English at the University of Virginia, is the author of* A Genealogy of Modernism *(1984) and* Modernism and the Fate of Individuality *(1991).* *Copyright © 1994 by Michael Levenson.*

signal event is the overreaching of interpretation. William of Baskerville—Eco's Holmes as philosophic Churchman—devises the most cunning explanation, based on his reading of the Apocalypse, to solve the murders of *The Name of the Rose*. But William fails. This, says Eco, is "a mystery in which very little is discovered and the detective is defeated." So too in *Foucault's Pendulum*, the "Plan" is laid bare as a fantasy imposed on the world—"wanting connections, we found connections"—an elaborate intellectual construction, which, once projected, takes on its own grotesque and murderous reality.

The laughing, lurching energy of these careening plots plainly comes in some significant part from Eco's flight from criticism, his flight from the excess and the failure of contemporary literary theory, what he calls its "interpretative frenzy." And when Eco's own invention flags, nothing seems to bring it back to life more quickly than the memory of his old critical opponents. They challenge his theory; he writes them into his novel.

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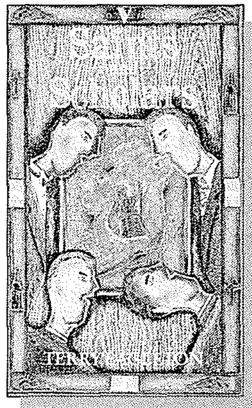
In 1987 Terry Eagleton, well established as an internationally prominent Marxist critic, published a novel called *Saints and Scholars*. It takes the Irish uprising of 1916 as its pressing historical context and then imagines a set of improbable circumstances. What if the wounded revolutionary James Connolly, on the run from the British, hides in a cottage that had been rented by Ludwig Wittgenstein, still a young philosopher genius? What if Wittgenstein has been traveling with Nikolai Bakhtin, the boisterous brother of the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin? And what if in the midst of this improbable encounter Leopold Bloom steps out of the pages of Joyce's *Ulysses* and stumbles into the panic?

In a prefatory note to the book, Eagleton points out that "this novel is not entirely fantasy." Wittgenstein and Nikolai Bakhtin were indeed friends; Wittgenstein did spend time in a cottage on the west coast of Ireland, "although at a later time than suggested here." Eagleton ends his note by observing that "most of the rest is invented."

But "invented" is too weak. What gives the novel its comedy and its charm is not merely that it spins out new fancies but that it so cheerfully refuses claims of historical fact. In its opening pages, which describe James Connolly on the point of execution by firing squad, *Saints and Scholars* looks to be a conventionally scrupulous historical fiction of the Irish revolt. But it is exactly scrupulous history that the book explodes. Faced with the awkwardness of "facts," it invents new ones.



At the center of the book is a debate between Connolly and Wittgenstein, the one upholding the imperative of revolution as the only response to crushing Irish misery, the other insisting that revolution is just another dangerous dream of purity. The dialogue between them is the best thing in the book. An exhausted Connolly, badly suffering from his wounds, holds on to revolutionary speech, even as his conviction weakens. The excitable Wittgenstein finds himself deeply moved by that speech and begins to try on Connolly's revolutionary truth: "What if he is right that crisis is common?" This is the Wittgenstein who had told Bakhtin earlier in the book that "out there in Europe the most dreadful war in history is now being waged. I came to this place because I couldn't stand it any longer. So I'm on the run—in hiding from history."

The Wittgenstein we know from the biographical record was scarcely on the run from history in 1916. On the contrary. He had left the security of Cambridge in order to join the Austrian army, in which he served at great personal peril; an artillery officer, he was taken

prisoner of war by the Italian army. This was anything but a flight from history. Better to call it a determined press into the midst of history's most dangerous confusion. For Eagleton's purposes, though, Wittgenstein must be cast as a philosophical purist who has fled the impure swamp of social life.

It must have been very shortly before he sat down to compose his novel that Eagleton wrote a rather traditional essay called "Wittgenstein's Friends." It usefully places Wittgenstein in relation to recent poststructuralist theory, showing, for instance, the common ground between Wittgenstein and Derrida. From Eagleton's standpoint, both the school of Wittgenstein and the school of Derrida make telling critiques of metaphysics, with its longing for impeccably secure foundations and systematic truth, but both schools fail to engage the reality of politics. At this moment of impasse, the essay invokes a third figure to split the difference, Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. For Eagleton, Bakhtin shows how it is possible to make a strong philosophical criticism of metaphysical abstraction from the standpoint of social engagement. The key thought is that the metaphysics of the philosophers and the tyranny of the politicians are in a fearful partnership that can be opposed only by a subversive energy. "Carnival" is Bakhtin's answer to oppression, where carnival implies a lusty release of the wild body, free to laugh, to mock, to enjoy.

In the fictional world of *Saints and Scholars*, Nikolai Bakhtin stands in for his brother's theory of carnival. Off in their Irish retreat, Wittgenstein becomes appalled by Nikolai's taste for food and wine; he calls Bakhtin a "disgusting walrus," at which point,

> Bakhtin begins to croon a Russian folk song inaccurately to himself. Then he breaks off and remarks, "Somebody is slaughtering somebody else." He licks his lips contentedly. "I think it's you, Ludwig, who's killing us all with your ridiculous purity."
>
> Wittgenstein leans swiftly across and grabs a half-empty bottle of wine from Bakhtin's cabinet. He says lightly: "I think you should drown in this." Bakhtin gives no response. "Do you hear me, Nikolai? I said I think you should drown in your own disgusting mess."
>
> Bakhtin opens his eyes for a moment and twists his lips upward in the shape of a slobbery kiss.

So why does Eagleton do it? Why does he play out in fiction what he had soberly enacted in his criticism? And why does he extravagantly "reinvent" a history that he knows so well?

The beginning of an answer is that Eagleton, like many others, must feel the desire to break free of the usual academic constraints—historical exactitude, intellectual precision, sound evidence. This must always be a temptation in academic life: to be done with its cautions and respectabilities. What makes it more urgent in Eagleton's case is that his career as a critic has been devoted to a vision of history—a revolutionary vision of social liberation—that has come under such tremendous stress. He has not blinked in the face of the oppositions, internal and external, within the Marxist tradition he has sought to extend. Competing methodologies, as well as sharp turns in political history, have brought large and difficult changes in Eagleton's life as a political critic.

Of all these changes, perhaps the most interesting has been Eagleton's recognition that pleasure—immediate delight, as in the love of a single line of poetry—can no longer be neglected by even the most committed criticism. We live at a moment, he writes, when "the relation between the kind of pleasure people take in art, and the pleasure they derive from striving to realize their political needs, has become extremely obscure." Our age has "a *political* problem about pleasure."

*Saints and Scholars* is a fantasy of historical coherence, a fantasy of our century's forces and powers brought into consoling relation. What Eagleton struggles toward in his theory,

he brightly paints in his novel: a universe where pleasure and politics can meet and where the significance of our historical struggle has reassuringly distinct outlines. The comedy of Leopold Bloom set free from *Ulysses* to enter into drunken dialogue with Wittgenstein, Bakhtin, and Connolly is ticklishly sharp. But transcending the comedy of the image is its sheer romance , which reassuringly lets us feel that our modernity is not an ugly chaos but that it might have a tidy plot of its own. If we feel let down by history, implies Eagleton, then it's for us to reimagine the historical legacy, to revive ourselves with a daydream, a fully conscious daydream that admits its own need to find a refuge.

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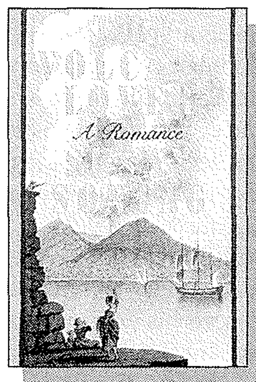
Susan Sontag is no academic. Her ability to resist university confinement has been one of the strengths of her long career. Nor is she a recent first-time novelist; her fiction writing began in the 1960s. But she belongs in any consideration of this cultural current, first because she is by any sensible measure a common-law academic who lectures in that sprawling university called New York Culture, and second because if she has not recently been born as a novelist, she has been born again as one.

From the time of her first successful essays in the early 1960s, Sontag has refused the name Critic and fought hard to keep alive her claims to be called Novelist, and later Filmmaker. She stubbornly presented herself as a creative artist who also happened to write interesting essays. But it was a losing battle. Her experimental fiction was politely acknowledged; her films less politely received; her essays were triumphantly influential. Through the 1970s and '80s she was never the visionary artist but always the supremely lucid critic—writing of illness as metaphor, of AIDS, of photography.

All of this is what makes *The Volcano Lover* (1992) such a revealing case: It is Sontag's late, large attempt to place her career under the sign of art. Her novel's big sales and favorable reviews make it impossible to confine her within the prison marked Critic.

Her early fiction was bred in the late European modernism of Beckett, Robbe-Grillet, and Sarraute. Linguistically adventurous and formally severe, it came out of an admiration for others, admiration for the achievement of late high modernism—not just the experimental fiction, but the cinema of Godard, the theater of Artaud. Within the tradition of modernist experiment, few tastes extend more widely than Sontag's.




But that taste finds its limits in what Sontag sees as the debased forms of popular art—i.e. television. In a symposium on kitsch at Skidmore College a few years ago, Sontag growled at the thought of taking television seriously. She has always held to the necessary difficulty, the strenuousness, of authentic engagement with art. It's not that she has taken difficulty as an end in itself; rather she has clearly understood it as the precondition for the keenest satisfactions. The great danger in kitsch, she argues, is that it "unfits people from having certain kinds of attention spans and an appetite for complexity."

And yet it's hard to resist the thought that as a result of that awkward discussion at Skidmore (and others like it), Sontag reconsidered her views on pleasure, and that in relaxing some of her modernist sternness, she found a path back to the vocation of novelist. No one is likely to confuse *The Volcano Lover* with television: The novel continually employs distancing techniques (shifts in point of view, the intrusion of the narrator's voice, the insertion of mini-essays on such subjects as collecting and history and revolution). But these techniques, though sometimes interesting, are best seen as Sontag's attempt to keep faith with the mod-

ernist formalism that she is teaching herself to half-unlearn.

The real event in *The Volcano Lover* is not the play with perspective, and not the lucidity of intelligence; it is the unveiling of the theater of desire, romantic desire, sensuous desire, as performed in the famous ménage of Sir William Hamilton, his wife Emma (born Emily Lyon), and Lord Nelson. The circumstances are irresistible. You have Hamilton, the famous art collector and naturalist, the great rationalist connoisseur who, as ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples, grows obsessed with the eruptions of Vesuvius. You have Emma, his second wife, a legendary beauty whose face and whose wits carried her from poverty to courtly privilege. You have the one-armed Nelson with all his impure mystique, the tactical genius, the impetuous adventurer, who deserts his wife and neglects his duty in order to play the tirelessly eager lover.

Sontag has confronted many of the same disturbances that jarred Eagleton—for one, the disturbance in the claim of a pleasure that won't be purified but won't go away. At one point, the novel draws a sharp distinction between the Collector and the Lover.

> The collector's world bespeaks the crushingly large existence of other worlds, energies, realms, eras than the one he lives in. The collection annihilates the collector's little slice of historic existence. The lover's relation to objects annihilates all but the world of the lovers. This world. My world. My beauty, my glory, my fame.

It's not too much to say that Sontag as a critic has been a Collector who has come only recently to feel the full urgings of the Artist as Lover. What she says of her Emma, we might now say of her: "She needs her fix of rapture." The other drama in the book, the drama beneath the plot, is the struggle between Sontag's old need to understand writing as a serious aesthetic gesture and the new thrill of writing what fancy whispers. This is a drama without conclusion. *The Volcano Lover* activates the emotions inside old conventions, releases ancient energies of the love story, but then hastens to distance its voice and to stylize its forms. If the conflict remains unresolved, we can still learn to love the agitation at a moment of creative instability.

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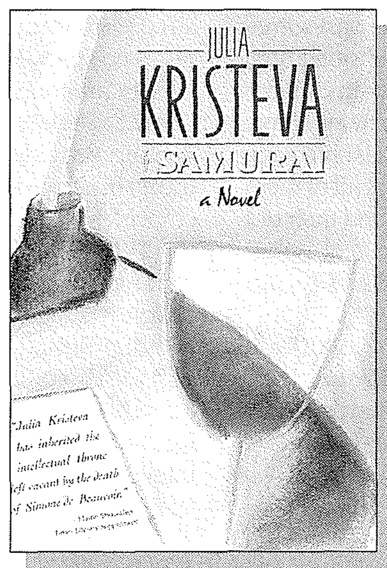
More than any of the other figures discussed here, Julia Kristeva has entertained hopes of a transformation of the world through an art guided by a theory. Arriving in Paris from Bulgaria in 1966, she soon found herself moving among the French luminaries; she bathed in their glowing aura, and then quickly acquired an aura all her own. Within a very few years she had built a subtle picture of modernity, language, and literature that took its place as one strong, coherent view contending with the many others.

In Kristeva's influential sketch, we all come out of our mothers dripping with the needs of the body. The howling, weeping, laughing infant will come to submit to the father's law, and will learn the rules of grammar. But obedience can never be complete. Some, the psychotics, continue to howl; others, the poets, acknowledge the social codes and linguistic conventions but refuse to surrender the truth on the tongues of those called incompetent. Speech from the body, speech in chanting rhythms, the speech of nonsense, the hard speech of obscenity—these are the resources of a poetic language that is our revolutionary century's greatest gift.

For the young Kristeva, our epochal hope lay in the struggles of a literary avant-garde to overturn the oppressive word with the strong poetic word. The father's law, the social law, strangles poetry; poetry must reach into old, dark speech to defy the law. In the works of those such as Mallarmé, Céline, and Joyce, especially the Joyce of *Finnegans Wake*, Kristeva located the "positive subversion of the old universe." It is a vision of the avant-garde as lion rampant, snarling into the frightened

faces of the cool rationalists.

When her novel *The Samurai* appeared in 1990, the first excited reaction fastened onto the thin disguises worn by its lightly fictionalized characters. There they were, the glittering minds of the Parisian boulevards strutting their mentalities through her pages. It was fun (for an hour) to identify Fabien Edelman as Lucien Goldmann, or Maurice Lauzun as Jacques Lacan, or Saida as Derrida, or Olga as Kristeva herself. But now that the players are identified, it's possible to set the detective game aside and concentrate on what an odd book this is—odd because it is the perfectly conventional work of an adventurous thinker. Nothing, after all, could be easier to absorb, easier to digest, than a roman à clef that puts Parisian intellectual celebrities through their familiar paces.




Where is the poetic language? Where is the shock to "father's law"? How does a passage such as the following—prompted by a game of tennis—"positively subvert" the old universe?

> These fine distinctions struck Olga as typically "structuralist." Talk about splitting hairs, even when it came to war! It was astounding how they tracked down meaning in the smallest fraction of time, space, or action. Admittedly it was an attractive theory. But its adepts seemed rather otherworldly and vague, as if they'd unlearned everything that had ever been known. So did they really need to learn anything anymore?

Kristeva, of course, isn't obliged to live up to her portentous views of the 1960s and '70s. She doesn't need to apologize for what she writes. But then we don't need to apologize for pointing to the contrast between this cozily diverting novel and her audacious theoretical challenges.

In *The Samurai*, Kristeva has not written a novel that her energetic theory taught her to write; rather she has written a novel about the theorists. This itself suggests a good deal. It suggests that, quite apart from any conceptual ambitions, the Theory Life stirs creative energies for those once connected to it. Ideas aside, the idea people claim an interest all their own. With their alliances and betrayals, their deepening intensities, their trips to China, their unusual minds and their usual bodies, they now often seem to Kristeva more interesting for the gestures they made than for the conclusions they reached.

The effect is not always pleasant. When Kristeva tells the grimy anecdote of Lauzun/Lacan betrayed by his lover and his faithful disciple—a story of knowing glances and public humiliation—it's impossible not to feel the cruelty of her gaze. But *The Samurai* confronts the recognition that intellectual life is not the mind's pure labor. It is, rather, active, sensuous, dramatic, public, impure.

As her career in theory has developed, Kristeva has moved steadily from the visionary hopes of her daring early writings. Her political skepticism (born with her in Bulgaria) has spread: Trained as a psychoanalyst, she has increasingly made love the subject of her intellectual work. These turns of interest have exposed her to much challenge from disappointed theoreticians, but she has not stopped turning. Her novel, in its very conventionality, with its undemanding structure and its soft love plots, upbraids the purists of the avant-garde and marks her furthest reach from the sacred precincts of high theory.

Eco's semiotics, Eagleton's politics, Sontag's aesthetics, Kristeva's avant-garde—all under pressure, these once-confident projects

struggle in varying stages of retreat. What has been lost is the note of inspired intellectual self-assurance, the contagious sense of a large cultural project unfolding its prophecies. What has been found is the undead novel.

None of these figures denies or repudiates his or her theoretical past, but each uses the past sometimes in a mood of nostalgia, sometimes in mockery, sometimes in cool detachment—in ways that would certainly have surprised their former selves. Kristeva's roman à clef only makes explicit what all of them have done: They have passed beyond their old austerity and have learned the joys of bringing intellectual life down into the muddy, uproarious world.

The pleasures in Umberto Eco's work are the pleasures of deep release, a full-souled indifference to the proprieties of critical discourse. When *The Name of the Rose* (and less frequently *Foucault's Pendulum*) succeeds, it is because Eco has allowed himself to forget the obligations of the perspicuous axiom and the clinching argument. If, in *The Samurai*, the pleasure is rarer and weaker, this is largely because as a novelist Kristeva is all the time remembering her other, older incarnation as a glistening intellectual, and because as she writes of that time she tastes bitter ashes.

But it may be the mixed satisfactions of Sontag and Eagleton that are most revealing. In *The Volcano Lover* and *Saints and Scholars* you find a giddy delight in sinuous plot, in its romance or its comedy, alongside a rueful, tacit awareness that such writing is not what was dreamed of one, two, and three decades ago. This double consciousness captures some of the unsettling complexity of the current cultural moment. A new sensibility (Sontag) and a new society (Eagleton) are what they pursued with daunting vigor, but nowadays it takes no special skeptical turn to see that sensibility and society are nothing so simple as "new." Their careers, their lives, and their writing provide sobering tokens of a milieu (ours) in which a (literary) opportunity seized coincides with a (critical) ideal abandoned.

What is likely to happen to this current of writing? Impossible to say. Still, it only takes a slightly generous view to see it as a sparkling tributary into the pool of culture. Whether it will yield work of lasting quality is unclear. But while we wait to find out, we can enjoy the fresh stirring of the old waters. That academic intellectuals should suddenly feel bouncy and vigorous at the thought of writing fiction—this may be a harbinger of the kind of hybrid we could sorely use, a hybrid that overcomes the division between those who imagine and those who ratiocinate, those who create and those who review their books. It's no ultimate synthesis, but it makes a colorful little picture within our larger gray: the sight of these self-reinventing theorists, these feeling intellectuals and pleasure-seeking rationalists, these academics laughing and weeping.