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***Imagining Paris: Exile, Writing, and American Identity.* By J. Gerald Kennedy. New Haven: Yale U P, 1993. 269 pp. \$30.00 Cloth.**

"We live by accidents of terrain, you know. And terrain is what remains in the dreaming part of your mind" (11). That enigmatic remark by Hemingway's Colonel Richard Cantwell occurs in *Across the River and Into the Trees* in the course of one of the maundering conversations between the aging colonel and his nineteen-year-old lady love. In the novel, the colonel's comment on the dreams he has been having-- "strange dreams about places mostly" (ARIT 123)--implies, but does not explore, the connection between dreams and geography, topography, or, in Hemingway's basic term, "terrain."

Taken out of context, Cantwell's remark seems to have a greater relevance in the opening chapter of J. Gerald Kennedy's brilliant critical study, *Imagining Paris*. There it is one of the many fascinating quotations by modernist writers that Kennedy brings together to define his theme of "place" and its symbolic relationship to exile, dreams, memory, the search for self-identity (both professional and personal), and the shaping influence it has had on the lives and works of five American writers who spent crucial periods of time in the French capital. Three lengthy and informative chapters deal with Gertrude Stein, Hemingway, and Henry Miller. A final chapter is devoted to F. Scott Fitzgerald and Djuna Barnes. The book also deals, in passing, with a host of other writers (August Strindberg, Rainer Maria Rilke, James, e.e. cummings, T.S. Eliot, and Anais Nin for whom Paris provided a magnetic north at some point in their various careers. Kennedy cites, too, a number of critics and theoreticians who have explored the subject of place in more abstract terms. Needless to say, his book is not a Baedeker guide, though he often gives the names and addresses of streets, apartments, hotels, parks, and the more famous cafes that figured prominently in the lives of his three principals.

Kennedy is a master at selecting the judicious and telling quotation and uses that talent to explore, define, and redefine the significance of "place" in the creative process. Time and its irrevocable passage have rightly been time-honored metaphors in literary studies of such works as Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* or Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, among others. But Kennedy's book is meant to remedy an oversight: "Though all narrative action unfolds in space and time," he observes, "criticism has concerned itself almost exclusively with temporality; we have barely begun to consider the textual implications of place" (4-5). He cites a number of theoreticians who argue that "place" is equally vital to critical discussion, an argument thoroughly confirmed by Kennedy's own fascinating analysis of Harry Walden's memories of places--especially Paris--in the italicized passages of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." His account of Hemingway's method is apt: "the narrative enacts the gesture of autobiography, the effort to locate in past experience those episodes in which the self has defined itself through its response to the world" (10-13).

Kennedy is no ideologue for the critical trends of the past and the immediate present, though he is familiar with most of them. He is aware of the relevance of Gabriel Marcel's observation, "an individual is not distinct from his place; he is that place" (8), as well as Gaston Bachelard's somewhat different notion that the most powerful "psychospacial" image in life is that of the house in which we were raised, the imprint of which is "physically inscribed in us" and "imbued with dream values which remain after the house is gone" (7). For writers, critics, and biographers, Gertrude Stein may have put it more succinctly (or more grandiosely) with her abrupt assertion: "Everybody is as their air and land is" (75). Presumably, we might take that to mean, "We write what we are," if not "We are what we write"--a different but equally interesting idea.

Other discussions in Kennedy's book deal with less speculative matters: the varied accounts of Paris in the works, memoirs, diaries, and letters of his convocation of writers. Rilke described Paris as a city full of strange temptations: "I have succumbed to these temptations, and this has brought about certain changes, if not in my character, at least in my outlook on the world, and, in any case, in my life" (34). F. or Stein, "Paris was where the twentieth century was" (185), the necessary mecca of the modernist faith, while Hemingway described it as "a moveable feast," the same metaphor he used, oddly enough, for "happiness" in *Across the River* (ARIT 68). For Hemingway Paris and its cafe society encouraged his anti-bohemian prejudices, first by allowing him to play the adversarial role in his early European journalism, then to settle into the role as the aging master. But more importantly, Paris gave him access to the salons and studios of modernism.

Henry Miller on arrival, found Paris an immediate center of being: "To get lost here is an adventure extraordinary. The streets sing, the stones talk. The houses drip history, glory, romance" (146). For Anais Nin, Miller's consort in that interminably claustal, self-mirroring love affair out of which they both milled a considerable body of literature, the French capital was hateful and opportune: "I shall try to turn my hate of Paris into writing and make it harmless," she announced in her *Early Diary* (18). In *Tender is the Night*, Fitzgerald, as Kennedy notes, treated the Paris episodes as violent or hallucinatory and destructive of sexual distinctions. At a lesbian tea party on the rue Monsieur--a nice touch--Rosemary Hoyt encounters a trio of women "tall and slender with small heads groomed like manikins' heads, and as they talked the heads waved gracefully about above their dark tailored suits, rather like long-stemmed flowers and rather like cobras' hoods" (207). It could have been a scene out of Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*, that even more dark-engendered novel about Paris. Barnes announced, after her arrival: "It took me several days to get over the sensation of dangerous make-believe." She also claimed that "too many people had reported Paris--it had the fame of a too beautiful woman," a criticism she herself was well-acquainted with (220).

Kennedy's secondary theme is the role of Paris in the advent of modernism. It involves my only serious criticism of the book. Perhaps to emphasize the importance of Paris, he takes too narrow a focus on the phenomenon of modernism--to my mind one of the most far-reaching cultural revolutions since the Italian Renaissance. "Other European

cities," Kennedy writes, "--notably Vienna, Berlin, and London--had harbored important avant-garde coteries during the two decades bracketing the turn of the century, but by 1910, Paris had achieved pre-eminence as a site of modernist production" (185). But the spread of modernism was far greater than that, reaching into every creative endeavor of the past century and a half, encompassing not only literature and art, but music, theater, and dance, architecture and design, to say nothing of technology and science. It added new genres: photography and film. Its influence continued well into the Thirties and beyond in Germany, Russia, Italy, Spain, Austria, England, and the United States. Neither the gulags in Russia nor the concentration camps in Germany and Austria quelled it; the diaspora of writers, artists, architects, and scholars carried it to London and New York where it flourished anew. About modernism, Marxist critics were right about one thing (at least)--that it was a "bourgeois" development, though they considered it "decadent" in all its works and ways. In its beginnings it sprang from and was sponsored by the sons and daughters of the upper-middle and professional classes, even though its practitioners were in revolt against parental values. But that is too involved a subject to tag on to this review.

Suffice it to say that *Imagining Paris* is a vital, engagingly written, and absorbing book. Kennedy has brought new insights to an overlooked aspect of literary studies. And behind his discussion there rises the enduring image of Paris and what it has meant to generations of writers and artists.

By James R. Mellow