

W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915). And he finds parallels between today's "American cultural imperialism" and the British theater of the late 19th century. Imperialism, he suggests, requires that the population at large be essentially passive, feeling neither involved in nor responsible for events on the world's stage. And, Gilmore triumphantly points out, British imperial theaters kept the audience far removed from the actors, a characteristic he finds in modern American cineplexes as well.

Always fair, Gilmore takes pains to point out that the United States, "using trade rather than takeover," built an empire more durable than Britain's. Without declaring a preference for either theater or movies ("both seem to me both admirable and indefensible"), he gives us a small, rich production that deserves applause from both sides of the Atlantic.

—Dillon Teachout

THE BAD DAUGHTER:
Betrayal and Confession.

By Julie Hilden. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. 198 pp. \$18.95

Memoirs are the rage. Readers turn to them instead of fiction because, as life becomes more fragmented and isolated, people struggle ever harder to construct scales—hand held, jury-rigged, soldered from junkyard stuff—on which to weigh their lives. Good or bad, better or worse than others?

While the genre's range is broad, one popular subtype embraces those written by "bad" narrators—for example, Kathryn Harrison's *The Kiss*, or Caroline Knapp's *Drinking: A Love Story*. These confessional memoirists, test pilots of the psyche, break the taboo barrier at high speed and compete to tell the worst secret. Then, just when you think they're plummeting into something too alien, they pull out of the spin and redeem themselves by their undefended openness, their tenderness. They display a sudden uncanny and ultimately relieving resemblance to us. It's a

conundrum of a genre, sometimes marvelous, sometimes bedeviling, whipped first one way and then the other by the apparently polarized (but, really, closely related) cultural values of "tell it all" versus "suck it up."

The Bad Daughter is a disturbing and disturbed addition to the genre. The only child of divorced parents, Hilden was left much too alone with an alcoholic mother who both badly neglected her and raged at her uncontrollably. She withdrew far into herself, turned to books and schoolwork, attended Harvard and Yale, and became a successful lawyer. Sometime during her adolescence, her mother developed Alzheimer's disease. In spite of many family pleas, Hilden refused to pause in schooling or career to care for her. This decision is the point on which the book turns. Hilden finds her act unbearable—and, like a scientist, she puts it on a slide and magnifies it for us to examine thoroughly.

She adds two subplots. One is her discovery that she may carry her mother's gene for the disease. The other is descriptions of her affairs with men. She equates her repetitive sexual betrayal of boyfriends with her betrayal of her mother. She may be right, but the equation seems too neat.

The Bad Daughter is well written, at times beautifully so, and very readable. Its accomplishment and its courage lie in the exactness of its depiction, and thus its ability to capture Hilden's terrible predicament. "It has come to define who I am," she writes: "the daughter who left her mother—the bad daughter, the one who did not stay." Sadly, though, the result is too narrowly unsettling. Once Hilden describes how her love for her mother died during adolescence, that loss—the real tragedy of her life—quietly dwarfs the rest of the text, making the book eerie. As you admire the exquisite detail, it dawns on you that the anatomy can be so fully rendered exactly because a heartbeat has been stilled.

—Janna Malamud Smith

Religion & Philosophy

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SOUL:
A Study of the Origin, Conceptual Evolution, and Nature of the Soul.

By Otto Rank. Transl. by Gregory C. Richter and E. James Lieberman. Johns Hopkins Univ. Press. 176 pp. \$29.95

For 20 years, Otto Rank (1884-1939) was Sigmund Freud's pupil, colleague, and virtual foster son, until Rank did what sons always do and what Freud of all people should have expected: he rebelled against the father figure. Rank broke with Freud in the mid-1920s—in