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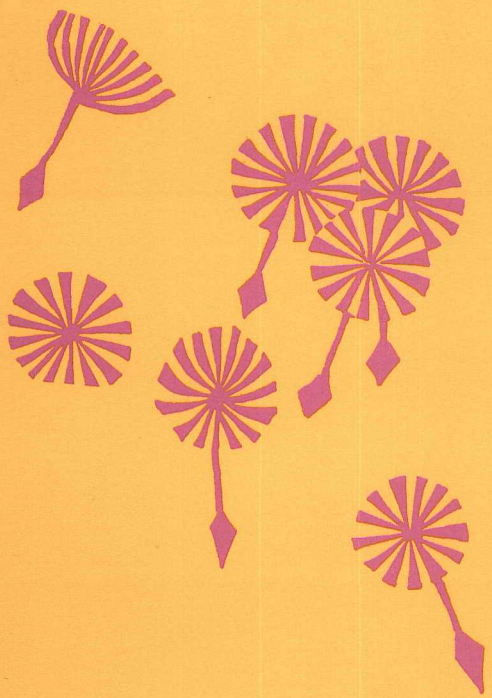

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Canadian Literature, revue universitaire avec comités d'évaluation, reçoit des soumissions d'articles, d'entrevues et autres portant sur les écrivains du Canada et sur leurs œuvres, de même que des poèmes inédits d'auteurs canadiens. La revue ne publie aucune fiction narrative.

Les manuscrits, d'une longueur approximative de 25 pages, doivent être soumis en trois exemplaires (dont deux anonymisés), adressés à l'Éditeur de *Canadian Literature*, The University of British Columbia, Buchanan E158, 1866 Main Mall, Vancouver, C.-B., Canada V6T 1Z1, et accompagnés d'une note biographique (100 mots) et d'une enveloppe de retour pré-adressée et pré-affranchie (timbrée ou munie de coupons-réponse internationaux), sans quoi ils ne pourront être retournés à leurs auteurs.

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Editorial

"I ham very much Sopriced of you not Riting to me Sooner"

Eva-Marie Kröller

In 1964, the National Film Board produced a number of films on Canadian "history-makers," with historians Maurice Careless and Gustave Lanctôt as consultants: *John Cabot, A Man of the Renaissance*; *The Last Voyage of Henry Hudson*; *Alexander Mackenzie: The Lord of the North*; *David Thompson, the Great Mapmaker*, and *Selkirk of Red River*. The film on Mackenzie is ambitious: it is in colour and shot in impressively authentic settings. *Thompson* uses some location shots, but *Cabot*, *Hudson* and *Selkirk* were filmed in black and white in the studio, with Venice evoked by a cardboard model and Hudson's ship bobbing in a puddle masquerading as James Bay. Using stage actors, these movies are filmed theatre: the camera, not quite knowing what to do with itself, remembers every once in a while that a close-up may be in order and swoops like a vulture onto a ring-bedecked hand. The language abounds with "thou" and "sayest," and, in *John Cabot*, actors pretending to be Venetian courtiers—a youthful Timothy Findley among them—stroll about popping grapes into their mouths or peering pensively out from underneath their ill-fitting wigs. In *David Thompson*, there is the snuff-sniffing HBC governor in powdered perruque and jabot (did they really dress like that in York Factory?), together with emotional Frenchmen, disobedient guides, and taciturn Indians. Women are, for the most part, decorative and mute. In *John Cabot*, they don't get to say anything and content themselves with displaying their expensive wardrobe. In *David Thompson*, Mohawk activist and model Kahn-Tineta Horn as Thompson's new wife Charlotte Small sits alluringly on her bed as he finishes up some urgent map-making. Her glamour makes for a singularly unconvincing

frontier housewife and we don't believe for a moment that she is ruffled by the arrival of fierce-looking Piegan warriors outside their house. The voice-over speaks of the Thompsons' growing family but the children don't feature in the action. *Lord Selkirk* daringly shows a pregnant Lady Selkirk, her condition camouflaged by her Regency gown but highlighted by her exaggerated awkwardness as she settles at her desk to write in her journal. She warns Selkirk that his dreams will ruin him and his family as she brings him a cup of tea in the middle of the night, but her domestic worries duly fade as he asks, "Why do you stare?" (which is a bit rich considering that he hasn't blinked once) and she concedes, "How strong you've become!" All of the movies end somewhat abruptly after thirty minutes or so, with the hero well on his way to death, disappointment, or failure, while the voice-over intones that his legacy will "make history" and become recognized in due time.

Enjoyable for all the wrong reasons, these films must have provoked some considerable eye-rolling and snickering among the schoolchildren for whom they were intended. I watched the "History-Makers" with growing fascination just after reading *Undelivered Letters to Hudson's Bay Company Men on the Northwest Coast of America, 1830-57* (UBC P, 2003), edited by Judith Hudson Beattie, Keeper of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg between 1990 and 2003, and by scholar Helen Buss. Films and book make for enlightening juxtapositions. In contrast to the single-minded, although often deluded, determination of explorers to find specific trade routes, here are letters from parents who had only the vaguest notion where their sons were headed. "Fort Anchovy, Collambia" features alongside "Arctic Regions" and, my personal favourite, the "Backside of the world." The level of rhetorical accomplishment in explorers' narratives varies, of course, and in his magnificent chapter on exploration literature in Carl Klinck's *The Literary History of Canada*, Victor Hopwood praises the "dazzling illiteracy" of fur-trader Pierre-Esprit Radisson's narratives as a source of surreal poetry of sorts. The unorthodoxy of his English is, however, nothing compared to the obstacle course in spelling and grammar undertaken by these correspondents who had none of Radisson's connections or opportunities.

"My der," writes Ellenor Smith to her sweetheart, seaman John Coon, "Frind this Comes with My kind love to you hoping that thes fiou [few] liends [lines] will find you in good thellth [health] as it leves Me bout [but] very porley at present for My der Coun I have had a very havey MisCarrey [miscarriage] bout thank god i ham a getting beter noy." This and other other letters in the collection read like a script in a strangely familiar language, and

I found myself reading back and forth over a line and muttering the words until they made sense. Ellenor's spelling is so phonetic as to require frequent square brackets with annotations from the editors, but there is still plenty of challenge left. The stage dialects and portentous schemes of the "History-Makers" are here replaced by a rich chorus of regional dialects and the worries of ordinary people, inadequate as this description may be for a mother from Stromness, Orkney Islands who supported herself by opening a makeshift "hospital for twenty-six scurvy-ridden whalers." Driven by economic necessity, Margaret Humphreys's sons were scattered all over the globe (Halifax, Mexico, New Orleans, Hudson Bay), but troublesome as they had been, she was determined to keep their younger sibling Charles in line, exhorting him by letter not to give in to "Extravigance" and the bottle "like some of your Brothers."

News about extended families and entire villages is crammed into short letters, many of them cross-written, and some of them assume the entrancing cadences of a litany. Seaman John Flinn, stationed on the Columbia River, received an update on the professional endeavours of his acquaintances, among them one "John Kairnes," an "Undertaker and Vearynear Licenced." There was plenty of work for Kairnes because "Johonathan Thomson he is in the W Indias his landlad[y] old Mrs Anderson is dead [.] Mr Ofield is dead [.] Thomas Caines the Wheate Chaff opposed to my House is dead [.]" and so on. In some of the letters the monotonous tally of death gives way to a crescendo when the passing of a loved one is described in agonizing detail for the benefit of the correspondent who could not be present. Although much of the writing, despite its fanciful orthography, remains formal in ways characteristic of infrequent letter writers, several also have delightful flashes of intimacy and wit. Thus, Margaret Simpson has to excuse herself from continuing her letter to her husband James because "the Babe is trubelsom" and a mother, hilariously, tries to lure her son home by reminding him that "little Careloine Taylor says she hopes you will soon come home to turn her Mangle."

Such notes, often accompanied by a lock of hair, would surely have been welcomed eagerly by the recipient had they ever been delivered. One can be fairly certain that this was not the case with the letter sent to Charles Baker by his new and solicitous brother-in-law, Charles Barrowcliff. In a frantic soliloquy that has all the drive of a Bloomian stream-of-consciousness, Barrowcliff evokes the dangers of melancholia: "conscience some times tells you that you are doing wrong but however you take another till the liquor

gets into your head & then you are as anxious to stop as any one else and you can hear or sing what you call the jovial song, you sink into a state of intoxication etc. etc." However, there is a remedy, and Barrowcliff cites a whole page of suitable Biblical verse to fortify his relative. One all but sees him frothing at the mouth as his pen can barely keep up with the torrent of advice: "I was once a great sinner & God saved me & there is the same grace for me [crossed out] you as there is [crossed out] was for you [crossed out] etc." The editors of *Undelivered Letters* sometimes express an appealing concern for some of the couples who become increasingly anxious and angry with each other as letter after letter fails to reach its destination. Equally appealingly, Beattie and Buss restrain their irony in their annotation on Barrowcliff's tirade, merely finding it "[e]specially interesting."

Although there are the occasional women and children in the wings, the "History-makers" are largely depicted as solitary men. Not so the letter writers. An entire family depends on the meagre earnings of Henry W. Harmsworth, an apprentice to the Hudson's Bay, and he is reminded to "halp keep your Old Mother and sisters as we have no outher Earthly Protecter." Failure to fulfill this duty landed families in serious difficulty. This was especially the case when Hudson's Bay men entered a *mariage à la façon du pays* and as a result were under some pressure from the Company, if not their own conscience, to look after two families. In *Undelivered Letters*, most of the information on country wives and the appalling callousness with which they and their children were often abandoned appears in the editors' annotations, but there is the occasional glimpse that women at home were aware of the practice and the potential competition for a salary. Mary Baker from Holborn was obliged to go into service to feed herself and her child because she had not heard from her husband, and she let him know that she was "very much Sopriced of you not Riting to me Sooner." At least, Mary was assured respectability, but Ann Story had a child out of wedlock and complained to her brother at Fort Vancouver about the ruthlessness with which her former employer had turned her out "pennyless" and ruined her chances of finding work elsewhere. Ann had to seek shelter in her mother's house, but "she makes me out the vilest of the vile." There is much correspondence among siblings, and brothers and sisters become confidantes and substitute parents. Mary Humphries advises her brother Thomas Morrow that their sister Agnes has left the convent ("I got her out by Scheming unknown to Mother"), and dispenses parental advice about women who might want to ensnare him on his travels.

In Mark Starowicz's acclaimed CBC series *Canada: A People's History*, actors impersonating both the well-known and the obscure turn towards the viewer, citing from historical letters or journals as if the events described were happening in the very moment they speak. Unmediated by accomplished acting and requiring active participation from the reader, these "undelivered letters" to Hudson's Bay Men provide an even more immediate understanding of the many ways in which Canadian history can be recorded.

Carole Langille

Too Late

Already it is too late
to start over. So many people
I'll never be, things I won't do.
Why list them? Soon the years ahead
will be too few in which to maneuver
and I won't be able to lie, even to myself.
As in a cave at low tide, echoes resound,
not in the spaciousness of possibility,
but in limitation. And isn't this good?
To say, *Yes, I haven't. That's right,*
I never did.

Sabine Sielke

"The Empathetic Imagination"

An Interview with Yann Martel

To date, Yann Martel has published three books: *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* (1993), a collection of short stories awarded the Journey Prize; *Self* (1996) shortlisted for the Books in Canada First Novel Award; and *Life of Pi* (2001),* his second novel, which received the Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction in 2001 and was nominated for the 2001 Governor General's Award for Fiction. The 2002 Booker Prize for *Life of Pi* places Martel on par with V. S. Naipaul, Iris Murdoch, Salman Rushdie, J. M. Coetzee, Kingsley Amis, Keri Hulme, Michael Ondaatje, and Margaret Atwood.

Martel was born in 1963 in Salamanca, Spain to Canadian parents. His father's postings as a diplomat took the family all over the globe, and Martel grew up in Alaska, British Columbia, Costa Rica, France, Ontario and Mexico. He has continued to travel as an adult, spending time in Iran, Turkey and India. He studied philosophy at Trent University and held various odd jobs—tree planting, dishwashing, working as a security guard—before he began to write. While he now generally makes his home in Montreal, he followed an invitation of the German Academic Exchange Service and Samuel Fischer Publishers to spend the academic year 2002/2003 as the Samuel Fischer Professor of Literature in the Department of Comparative Literature, Free University of Berlin, where he offered a seminar entitled "Meeting the Other: The Animal in Western Literature." I had the pleasure of meeting Yann Martel in Bonn and Berlin in late 2002. We talked about empathy and imagination, otherness, religion, violence, and other subjects. The interview was conducted at Martel's residence in Berlin Charlottenburg.

SSIE How does it feel to be so famous all of a sudden? What was the most significant effect on your life?

YM You don't feel fame the way you feel hunger or thirst. It's more abstract. So far fame has been a deluge of e-mails, of mail in general. I realized how unusual my situation was when I had a twenty-minute conversation with the Prime Minister of Canada. He called me to congratulate me. When things like that happen to you, rather than you being elevated, the whole situation is lowered to you, which doesn't mean that you don't think you're not worthy of it, but it suddenly becomes normal and human. The man speaking to you is no longer that famous, powerful, inaccessible man far above you; it's just a voice on the phone, a chatty, human voice that sounds so familiar because you hear it every day on the news. Also, let's not forget that right now I'm in Germany. I'm a foreign writer who has won a foreign prize. If I were in Canada, if I lived in the UK, it might have been different: people might have recognized me on the street or I might have received even more requests for interviews. There's been a certain buffer created by the fact that I am in Berlin. Occasionally I think: "Hey, I won the Booker Prize, like Salman Rushdie won the Booker Prize, like V. S. Naipaul won the Booker Prize, like William Golding won the Booker Prize," and I'm thrilled. But most of the time I forget it. I still think of myself as a struggling writer. And that's not an act. It's not easy being a writer. The world makes you feel that it doesn't need another novel or another painting or another piece of music. You create in the face of indifference, and I say that and I've had an easy time of it. I know of many artists who struggle and struggle and struggle. You can't forget the fear of failure and oblivion overnight. So I still think of myself as being a struggling writer and then I think, "Wait a minute . . . I won the Booker Prize. I can't be struggling!"

It's also nice to know that my book is being read. I'm getting lots of letters. Letters from total strangers, letters from friends, letters from people in high places, from people I haven't heard of in years. It's always a bit of a surprise because these letters are addressed to me, when in fact they should be addressed to the book. It's the book that they liked. The author is somewhere else, something else. But it's nice to receive these letters, to get the attention. And the money is nice. It makes for a more comfortable life.

SSIE You are quoted as having said that you write simple books. What do you mean by that? Does that phrase really apply? And is the apparent simplicity of *Life of Pi* the reason for its success?

YM That's what I meant: apparent simplicity. I meant that stylistically the book is simple. First of all, most of my stories are quite linear. There are parallel stories, but parallel still means two lines. So, I would say that in terms of narrative, my stories are simple and classical. You have characters and events that move in a straightforward, linear way. There's no stylistic trickery, no impenetrable style. The language is uncomplicated, and the way of telling the story is not convoluted. Something happens and you live through the consequences, whether it's a sex change, AIDS, or a shipwreck. But you're right: it's an apparent simplicity. At one point you realize that with these simple little strokes I am creating a more complex picture.

SSie You already made reference to one of your other books, namely your first novel *Self*, so let's talk a bit about your earlier work. Your first book is *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios*, a collection of short fiction whose title narrative was turned into a movie. How did you come to writing and why short fiction and not poetry? And what are "the facts behind the Helsinki Roccamatios"?

YM *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* is a collection of four long stories. In fact, the title story is more properly speaking a novella. I started with short stories because I was learning how to write, and short stories seemed more manageable than novels, even though they are as difficult to write as novels. In fact, if anything, short stories are less forgiving than novels. Nonetheless they are shorter and do not require strong characterization, just plot with an epiphany at the end, some sort of illumination. And to be honest, I started writing without having the faintest idea what I was doing. I certainly wasn't thinking in terms of literary categories: "This is a short story. This is a novel." As I was learning how to write fiction, I wrote a lot of stuff, some of it short, that could properly be called short stories, some of it longer, novellas, and eventually novels. I was experimenting. Now I only write novels and I'm comfortable with that. I haven't written a short story in years. I only think in terms of novels. I don't find novels at all daunting. Like any big thing you have to do, you break it down into smaller parts and then it becomes quite manageable.

As to what the stories are about: I tend not to be interested in autobiography, for two reasons. In a general way, I don't find the ego that interesting. I would rather have a normal character face extraordinary circumstances than an extraordinary person face normal circumstances.

Maybe this is the influence of religion, or philosophy, or asceticism, or whatever—but I find the good life is the one where you tend to shush the ego, where you forget yourself. Not to the point of desolation or self-destruction or denial, but I do dislike this sort of very Western dwelling on one's little sores, little opinions, little life. This is a generalization, but I'm not really interested in psychological novels. I'd rather take a character, put him or her in unusual circumstances and see how he or she evolves than have a novel set inside a room where the character endlessly dreams away. That also goes for my own person. Even though I have what seems to be an interesting life, because I have moved around a lot, that's only the outside. I find neither my own life nor my own personal history that particularly interesting. I'd rather look out than in and very few of my stories are autobiographical. In *Helsinki,* the last story has autobiographical elements to do with my grandmother, this woman who lost her husband when she was very young and who accumulated all these objects. Her grandson comes for a visit and is bothered by this mountain of clutter she keeps in her house. That is autobiographical. But the point is not mere self-revelation; the story draws a lesson that can be applied beyond my life. At least I hope. The other stories are not autobiographical.

I have never written poetry, though I like to think that I have a sense of poetry. I don't feel comfortable in a genre that seems to have no rules. Grammar—forget it; syntax—forget it; punctuation—forget it; just plain sense—forget it. That's too arbitrary for me. I like the limitations of sentence and story. But I hope what I write is infused with a certain poetic.

SSie It certainly is. In fact the poetic quality of your writing inspired my question. Was there something in the form of shorter fiction that no longer worked for you? Or is the development—from the composition of short stories to that of novels by way of the novella—a movement that most writers aspire to?

YM I don't know. It depends. Alice Munro, for instance, is a brilliant short story writer. No reason to turn to another genre when you're brilliant at it. No, the short story is very difficult. It's very, very tight, not a word is wasted. It takes a lot of effort for something that is, let's say, twelve pages long. No, I started writing novels because it suited my creative nature. I'm not a very fast writer. I do one thing for a long time slowly. I'd rather get involved in a project that is long-term. Also, I like doing research. It's my way of learning. But to do a whole pile of research for a single

short story seems more work than it's worth it. At least for me. But it's a great genre, the short story, much maligned. Who can read Munro, Gallant, Maupassant, Daudet, and not like it?

SSIE Could we talk about your first novel, *Self*, which you allude to in the "Author's Note" at the beginning of *Life of Pi* and which I hear you do not really like to talk about? *Self* is preoccupied with the old theme of identity, at least that is how it has been read. And it uses an ancient trope to approach this theme, namely that of metamorphosis. Its first-person narrator goes through a whole series of metamorphoses, turning from male to female to male, transgressing boundaries of bodies, gender, and identity, self and other which, in the book, are also transgressions of form (pages are divided, for instance, and the text is reduced to individual terms like "fear" and "pain"), genre, and modes of perception. In *Pi* it seems that you are no longer as interested in such transgressions of form and identity?

YM Except that Pi practises three religions, which is transgressive. *Self* actually was less theory-driven than your question makes it sound like. Reducing it to its simplest form, it is a story of a boy who becomes a woman on his eighteenth birthday. In the book this is a completely natural process, not the result of an operation. He has no desire to be a woman, he just wakes up being one. Actually, he becomes one over the course of a week while he is traveling through Portugal. His body starts changing and he turns into a woman. And he is a woman for seven years and then turns into a man again. The reason I wrote this story—well, as with any work of art, I suppose there are many reasons—but one of the reasons I am aware of was that when I got to university I discovered things about myself that I was not pleased with. Most of us move through life convinced that we are good people. We tend to sweep under the carpet the hypocrisies, the lies, the deceits. That is a normal part of living, a normal way of dealing with childhood injuries and our various inadequacies. I think most of us when we reach adulthood are under the impression that we are not bigoted, that we are not racists. We tend to think that our prejudices are reasonable ones and therefore not prejudices at all. Few of us would openly say: "Oh I don't like blacks" or "I don't like Jews" or "I don't like women" or "I don't like fat people" or "I don't like—whoever".

Well, when I got to university I realized that I was not treating women, thinking of them, fairly. That I was sexist, which nowadays

sounds like I'm trying to be horribly politically correct. That's not it at all. No one likes to discover ugliness in oneself and I discovered something ugly. It had nothing to do with fashionable conformism. It was something private. The discovery came slowly. One shaft of light was an American study I read which showed that men interrupt women a lot more often than women interrupt men. After that I would catch myself interrupting a girl and think: "I just interrupted her. Was that right?" Which is not to say that women don't sometimes deserve to be interrupted. What I was discovering was that, as an eighteen-year-old male, I was a bit of a bull in a china shop. There was a psychological bluntness to my approach to human relations and more specifically to women. I was regulated in my relations with them by modes of thought that I was not aware of, and these modes of thought imbedded in me were not equitable. I wasn't happy with that. There was another American study, too. Psychologists asked girls how they would feel if they woke up one morning and were boys, and asked boys how they would feel if they woke up one morning and were girls. The girls' responses were varied. Some said: "Oh great, that would mean I could play baseball, or I could climb trees, or I could become an astronaut." Some didn't want to be a boy, but they had a variety of responses. Boys, on the other hand, every single one, without *one single exception,* reacted with horror. I had two reactions. One, there's something wrong with that picture. Two, I can see why. I understood why the boys reacted the way they did. I could see that in their eyes it would be terribly disempowering to be turned into a girl. "But why is that?" I thought. Why is being a woman disempowering? What power are we talking about? Is life about being powerful? Is that the whole picture? *What is the picture?* I believe in the empathetic imagination so I thought the best way to find out would be to pretend to be a woman.

I did "Feminism 101" as fast as I could and I read classics such as *The Second Sex* and *The Female Eunuch.* And I decided to write a novel in which the male protagonist would become a woman. Feminism I think is probably the most important, richest force to come out of the twentieth century. Whereas Marxism is dead and gone, and capitalism is dead and still in place, feminism is still rich and responsive. And yet there's a discrepancy between theory and practice. The theory sounds good, very convincing, but some women still come home and do the cooking quite happily. Some women *stay at home* and do the cooking quite happily.

How do we figure out division of labour? What is the true nature of a man, of a woman? Much of feminism is theoretical, academic. This, I think, is ultimately detrimental. Feminism must be lived, not thought. I thought a novel in which a character would live the life of a man and of a woman would shed some light for me. And the reason why I got bogged down and don't particularly like the novel anymore is precisely because the issue is so rich and complicated, because there is so much theory and so much practice. It was quite difficult getting the novel finished.

One of the key turning points in the novel is a rape scene. What exactly is rape? I often compare rape and the Holocaust, with the difference that whereas the Holocaust is acknowledged, rape often isn't, even though rapes happens all the time. Rape is rarely talked about in public discourse and hardly appears in fiction. When it does, it's just as a device to move the plot forward. There is no actual focus on the event, on what exactly happens psychologically. Rape is a very complicated crime. I did a fair bit of research on it. The rape scene in the novel I consider quite a successful rape scene in that it is impossible to project pleasure onto it due to the parallel structure of two texts: on the left-hand part of the page, the rape is described in a straightforward manner, on the right, we read the woman's emotions reduced to a repetition of two words, "pain" and "fear." But once I had described that scene, I wondered: I have just described this minute Holocaust. Now what? Where do I go from here? It's the same point Adorno made when he visited Auschwitz and wondered whether there could still be art after Auschwitz. I felt at the end of that rape scene that I had nowhere to go creatively, and the novel ends on a grey, defeated tone. That has tainted my view of the novel.

SSie Using the trope of the Holocaust for an act, or rather, a representation of rape, will probably meet with a lot of resistance, I would assume?

YM I don't know. I'll find out when my next novel comes out. But in both cases you dehumanize someone. At the same time, you're right. During the Holocaust the Jews were killed, whereas in a rape the victim is not necessarily killed. But spiritually, it's the same thing; if you rape or kill you don't see a person as a full human being and because of that you use of them as if they were objects. In both cases, it's a hate crime with a dash of pleasure. The Nazis and their acolytes took pleasure in terrorizing and killing the Jews. And they profited materially by robbing their goods, by taking over their houses. Rapists often do the same. And I

think it's an appropriate parallel in another way: in the silence that surrounds both. No one really wants to talk about the Holocaust except out of weary duty. The only exception is some of the people directly affected by it, mostly Jews, and a smattering of historians and artists. Considering the staggering magnitude of the event, it is astonishing how little public discourse we hear about it, how little it is discussed on a daily basis. The Holocaust is still not something that we've integrated into our daily way of being. The same with rape. It is mostly muffled in silence.

SSie Are there questions of perspective involved in any of this? Did you experiment with point-of-view in writing *Self*?

YM Yes, explicitly. I wanted to look at point of view and terrain. One of the notions I was exploring in writing the book was that the body is an environment. I was working with the idea that if our body is an environment, then our living with our body, in our body, must be a process of adaptation similar to our adaptation to the external environment. This adaptation would affect our behavior, our sexuality and our sexual orientation. I wanted to explore how sexual identity and orientation maps onto the body. In *Self* the narrator is always lagging behind or catching up with his or her body. When she becomes a woman she is still thinking like a man. She's in a woman's body but still thinking like a man. So she's still attracted to women. But over time, she starts changing. There are many reasons for this. One is the appeal of the forbidden. Though on the outside her new attraction to men is banally heterosexual, at first for her it's homosexual. The first time she kisses a man she thinks, "This is homosexuality. I am a homosexual." And she's shocked, yet thrilled. So there's the appeal of the forbidden. That's one of the conscious reasons for the change. But beneath that I think there's an environmental adaptation, a linking between the mind and the body. I'm not being deterministic here. Of course we can override our "body environment," much like we largely ignore our external environment. But it's there, our bodies, as gentle pressure that tells us how to be. In any case, in exploring this, in how the narrator shifts and changes, point of view was central.

SSie For me reading your work, otherness evolves as a major theme in your writing. And this goes both for *Self* and for *Life of Pi*, where otherness figures in the otherness of religions as well as in the confrontation with the big other, nature and its inhabitants. In fact I got the sense that boundaries between self and other are quite fluid in your fictions. So

what about this relation of self and otherness? And what about that relation if the territory is fiction?

YM Well, what else is there to write about but the confrontation with the other, whether that other is another person or our environment? As I said earlier, in general I'm not interested in psychological novels because they never get beyond the doorstep of one consciousness. The solipsistic, the self-involved, the *angst* of the solitary do not interest me. I'd rather look at the other, whether it's the animal other, the cultural other, the religious other—it is through them that we come to understand ourselves. Let's take an example. Let's say you're chocolate ice-cream. If you're chocolateness through and through, if all you've ever known your whole life is chocolateness, then, on one level, you have no idea what chocolateness is, though it permeates your whole soul. You will only understand chocolateness once you meet strawberryness and vanillaness and butterscotchness. It's in meeting the other that you start to understand, first, that you are different, and then how you are different. Of course, understanding chocolateness remains extraordinarily complicated. Socrates's "Know thyself" stumps chocolate ice-cream as much as it does us! And that's just ice-cream flavors—imagine when you're a human being. Everyone has multiple identities. But because it's a big, complicated sometimes frightening world, we tend to want to simplify our identity, forgetting that all of us all the time are wearing many, many hats. Yet we tend to meet only one otherness at a time. So when I am in Poland, I see only Polish otherness. I forget, or diminish, the otherness of women, of children, of body-types, of character, of social status, etc. So yes, I am interested in otherness, because it strikes me that it's the very matter not only of fiction, but of life. I strongly believe in the empathetic imagination, in making the effort to understand the other. Because in understanding the other, you eventually understand yourself.

SSie Both *Self* and *Life of Pi* include scenes that are quite violent, though the situations themselves—the rape scene and Pi's first days on the lifeboat—do not necessarily compare. What function does violence take in the encounter of self and the other?

YM It's a platitude to say that violence is disturbing. Unfortunately, the truth of that only hits home when we're genuinely confronted with violence. I don't mean just the odd scuffle or verbal violence, but actual, physical violence. Even strong verbal violence with signs of aggression

is extraordinarily upsetting. I'm interested in violence in part because I'm afraid of it, in part because I've witnessed it in others. And I guess I hope that looking at violence in writing is protecting me the way an insurance policy would; I write about it so that if it should ever happen to me, hopefully I'll better be able to deal with it. Also, the response to violence is in a compressed way, like a sort of shorthand, the same response to what will happen to all of us, which is death. My grandfather died when my father was ten and that has marked my father's life, and mine by extension. And I volunteer in a palliative care unit, a hospital unit for the terminally ill, for the dying. I've become quite familiar with the dynamics of death, with how death actually creeps up on a living body. And death is very rich metaphorically. It's the basis of all religion. If we didn't die, I don't think there would be religion. So, looking at death is yet another approach to the other. And death, violence, and fear are phenomena that impel us to change. Some change is self-willed, some, through fear of death, is forced upon us. In *Life of Pi*, Pi is confronted with fear and violence and has to deal with it—a situation I was interested in exploring.

SSIE One of the German reviewers of *Life of Pi* entitled his piece "Belated Animal Lover" which was meant to refer to you. Why that interest in animals? Is this more an ecological, philosophical or literary matter to you, if those can be separated at all? And why such preference for zoo animals in particular?

YM The reason is a lot less romantic than you might think. What started me on *Life of Pi* was a review I read of the novel *Max and the Cats*, by the Brazilian author Moacyr Scliar. In a part of that novel a man ends up in a lifeboat with a jaguar. What attracted me to that premise was that it was perfectly Aristotelian: there was perfect unity of time, action, and place. While I was in India, I decided to tell my own story with a similar premise because it had that mix of the improbable and the appealing that suited the story I wanted to tell. So the heartless answer to your questions would be: I used animals simply because they served the purpose of my narrative. But of course, I'm also interested in animals for their own sake. Animals fill me with wonder. But it's the novel that drew me to animals, not the other way around. I find animals to be very useful and versatile. I'm not finished with them. I'll be using them for the next one, a novel about the Holocaust. It will feature a monkey and a donkey. And the novel after that will feature three chimpanzees.

And like everyone, I am concerned about the destruction of the environment. I do believe that it's good that we have zoos because if we don't, children will never see animals in the flesh. An animal becoming extinct will have no more impact on them than a TV show that's been discontinued. Children won't really feel for an animal the way they would if giraffes were being pushed to extinction and they had seen giraffes. So I am concerned about animals and do have a fairly good knowledge of animals. Still, my interest is mainly artistic and not necessarily political, though I am politicized. And although I did have a lot of pets when I was a child and we lived in tropical countries, my attraction to animals wasn't obvious. But it is true that there are animals in every one of my books. In *Helsinki*, there is a dog named George H., after George Harrison. It plays a minor but charged role. And in *Self*, there is a bulldog that also plays a small, but emotionally significant part. I find animals useful primarily because we project a lot onto them. We project onto people, too, but we know that this is not necessarily acceptable and that there are limits to that. Whereas on animals we happily project: We talk to our cats and dogs; we see tigers as ferocious and hyenas as cowardly, etc. When people claim *Life of Pi* is an allegory, in fact they're mistaken. The animals are possibly allegorical, but otherwise they really are animals.

In my next novel animals allow me to speak indirectly about something that's hard to talk about directly: namely, the Holocaust. Just as we use jokes sometimes to say something very serious, I am using a monkey and a donkey, because everyone likes monkeys and donkeys, to talk about something no one likes talking about. And for the novel after that, I'll be using three different kinds of chimpanzees: one's a sculpture, one's a real chimpanzee, although dead, and one's a real, true-to-life, totally un-anthropomorphized chimpanzee. I'm using them as different approaches to understanding Christ. I'm using chimpanzees because they are primates, thus similar to us, in fact 98.4% genetically similar, which is, of course misleading because the 1.6 percent makes all the difference. So they are quite close to us in some ways and very different in others, like Christ.

SSie As Samuel Fischer Professor at the Freie Universität Berlin you are currently teaching a seminar entitled: "Meeting the Other: The Animal in Literature." In your course description, you claim that the animal is remarkably absent in Western literature. What then are you talking about with your students, what are you reading?

YM We started with Coetzee, with a modern piece, but I meant to start with the Bible. The animal is absolutely central to Jewish identity because of the dietary laws. A Jew knows his or her relationship to every animal in relation to whether it is clean or unclean. This does not mean that Jews sanctify animals, or treat them with ecological kindness. No, they kill them, they eat them. But every Jew knows: this animal I can eat, that animal I can't, and this implies a relationship with the animal world. And you see that if you look at the Old Testament. It's chockablock full of animals. In Genesis, animals are mentioned first, and in a fair bit of detail, and they are created *on the same day* as Man. So there is a hierarchy in the Jewish worldview, but it's one in which animals are right next to us.

The Jewish point of view entails a guardianship, a custodianship of the animal world more than an absolute domination. And this has to do, I think, with the fact that Judaism has a strong sense of place. When Jews say, "Next year in Jerusalem," they mean that literally. The Holy Land is not a metaphor; it's a real place, with real geographical features, real flowers and trees, and real animals. Christianity, on the other hand, has a strong sense of *person*. Everything in Christianity comes down to Christ. Christ was a person. Persons can move. Persons who move have less of a sense of place. Christ had nothing to say about animals. There are animals in the New Testament, of course. Christ rides on a donkey, but it's a metaphorical donkey. It's a humble animal as opposed to the proud Roman horse. And there's a cock that crows to signal Peter's betrayal of Christ. But these animals are mere figures that move the plot forward, or are just symbols. There are no dietary laws in Christianity. The emphasis is on the person, which meant, as an unintended consequence, the slow evacuation of the animal from the Christian world. In it, animals are killed any which way—and any animals. They are eventually stripped of whatever dignity they had under Judaism. The culmination of this thinking might be Descartes, to whom animals are mere automatons, with no emotions or thoughts. Actually, the real culmination is the industrial food business, in which animals are treated with absolutely no respect. Real live chickens are treated like they were rubber chickens being manufactured in a smoke-belching factory. I don't believe in treating animals with exaggerated respect, but any animal can feel fear and every life form is worthy of basic respect. When you kill an animal, you should at least be aware of what you're doing. I object to going to the supermarket, buying a slab of meat all wrapped up in plastic for

which you've played no role in raising the animal, killing it and butchering it. I believe in taking responsibility for our actions.

The course I teach is in fact a bit of a disaster because I've been so busy and have had no time to prepare for it. But in essence I want to point out that absence of the animal. So we've started with the Old Testament, moved to the New Testament, to the Gospels. Then I arbitrarily chose one play of Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, basically to point out the absence of real animals, the obsessive humanness of Shakespeare's world, in which everything was by humans, for humans and about humans. The natural realm is otherwise incidental. Change came with Darwin, who suddenly brought animals much closer than people ever imagined. After that you start having writers like Jack London and Hemingway, where the natural world plays a prominent role in which humanity plays a diminishing role.

SSie Your novels dramatize transgressions of boundaries and in *Life of Pi* religion plays a significant part in this dramatization. In the "Author's Note" that opens the book you present the protagonist Piscine Molitor Patel's story as one that will "make you believe in God." To me it seems, though, that the story your book presents makes one believe not so much in religion, but in fiction. Somewhat in the same way as Daniel Defoe makes us believe in fiction in *Robinson Crusoe* when he presents himself as the editor of the story that the first-person narrator has experienced first-hand. Your "Author's Note" very much reminded me of Defoe's device.

YM Yes, but then the question is: What do you mean by fiction? I discovered in writing *Life of Pi* that in a sense religion operates like fiction. A good novel works by making you suspend your disbelief. When you read a novel that doesn't work, you sense that, "Oh, this happened and it was so improbable. That's not how they do it." Novels that don't work are emotionally dead, their mistakes in idioms or in cultural habits are annoying. A good novel—even though there are robots and flying dinosaurs—just takes us in. Religion works the same way—it makes you suspend your disbelief so that factual truth becomes irrelevant. It's not because the facts are ignored. It's more how you interpret the facts and how much you value facts that affect the totality of your sense experience. So to say that the book will make you believe in fiction, to me, isn't very far from saying it'll make you believe in God. I think it's acceptable to say that God is a fiction, if you understand that this

doesn't necessarily mean that this fiction doesn't exist. It just exists in a way that is only accessed through the imagination.

A religious person will not say that his belief contradicts reality. In fact it's remarkable how people who have faith, no matter what happens to them, keep on having faith. Perfect proof of that is Judaism. How there can still be practising Jews, how they can still think they're the chosen people, considering what has happened to them these last twenty centuries, is crying proof that there's more to faith than facts. It's not that goes beyond facts, or ignores them. It's that religion interprets the facts, interprets reality differently. In my novel, the proof is not a reasonable one, it's an existential one. Now clearly, you have to use reason. Reason is a tool that is useful in nearly every circumstance, and it's simplistic to say that religious people are unreasonable and agnostics are reasonable. The mechanism of faith uses imagination *and* reason. If you suspend your cynicism, it is remarkable what a call on the imagination the Gospels are. It really does colour your world. You view other people in a different way and the universe—as I say at one point in *Life of Pi*—becomes built along moral, rather than intellectual lines.

Maybe God's silence is an appeal to get beyond factuality. Maybe God's trick is to call us through the imagination. If you don't have any imagination, you live a diminished life. The overly reasonable life is a shrunken life. So much alienation in Western cultures is due to an excess of reason. A homeless person in Montreal has nothing, truly nothing, whereas a homeless person in India is materially bereft, but will most likely have some sort of Hindu thought coursing through his mind which will somehow give him a perspective, a way of understanding his suffering.

SSIE Your protagonist Pi Patel irritates his family because he insists on practising three religions: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. Does fiction or the imagination thus propose a solution for our current clashes of cultures and religions?

YM Yes, an emphatic YES—the empathetic imagination is the great solution. This is so true, so obvious, it becomes practically a psychotherapeutic tool. If you are an Israeli, you should imagine yourself a Palestinian. Then you will understand why the Palestinians are angry. If you're a Palestinian, you should make the effort of imagining yourself an Israeli, and then you will understand why the Israelis are afraid. If you're a man and you become a woman, you understand. If you're

white and you imagine yourself black, etc. Such an approach will not only make the universe more peaceful. It's also very enriching. It's much like traveling. The empathetic imagination allows you to travel just as catching a train or a plane does.

SSie In her review of *Life of Pi,* Margaret Atwood calls upon *Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels,* and *Moby Dick* as ancestors of your book. Let me pick Hermann Melville's *Moby Dick,* which is a book that interrogates both science and transcendentalism, or rather calls scientific truths into question by looking beyond mere matter. Do you consider *Pi* as part of this tradition or do you find those comparisons inappropriate, even though they are certainly flattering in some sense?

YM They're very flattering. Honestly, however, I'm indifferent to these sorts of comparisons. I must be following some tradition, but it's for other people to tell me that. I'm Canadian, and Canadian literature has a tradition. I've written a story with animals, and there's a tradition about that. But at one point every artist does his or her own thing. Someone also mentioned Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,* which was one of the sources for the name Richard Parker [the name of the Bengali tiger that comes along on Pi Patel's travels]. Now the truth is, it's a terrible novel. The only reason it has survived is because Poe wrote it. So I was aware of it, but it played no influence other than giving me a name for one of my characters. Same thing with *Moby Dick*: it's a great novel but it didn't have influence on my book as far as I can tell. There *is* a wink to Scliar in the novel, although it's mistaken one. I name a panther in my novel's zoo after what I thought was the one in Scliar's lifeboat, but in fact that jaguar has no name. I don't know where I got the idea that it did. My imagination again, buzzing about like a bothersome fly. So every artist does something new and eventually is told that he or she is part of a lineage. But that's imposed from the outside.

SSie What about the relation between science and fiction? Like *Moby Dick* your book seems to call scientific truths into question, though often quite ironically. Your protagonist, for instance, is named Pi, after "that elusive, irrational number with which scientists try to understand the universe."

YM I think both texts would not work if their tone was fable-like. They have to be realistic to work. And to be transcendental, you must first be somewhere. So my novel works in part because it is rooted in gritty facts, in a very *terre-à-terre* view of things. I wanted to use science for

practical narrative reasons to pull in the reader. After all, we operate with a mixture of the scientific and the transcendental. That's our approach to life. We are reasonable animals. That's what makes us more powerful than other animals. And we're the only animal with a strong sense of imagination. Dogs do have dreams, some capacity to be here but imagining something else, but it's far more limited than ours. However, we tend to be overly reasonable, because it has yielded so much materially, technologically. We've tended to denigrate the transcendental and parked transcendentalism with the arts as a "leisure product."

SSIE What kind of research went into *Life of Pi*?

YM A fair bit of it. In terms of the castaway element, I mainly read real life accounts. *Survive the Savage Sea,* for example. It's a terrible title for a brilliant book from the early seventies by a Scottish man who was traveling on a yacht with his family and a Welsh hitchhiker. Their yacht was attacked by killer whales west of the Galapagos. He was a former merchant marine and he had a good knowledge of the sea. They survived thirty-seven days at sea. They were eventually rescued by a Japanese fishing vessel. Then he wrote this beautifully understated book about their odyssey. It's also a manual about survival at sea, an absolute goldmine for me.

I also read the odd literary story about shipwrecks, though these tended to be more annoying than helpful because they were a finished result by some other artist on a theme I was tackling. Plus, I wanted my facts to be right. You can never trust an artist, whereas you can trust people who don't claim to be artists. For the religious element, I read the foundational texts—the Bible, selections of the Koran, the Bhagavad Gita and other Hindu texts as well as secondary texts to help with these texts. I read a history of zoos, some books on zoo biology, on animal psychology. And I visited zoos. I interviewed someone at the Toronto Zoo as well as the director of the Trivandrum Zoo in India. In India I also did experiential research: I went to temples, churches, and mosques, spent time in Pondicherry and Munar. And I read odd little things here and there on currents, on winds, on storms. I can't understand writers who don't do any research. If I was just going to write a novel about a guest professor in Germany and people he meets—it'd be so boring. I'd rather do something that is outside my life and allows me to do research.

SSie If you were shipwrecked on a lonely island, what book and what animal would you take along?

YM There's a great line by Chesterton on that very question. He answered: "A guide to ship-building." What book would I bring? It would have to be something big, not a novella. The book that impressed me most was Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It's the closest a book has ever come to capturing an entire world. It's just an extraordinary book. Maybe *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Maybe just the Oxford dictionary and a lot of blank paper and ten thousand pens.

SSie And your animal choice if you could take a companion?

YM Well, if I had to take a companion, it wouldn't be a tiger. It would be something more personable. The obvious choice would be a dog, because that would be the most resilient, useful animal. Or maybe a primate. But see, we have this idea of considering animals as pets and very few can be pets, very few are domestic. Honestly, I'd probably take a dog, a big dog like a St. Bernard, a German Shepherd, or a Labrador. Or maybe a donkey. I like donkeys.

SSie You have already mentioned *Max and the Cats* (1981), a novella by Moacyr Scliar from which your text received its "spark of life," as you put in the "Author's Note" to *Life of Pi*, and with which your text shares one of its premises. Scliar's book tells the story of a Jewish boy who survives both the Holocaust and a shipwreck, sharing a lifeboat with a panther. Soon after receiving the Booker Prize you were charged with plagiarism, a charge which not only made for "a scandal that wasn't," as one critic put it, but also for much publicity. And while I know you have talked enough about this matter, how do you see the case now as things have cooled down a bit?

YM Something was missed by the scandal. The real interest in this scandal to me was the question of what is an appropriate source of inspiration for an artist. That was the only really interesting issue, because clearly I didn't plagiarize. You can't plagiarize a book you haven't read. And until three weeks ago, I hadn't read Scliar's book. I had read a review of a book and that inspired me and I borrowed the premise. Is it dishonest to borrow a premise? Is it theft? To say that it is betrays, I think, an ignorance of the artistic process, in fact of the history of literature. The premise is the beginning of something. It's like the jokes that run along the lines of there's a Chinaman, a German, and a Frenchman in a plane; the plane is going to crash, and there's only one parachute.

That's the premise and then the joke develops. So for me the premise was a boy in a lifeboat with a wild animal. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* it's not just the premise that was borrowed from Boccaccio, but the entire plot. Did Shakespeare therefore plagiarize? We've borrowed countless times from the Greeks. That didn't bother people. Is it because Scliar is alive that people thought it was inappropriate? His book and mine are totally different and everyone who's read them sees that. First of all, Scliar's book is a novella. The part with the jaguar in the lifeboat is just sixteen pages long. Mine is over three hundred pages. To plagiarize sixteen pages for 350 pages is starting to sound like the miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand with three loaves of bread! But that's not the only difference. The two books are totally different in theme, character, language and tone. So, why did it bother people? There's a movie by Fellini called *E la nave va*, which at one point has a man in a boat with a rhinoceros. I never saw the movie but I saw the poster two years into working on *Pi*. If I'd said it was that poster that had inspired me, I don't think that would have bothered anyone because it's a different medium, it's film.

The engine that fuelled this scandal was in fact political. Brazil and Canada have had poor relations for many years now, mainly due to commercial squabbles. That's what fueled the high emotions in Brazil, which is where the scandal started. Brazilians aren't very fond of Canada. But the whole thing came and went like a spring shower. I spoke with Scliar. He's a very nice man and a fine writer. Thanks to this scandal, I now know a writer in Porto Allegre.

SSIE Well, such cases obviously make for publicity. But it seems evident to me that people who make these kind of claims miss what literature is all about. Literary critics and theorists simply call such textual echoes intertextuality.

YM Well, I'm not of the school that any publicity is good publicity. I didn't need the extra publicity. The Booker Prize was publicity enough. Two weeks after the thrill of winning the Booker to have mud thrown at me was hurtful and annoying. It did blow over and there were follow-up articles in the US, in Canada and in the UK. But in some places—in France, for instance—there were merely brief articles saying "Booker Prize Winner Accused of Plagiarism." And that was it. And when you're accused of something, it lingers. People forget that you are innocent until proven guilty. But anyway, the book will live and this nonsense will die.

SSie Besides Scliar you have mentioned Conrad, Kafka, Milton, Dante, Gogol and Sinclair Lewis as part of your reading and inspiration.

YM My reading is quite eclectic and these are people who have influenced me, who have formed my sensibility. I think for any writer it's important to have read, especially when you're young. I find I read a lot less now, in part because I'm more preoccupied with my own creation, and have less patience for other writer's creations. What's great when you're young is that you have such a capacity to wonder. It's so much easier to suspend your disbelief; it means you can believe so much more and the effect of what you read is that much more powerful.

SSie You're Québécois and your mother tongue is French, yet you write in English. I assume you consider yourself a citizen of the world?

YM No. I'm Canadian. I don't believe there are citizens of the world. Everyone is from somewhere, rooted in a particular culture. We're also citizens of the languages we speak. Some people speak many languages—I speak three, I'm a citizen of English, French and Spanish—but no one speaks World. World is not a language.

SSie You prefer writing in English, obviously?

YM Yes, I grew up going to school in English. It's the language I learned to write in and to think in at my most subtle. But French and Spanish are dear to my heart.

SSie How does it feel to live and teach literature in Berlin?

YM I love living in Berlin. And I don't mean to complain about winning the Booker, but it has ruined my stay in Berlin. I love Montreal, but it's nothing new to me. If I had won while living in Montreal, I could have involved myself fully in the Booker Prize without worrying about neglecting my home town, whereas Berlin, I had to neglect. I just haven't had time to do much here. A couple museums, one concert, a few movies, that's it. I'll have done in five months what some tourists would do in one week.

As for teaching—never again! I don't mind speaking in public. And there's nothing more stimulating than a young mind opening itself to the world. But I'm not an academic. I'm a creative artist. My knowledge of things is extensive but superficial, it's not systematic, it's totally partial, it's unfair, it's biased. So I have difficulty operating within an academic milieu. I'm not an expert on anything.

SSie What are you currently working on?

YM Currently? Nothing, because I'm too busy. But I'm thinking about and

jotting down the odd notes for my next book, which will be a fable. Everything I say about this, I hate saying because it seems so *déjà vu.* When I told people about *Life of Pi* they were sort of rolling their eyes and it will be the same thing here. People are going to roll their eyes and say: "This can't work." My next novel will be a Holocaust fable featuring a monkey and a donkey with no references to the Holocaust, Germany, Jews, Poland, or concentration camps. It will be a fable that takes place on a large shirt the size of a country. There will be soil and rivers and trees and villages as well as button holes and collars and seams. The monkey and the donkey—they're both completely anthropomorphized—will be traveling through this country, discussing and enduring various tribulations. The shirt will be afflicted by a phenomenon they will call "the Horrors," which obviously is a stand-in for the Holocaust. And as they travel around the shirt, the monkey and the donkey keep on telling each other little stories, folk tales, trying to find a way of capturing the Horrors, of speaking about it. They start at the back of the shirt, make their way up to the capital of the country, which will be called Yellow Star because of the colour of the brick used and the shape of the fortification. It is obviously the shirt of a Jew. The fable will be about how we understand evil, how we live with it, how we speak of it, how we remember it. The monkey and the donkey try to find what I'm calling a portable metaphor, a metaphor that can be applied, not only to their situation, but to other situations that are Holocaust-like. So I'm self-consciously trying to create a metaphor that will, I hope, stimulate people to consider the Holocaust and the lessons that we must draw from it.

The word Holocaust is already a metaphor. Holocaust is a religious term designating an animal sacrifice, something that happened routinely in ancient Judaism. To use that term for what happened between 1933 and 1945 is arguably an improper appropriation because it puts a positive spin on a horrible event. Jews who were persecuted by the Nazis did not think they were part of a religious ritual! I'm trying to find a different way to speak about that evil. And I would like it to be applicable to the extermination of European Jewry as well as to the violence that took place in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, to rapes and murder—any situation where a group is dehumanized.

SSie So are you basically against the assumption that the Holocaust is an exceptional historical event?

YM That's a very contentious issue. On the one hand, the Holocaust is certainly exceptional. Never before had a government, an entire state apparatus, right from its inception, been devoted to exterminating an entire people. And the Holocaust was unique because of its scale and the use of advanced technology. But I also think there's a danger in saying the Holocaust is a unique event. If it becomes totally unique, standing there on its own, apart from everything else in human history, there's the danger we'll learn nothing from it. Because to learn you must compare. To remember and cry over Anne Frank, and then turn around and discriminate against gays, blacks, women, Arabs, the handicapped, etc, serves no purpose. There's a danger to over-sacralizing the Holocaust. It's got to be a living, breathing contentious matter open to debate and analysis and comparison. It must enter the rough tumble of discourse, even at the risk of sometimes disrespecting it. What I want to do in this new novel is to talk about a heavy event in an engaging way.

SSie So it's in the tradition of Roberto Benigni's movie *Life is Beautiful*?

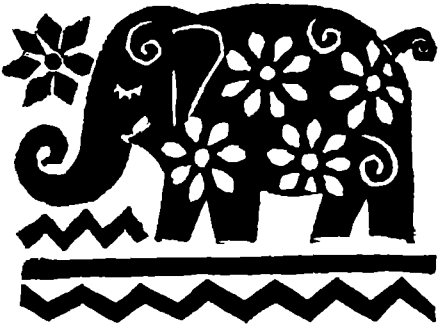
YM No, not really. I didn't like the movie. It was brave of Benigni to try a different approach. But it didn't work. It was too improbable emotionally. My approach will be different. It may very well fail, but I'll risk that.

SSie Just one final question, returning us to Berlin. Are there places that are particularly conducive to writing or is that a wrong idea about how writing works for an author of fiction?

YM I can work pretty well anywhere. I only need my computer, a table, a little light and a little quiet. I can definitely work in Berlin.

SSie As a native Berliner, I am very happy to hear this. And I thank you very much. It has been a pleasure talking to you.

* See p. 163 of this issue of *CL* for a review of *Life of Pi*.



Bill Howell

Miles to Go, Ocean Version

"Is it of such concern when what will be
already is within the moonward sea?"
—Charles Olson, *"The K"*

Quintet swooping in with a flock of murderous notions turning into doing what will play: a disrespectful bop salvage operation on "Bye, Bye, Blackbird": sun on B♭ water while we keep just missing bumping into those bleached-out ghosts of gulls contradicting gravity.

Or: ageless actors disguised as hangmen pretending to guesstimate your weight. Flap, flap, lifting off that staged page anyway: mist, haze, or just a lack of practice: the song polishes its own silver, crows along the edges of everything strong enough to be remembered.

Or: those caverns and canyons echoing under there, energetic ledges stretching beyond the last gasps of basking sharks. White caps, red caps, black hats just enjoying being bad: the list wishes it could carry on without you. But she just ain't a count your blessings kind of gal.

The cost of living, the cost of leaving: convicted of having convictions other than hers. What lasts is what you start with: gargling gargoyles to clear the sea trout from your throat: blowing everything away. Just this latest chance breathing its necessity into horizontal distance circling

what's left, downsized to nothing. . . .

Marie Thérèse Blanc

Tales of a Nation

Interpretive Legal Battles in Rudy Wiebe's *The Scorched-Wood People*

In his "*Nomos* and Narrative," the late Robert Cover stated that we grant legal documents authority because they are both normative and located in narrative. "Every prescription," he wrote, "is insistent in its demand to be located in discourse—to be supplied with history and destiny, beginning and end, explanation and purpose" (5). Certainly, we tend to regard legal instruments and precedents as our primary nation-founding and nation-building texts. Sections 3 and 4 of the British North America Act, 1867, for instance, provide that the Act itself constitutes the Dominion of Canada. Yet in the Act's preamble, the Dominion is said to have been established for "the Welfare of the Provinces and [to] promote the Interests of the British Empire." In short, the British North America Act spells out the duties and powers of provincial, federal, and imperial players without providing for the rights, freedoms, and obligations of those populating the territory. It is a document devoid of a secular awareness of community or nation, in the sense given to this last word by French historian Joseph Ernest Renan, for whom a nation is a spiritual principle constituted of a people's stance towards past sacrifices, defeats, or victories, and of a clear commitment to a communal future (904). Legislation (or, to use Cover's own terminology, prescription), in other words, is not narrative in itself; it relies on narrative to acquire a larger purpose or destiny.

Are there other texts, then, suited to the representation of a nation as a mosaic of hopes and intents? Common sense dictates, and many scholars have argued, that literary narratives may provide readers with a sense of nation.[1] What Canadian literary narratives impart community, belonging,

and even dissent, along with a comprehensive view of the past and a particular understanding of a collective future? How do they do this? How do they differ from legal narratives?

In this article, I address such questions by examining one literary work that looks at community in light of a communal memory and vision: Rudy Wiebe's *The Scorched-Wood People* (1977), a novel on the adult years, trial, and execution of Métis leader and rebel Louis Riel, and on the plight of the Prairie Métis. I locate my reading of Wiebe's novel in relation to two groups of studies. Wolfgang Kloos has characterized *The Scorched-Wood People* as "a novel dealing with the rise and fall of a nation," namely the Métis nation (207). For Sam Solecki, the novel opposes Eastern and Western ideologies in a contestational narrative (5). Allan Dueck, for his part, goes further when he claims that "Wiebe's perspective on history *affirms* the cultural heritage and identity of a demoralized and oppressed people" (198; emphasis added). Dennis Duffy, however, fears that in our "days of post-colonial enlightenment" we might too easily lapse into "flabby sentimentality about underdogs" and thus overlook the demanding form (and underlying message) of a work such as *The Scorched-Wood People* (211). Duffy follows Linda Hutcheon's lead in viewing *The Scorched-Wood People* as a metafictional work. At the core of this metafiction lie both the endorsement and the subversion of the authority of language. Duffy grants Riel's vision the power of Scripture itself, of "things unseen [. . .], drifting about in the air like flocks of birds, until they nest among the hearts of men" (206), yet cautions that in the world of British-inspired law, where "vision that results in action will be judged on the basis of action alone," Riel's hopeful words are without power. If any moral is to be identified at the end of the novel, Duffy adds, it lies in our understanding of the incompatibility of differing cultural discourses (more explicitly, that of secular law and that of vision and divine justice) in our society (210). In the end, Duffy asserts, no univocal discourse can claim hegemony in either our Western world or in our understanding of the past. Duffy's denial of univocality is echoed in Marie Vautier's reading of *The Scorched-Wood People* as a postmodern work that "prevents the myth of Louis Riel from crystallizing into a fixed element in the reader's historico-mythical imagination" (83).

I agree with Kloos, Solecki, and Dueck that Wiebe's novel fulfills a pragmatic, oppositional, and affirmative function. But it also grants us access to communal thinking about the possible place of a minority within the Canadian Confederation. More broadly, it asks us to reflect on the meaning

of citizenship. Moreover, *The Scorched-Wood People* achieves this not by deriding and turning away entirely from law, but by the appropriation of a legal genre known for its narrativity. Wiebe's novel may be looked upon as a counternarrative that challenges the integrity of Louis Riel's court judgment by bringing to the fore those facts and testimonies disallowed at the trial. In other words, the novel enacts a kind of trial, for it brings into play adversarial narratives: a historical court case, parts of which appear in Part Three, Chapter Four of the novel and the counternarrative itself. This counternarrative fictionalizes the events leading to Riel's trial at the same time that it presents Métis grievances somewhat differently than did the original judgment; it also provides a critique of white justice, particularly under the Macdonald government of 1885. Because trial narratives are essentially teleological, I endorse those studies that view *The Scorched-Wood People* as a defence of the underdog, yet the adversarial trial format is far from being univocal. Indeed, it provides a forum for various and dissenting voices. Moreover, rather than claim that the novel both installs and subverts such voices, I maintain that in a courtroom all voices and complementary versions of events are heard, although a final verdict must be reached. My position, therefore, is situated at the intersection of what might be called the instrumental and the postmodern readings of Wiebe's novel.

In 1885 Louis Riel led a final series of rebellions at Duck Lake, Fish Creek, and Batoche in the current province of Saskatchewan against the Conservative government of John A. Macdonald. At issue were democratic and land rights for which the Métis of the North-West had been fighting for some time (Stanley 291). On 15 May 1885, Riel, himself both a Métis and a Conservative M.P. who had been elected more than once to Parliament, surrendered peacefully to government forces and was charged with high treason under the British Statute of Treasons (1352). The mandatory sentence for high treason was death by hanging. Riel had hoped to bring his case all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada in order to publicize and denounce the government's role in the injustices suffered by the Métis (*Queen v. Louis Riel* ix). Criminal trials, however, are held close to the location of the crime, and Regina was chosen as a convenient forum instead. Moreover, the North-West Territories Act of 1880 authorized the trial of capital cases by a stipendiary magistrate, the highest judicial official in the North-West at the time, and six jurors only. Rather than being tried before an appointed provincial judge and the usual jury of twelve, Riel finally came to justice before magistrate Hugh Richardson and six white, English-speaking farmers.[2] Moreover, though

Riel was able to expound the economic and political helplessness of the Métis during two emotional and somewhat erratic speeches delivered at the end of his trial, Crown and defence attorneys generally limited themselves to arguing the substantive content of the charges brought against the accused. The trial, in other words, was concerned not with the government's alleged crimes against the Métis, but with Riel's alleged crimes against the Queen.

The jury found Riel guilty on August 1, 1885, but recommended mercy. Riel was nonetheless hanged on November 16 despite stays of execution during which his Liberal lawyers lost one appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench in Manitoba,[3] while the second one, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, was denied (Stanley 362). Described by Desmond Morton as "the most famous trial of Canadian history" (*QvLR* xv), *The Queen v. Louis Riel* was without doubt the most sensational trial of the emergent Confederation; it illustrated rather dramatically the way in which the new Dominion of Canada dealt with dissent.

The trial was a disappointment to Riel. Morton explains in his introduction to the 1974 edition of the trial that Louis Riel was above all a man of words who had hoped for a public trial to explain himself and denounce his enemies (vii). But during his trial Riel lost any authority he might have held in a different forum. To begin with, crucial witnesses who Riel had hoped would testify in his favour were absent from the courtroom. These witnesses included Gabriel Dumont, his military commander during the rebellion (who was to testify that the rebellion might easily have been avoided had the government been more receptive to Métis claims), and the Deputy Ministers of Indian Affairs and of the Interior (who would have been asked to confirm that the Métis' rights had indeed been denied). The court refused to summon government officials (*QvLR* xv; Stanley 346). For their part, as Morton points out, the Métis witnesses had fled to the United States in fear for their lives. Because they were active participants in the rebellion, they would have been prosecuted had they testified (*QvLR* xv).[4]

The defence's strategy was, furthermore, less than successful. After a few days of lengthy and incriminating evidence introduced by the Crown, Riel's Liberal lawyers—identified monolithically throughout *The Scorched-Wood People* as "Lemieux, Fitzpatrick and Greenshields" (317ff.)—decided to plead their client's insanity on the basis, notably, of Riel's claim that he was the prophet of the Métis nation. Riel himself opposed that defence, but, against his wishes, his attorneys called Dr. Daniel Clark of the Toronto Lunatic Asylum to the stand. Unfortunately, Clark admitted during cross-examination

that, despite being prey to delusions that led him to think of himself as a prophet, Riel most likely had the mental capacity to distinguish right from wrong at the time of the rebellion (*QvLR* 257) . Since the test for legal insanity was a cognitive one devised in 1843 known as the M'Naghten Rule, which required that the accused prove that he was unable to tell right from wrong when the crime was committed, the jury had to find Riel guilty. According to historian George Stanley, the damning testimony of Charles Nolin—a cousin and rival of Riel's, and the Crown's star witness—also weakened the defence's case (351).

The Crown's narrative characterization of Riel as a traitor and a man of violence proved more consistent than that of the defence. Towards the end of the trial, for instance, Quebec defence attorney Charles Fitzpatrick cross-examined Crown witness Dr. Frederick Jukes in an attempt to prove that his client was of unsound mind. If Riel had laboured under a delusion, Fitzpatrick asked, would he be responsible for his own actions? Unexpectedly, Juke replied:

> Well, take Mahomet, for instance [. . .]. He believed and few believed with him, even his own people, that he was divinely inspired, but he acted upon this belief and he carried his whole belief with him. He believed it and he carried it out at the point of a sword and [. . .] he convinced the people of what, if he had failed, would have simply been regarded as a delusion of his own mind. (*QvLR* 273; cf. *SWP* 330)

Jukes's narrative about Mahomet's success constitutes a metadiegetic narrative within the larger, institutionally defined matter of Riel's delusions and responsibility. Much to Fitzpatrick's distress, Jukes's intervention bears a strong thematic connection to the Crown's own description of Riel. It creates an interpretive trope (Riel is like Mahomet) that furthers the larger, juridically constructed story of Riel's criminal responsibility in a damning way. If Mahomet managed to convince the world of his prophethood through violent action, Riel might have done the same. Later during his cross-examination Jukes suggests that Riel, an educated man, took advantage of other Métis' religious naïveté and passed himself off as a prophet to lead them into a self-glorifying battle (*QvLR* 273). Jukes's Mahometan analogy also marginalizes Riel. To any self-respecting Christian at the time, Mahomet, like Riel, was an outsider. Indeed, Riel, as a visionary, a lapsed Catholic, and a French-speaking Métis whose knowledge of English failed him in moments of great emotion, was a conspicuous oddity in the cramped Regina courtroom.

Having failed to show that Riel was insane during the rebellion, Charles Fitzpatrick attempted during his closing argument to redefine the Métis leader's actions. While the Crown portrayed Riel as neither patriotic nor insane (327), but a treasonous rebel who incited both Natives and Métis to take up arms against the government, Fitzpatrick admitted that acts of violence had been committed; however, he tempered this admission by attacking the government itself. In Fitzpatrick's words, "no one of any nationality, of any creed [. . .] can justify the rebellion." The government, however, is not entirely without fault. Riel, Fitzpatrick argued, had acted in self-defence in the name of the Métis, whom the government had neglected and left to die of starvation while it granted land to white settlers and busily developed the rest of the country's infrastructure. Institutional greed affects not only a minority but all Canadians, who must avoid complacency and remain vigilant; thus, Fitzpatrick continues, "we are made the guardians of each other's rights" (287). Riel's illegal action is not to be characterized as an attempt to destroy the nation but as a plea to be included in it. Yet despite Fitzpatrick's closing attempt to rouse the jurors' sympathy and republicanism, his characterization of the Métis comes too late in the trial and is, moreover, disturbingly patronizing. Fitzpatrick suddenly adopts a new narrative, that of the Métis as noble victims (297) always "on the side of civilization and [. . .] on the side of humanity" despite their grievances against an unfeeling government (289).[5] Riel is depicted as a descendant of those Natives "of whom the poet has said that their untutored minds see God in the clouds and hear His voice in the wind" (295). Actually, as Stanley explains, only a paternal grandmother of Riel's was herself a Métis (3), and Riel's mind was far from untutored since he had acquired a rigorous classical education at the *petit séminaire* of the *Collège de Montréal* (24-30). Furthermore, prior to the prosecution's final argument, when Riel is finally afforded a chance to speak for himself, François-Xavier Lemieux, another of Riel's Quebec attorneys, warns the jury that the defence cannot be held accountable for Riel's statements (*QvLR* 311), thus underlining the defence team's lack of belief in and identification with the accused.

Ineffective litigation strategies aside, the trial was a confining format to a man such as Riel. Dennis Duffy remarks that "[p]olitical criminals appealing to God and History can entertain us in courtroom drama." But, he asks, "how can one accommodate unearthly visions within the range of our discourse on the nature of a criminal act?" (210). One of the problems raised by Riel's spiritual vision is that of the time-frame used to locate his actions.

In any trial, attorneys' questions to witnesses normally elicit responses that situate the defendant or the accused within a clear chronological framework. In their attempts to refute the insanity defence and to prove that Louis Riel intended to destabilize the government, Crown attorneys in the Riel trial launched into a laborious chronological recounting of events. More often than not, at trial, the acts of commission or omission leading to an actionable event are examined in the order in which they occurred, both to determine causality and to avoid confusing the jury.[6] How Riel behaved in January, February, and then in March suggests to the jury whether he is criminally responsible or insane. The chronology of the trial itself is equally governed by strict rules. When in mid-trial Riel asks Richardson if he may speak and cross-examine Charles Nolin, whom he has known for most of his life, the magistrate replies: "In the proper time, I will tell you when you may speak to me [. . .]." When Riel insists, Richardson requests that he direct his concerns to his counsel, not to the jury. Even then, Charles Fitzpatrick, one of Riel's attorneys, snaps: "I don't think this is the proper time, Your Honor [. . .]" (*QvLR* 205). What is at stake here is more than the defence attorney's unhelpfulness. Every criminal trial unfolds in accordance with a conventional formula that includes, in the following order, a plea, opening statements, direct and cross-examinations, closing statements, a verdict, and a sentence; there is no question here of succumbing to anachrony.

As Gérard Genette has noted, chronology is atypical of our Western narrative tradition. (36). Ian Watt, in his *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, explains why this is so: "though the mere forward progression of the story may hold the reader's immediate attention through suspense, it cannot satisfy the reflective mind when it comes to ask why an event occurred or what is the moral significance of a character" (286; qtd. in Sternberg 915). What we might call "legal narrative chronology," of course, is established not to create suspense, but to record precisely each and every circumstance that might help a judge or jury arrive at a final verdict. Time, here, is used as a thread upon which the beads, or elements, of a contentious or actionable event are strung causally. Watt suggests that "literary anachrony" takes the reader *out* of the progressive march of time and, paradoxically, gives him or her *time* to reflect. Albeit differently, then, both legal chronology and literary anachrony employ time as a vehicle for cognition. Emile Benveniste, however, anchors the person in the eternal present tense of the act of speaking, which he distinguishes from an "objective chronology" that shuts out subjectivity (227). Quite possibly, then, by denying him the chance to speak

either for himself or in his capacity as leader and prophet of the Métis at inopportune moments during his own trial, the Regina court objectified Riel, and created an accused that merely fit the purposes of the trial format itself.

When Riel finally rises and addresses the jury prior to sentencing, his speech is ineffective. He apologizes for not speaking English well due to the excitement caused by the trial; intersperses his address with French words; prays aloud to God and Christ; begins to describe the state of deprivation in which he found the Métis of Saskatchewan; returns to the trial's many testimonies; remembers that his personal papers were never returned to him following his surrender; revisits the Red River rebellion of 1869; reiterates that he is the prophet of the new world; and continues in this ragged, tattered way until Justice Richardson asks him, "Are you done?" (*QvLR* 324; cf. *SWP* 325). But Louis Riel is vanquished. The legal process is not what he had hoped it would be. Not only is he deprived of the assistance of essential witnesses, but, confined by the strict, linear chronology of the trial, and awash in the narrative constructions of professionals, Riel, who invokes a timeless, ahistorical God throughout his trial, becomes incapable of finding the appropriate timeline and context for an authoritative narrative of his own. The next and last time he is allowed to speak is after the jury declares him guilty of high treason. When on this occasion Riel begins to address the room, Richardson cuts him off and reminds him that the jurors have been discharged (*QvLR* 350). With a portion of his narratees gone, what authority can Riel's pre-sentencing speech hold?

Still, in both trial and novel the Métis leader goes on: "Who starts the nations?" he asks defiantly. "The very one who created them, God" (*QvLR* 358; cf. *SWP* 324). But by the time he utters this momentous statement, his trial is over. Sentence will soon be passed: mercy denied; Riel must hang. *The Scorched-Wood People*, however, ends with the words of Gabriel Dumont, one of the witnesses on whom the defence was unable to count during the trial due to prosecutorial threats: "You think Riel is finished? He said a hundred years is just a spoke in the wheel of eternity. We'll remember. A hundred years and whites still won't know what to do with him. The smart whites will say [. . .] it's judicial murder; Riel was mad. But it wasn't, and he wasn't mad" (351). Dumont unambiguously challenges both the insanity defence and the trial's outcome, at the same time as he rewrites history. Although hanged, pronounced dead, and buried, Louis Riel is hardly "finished." In addition to suggesting that Riel might be a transcendent Christ-like figure, Dumont also alludes to those Métis who survived exile,

poverty, and the rebellion itself, and whose struggles will be passed on to future generations. According to legal scholar David Luban, traditionally "[t]o the victor goes the right to infuse a constitutional clause, or a statute, or a series of prior decisions with the meaning that it will henceforth bear by recounting its circumstances of origin and assigning its place in history" (2152). Richard Delgado, another legal writer, asserts that court battles hardly end with a verdict and a sentence. Alternative narratives that disclose what was left out of a trial can provide much-needed, revisionist footnotes to such marks of victory (2429). Here, Delgado's New Historicism displays affinities with Jean-François Lyotard's postmodernism; for Lyotard, justice depends not on a final, consensual acknowledgment of victory and defeat, but on an inevitable and continual reconstitution of events and consequences (65-66).[7] In *The Scorched-Wood People*, this "reconstitution" of legal history is achieved through the words of narrator Pierre Falcon, a Métis bard historically dead in the late 1870s, who addresses us from beyond the grave.

Falcon, whom Riel calls "grandfather," no doubt to signal the bard's status as an elder within the Métis community (*SWP* 35-36), makes up songs that help the Métis remember their origin, their struggles, and their victories. Addressed to narratees identified as "you" (348), and who might be of either Métis or non-Métis origin, *The Scorched-Wood People* is not one of Falcon's God-inspired songs,[8] but a more prosaic account of the rise and fall of the Métis nation envisioned by Riel. Although he prays to God throughout *The Scorched-Wood People*, Falcon regrets that for that brief and bright moment between 1870 and 1885, when the Métis accepted Riel's vision and launched a final rebellion against an unjust government, God has given him "nothing" (141). Because God seems to deny him this last song, Falcon tells us that he "must leave the words to stand in all their unmemorable bareness," in the hope that "their unearthly power [. . .] [may] be seen in the effect they had on Riel, on our people, and on Canada" (141). Falcon thus reports what he and a number of fellow Métis viewed as Louis Riel's Moses-like prophethood in his efforts to found a nation in the North-West based on God's word (140). At the same time, he prays that future generations derive from his account both strength and faith.

Falcon's contradictory status both as Riel's contemporary and as a post-historical, omniscient narrator who speaks from beyond the grave has been the object of much scholarly attention. W. J. Keith writes in his *Epic Fiction* that "Falcon's narration is [. . .] the crucial aesthetic issue in the novel" (96). In her Bakhtinian analysis of *The Scorched-Wood People*, Penny van Toorn

shows with remarkable clarity that Falcon's account may appear at first glance to be monologic, but "either obviously or in subtle ways, contains multiple 'other' voices embedded in it" (147). According to van Toorn, these include Wiebe's own voice, that of Falcon (who not only narrates, but appears as a character within his own narration), and, among others, of Riel, Christ, and John A. Macdonald. Falcon is able to carry these multiple voices, van Toorn argues, because of his dual narratorial status, which allows him to speak of historical events from the immediacy and contingency of "ground-level" while simultaneously authorizing spiritual truths "which Wiebe believes to be absolute and eternal" (162). In the end, van Toorn claims, the novel represents a parable against violence that is consistent with Wiebe's own Mennonite pacifist views (160).

Yet van Toorn sees in Falcon's words more than a mere showcase for Wiebe's personal views. *The Scorched-Wood People*, she writes, "reopens a court case closed officially many years ago." Thus she suggests that an injustice was perhaps carried out. She adds, however, that the novel asks us to "judge Riel's and the Government's actions and words in the light of Mennonite morality, not Canadian law" (140). This assertion is puzzling. Aside from the fact that Wiebe himself is of Mennonite background, there is no historical reason why Mennonite morality ought to have greater authority over either Riel or the Canadian government than Canadian law or the Métis' own cultural and spiritual traditions. Presumably, van Toorn's proposition is to be interpreted in two ways. Not only do Mennonites (including Wiebe) advocate non-violence (a position that neither Riel nor the Canadian Government was able to sustain), but, like the Métis themselves, they represent an insular community within Canada and thus pose a challenge to the state as a unitary source of authority. Thus, I argue, Falcon's narration accommodates both what van Toorn describes as Wiebe's intrusive authorial voice in relation to spirituality and non-violence (144), and Falcon's own communal devotion to the Métis as a distinct community within the Confederation. Because he is, after all, an identifiable, historical Métis bard, Falcon is not entirely assimilable to Wiebe, although he may at times speak like Wiebe.

I therefore look upon Falcon's dual status somewhat differently. The embedding technique used throughout *The Scorched-Wood People* that van Toorn describes might also apply to Falcon's status in the novel. Falcon's occasional homodiegetic narration[9] is embedded within the utterances of Falcon, the "transcendent" and extradiegetic narrator. Moreover, as a manifestation of Wiebe's intellect that extends, however, beyond Wiebe's personal

realm of experience, Falcon's "ghostly" and all-embracing voice acts as the implied author (to use Wayne Booth's term). From it we may learn *The Scorched-Wood People*'s "extractable meanings but also the moral and emotional content of each bit of action and suffering of all the characters" and achieve "the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole" described by Booth (73). Traditionally, the implied author and the narrator are distinct voices, but Falcon acts as both. Even as a mere narrator, Falcon is idiosyncratic. To grant Falcon a hybrid role as an implied author who also rolls up his sleeves and narrates does away both with the awkwardness of what has so far been described as Rudy Wiebe's intrusions and with the perplexing matter of Falcon's ghostliness. Throughout my study, then, the name "Falcon" alludes to this hybrid status.

Within this framework, I argue that *The Scorched-Wood People* might be labeled a counternarrative to the historical trial. In this counternarrative, Falcon guides readers through the events of the 1885 rebellion; investigates the historical defence lawyers' contention that high treason "can *never* be justified" (*SWP* 319); casts doubt upon the ultimate relevance of the issues brought up at trial; insists upon presenting evidence and witnesses denied by the original court; submits that Riel was both a prophet and a fallible human being; and champions the cause of an entire people, something that Riel was kept from doing at his own trial. The dialogic nature of Falcon's account only lends credence to his advocacy. Like any attorney, Falcon introduces and cross-examines a number of witnesses whose narratives may contradict one another. Yet the tenor of the counternarrative as a whole is unambiguous: it grants dissent a voice ninety-two years after being silenced and offers to present-day and future Métis a record of a political and spiritual vision that may give them a sense of their heritage and a reason to endure.

At times, the Métis bard acts as Riel's true attorney. Throughout the novel, Riel's lawyers (Lemieux, Fitzpatrick, and Greenshields) are too dismayed by their client and perhaps too concerned with their own future political careers to be successful. They rap Riel on the knuckles as if he were a child and scold him for having failed to respect Her Majesty's laws (319). Their loyalty to their client seems so tenuous that Falcon remarks that the Macdonald government obtained the guilty verdict it needed in the Riel trial "confidently assisted" by the three attorneys (322), thus suggesting not only that the impartiality of the historical tribunal was corrupted by the political agenda of the executive branch of government but that the Liberal defence lawyers were inept. Falcon, however, occasionally draws upon

sound and forceful legal arguments. He objects to the Crown's indictment of Riel on points of fact and law. Riel himself never fired at Canadian soldiers. Strangely, those Métis who did are charged not with high treason, but with the lesser count of treason-felony, which requires that the accused intended to levy war against the Queen without actually doing so. "I know of no historian," Falcon remarks, "who has commented on this [. . .] strange legal distinction that the men who shot and killed Canadian soldiers only *intended* to wage war while Riel, whom no witness had ever seen with anything more than a cross or a pen in his hand, [. . .] had actually waged war" (316-17; emphasis in original).

But whereas Falcon is quite capable of arguing the Queen's law, the greater part of *The Scorched-Wood People* is noteworthy for its lack of resemblance to traditional courtroom discourses. First, rather than circumscribing and ascertaining facts by way of corroborating testimonies, Falcon at times freely reconstructs documented episodes. Early historical events that took two months to unfold are, as W.J. Keith puts it, "contracted into a single day" (88). Dumont meets Riel much earlier than he actually did.[10] Riel's sister Sara calls him Louis "David" Riel after King David; according to historian Thomas Flanagan, Riel first gave himself the name "David" as a pseudonym to throw his pursuers off track (*SWP* 129; Flanagan, *Louis "David" Riel* 43). Keith argues that these and other factual liberties heighten dramatic tension and thus better capture "a crucial turning point in the history of the nation" (88). In a similar vein, Georg Lukács notes that what draws successive generations into the past is "not the re-telling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events" (42).[11] *A fortiori*, a prophecy needs to be a forceful narrative if it is to make a lasting impact and attract followers; the painstaking details and accuracy required in a courtroom would stand in the way of such a compelling narrative. Despite Métis defeats, Falcon attempts to "name" and establish the Métis community arisen from prophecy in order to give it a place in national consciousness. In doing so, he adopts a strategy in accord with Delgado's contention that, in order to install a counternarrative to the victor's version of events, the "outgroup" or vanquished minority must stay clear of the confining discourse of law, which, after all, rewarded the victor in the first place (2413-15).

Beyond what Keith identifies as a selective "concentration and telescoping" of events (89), the destiny of the Métis and a cyclical understanding of history thus merge to challenge the trial's emphasis on individual responsibility and on chronology. The account Falcon presents is anything but temporally

straightforward. He peppers his account with ironic returns to the past and premonitory visions. Lief Crozier, the first white man to tell Gabriel that Métis law is now invalid and has been replaced by the Queen's law, turns out to be the last man to whom Dumont speaks of Riel's timeless influence (350-51). Rather than surrender to Canadian forces in 1885, Dumont flees to Montana (313), where only a few months earlier he had convinced Riel to cross over into Saskatchewan to fight for Métis rights (182). Riel's institutionalization at the Beauport asylum in 1877 (153-67) comes back to haunt him during his trial (321). His hanging is announced twice: when Canadian soldiers hang him in effigy (120), and in a revelation seen by both Riel and Dumont once the former makes the decision to return North in 1884 (188).

Falcon, then, relies heavily upon the notion that time and history are circular. Like the Israelites to whom Riel compares his people, the Métis must never forget the crimes committed against them. "Oh God," Falcon prays at the very end of his narrative, "[g]ive [our people] that faith again" (351). Yet the aim of Falcon's anachronological and cyclical recounting is not merely to confront the reader with a subjective appreciation of a Métis sense of time. Falcon also opens the door to Riel's inspired understanding of constitutional politics.

Between 1869 and 1885, the poor and largely uneducated Prairie Métis lived in a world where grassroot demands and the religious vision of their leader commingled to oppose the Queen's law. Legal theorist Robert Cover makes a strong and eloquent case for the role of nonofficial players in the production of constitutional meaning. Judges, lawyers, and legislators may interpret or "make law," but others are involved as well. Not only do the minoritarian norms of insular communities like the Amish or the Mennonites co-exist with those of the majority, he writes, but the dissenting hermeneutics of, say, civil liberties groups may also lead to transformational politics that eventually push the often narrow limits of majoritarian rule. Resistance to the laws of the state becomes "paideic," "world-creating," or normative (12) when the dissenters are united in a committed vision of the future. Yet because courts of law are themselves committed to the state, and because this commitment demands that conflicting *nomoi* be quashed, resisters must entrench their norms, communal identity, and commitment in a founding narrative (27). They at times need also to speak their commitment "in the medium of blood" or of "time in jail" (47). Within this framework, Falcon uses narrative to entrench Riel's revolutionary and visionary hopes, themselves rooted in Biblical narratives.

Throughout *The Scorched-Wood People*, Riel wavers between the combative prophethood of the Old Testament and the peaceable tolerance of Christ. By the time he is arrested and tried, Riel's political understanding has grown broader and more egalitarian. No longer concerned only with Métis rights, he envisions a North-West apportioned equally among wandering Jews and "the landless believers" of Europe and French Canada (352). But generally, for Riel it is God who directly inspires man to found nations; God trumps constitutional, judicial, and even ecclesiastical law. As Riel notes, the Catholic priests who live among the Métis have no qualms about fusing worldly and spiritual interests. One such priest, Father Fourmond, tells the restless Métis that "to rebel against [. . .] civil authorities is as great a crime against God as to rebel against the Holy Mother Church, or the Holy Father!" (221). Riel fights fire with fire. His God is not the God of the French priests who tend to the Métis' spiritual needs. Just as he opposes the Queen's laws, he rejects "the mathematical legalism of a calculable God" who metes out pardon and punishment according to a person's capacity for meek endurance under economic hardship (52). Riel remembers what happened in Manitoba, which he helped turn into a province after he led the Red River rebellion of 1869-70. Soon after, Canadian settlers and speculators moved in and drove the Métis further West, where they were forced to start over as the buffalo became scarce, and where reserve Natives tried, and failed, to farm under adverse climatic conditions. Canada is likened to Babylon (187) and Riel parodies the priests' immutable instructions: "If the [Hudson's Bay] Company pays you ten cents for a ratskin and sells it for a dollar, don't complain. Your reward is in heaven" (201). Far from being the origin of a nation of people united by a common vision, the new Dominion is depicted in *The Scorched-Wood People* as a mere economic venture established to the detriment and disadvantage of its weakest elements.

Since both politicians and priests contribute to the impoverishment of the Métis, Riel brings to his people a religious vision that is both spiritually and politically empowering. As prophet he has but one goal: "we will build community here, community," he tells Gabriel Dumont. The right to land is "a simple human right," and so is the self-sufficiency that results from it (201). Since God, after all, preceded the Queen, His word supersedes the Queen's laws; defying such laws in order to obey God's will is therefore a risk worth taking. Walter Benjamin has noted that the tension inherent in social protest and revolution may lead to what he calls a "Messianic cessation of happening," in that such tensions momentarily arrest the progress of

time and allow for a "revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past" (254). Riel's God-inspired rebellion also affords the Métis a chance to divert the march of history and to name both the land they inhabit and its customs. For a brief moment, Riel is triumphant. First, the Métis rename the days of the week (*SWP* 281) in imitation of French revolutionaries. Soon after, they proudly decide to wage a defensive Holy War against the advancing Canadian forces. With Riel as their leader and prophet, they momentarily regain authority over themselves, although they appear to have none in the eyes of the Canadian government. Falcon warmly recalls the Métis heading for their second armed confrontation of 1885, at Fish Creek. It was "the greatest army we ever had," he exclaims, "to see our people ride like that: excitement, pride, brotherhood, and ceremony all together are not easily found on earth, especially not by the poor [. . .]" (261).

Yet as van Toorn remarks, this account of Riel is hardly monologic. She notes cleverly that Falcon's utterance itself is "métis" because it represents a site of social struggle (141), notably between violence and pacifism, vision and secular interests. Not only does Falcon refer to and oppose the narrative of Riel's historical trial, but within the retrial that is *The Scorched-Wood People*, he invites "witnesses" to speak up against Riel. Through their own resistance to Riel, these characters reflect historical characterizations of the Métis leader as either occasionally violent and despotic or as an embodiment of Christian values. Charles Nolin, Riel's cousin, dreams of living like an affluent white man; Métis struggles for recognition are therefore suspect to him, and he soon becomes Riel's victim as the latter accuses him of being a traitor and calls for his trial and execution (227). Gabriel Dumont, in turn, doubts the effectiveness of non-violence and prayer. Although momentarily won over by Riel's faith, he finally launches into a desperate shooting rampage when the rebels are defeated in 1885 (307). These "testimonies" also signal to us that Riel remains on trial (although here, through Falcon's account, Riel's actions are reviewed not as crimes against the Queen, but for their effect on the Métis). In addition to such dissenting voices, Falcon allows Riel to "testify" in his own defence. As the rebellion of 1885 begins, Riel warns Gabriel that the Métis' demands for justice need to be obtained without bloodshed; the mere threat of violence, followed by negotiation, must suffice. Still the inevitable occurs; when Canadian troops fire first at Duck Lake, Riel, holding up a large, visible crucifix, orders his men to return their fire in the name of God (237). [12]

When Justice Richardson delivers his sentence during the historical trial, he is merciless. "You have been found [. . .] guilty of a crime the most

pernicious and greatest that man can commit," he tells Riel. "You have been guilty of high treason. You have been proved to have let the flood-gates of rapine and bloodshed, you have [. . .] brought ruin and misery to many families whom if you had simply left alone were in comfort, and many of them were on the road to affluence" (*QvLR* 371). The Court caters to majoritarian standards and fulfills what Cover calls its "jurispathic" or "killing" function (40) when it suppresses Riel's vision in favour of values (comfort, affluence) already dear to the white inhabitants of an expanding nation. More particularly, the historical Richardson refers here to some of the local white merchants and farmers whom Riel and his Métis followers had made prisoner, and whose stores and cattle the insurgents had used as their own during the rebellion. The magistrate's concern, in other words, lies above all with the material welfare of the white community, members of which were victims of the rebels (although no prisoners were actually killed in 1885 [Stanley 329-38]).

In contrast to this judicial narrative, Falcon depicts Riel as an inspired prophet and a well-intentioned but troubled and fallible man who may have occasionally lapsed into autocracy and violence. He also shows the Métis to be victims of an insensitive government that has failed to look after the disenfranchised, has violated its own rules of representation by excluding an elected Riel from Parliament, and has taken on the role of aggressor. Not only did Canadian troops fire first in 1885, but Riel was more than once elected to Parliament as a representative of Provencher, and finally expelled from it. Although John A. Macdonald had agreed to make a province out of Manitoba according to Riel's demand during the earlier 1869-70 uprising, the Canadian Prime Minister refused to grant Riel an amnesty for his insurgent activities (*SWP* 136-37) and, according to Stanley, members of the House of Commons would not sit with Riel in Parliament (203). Later, in Saskatchewan, Riel's petition to the Canadian government for equality, land grants, and democratic rights is ignored (*SWP* 205). Falcon thus presents readers with a string of legitimate grievances rendered inadmissible at trial due in part to the absence of crucial Métis and government witnesses. When lawful means fail, rebellion in the name of divine justice becomes a conceivable reaction to cumulative instances of institutional discrimination and negligence.

I have argued so far that *The Scorched-Wood People* may be looked upon as an effort by Falcon in his roles as implied author, narrator, and iconoclastic "attorney" to counter the official narrative of Riel's trial, during which Métis rights, interests, and concerns went unheard for reasons of ideology

and of legal procedure. One of the ways to understand *The Scorched-Wood People*, then, is as a narrative effort to grant authority to a people by pitting their spiritual vision against secular law *and* to offer a plea for a Confederation which not only unites the provinces, Ottawa, and the Empire but also attempts to accommodate those whose beliefs may appear different and insular, but whose insularity is partly a product of life-long institutional exclusion. I disagree with Marie Vautier's claim that because the Métis are defeated and the Queen's law wins, this project is futile (59). When Falcon closes his narration with the words of Gabriel Dumont to the effect that a hundred years is but a spoke in the wheel of eternity and that Riel is hardly defeated (*SWP* 351), he raises the possibility that Riel's prophecy of a recognized Métis nation may yet be accomplished.[13] The British North America Act, 1867 does not contain a narrative that gives Canadians a sense of their nation's past, purpose, and destiny. In *The Scorched-Wood People*, Falcon defends the Métis' commitment to a sense of belonging of their own. If every prescription necessitates narrative to give it life and meaning, Cover explains, "every narrative is insistent in its demand for its prescriptive point, its moral" (5). Falcon's moral is that without justice, the law loses its claim to normativity. This point is emphatic; it is also free from the relativity with which postmodern readings infuse *The Scorched-Wood People*. Yet while this counternarrative is compelling in its defence of the vanquished minority, the reader is encouraged as well to consider a number of critical questions concerning Riel's actions: Can treason and armed violence ever be justified? Is treason the only possible characterization of Riel's actions? Should immunity from prosecution be granted to the active participants of an armed rebellion? Was Riel in fact insane when he declared that he was the Métis' prophet? These inquiries arise from a consideration of *both* sides of this dispute, for the reader is equally bound by the existence of the original trial to consider and deliberate upon all arguments in this case. Each side of this debate refers to the other, casts light upon its weaknesses, yet also demands that its merits be considered seriously. From the clash of such conservative and oppositional positions, or from what Robert Cover calls the "jurisgenerative process" (40), or the balancing of such forces, norms tailored to a community (even to a community of readers) can ultimately arise.[14] Thus new norms and interpretations emerge that allow a community to define itself and perhaps even to endure.

In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Walter Benjamin reminded us that "every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one

of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably" (247). The adversarial model within *The Scorched-Wood People* attempts to make its "image of the past" a concern for contemporary readers. It follows Ernest Renan's prescription for a nation: it tells us at once where we have been, and what we may hope to become. The official trial narrative asks who is guilty of crimes against both Queen and nation, and who must consequently be excluded from citizenship. Falcon's legally unorthodox counternarrative asks whether our survival and greatness as a nation depend upon trying to, in Richard Rorty's words, "extend our sense of 'we' to people whom we have previously thought of as 'they'" (192).

NOTES

1 Among them are Benedict Anderson, for whom nations are not born but constructed through the imagination of their inhabitants, and American legal scholar Robert Ferguson, whose study of post-revolutionary "lawyer-writers" maps out the aesthetic shaping of American national identity.

2 Historian Desmond Morton (in his introduction to *The Queen* v. *Louis Riel*) suggests that Regina was preferred over Winnipeg because the latter would have allowed Riel to be tried by a mixed (English and French) jury of twelve men, whereas Regina allowed only for a stipendiary magistrate and a jury of six (*QvLR* viii). Thomas Flanagan argues that the facts and archives fail to bear out Morton's theory. Not only was the government uncertain of the laws that applied, but the issue was never raised at trial by Riel's attorneys. More simply, Regina may have been viewed as a neutral forum since neighbouring jurisdictions such as Battleford and Prince Albert had been under siege for months as a result of Riel's insurrection. Jurors from these towns might have proved less than fair to the accused (*Riel and the Rebellion* 138-39).

3 This change of forum is provided by section 77 of the North-West Territories Act, 1880, according to which anyone convicted of an offence punishable by death could appeal to the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench to confirm or overturn the sentence (*The Queen v. Riel, Manitoba Law Reports*, 322-23).

4 The Court was unwilling to grant such witnesses immunity. As Crown attorney Christopher Robinson put it during the trial:

> [. . .] we have no power whatever to give to any of those persons who have fled from justice anything approaching protection or safe conduct, if they choose to enter this province. If they enter it in innocence, they can prove their innocence. If they enter it guilty, they must take the chances of all others who are guilty. (*QvLR* 54)

Naturally, what Robinson suggests is that only prosecution and a full-fledged trial could adequately determine these men's guilt or innocence.

5 To present alternative arguments (or alternative narrative interventions) to a judge or jury when a first argument or narrative lacks strength and persuasiveness is a common litigation practice that is rarely viewed as a breach in the careful, chronological and logical development of a trial. In other words, a plurality of arguments does not necessarily

negate logic or chronology. In a criminal case, especially, the defence may both refute the Crown's accusations and counterattack with distinct allegations of its own. In this, litigators differ from judges and scholars, whose decisions and theses require greater singularity of focus, although their plural discourses resemble the alternative narrators and narratives that the genre of the novel accommodates.

6 I do not wish to imply that a trial cannot begin *in medias res*; it usually does. Criminal trials open with the charge warranted by a specific crime. From there, a prosecutor guides both judge and jury back to the events that led to the crime in order to lay out the facts of the case and to determine, among other things, motive, opportunity, or intention. To avoid confusing the jury, however, these retrospections are then presented chronologically up to the point of the trial's cause.

7 One need not, however, be a New Historicist or even a postmodernist to endorse the capacity of justice to revise its own judgments; judicial review is built into the juridical system, although the revision must be warranted on points of fact or law.

8 The epigraph to *The Scorched-Wood People* asks, "[. . .] who has made this song?" and answers, "[w]ho else but good Pierre Falcon. / He made the song and it was sung /To mark the victory we had won [. . .]." *The Scorched-Wood People* essentially represents the narrative of a valiant struggle that ended in a historical defeat. The epigraph clearly refers to the victorious Red River rebellion of 1869-70, and not to the final rebellion of 1885, which Falcon describes in greater detail. The epigraph thus merely introduces Falcon as narrator; it does not imply that *The Scorched-Wood People* is one of Falcon's songs.

9 In Part One, Chapter One of *The Scorched-Wood People*, Falcon appears within his own narration as Riel's elder and sings a narrative song of his own composition titled "The Sad Ballad of King Muck" (38-39).

10 George Stanley traces Louis Riel's first meeting with Gabriel Dumont to 1884, when the latter visited Riel in Montana to ask him how the Saskatchewan Métis might fight for their rights (250). In *The Scorched-Wood People*, however, Riel and Dumont are already comrades in 1869, during the Red River rebellion (33).

11 Of course, what Falcon stresses, and what Delgado and Lukács point to, is the inescapable ideological function of narrative, be it legal, historical, or fictional (Hutcheon 74; White 36-37). In the courtroom, however, narratives and ideologies clash until a verdict is rendered. That trial narratives are biased is not shocking; it is expected.

12 Both sides of the North-West conflict sustained casualties. As implied author and wise "attorney," Falcon makes concessions to the Canadian troops' humanity, notably when Colonel Williams explains the Métis' Roman Catholicism to his curious men and concludes ("gruffly," Falcon adds) that "[t]hey're Christians, you know [. . .]" (279).

13 Debates concerning Riel and the Métis persist to this day. Despite support from a majority of Canadians, and though at least two private members' bills were introduced in Parliament to exonerate Riel and declare him a Father of Confederation for his role in the founding of Manitoba, the Métis themselves claim that a pardon would merely underscore Riel's status as a criminal (Daly 3).

14 It is perhaps worth noting here that *The Scorched-Wood People* was published only five years prior to the entrenchment of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the aim of which is, precisely, to ensure that the rights of individuals or collectivities are balanced (by way of a number of judicial tests) against the potentially crushing interests of the state.

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rob mclennan

on the death of paterson ewen

this is a light, a
cloth

& goes by temporarily

a mark made deep, a gouge
in wood panel

"portraying sweeping vistas"

of distinction, & goes by
so

remarkably rare

unscathed, undecorated
for but a year

halleys star, bare stretches
widening blue

for good or bad,
a moment

increasing in demand
& density

Anna Snaith

Sara Jeannette Duncan
A Canadian Girl in London[1]

Criticism on Sara Jeannette Duncan has focused overwhelmingly on her 1904 novel, *The Imperialist.* This has been read as both her most Canadian and her most politicized novel. *Cousin Cinderella* (1908) is another of Duncan's novels in which the politics of Canadian national identity are paramount, as well as the text in which she explores the relationship between women and imperialism most explicitly. Through the first-person voice of her female protagonist, Mary Trent, Duncan investigates Canada's position, post-Confederation, of semi-nationhood (with Britain still controlling security and foreign affairs) and articulates a feminist critique of imperial policy. By placing her Canadians outside Canada, Duncan depicts a complex nexus of imperialism, nationalism and feminism. I want to argue, in particular, that she sets the novel, and Mary's arrival in London, in the context of the topical preferential trade debate, in order to illuminate the question of Anglo-colonial marriage. Mary is a raw product, launched on and commodified by the London market. Duncan's is a rare and subtle look, for the period, at how the economic and political workings of imperialism affect women and the private sphere of personal relations.

Cousin Cinderella needs to be read in conjunction with *The Imperialist.* In a letter to John Willison, editor of the Toronto *Globe*, Duncan makes the link clear: "I now think of a novel bringing Lorne Murchison over here and giving the critical colonial view of London society, marrying him eventually" (Duncan, *Imperialist* 309-10). Writing the novel three years later in 1907, Duncan turned Lorne into Graham Trent, but the project underwent

more dramatic changes. The critical, colonial viewpoint belongs primarily to a woman, Graham's sister, Mary, thus making the novel Duncan's only extended portrait of a colonial woman in London.

The plot, briefly stated, concerns Canadians Mary and Graham Trent, sent to London by their wealthy father to represent their homeland. After bumping into their American friend, Evelyn Dicey, they find themselves moving in London's upper-class, imperial circles, meeting, in particular, Lord and Lady Lippington, the Duke and Duchess of Dulwich and the impoverished Lady Doleford and her two children Barbara and Peter. It soon becomes clear that the Trents are desirable to the British for their fortune and ability to rescue the Dolefords and their ancestral home, Pavis Court. Lady Doleford has her sights on wealthy Evelyn as a match for her son Peter, but when Peter will not oblige, Graham feels duty-bound to assist and proposes to Barbara. Immediately he starts pouring money into the restoration of Pavis Court. Barbara later realizes that Graham has fallen in love with the house rather than her, and calls off the engagement. Mary, whom Mrs Jarvis has selected as a potential match for her rather ineffectual son, Billy Milliken, becomes engaged instead to Peter, thus rescuing the Dolefords. Evelyn marries eccentric Lord Scansby, Lady Doleford's brother, and the conclusion sees the Trents returning to Canada. It remains unclear whether Mary and Peter will settle in Canada or England.

The setting in London, heart of empire, opens up a crucial aspect of Duncan's writing life: her literary representations of London, and the time she spent year after year living and writing on her own in the capital. Her connections with her London publishers, reviewers, readers and agent, A. P. Watt, were obviously essential to her. In *Cousin Cinderella* (the American edition of which was subtitled, *A Canadian Girl in London*), she depicts the "voyage in," a journey she herself made repeatedly from Canada and India. In *Set in Authority*, the novel she published after *The Imperialist* and before *Cousin Cinderella*, Duncan looks at the question of justice in the fraught context of colonial India, but importantly she moves the setting back and forth between the drawing rooms of Westminster and Bloomsbury, and Anglo-Indian society. This approach, as in *Cousin Cinderella*, highlights the relationship between colony and imperial metropolis, and the shifting perspectives on that relationship. In both novels, London must concern itself with happenings on the periphery: "the centre of the Empire became vaguely aware that far out upon those circling boundaries which she manages with such magnificent unconcern something was happening"

(Duncan, *Set* 206). In *Cousin Cinderella*, Mary and Graham require London aristocracy to take note of Canada, Mary's "voyage in" providing the context for Duncan's deliberation on the colonial woman's relationship to politics and society in the imperial centre. The spatial politics of Mary's London—in particular the Trents' choice of a flat over a house—is an integral part of *Cousin Cinderella's* critical, colonial point of view.

The most important link between *Cousin Cinderella* and *The Imperialist*, however, is the imperial policy debate which informs both novels: tariff reform. The preferential trade debate is central, both literally and metaphorically, to the narrative of *Cousin Cinderella*. Critics such as Thomas Tausky and Alfred Bailey have placed *The Imperialist* firmly in the context of this debate, but the latter also has links with *Cousin Cinderella*. Duncan examines the economics of imperialism and imperial federation, and places women at the heart of that debate.

Imperial Federation and Tariff Reform

The Imperialist was not well reviewed in London: readers found the topic of imperial trade "wearisome" and wanted a novel rather than a "fiscal pamphlet" (*The Spectator* 647). But Duncan felt that her British readers should concern themselves with Canada's role within the empire. A re-packaging, from small-town Ontario to aristocratic London society, would perhaps captivate a British audience. Duncan returned to the format of *An American Girl in London* (1891), the "foreigner"-in-London novel of social observation, and complicated the feminist politics of that early text by including the weighty, topical question of imperial trade.

The future and financial viability of the settler colonies was the subject of much debate at the turn of the century, separatists of the Manchester school arguing that gains in trade did not justify the bill for colonial administration and military protection. The campaign for imperial federation grew up in response to Little Englanders, and came to denote any strengthening of the bonds of empire, although concrete proposals included tariff benefits, an imperial penny post, navy, army and court of appeal. Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary (1895 -1903) and the model for Wallingham in *The Imperialist*, became the chief advocate of preferential tariff, or *Zollverein*, as a means to imperial federation. In a speech entitled "The True Conception of Empire" given in 1897, Chamberlain declared his belief in "the practical possibility of a federation of the British race" (5). Federation was a means of cementing the "sentiment of kinship" so central to the self-governing

colonies (Chamberlain 4). However, answering the concerns of an essentially free-trading Britain and the increasingly autonomous settler colonies was far from easy. *The Imperialist* charts the reaction to imperial federation in Canada, the self-governing colony which led the way on this issue. There was, of course, opposition, particularly from the business community who had benefitted under John A. Macdonald's National Policy and did not welcome the competition of British goods. The Canadian Prime Minister, Wilfred Laurier, had nationalist interests in mind and was hostile "to any tightening of the bonds of empire, whether through military arrangements or unifying political institutions in London" (Marsh 623), but in 1897 and again in 1900, Laurier entered into a one-way, preferential tariff relationship with Britain.[2] In 1902 at the Colonial Conference, Laurier pursued his key goal, promising further reductions if Britain offered tariff protection on Canadian wheat (Amery 149). Chamberlain used Canadian desire for reciprocity to argue his case in Britain: the British were getting something for nothing, and the future of the empire depended on their being able to reciprocate. If this did not happen, Canada could withdraw its tariff reductions to Britain. Canada provided a booming market for British exports, he argued, which would be in jeopardy without preferential tariff.[3] The settler colonies had always been a source of raw materials for Britain, and emigration to the colonies provided an outlet for an overcrowded motherland, but around the turn of the century, as Chamberlain was quick to point out, it was clear that they could provide additional markets.

In Canada, such arguments also led to concern about British self-interest and a feeling that the ideals of imperialism were being reduced to economics. This was Duncan's anxiety. *The Imperialist*, she wrote, charts imperial relations between Canada and Britain, ideals "broken of course, on the wheel of economic fact" (Duncan, *Imperialist* 307). A theoretical supporter of empire, she feared the growth of materialism and capitalism and hoped that allegiance to British monarchy, as opposed to American democracy, would be a way of maintaining ideals of honour, tradition and loyalty. As Misao Dean has explained, Canada's position as a Dominion with a parliamentary democracy embodied the combination Duncan desired (79). In *Cousin Cinderella*, the author further questions Britain's commitment to those ideals. In her article "Imperial Sentiment in Canada" (1896) she charts Canada's reaction to imperial federation. Although she exaggerates Laurier's endorsement of Chamberlain's proposals for imperial federation based on preferential tariff, she nevertheless makes clear her support for the scheme

and the "greatness it prefigures" (Duncan, *Journalism* 62). It is imperial *sentiment* which will forge the links, however, rather than economic benefits. Canadian imperialism was a version of nationalism: federation implied that Canada was an asset to Britain as an equal partner (see Berger 9). Canada could revitalize the decaying heart of empire. This is clearly part of the colonial agenda in *Cousin Cinderella*: Graham is convinced that the people of Britain are "degenerating" (64).[4] London, in particular, was seen as a microcosm for the diseased and decaying national body. Overcrowding and poverty turned the metropolis, in the popular imagination, into a dark abyss akin to the furthest reaches of the empire, characterised by racial and moral atrophy. Graham and Mary, as inheritors of the pioneering qualities health, energy and self-reliance, are required in the heart of empire. Without regeneration, the thinking went, the power balance within the empire would shift, leading perhaps to the fall of the British empire itself. In *Cousin Cinderella*, Graham Trent predicts Canada's ascendancy: the country is a "one-horse show that is going some day to pull the Empire" (186).

The Trents arrive in London in August 1906, after the overwhelming Liberal victory in the General Election of January 1906 effectively put an end to protectionist policy, although the Tariff Reform League continued to campaign, and the novel ends with their departure in mid 1907. Although she wrote the novel in India, Duncan had been in London for an unusually prolonged period from early 1906 to July 1907, and therefore was attuned to political debate in London during the period covered by the novel and by the election. In particular, she was friendly with James Louis Garvin, editor of the *Outlook*, in which Duncan was published, and the *Observer*. Her friendship was partly motivated by desire to persuade Garvin to secure a position for her husband, Everard, so they could leave India, but it was surely no coincidence that Garvin was a fierce supporter of Chamberlain and later became his biographer: "tariff reform had been J.L.G.'s main platform since the foundation of Chamberlain's reform league in 1903" (K. Garvin 56).[5] Furthermore, as Garvin said later to Lord Northcliffe, "'it was the question of Canada more than anything else [. . .] that made me throw in my whole lot with Chamberlain'" (quoted in Ayerst 51). No doubt Garvin was interested in *The Imperialist*, and in Duncan herself because of this issue, and in turn, it was most likely because of his influence that she continued to think about the debate preparatory to writing *Cousin Cinderella*. Duncan had done her research on Canadian reactions to imperial federation, writing from India in 1902 to John Willison, editor of the Toronto *Globe*, for pamphlets

"dealing with *Imperial federation,*" "all *Sir W. Laurier's* speeches on the subject" or anything "occupied with the practical intricacies of the question" (Duncan, *Imperialist* 306). She had undoubtedly continued to follow reactions to tariff reform and imperial federation on both sides of the Atlantic. In *Cousin Cinderella* she is dealing essentially with the aftermath of the tariff reform question, although the Tariff Reform League, set up by Chamberlain after his resignation, continued to campaign into the 1920s. The status of the self-governing colonies within the empire remained a contentious issue.

The subject may be topical, but Duncan's implications about women's involvement in imperial economics are, I think, both unusual and innovative. Rather than situating women's dealings with imperialism solely within the home, much in advance of contemporary postcolonial theorists, she depicts fictionally both women's involvement in imperial politics and the imperial consequences of domestic arrangements. This kind of reading of the novel starts with Kipling's poem "Our Lady of the Snows (Canadian Preferential Tariff 1897)," which is mentioned in the text. The poem was published in *The Times* on April 27, 1897 and was clearly an exercise in propaganda leading up to the Imperial Conferences held during that Jubilee year: other colonies should follow Canada's lead. Kipling's poem revolves around the intersection of the woman's body, the marketplace and the home, all of which are exactly Duncan's concerns in *Cousin Cinderella.* Kipling uses the familiar, female-gendered familial relations to indicate colonial ties: "Daughter am I in my mother's house, / But mistress in my own" (Kipling 132). The empire is one big family, presided over, and cared for by women. Kinship, rather than force, will lead to economic arrangements between the "white" colonies, as suggested by the reference to snow (Parry 86). The links created and nurtured by women become imperial policies tendered and negotiated by men. Canada is woman, the vast dominion represented by the woman's body. But "*our* Lady" (still the possession of Britain) must "talk of common things— / Words of the wharf and the market place" (132). Canada has entered into economic dialogue with Britain; Kipling metaphorically allows women into the traditionally masculine domain of imperial trade.

Duncan uses the poem to mount a critique of London society: Lady Lippington—hoping for a Governorship in Canada for her husband—chides Kipling for representing Canada as snowy: "these poets never know what mischief they may do" (86).[6] She completely overlooks the subject of the poem, tariff reform, instead treating it as advertising: it may deter future

colonial administrators or potential immigrants through its negative portrait of the climate. She is not interested in imperial politics, or even Canada itself, but only the gains in status to be had from the governorship. Lady Lippington is one of the many women in the novel whose purported interest in empire is exposed as ignorance. Women are seemingly complicit in their exclusion from imperial politics.

Tariff reform is frequently mentioned in *Cousin Cinderella.* Mrs Jerome Jarvis is a "fearful Let-Things-Aloner" who is annoyed when "the other side," the "Imperialists," get hold of her son Billy to stand for parliament (159). Mrs Jarvis sees marriage as a way of "drawing the ties of Empire closer" without "tinkering [. . .] with the tariff" (159). Mary, talking to Graham, says that they are not supposed to mention tariff reform as the British are "tired of it," but that reform is immaterial, confident as she is in Canadian loyalty to Britain (101). Near the close of the novel, Peter also says he cannot see his "way to tariff-reform," preferring "ties of sentiment" over economic policy (313). The novel and its protagonist appear to be advocating ties of romance and kinship over economic bonds. Indeed critics such as Misao Dean have posited this advocacy as key to Duncan's imperialism in general: "women traditionally have a special duty in the family to promote affection and understanding among the members, and this duty becomes a public one as women fulfil a special role in the Empire, creating the affectionate ties that are the most important part of diplomatic alliances" (Dean, *Different* 13). She argues that, in *Cousin Cinderella,* Mary "gains power through her ability to bestow the dowry that represents her nation: wealth, a field for action, and the possibility of a new social harmony" (14). This may be Duncan's ideal position, but Anglo-colonial marriage is portrayed, I want to argue, not in opposition to, but as merely another kind of trade relation. Colonial women are raw products for export to Britain.

Mr Trent sends his two children to London as samples, as proof of his success as a colonial emigrant, a success both economic and political. The text opens with Mary's description of her father, a man who, because of his thriving lumber business, has "simply created" a town, Minnebiac, the original seat of his "interests" (1). In fact, he is one of the legislators of the country itself: "he had a finger in every sort of national pie" (6-7). "As seems suitable," he inaugurates the text, as he has authored his home-town and helped to create his nation. This God-like, male power is implicitly contrasted with the weak Mrs Trent, who is capable only of keeping herself alive (2). Pages later we learn that her poor health is "never bad enough to

be more than a solicitude and a subject for kind enquiry" (6), but the infantilization of Mrs Trent reinforces her husband's authority. Mary seems to have accepted this power division.

However, from the start, Duncan makes clear the gap between Mary's desires and her commentary: "we had the best influences, and even in Minnebiac were never allowed to play with interesting children or in the street, though how we longed to on big, light, empty spring evenings after tea, words can never tell" (2). The best influences are in fact the worst; Mary simultaneously accepts or reiterates the values instilled in her, and rejects them, desiring what is taboo. Her desire falls outside language, however, and representation fails even at this early stage in the narrative. As a result, the reader is given an early clue to the importance of subtext and irony to Mary's narrative.

Senator Trent sends his children not only as "samples" of his own prosperity, but as national representatives: to "show forth his country for him" (10). They are ambassadors for Canada, but also for capitalism. They stand for the way in which Canadian natural resources can be harnessed for trade and business. Graham has already been apprenticed to the business, just as he is nearly sacrificed for Canada and imperial loyalty in the Boer War. Mrs Trent's United Empire Loyalist ancestors suddenly become a burden rather than a privilege in the context of Canadian military involvement in the Boer War: "if she had come of a Revolutionary family Graham, in so far as she was concerned, would not have had to go" (3). Mary's irony and ambiguous use of pronouns are telling: "they gave him a commission" and "we got him back then" (3-4). His DSO does not make up for the typhoid fever and leg injury. Britain becomes the enemy here, the ties of family crystallizing over those of nation or empire. Graham is a carpenter, missionary of "simple purposes and fine ideas in wood" (6). He loved the "touch and the feeling and the idea of wood," seeing it as essential to the Canadian landscape and identity (6). Graham has the pioneering spirit: the enthusiasm, the affinity with nature, but instead he becomes "Son of John Trent and Son" and has to "reserve the poetry of it for his spare time" (6). Creativity is subsumed by commercialism and the Trent children become representatives of that take-over.

Mr Trent also describes his children as "nothing but a pair of colonial editions" (9), editions of popular books produced specifically (and less luxuriously) for the colonial market (see Dean, *Cinderella* 367). They are the raw products, both in what they represent (timber) and what they are (single and marriageable).[7] Like the difference in export terms of "dressed" and "undressed" wood, the Trents are sent to be refined and polished, made

acceptable to London society, like the newly arrived Rhodes scholar who is described, in the novel, as "very raw" and in need of advice on fashion and demeanour (107). The links between colonial administration and the aristocracy made etiquette an important area in which to distinguish colonials from the metropolitan society.

This air of superiority often barely disguised ignorance about the Dominions themselves, particularly the emergent nationalisms of these countries. The Trents are constantly irritated by the condescension and misinformation they encounter. Duncan highlights the hypocrisy of those imperialists who support a united empire yet know nothing about those countries with which they would unify. Lady Doleford, for example, refers to Upper and Lower Canada (150), both terms obsolete in the 1840s. Duncan contrasts British stereotyped ideas of Canada as wild outpost (123, 151) with Mary's complex, changing sense of London. The Trents' American friend, Evelyn, whom they meet by chance in London, also characterizes ignorance regarding Canada's political position. "We've got nothing on our side like him, have we?" (67) she says of Edward VII. "We've got *him*!" Mary retorts, which Evelyn turns into "he's got you" (67). The issue of "sides" (the dividing line of ocean as opposed to government) and of ownership run through the conversations in *Cousin Cinderella.*

Social climber Evelyn draws Mary and Graham into aristocratic society and reminds them of their position: "Do you realise that you represent between you a good quarter of the mining interests of Nova Scotia, and enough New Brunswick timber to buy a county town with?" (67) She implies that they should realize their purchasing power and live more extravagantly, but it soon becomes clear that they are attractive "products" themselves. They not only represent the market back home, but have been launched as valuable commodities on the London marriage market. Evelyn openly talks of the Trents in terms of the stock market. The only reason the English haven't considered the colonial market thus far, she says, is that it's so small: "Maple princes and princesses [. . . .] have only lately been quoted in the share lists. But prices are firm, Marykin—and rising. And Mrs Jerry [. . .] declares that it's a Heaven-sent way of drawing the ties of Empire closer without tinkering [. . .] with the tariff" (159). The society magazines pick up on Evelyn's nickname for Graham, the Maple Prince, thus connecting them to the basic commodity which renders them so desirable (113).

The climax of the text, and a crucial passage for my argument, occurs when Mary fully realises the extent of her power. This scene highlights how

the siblings' gender difference determines their reactions to their desirability. After a night out with Mrs Jarvis, and an introduction to her son Billy, Mary, riding home in the brougham, feels "the definite thrill of a new perception, something captivating and delicious" (111).

> Suddenly, without Graham, without anybody, moving through the lovely, thronged, wet, lamplit London streets in Mrs Jarvis's electric brougham, I felt myself realised—realised in London, not only by the person who happened to be near me, but in a vague, delightful, potential sense by London. Realised, not a bit for what I was—that wouldn't, I am afraid, have carried me very far—nor exactly for what I represented, but for something else, for what I might, under favourable circumstances, be made to represent. (111-12) [8]

Mary's realization that her dowry brings her influence and worth, importantly comes when she is separated from Graham, her interests momentarily given primacy over his. She is interested not so much in the marriage itself, as in the "solicitation [. . .] of London" (112). Her epiphany can only come in the "lovely, thronged, wet, lamplit London streets": the anonymity of the crowd is alleviated by the "value of having" (112). She views herself literally as a commodity: "a possibility, a raw product, to be melted or hammered or woven into London" (112). At this point, the rhetoric is one of sacrifice: "one would be obliged, in a way, to hand oneself over", but Mary is delighted that London should "take one into account at all" (112). The passage is immediately complicated, however, by her realization that her worth gives her "a point a view" which allows her to feel "disdain" for London. She is no longer in its thrall, but rather "behind the scenes" with her (112). The potential of the situation gives her a voice in London, a way of seeing. Her excitement at her revelation in the brougham is never repeated. She becomes more and more disillusioned and frustrated with her role. As Graham is drawn further into colonial politics ("Lord Selkirk chaffed him openly about the probability that he would one day fill the official shoes of the High Commissioner" [137]), and Mary realizes her relatively "small allotment" in the form of Billy Milliken, she gradually withdraws from the situation. She feels, she writes, "like a mouse in the paws of Mrs Jarvis, her own small Colonial trophy, which she would presently drop at the feet of Society" (137). Mary becomes increasingly aware that her commodification extends to her colonial identity.

The fairy-tale motif found in the title and throughout the text ironizes Mary's elevation from her inferior position by London and by Peter Doleford. Although her "humble airs" seem to Evelyn like "something out of a fairy tale" (68), she, unlike Cinderella, has chosen to live in a flat. She

does not need Mrs Jarvis, the "fairy godmother," who is in fact offering Mary, not a dream come true, but her own son (114). Through the fairy-tale motif, Duncan not only critiques the "white knight" scenario (Mary takes that role herself), but also underlines the discourses of imperialism. But initially the Trents see London and England in idealized, magical terms: "the Royal heart of England, which had always before beaten for us in a fairy tale far away" (59). London is mediated through fiction and myth. Their points of reference include Dickens and Thackeray (164, 190).[9]

These associations gradually unravel and Mary's anger intensifies as she realizes Graham and Barbara's own position within the all-pervasive marriage market. Mary begins to identify with Barbara, as she too is launched, a lure for Graham's fortune. If Evelyn will not marry Peter, the same ends can be achieved by marrying Graham to Barbara. Mary likens Barbara to a pound of tea, a commodity intimately associated with colonialism and trade, and also to "a distinguished expensive product of nature" "very much aware [. . .] of what ought to happen to her": marriage (97-8). Barbara is a national treasure, "a Gainsborough out of the National Gallery," there to be gazed at and bought (98). At Mrs Yilke's ball, Mary sees the men as similarly implicated in the transaction. They, including Billy, are "perfectly produced," "prime stock upon exhibition" (117).

One way of reading Mary's marriage is that she sacrifices herself to save Graham's freedom: "That Graham should cherish his freedom seemed indispensable and necessary. My own sex, I found myself thinking, were more or less born into a state of bondage—it would not have mattered nearly so much if it had been me" (268-69). Mary and Peter's marriage is perhaps more heartfelt than the union of Graham and Barbara would have been, but Duncan plays down the romance. Marriage, as in many of her novels, comes as somewhat of a surprise, tacked on as if only in capitulation to convention. Mary seems to feel that she has much less to lose than Graham by rescuing Pavis Court, and that Canada has much more to gain from Graham than herself. Her awareness of her own commodification is still subordinated to the needs of the male nation-builder.

For Duncan's British characters, however, Anglo-colonial marriage is an inevitable part of imperial economics and social engineering. Instead of the conventional pattern of sending British women to the colonies to ensure colonial loyalty, improve the racial stock and deal with the problem of "surplus" women, the voyage is reversed. Colonial women prove useful in rejuvenating British stock: "'a certain number of the daughters of our own kith

and kin beyond the seas'—the Duchess smiled at me benevolently—'might very well help to replen—might very well make good English wives [. . . .] And if such ideas seem in any way sordid or grasping, it should be remembered that the Colonies pay nothing, for the protection afforded them by the British navy'" (301-2). Colonial women are to be offered in marriage as repayment for military protection and security. The Duchess advocates a trade in women, another kind of tariff reform. Her subsequent comment "I understand [. . .] that the preference they are supposed to give us commercially does not amount to a row of pins," places the marriage question firmly within this context (302). She disapproves, however, of Graham's marriage to Barbara: "it does not seem desirable that the men of younger countries should look for wives to England" (301). Mrs Jarvis tells Mary, too, that "the marrying [male] foreigner is usually perfectly unscrupulous" (111). Women are merely the breeding vessels, mating with superior British male genes. The problem arises when the male genes are colonial: "Look at the Billingers—Lady Marjorie married Australian mutton. They have no family" (301). Mary seems complicit in this social Darwinism. Her first impressions of Peter are that his features suggest "a race and then a type and then an order, and a kind of direct correspondence of character—he was written beautifully plain" (96-7). His sister's features, however, fall short of the "original nobility" (97).[10] Mary's realization and use, in London, of her own economic and political significance as a single, colonial woman, makes the tariff reform debate, not an incidental backdrop, but central to Duncan's portrayal of Edwardian imperial policy and its effects on women.

Imperial London: The Empire on Display

By focusing on colonial subjects in London, Duncan explores the links between imperialism, capitalism and urbanization. Mary realizes in the brougham that only on the London market will she be valuable. Duncan, in line with other cultural theorists of modernity identifies the metropolis with commodity capitalism. Mary soon learns that "money economy dominates the metropolis" (Simmel 411): everything is determined by its exchange value, including her. The metropolis foregrounds the "purchasibility of things" (179). By the late nineteenth century, Britain had become the world's financial centre, and "the City was the colossus of commerce and credit throughout the Empire" (Sheppard 313). The very architecture of London, both in its building materials and its purpose, is symbolic of the imperial project and the interrelations between metropolis and periphery. The colonies were

not just "out there"; colonial subjects were both present in London and were greatly responsible for the capital's wealth. Colonialism and urbanisation were inextricably linked, the former accelerating the latter (King 34).

Anthony King estimates that in 1887 out of London's 4.3 million population, only a few hundred were colonials, but twenty-five years later, Edwin Pugh, in *The City of the World*, writes of the "Colonials and Yankees everywhere" (Pugh in King 75). In the years before WWI, the largest group of immigrants came from the settler colonies (Walvin 74). Evelyn muses on the presence of Canadians in London: "The American duchess is a deservedly popular institution—good for the Duke and improving for the American [. . . .] I expect Canadians are something new over here—that's what it is. Americans were new once, and frequented Bloomsbury boarding-houses and brought introductions from Emerson and Thoreau, and wrote their experiences in the magazines. Now you are" (68-9).

Duncan's depiction of colonial "products" on display in London, invites comparison with the numerous imperial exhibitions staged in London, starting with the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851. These were a "justification" of imperialism through the display of bountiful commodities and indigenous peoples. British spectators could feel a sense of ownership: the colonies, like the Maple Prince and Princess, had come to them to be gazed at and consumed. Reading Mary as colonial export highlights the complex status of Canadian women within the empire.[11] She is produced in the dominion, but returns to be, in her eyes, sold to the motherland. While both Mary and Graham are on exhibition, the commodification is intensified for the woman. Mary is excluded from an active role in imperial politics.[12] She is repeatedly ignored in favour of Graham: she is not invited to the lunches, the meetings. Her position behind the grille at the Houses of Parliament symbolizes her place on the periphery (139). For Graham, on the other hand, saving a "sacred folio," a "Jacobite collection" and finally Pavis Court from foreign purchasers increases his sense of belonging (130). Sent to London as a "sample," Mary is constantly referred to as "Miss Canada," whereas Graham, although he is given nicknames, never stands for the country itself. The Duchess, Mary thinks, "seemed literally, as she sat on the sofa and considered me, to come, like the early discoverers, within sight of land" (245). The Duchess surveys her, a new territory to exploit, and even asks Mary if she has Native blood in her family, as though she, as the country, encapsulates the indigenous inhabitants.

On her arrival in London, Mary is receptive to the city and considers at

great length her position in it, but by the end of the text she is not "keyed up to the Empire" (305). She opts out, her world narrowing to Minnebiac and concerns of marriage and family. She becomes increasingly resentful of the ways in which she is represented. The Trents' "voyage in" can be seen, in part, as a rebellious act. Their very presence in London does appear to some, like the Duchess, as an implicit challenge: a daring reclamation of a privilege not rightly theirs. As Mrs Jarvis says: "I've no patience with the Colonies, wanting this, that, and the other thing, telling us what to do. Teaching their grandmothers to suck eggs" (58). The Trents serve as reminders to the British that development and "progress" in London cannot be separated from colonial nation-building. The colonial subjects, who are of course colonizers themselves (and Duncan treats the relations between settler and Native Canadians in *The Imperialist*), keep reminding themselves that they do have a claim on Britain. Graham wants to claim "his moral birthright," his "share in the commonwealth that is so much richer and more rewarding where the Empire began" (131). Barbara is part of this share. His actions are in part determined by admiration for British culture, history and tradition, but they are also a demonstration of Canada's power to save the mother country. Mary sees this belonging as another type of colonization. She feels like a intruder and her enjoyment at "discovering" Britain is described in such terms: "I wonder if they [the English] know any satisfaction, planting their flag in the ends of the earth, that equals the joy of exploring England" (195). As Mary becomes more disenchanted with Britain, she imagines a reversal of colonial acquisition: "I had distinctly, now that I come to dissect it, a plundering feeling toward the mother country." "There was a good deal that one could remove, and I wanted to fly back with it," "clothes and ideas and old china, anything portable" (129-30). Evelyn is the consummate colonizer, taking possession of "vast tracts, in the name of her Republic" (180). She is like the Elizabethans, Duncan writes, except that she knows where the treasure is and her voyage is mapped out (180). She, of course, gets the trophy, not the impoverished Peter Doleford, but Uncle Christopher, next in line to inherit the Duke of Dulwich's title. With these images of reverse colonization, Duncan decentralizes empire, one of the agenda behind imperial federation itself.

Furthermore, Mary continually dismantles the dichotomy between home and abroad. As she says, "we were strangers really, though we knew the flag so well [. . .] such strangers that I felt sometimes as if we had rifled the flag out of Westminster Abbey" (47). Familiarity with cultural icons does not

equal familiarity with location. She reasserts Canada as home, as the centre, countering Lady Doleford's anglocentrism: "can one be at home out of England?" (150) She asks whether Mary's parents intend to come "home to England to settle" and Mary replies, "But they are at home now, Lady Doleford!" (149). Duncan sets imperial arrogance against Canadian nationalism when Lady Doleford says, "'But we are so accustomed, you know, to people coming home—from South Africa, and India, and even Australia. They seem to prefer it'" (150). Mary replies "Nobody prefers to leave Canada" (150).[13] Christmas, in particular, emphasises the Trents' outsider position: "The occasion proved us aliens" (192). They are awash on "the great vague, friendly, impenetrable ocean of London" (49), the friendliness never quite making up for the impenetrability. Duncan's own homeless, denationalized position enabled her to envisage fully this position (see Peterman 58).

Urban alienation is central to Duncan's exploration of women and imperialism. Simmel's notion of the urban stranger characterized by "indifference and involvement" (404) is complicated by the colonial subject who both belongs in London yet is foreign. Mary is not only under the male gaze on the streets of London, but under the imperial gaze in the private spaces of London drawing rooms. As the novel progresses, fog descends on London, symbolizing the claustrophobia and oppression of even London's public arenas for Mary.[14] Jane Jacobs has noted the "primacy of the spatial in imperial projects" but also that "in recent social theory the spatial is metaphorically everywhere but oft-times nowhere" (3). *Cousin Cinderella* merges the metaphorical spaces of the colonial perspective with the real, lived space of the colonial in London.

The Spatial Politics of Duncan's London

The spatial politics of *Cousin Cinderella* revolves around "the psychology of flats" (Duncan, *Two* 64). The siblings' flat in Kensington is central to their identity and their self-presentation on the London scene. It marks them as modest in their way of life: it is the "unpretentiousness of Kensington that most appealed" (14). Evelyn cannot believe they make do with, or choose to make do with, such accommodation (146). Duncan attributes to the Canadian character an unpretentiousness which she does not find in Evelyn or in the British.[15] After her marriage in 1890 to Everard Cotes, then superintendent of Calcutta's Indian Museum, India became Duncan's home, but her trips to London were made alone and she rented furnished flats in

Kensington. The freedom and stimulation she found as a cosmopolitan writer in London runs through her writing. In particular, the flat reappears constantly as a haven for women. The flat signifies temporality of existence and the Trents' place as foreigners in London, undecided whether to commit to the city or not. As Duncan writes in *Two in a Flat*, "there is a vast amount to be said for flats. I feel sometimes as if I could never consent to be pinned down to the ground under a house again" (35).

The Trents rent in an apartment block rather than a house, which identifies them with other middle-class inhabitants, rather than with the upper-class circles in which they are moving. As the demand for inner-city dwellings increased in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, more of these mansion blocks went up, particularly in Kensington and Chelsea, part of a new wave of experimental housing in the first decade of the twentieth century (Walker 82). Importantly, as Anthony King points out in his investigation of the links between urbanization and colonialism, Kensington was favoured by the colonial returned (80).[16] During Duncan's stay in London from early 1906 to July 1907, she lived in just such a newly built, five-storey, apartment block at 40 Iverna Court in Kensington (Fowler 274). Duncan links the Trents' choice of a flat with these new fashions in housing: "a flat seemed to be the best way, seemed to be the only way. I don't know what may have happened by this time—very likely a reaction in favour of caves in a Garden Suburb" (12). Their choice of housing puts them in opposition to the conventional circles in which they are soon to move: "the London of that autumn simply sang and shouted flats, announced and imposed flats as the one possible form of housekeeping" (12-13). Command over space and the lengthy negotiations with Miss Game, the owner, are the Trents' initiation to London. The modishness of the Trents' flat in *Cousin Cinderella* has to be contrasted, of course, with Pavis Court, and its associated permanence and tradition. Pavis Court represents England—decaying and moulder-ing—the weight of tradition neglected. Mary is rendered deaf and speech-less by the house, seeing it as a monster, a devourer of lives and fortunes (210). Her brother is to be sacrificed to its "uplifted ideal" (210). The future is not with Pavis Court and Mary has to stop Graham from marrying a doomed way of life.

The significance of the flat changes, however, as it becomes a retreat and a fortress rather than an entry point. It is their "stronghold," their "own for retreat and reflection, always invitingly there" (145). As Mary says: "The flat stood for us, just for Graham and me. Here, we could say, we are; here is our

wandering tent" (145). The flat protects them from false grandeur, reminding them, when London labels them provincial, that they "made no particular pretensions, that nobody could be more honest" (145-46). Mary pities "Colonials" without flats who are "exposed" (146), liable to be swept up by decadent, cosmopolitan airs.

Duncan raises issues of class through Mary's relations with Towse, the servant whom they are expected to hire with the flat (25): "there was not a soul," Mary writes, "except Towse, upon whom we had any claim" (47). She feels uncomfortable with the formal behaviour of British servants, and yet exhibits the classist assumptions which perpetuate that behaviour, by attempting to rename Towse, Kalifa, for example (43). The attempted renaming is motivated by respect: Mary and Graham find calling Towse simply by her deceased, first husband's surname a bizarre, British convention, and feel Kalifa, "the skilled one," is indicative of her gender and generally more complimentary. In *Two in a Flat* and in *Cousin Cinderella*, the narrators do however exhibit interest in their servants' lives, but find the intimacy of flat-living conflicts with the barriers of propriety between servant and mistress. However much the narrators question the barriers stipulated by social convention, the divisions nevertheless remain: "the gulf is ordained, as narrow as you can make it, but it must be there; you cannot *live* with a little kitchen-maid however you may love her" (*Two* 38).

Mary's privileged position is mirrored in her selective view of London. There is a surprising absence of references to the suffragettes, whose militant campaign began in 1906, and who would have been an obtrusive presence on London streets, engaged in protest as well as selling newspapers (see Dean, *Introduction* xx). Given that Duncan was a supporter of women's suffrage and given the awareness of imperial politics in her work, this seems to be a deliberate omission. Female imperialism and suffrage were not mutually exclusive concerns: women such as Louisa Knightley and Frances Balfour supported both of these causes (Bush 146). Duncan perhaps wants to make it a sign of Mary's own political naiveté that her character does not register this aspect of public London, but the omission also illustrates the narrow social circle in which Mary finds herself moving. A network of clubs, colonial lunches, talks and events underscores the workings of upper-class, imperial London society. Duncan herself was a member of the Ladies Empire Club in Grosvenor Street, established by the Victoria League in 1902, which served as her London postal address (Morgan 263). In 1904 the Club had 900 members; one third of these were colonial women (Bush 136). Similarly,

one of Mary and Graham's first stops upon arrival is the Royal Colonial Institute (66), founded in 1869 and located metaphorically and literally at the heart of imperial London, in Northumberland Ave, WC, off Trafalgar Square. Mrs Lippington invites Graham to her club, Daughters of the Flag. A club with "real purpose," it is hosting a talk on "Canada at the Present Time" complete with lantern slides (84). She also hosts "Colonial lunches" in "great houses of London," intent on impressing colonials with all elements of British culture and acutely aware of her duty in "backing up the King" (204).

Duncan has come under criticism for her focus on middle and upper-class society (see Tausky, *Novelist* 77-8 and Hubel 439), when in fact her depictions are invariably critical. Edwardian, imperial London eventually stifles Mary. The Lippington's departure for Canada, an "Imperial occasion" itself, is the turning point (273). She decides against lunch at her club afterwards with Graham, because it will be "full of them": "I wanted to part with everybody, to get away from all those people" (273). She wants to recapture the London they found on arrival, when, as she puts it "we didn't know anything and enjoyed ourselves" (273). At one point she refers to her early days in London as "the other side of the Flood" (291): the deluge has now overtaken her experience of Britain. She becomes critical of the city, once it becomes synonymous with the people they meet. After Lady Lippington's departure, Graham and Mary travel to lunch on a bus, symbolic of her desire to return to their early simplicity. Mary's final farewell to upper-class imperial London comes at an Empire First tea party given by the Duchess of Dulwich. Mary is disappointed that the guests are not better advocates of imperialism. She identifies several women of principle "in whose hands I felt sure all national issues would be safe" (304), but most of the women, as she puts it, "must always [. . .] have had before them or behind them their adorable clothes" (304). Mary sees clearly how status and materialism take precedence over imperial interest. Peter's entrance from "the more private part of the house" suggests her rejection of public for private concerns (306).

Duncan's fiction is often concerned with the intersection of politics and the quotidian, whether it be the politics of domestic spaces (as in *On the Other Side of the Latch* [1901] and *Two in a Flat*) or, as in *Cousin Cinderella*, the impact of national politics on daily life. It is significant that Duncan gave Mary the position of narrator, as we have seen, because of her cultural background and her gender, but also for her ordinariness. In a letter about *The Imperialist*, Duncan writes: "It seems to me that among the assumptions

and disputes over here as to what the 'colonial view' really is, it might be worth while to present the situation as it appears to the average Canadian of the average small town, inarticulate except at election times, but whose view, in the end counts for more than those of those pictorial people whose speeches at Toronto banquets go so far to over-colour the British imagination about Canadian sentiment" (Duncan, *Imperialist* 310). Invariably, however, that "average" voice is female. *A Social Departure* narrates "the ordinary happenings of an ordinary journey of two ordinary people" (Duncan 40) and we are told that Mrs Browne in *A Simple Adventure* is not extraordinary or original but certainly not dull (Duncan 26 and 290). By calling her unconventional and adventurous heroines "ordinary," Duncan expands the scope of women's activities.

On the other hand, the Canadian girl in London, not the British New Woman or the American girl, suggests a fresh perspective, and hence a new genre. Duncan's *An American Girl in London* (1891), which acknowledges its debt to Henry James's American girls, is in some ways a precursor text to *Cousin Cinderella,* which one reviewer called Jamesian (Duncan, *American* 2 and *The Saturday Review* 20).[17] The later text is much less conventional, however, in its discussion of imperial politics, its narrative style and the way in which it complicates the theme of the "foreigner-in-London." Duncan's use of a first-person narrator further emphasizes that her character's perspective is her own both in generic and political terms. Mary arrives in London with an inherited view, her father's, and leaves with her own.[18] The modernity of the text and its critical perspective are highlighted by this intimate and subjective colonial voice. Mary is clear about the kind of text she wants to write: "It is along the ordinary ways of life and among the people one would naturally know that the really most interesting things happen to one" (62). However, the text which begins with a detailed description of London flat-hunting and domestic living, similar to *Two in a Flat,* becomes a more conventional tale of London society, when the narrative is usurped by the Dolefords and the Lippingtons. Of course, "Towse is the very first to go" (89). Mary writes:

> I knew exactly how it would be. As soon as I let myself begin to tell about the people we came to know and the things that happened to us, all the wonderful daily romance that London has for the stranger, from the hour when "Ulk" sounds with a clatter of tins through the cold grey dawn, to the last irresponsible beat of a hansom in the abysmal streets, would simply swim and melt away and refuse to compete, as it were, in one's memory, with such centres of interest as the Lippingtons and Lady Barbara. (89)

Society women walk in "without any special invitation, and take possession of this page" (89). Mary and Graham's lives are taken over, their identities defined by London society. "Dear, homely details" disappear "out of the back-door of her mind" (89). Duncan's exploration of women and colonization becomes meta-textual when Mary's voice is re-colonized by imperial London.

By highlighting Mary's position as a product, Duncan points out the limitations of women's role in imperial relations. While the text is not anti-imperialist—Graham is vice-president of the Dominion Club (61)—a united empire in which the former colonies are judged by the value of their exportable commodities is far from desirable. The colonial subject's attempt to enter and contribute to the metropolis paradoxically results in a reassertion of British superiority and dominance, as Canadian nationalism and imperial goals prove incompatible. Mary's freedom as a writer allows her to both document and critique her re-colonization. In *Cousin Cinderella*, Duncan shows herself to be an important writer of the metropolis, exploring the ways in which the colonial woman is constructed by imperial Edwardian London, but also writing against an empire in which both Canada and women have a subservient role.

NOTES

1 I am grateful to the late Professor Thomas E. Tausky for his advice and assistance on matters relating to Duncan. He is deeply missed as a friend and fellow Duncan-enthusiast. I would like to acknowledge the Canadian High Commission's support of my research in the form of a Canadian Studies Faculty Research Award which enabled a research trip to the Sara Jeannette Duncan archive at the University of Western Ontario. Thanks also go to John H. Lutman, Head of the J. J. Talman Regional Collection at the D. B. Weldon Library at UWO, and his staff for their assistance during my visit.

2 Taxes were lowered on British goods coming into Canada by 25% in 1897, increased to 33.3% in 1900 (Amery 43; Marsh 423).

3 Since the introduction of Canadian preference, the value of annual British export to the Dominion increased from 6.5 to 11 million pounds. A preferential arrangement with Canada would also ward off competition from Germany and the United States (Garvin, *Imperial* 8).

4 I am using the British, as opposed to the American, edition of the novel given that I am dealing with Duncan in London. There are many slight differences between the editions, some of which Misao Dean outlines in her edition of the text.

5 See J. L. Garvin, *Tariff or Budget*, articles reprinted from the *Observer*, 1909 with a preface by Joseph Chamberlain. Garvin also wrote a series of pro-Chamberlain leader articles for the *Daily Telegraph* reprinted as Imperial Reciprocity.

6 Lady Lippington's comment may also be an allusion to the Canadian reaction to the poem. Kipling visited Canada on an official tour in late 1907, as Duncan was writing her

novel. J. Castell Hopkins, in an article in the *Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs* for 1907, while writing about Kipling's tour, also noted that "Our Lady" had not been popular "among a people unduly sensitive to the injury which American misrepresentation of English ignorance of their climate had done to their country" (quoted in Wilson 253). Lady Lippington, like the Canadian readers, views the poem as advertising, but for immigration rather than the preferential tariff.

7 At the turn of the century, timber was Canada's second most important industry after agriculture (*The Wood Industries of Canada* 4). The years 1896 to 1914, as world markets recovered, were a boom time for Canadian exports, particularly wheat and minerals, although timber and forest products remained a crucial export to Britain. For a detailed contemporary analysis of Anglo/Canadian trade relations, see J. W. Root. Timber and related products, such as pulp and paper, were a major Canadian export to Britain but the state of the exports was a tariff issue: "an immense foreign demand prevails for its [Canadian] forest produce, and there is naturally a desire to export it in as finished a state as possible, but almost everywhere differential duties are imposed as between undressed and dressed wood" (Root, *Tariffs* 216).

8 In *Set in Authority*, too, Lavinia Thame has a revelatory moment in an electric brougham travelling through London, when she decides to use her money to finance an Irish-American's hunt for Herbert Tring, a man with whom she is in love: "The motor halted, trembling, behind a policeman's hand, and in the motionless carriage, with the tides of Piccadilly checked and fretting outside, Lavinia Thame encountered one of those decisive moments [. . . .] She took it in silence, appearing to consider only the impassive rear of the liveried servant on the other side of the glass, all that was between her and the void, between a well-brought-up young Englishwoman and plunging initiative" (Duncan, *Set* 99). As with Mary, it is the public spectacle of London crowds, her proximity yet tenuous separation from them, that facilitates her awakening.

9 In *An American Girl in London*, Mamie Wick attends a lecture on Dickens's London (10) and in *A Daughter of Today* Duncan makes reference to Thackeray's London (80).

10 Duncan's reference to a best-selling book, *The Anglo-Saxon*, underpins the novel's preoccupation with British racial superiority as a justification for imperialism (78). The Duchess' work for a Royal Commission into the Assimilation of Aliens, following the Aliens Act (1905) is important here. Her brief to investigate "how best to understand them, and deal with them without damage to their national, political or religious prejudices" (88) is actually research into "the quickest and most effective methods of turning them into loyal British subjects" (88). Eventually she admits, "Personally I am not very fond of aliens. I would repatriate them all." (88) In this context, Graham is firmly complimented by the Duchess when she remarks that he's "not a foreigner" (220). Her declared interest in the "repatriation of the Jews" is undoubtedly inspired by anti-Semitism and xenophobia, rather than sympathy for Zionism (88).

11 Duncan's thinking about the colonial woman in London may well have been influenced by the arrival of her old school friend Pauline Johnson in London in 1906, prior to the writing of the novel. Johnson came from the Six-Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, her father was a Mohawk chief, and she would board in the town during the school term. Johnson became a poet and travelled to London, first in 1894, then again in 1906 and 1907 to give readings and performances. Her first book *The White Wampum* was published in England. Her 1906 tour opened in London's Steinway Hall. Johnson wore traditional Mohawk dress for her performances. London welcomed this colonial

woman, thrilled by her "exoticism": "no Canadian who had gone to London up to her time had received quite so warm a welcome" (Van Steen 22).

12 In Duncan's *A Social Departure*, by contrast, the women travellers very much realise their purchasing power, Orthodocia going against her name by buying land, selling it, and making a £4000 profit (54).

13 Duncan's own national allegiance is complicated in the British review which calls her one of "our novelists" (*The Saturday Review* 533).

14 The delegation to London in *The Imperialist* have similar experiences: "London, beating on all borders, hemmed them in; England outside seemed hardly to contain for them a wider space." They "longed for an automatic distributing system for the Empire" to combat the "sluggish over-population" (117).

15 In one of twelve unpublished plays by Duncan called "Billjim From Down Under," performed in Adelaide by Robert Courtneidge's London Comedy Company at the Tivoli Theatre, an Australian soldier comes to stay in Lady Laughton's Knightsbridge flat. One of the characters, Mr Thurloe says: "A flat is a very levelling form of residence. That's why I avoid it" (5). I am grateful to John H. Lutman for permission to quote from the Sara Jeannette Duncan papers.

16 Renamed The Royal Borough of Kensington by Edward VII, the presence of Kensington Palace, opened in 1899, and the Imperial Institute gave the area a distinct flavour (Walker 92): it was prosperous, inhabited largely by government officials, lawyers and other professionals (94).

17 Duncan seems to have cultivated this alliance with James, sending him a copy of *His Honor and a Lady* and asking him if he sees similarities between their styles. "How can I tell if it's 'like me'?" he replies in 1900, praising her for her "consummately clever book," both "intelligent and observant," but lacking in "line" (James 354-55).

18 See *Those Delightful Americans*, *The Simple Adventures*, *A Social Departure*, *An American Girl in London* and *A Voyage of Consolation*. The first-person voice in *Two in a Flat*, which is invariably taken to be semi-autobiographical is, interestingly, that of a long-standing resident of London. There is no mention of colonial origins.

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Hannah Main-van der Kamp

How the Nictitating Membrane Mitigates Against Explication of the Milky Way

Which is not to say that galaxy appellation
is useless but to warn that fixed staring
at glossaries may lead to blindness.

On your back on the beach on a moonless night,
in one hand a black stone marked with white lines
in the other a white stone, black flecked.
You might become a little child again if
no adult earnest teacher hovers
and you allow Loon to be your teacher.

Because the art of noticing is not the same
as the art of naming,
Loon parts your eyelids:
the right lid of scrutiny
left lid of explication
and inserts another membrane
transparent as cold water.

Hoots wails tremolos and yodels
imprint on your retina
as dots and dashes, diamonds and pearls.

You've stepped through the veil, now
you can only gesture to that
from which names are withheld
milk droplets spattered with feathers
on a shattered mirror.

Gilles Mossière

Présences de l'Autre dans *Agaguk* d'Yves Thériault

Reprenant le titre du livre d'Éric Landowski, nous nous inspirerons des principes qu'il pose dans son essai de sémiotique pour mettre en relief les figures de l'identité et de l'altérité qui sous-tendent explicitement et implicitement *Agaguk*.[1] Landowski remarque que "l'émergence du sentiment 'd'identité' semble passer nécessairement par le relais d'une 'altérité' à construire" (16).[2] C'est pour cela qu'il lui semble falloir "poser en premier lieu le régime d'altérité du *non-soi* [. . .], pour pouvoir, ensuite seulement, rejoindre le *soi*" (9). Pour Landowski, c'est seulement

> à partir de là que pourra apparaître enfin la figure du *Tiers*, non pas toutefois celle d'un simple "Il" situé à distance mais cette forme spécifique de l'Autre qui a pour fonction de renvoyer au sujet sa propre image en le "représentant." (9)

Notre objectif sera d'éclairer ce processus abstrait en l'illustrant par des exemples du cheminement du personnage éponyme du roman d'Yves Thériault et en mettant en lumière le foisonnement des figures de l'Autre dans ce texte.

Rappelons tout d'abord que Landowski associe trois définitions à chacune de ses étapes d'analyse:

> Dans le premier cas, la figure de l'Autre, c'est avant tout celle de l'étranger, défini par sa *dissemblance*. L'Autre est en somme *présent*. Il ne l'est même que trop, et c'est précisément tout le problème: problème de sociabilité, car si la présence empirique de l'altérité est donnée d'emblée dans la cohabitation au jour le jour des langues, des religions ou des habitus—des cultures—, elle ne fait pas pour autant sens, ni surtout le même sens pour tous. (10)

Nous verrons ainsi dans *Agaguk* comment les Montagnais remplissent cette fonction, et comment c'est l'acceptation de leur *présence*[3] par le village inuit

qui transforme à son tour Agaguk en Autre, le conduisant à rejeter cette *présence* et à s'exclure des siens.

Pour Landowski, l'analyse de l'Autre passe aussi par un deuxième niveau:

> L'Autre, ce n'est pas seulement le dissemblable—l'étranger, le marginal, l'exclu [. . .]. C'est aussi le terme manquant, le complémentaire indispensable et inaccessible, celui imaginaire ou réel, dont l'évocation crée en nous le sentiment d'un inaccompli ou l'élan d'un désir parce que sa *non-présence* actuelle nous tient en suspens et comme inachevé, dans l'attente de nous-même. (10-11)

À cette deuxième définition correspondent le personnage d'Iriook, la femme objet du désir, puis celui de Tayaout, le garçon tant espéré. Nous verrons également que la notion de nouveau territoire, qui va de pair avec l'établissement d'une famille, participe de cette "nouvelle dimension de la quête de soi" (10-11).

La troisième définition de Landowski a rapport au "jeu de la représentation politique," c'est-à-dire à l'opposition du "Nous" et du "Ils," "qui dans le discours de la quotidienneté désigne communément le lieu du pouvoir " (11). C'est bien entendu ici que nous associerons les Blancs (commerçants et policiers), qui au contraire de Brown, le trafiquant d'alcool, ne vivent pas parmi les autochtones, mais dont l'influence a des répercussions essentielles sur leur communauté.

En dernier lieu, nous nous interrogerons sur la problématique inhérente à écrire sur cet Autre et à faire entendre sa voix dans le cadre d'une entreprise littéraire indéniablement blanche.

Au début du texte, considérant que "la lignée était rompue" (4) puisque son père s'est remarié avec une Montagnaise, Agaguk part à la recherche d'un nouveau territoire pour fonder une famille. Au terme des divers conflits internes (entre les membres de la communauté autochtone) et externes (entre cette communauté et l'autorité des Blancs), le roman se clôt sur une double naissance, d'abord celle d'une fille, fardeau à éliminer selon la mentalité inuit traditionnelle, puis à la dernière ligne du texte, celle d'un jumeau, un fils.

L'objectif de ce trop bref survol est de montrer à quel point la figure de l'Autre parcourt tout le roman, depuis son incipit jusqu'à sa conclusion ultime.[4] Nous tenterons maintenant de rendre justice à sa richesse et à sa complexité en procédant à une analyse de ces *présences* de l'Autre, analyse sous forme de couples puisque, selon les définitions de Landowski, identité et altérité sont indissociables.

Les Inuit / Les Montagnais:

Comme nous l'avons dit, c'est l'inclusion d'un élément "autre" dans l'unité familiale qui est l'élément déclencheur du départ d'Agaguk. Thériault nous présente, entre parenthèses,[5] la vision d'Agaguk sur la Montagnaise et, par l'emploi du style indirect libre, nous amène à accepter son point de vue totalement négatif (39). Qui plus est, la robe de coton qu'elle porte dénote aussi un contact fréquent avec les Blancs. C'est donc au nom de sa supériorité de mâle inuit qu'Agaguk repoussera les gestes de générosité de cet être composite (39), tissé de tout ce que sa culture jugeait "Autre."

Si les Montagnais "savaient chasser la fourrure" et que les Inuit employaient leur méthode pour attraper le rat musqué (45), cela n'est nullement suffisant pour les considérer "à peine plus que des bêtes" (45), les traiter d'"*Irkrelret*," "appellation méprisante, insultante" qui signifie "poux" (28) ou "couvert de poux" et de cracher par terre (247), voire au visage (39).

Cette étrangère a sa contrepartie masculine, le Montagnais qui aide le trafiquant d'alcool.[6] Thériault ayant largement orienté l'interprétation négative des lecteurs au sujet de ce peuple, il n'accorde qu'une place minime à ce personnage, mais son rôle est conforme à l'opinion qu'il en a donnée puisque c'est son acte de délation qui provoquera l'arrivée du premier policier blanc.

Rejetant sa belle-mère, Agaguk renie son père et tout le village qui accepte d'intégrer les valeurs "autres" qu'elle représente. Son départ a donc valeur de symbole puisqu'il veut ainsi reprendre l'identité ancienne:

> Ainsi ils se nomment, de l'un à l'autre, *Inuk*, l'homme; *Inuit*, les hommes. Il n'y a d'autres hommes qu'eux, les Esquimaux, les *Inuit*. Pour toute autre race, ils auront des noms de mépris. (38)[7]

L'idéal d'Agaguk sera donc celui d'une société traditionnelle fondée sur une codification qui pose le rejet de l'Autre.[8] Par opposition au village décadent, l'épisode de la chasse au phoque illustrera ses retrouvailles avec l'existence et les valeurs ancestrales des peuples du "Sommet de la Terre" (131-37).

La tribu et le village / Le couple et la toundra:

Si Agaguk fuit le village, ce n'est pas à cause du meurtre qu'il y a commis, mais parce que c'est le lieu "autre" du texte, lieu où il n'a *littéralement* rien à faire et à partir duquel l'intrigue *étrangère* du roman (pratiquement toute l'enquête policière) va prendre corps à son insu.

Le projet identitaire d'Agaguk passe par la territorialité ancestrale. La toundra est un lieu devenu "autre" pour les membres sédentarisés du

village, mais que le héros veut de nouveau faire sienne en recréant la cosmogonie traditionnelle autour de sa hutte. Mircea Eliade a fait des remarques pertinentes sur le rôle essentiel que joue l'habitation:

> [Elle] est l'univers que l'homme se construit en imitant la Création exemplaire des dieux, la cosmogonie. Toute construction et toute inauguration d'une nouvelle demeure équivaut en quelque sorte à un nouveau recommencement, à une nouvelle vie. Et tout commencement répète ce commencement primordial où l'Univers a vu pour la première fois le jour. (52)

Reprenant cette idée, Maurice Émond a bien montré que la forme même de la hutte d'Agaguk—pyramide dressée vers le ciel sur l'immensité de la toundra—est l'axe central autour duquel s'organise son monde et se renouvelle l'ordre ancien (37).[9] De fait, Thériault nous montre plusieurs fois son héros, assis devant l'entrée et montant la garde sur son univers (10, 169).

Agaguk présente donc deux identités autochtones mutuellement "autre," chacune ayant sa territorialité propre, et qui vont progressivement entrer en conflit: d'un côté, le village des Inuit, "hommes" déchus ayant accepté le métissage et, de l'autre, l'univers de la toundra, lieu éternel choisi par Agaguk pour abolir le temps profane. Émond a bien noté le rôle que joue la répétition des gestes archétypaux (chasse, trappe, traitement des peaux) dans le rétablissement de la temporalité sacrée (47).

Si Beaulieu a remarqué le problème intrinsèque que cela implique pour le "triste et superbe Agaguk"—"en homme seul, assumer tout ce qui, jadis, relevait de l'organisation profonde de la collectivité" (212)—il n'a toutefois pas entièrement raison puisque Agaguk ne saurait recomposer la cosmogonie ancestrale sans l'aide d'une compagne. Hervé Le Tellier résume clairement la situation traditionnelle dans le Grand Nord: "sans la femme, l'homme meurt de froid, sans l'homme, la femme meurt de faim" (39). L'installation d'Agaguk se concrétise donc par une double prise de possession: celle d'un territoire et d'une femme. Ces deux actes fondateurs sont d'ailleurs posés, littéralement et symboliquement, au même moment, dès l'arrivée sur l'emplacement choisi pour la première hutte (8).

Iriook devient ainsi l'Autre complémentaire dont parlait Landowski, mais dans son cas, elle conserve des signes de dissemblance qui vont aller en s'accroissant. Si, dans un premier temps, Agaguk lui fait comprendre violemment quelle doit être sa place et son attitude (22-23, 76), elle acquiert rapidement des prérogatives étrangères au rôle traditionnel de la femme: elle démontre son habileté au fusil, forçant un commentaire admiratif d'Agaguk (75)—habileté qui lui permettra plus tard d'inverser les rôles et de

prendre la place du chasseur blessé pour assurer la survie de la famille (215-21)—puis elle le convainc non seulement de la laisser l'accompagner à la chasse au phoque (114), mais aussi, à l'encontre de toutes les coutumes et au risque de faire passer Agaguk pour un lâche, de pêcher près du bord, là où la glace ne risque pas de se détacher (125-28). Si l'isolement de la famille dicte ces actions de prudence *étrangères* au mode de vie ancestral, c'est par cette faille que vont entrer d'autres modifications à l'ordre qu'Agaguk avait imposé par la force. Iriook, en assumant un rôle non conventionnel, force Agaguk à évoluer et à devenir "autre" lui-même par rapport à ses convictions. On assiste donc, au fil du roman, à une double métamorphose des protagonistes, un double devenir "autre" (Landowski), illustré de manière probante par l'évolution de leurs rapports sexuels (123). La transformation d'Iriook prendra tout son sens en deux temps: tout d'abord lorsque, encore une fois contre toutes les traditions, elle tiendra tête à Scott, le policier blanc (242-48), puis dans une dernière confrontation lorsqu'elle forcera Agaguk à accepter la naissance d'une fille. On sait que cette acceptation de l'Autre, ici dans sa nature féminine, ne se passera pas sans difficulté pour l'orgueil du héros et que c'est ce combat interne qui donnera toute leur tension narrative aux soixante-dix dernières pages du roman.

Le garçon / La fille:

Dans *People of the Deer*, Farley Mowat rappelle la loi ancestrale qui avait de tout temps régi la structure familiale inuit dans des conditions de famine: le chasseur se nourrit d'abord, viennent ensuite par ordre de priorité la femme, les enfants et les vieillards (171-72).[10] On pourrait aussi y ajouter la préséance des garçons sur les filles. Si le problème de la famine demeure théorique chez Thériault, il y est toutefois nettement posé, devenant même le point d'achoppement de la conclusion du roman. La solution ancestrale de sacrifice des maillons les moins importants ou les moins productifs ne se posait certainement pas en terme d'"autre" puisqu'elle faisait partie de la "loi implicite" dont parle Mowat et à laquelle tout le monde souscrivait. Dans le cas d'*Agaguk*, c'est pourtant dans ce sens qu'il faut l'analyser puisque c'est dans sa dualité avec le "même" qu'elle s'exprime.

L'ordre du "même" est effectivement présent dans le roman sous la forme du garçon, et ce, bien avant la naissance de celui-ci. C'est ainsi qu'on voit Agaguk projeter l'existence de son fils, et se projeter lui-même, dans un long délire narcissique (46-50). Notre but n'est pas ici de nier la fierté légitime de la paternité, mais de faire ressortir la surenchère narcissique

présente dans cette accumulation de superlatifs, d'images de possession, de désirs de puissance et de rêves de renommée (46-50), car tous ces termes du domaine de l'imaginaire n'ont aucune commune mesure, et aucune résonance objective, avec le fait que l'Autre, dans ce cas la fille, ne serait "qu'un fardeau, une bouche inutile à nourrir" (45).

Les "moralistes" blancs ont fait grand cas de l'élimination des enfants de sexe féminin (et des vieillards) pour assurer la survie de la tribu. Si cela a certainement eu lieu lorsqu'il naissait un trop grand nombre de filles et quand la nourriture manquait gravement, ce n'est pas, à notre avis, dans ce sens "réaliste" qu'il faut prendre le dilemme d'Agaguk.[11] Nous suggérons plutôt de l'interpréter selon la "nouvelle dimension de la quête de soi," car c'est Tayaout, le fils rêvé, qui, dans l'ordre du "même," joue le rôle du "terme manquant" de Landowski. Paraphrasant ce sémioticien (10), nous pourrions traduire "Agaguk accédait à une vie neuve, à des façons qui ne ressemblaient en rien à autrefois" (46)—par "l'évocation [de Tayaout] crée en Agaguk le sentiment d'un inaccompli ou l'élan d'un désir parce que sa *non-présence* actuelle le tient en suspens et comme inachevé, dans l'attente de lui-même." On sait que les espoirs d'Agaguk ne se concrétiseront qu'après une transformation majeure: Iriook, Autre à la fois complémentaire et dissemblable, obligera Agaguk à réviser ses stratégies identitaires et à accepter la *présence de l'autre féminin.* Au terme des scènes quasi insoutenables qui précèdent et suivent la naissance de la fille, elle oblige Agaguk à accepter "un devenir, un vouloir être avec l'autre" qui se substitue à "la certitude acquise, statique et solipsiste d'être soi" (Landowski 10).

Les Inuit / les Blancs:

Si nous avons jusqu'à présent peu mentionné les Blancs, certains objets de la vie quotidienne des Inuit dénotent cependant leur *présence* insistante. Nous avons vu que la robe en coton de la Montagnaise était un signe de son étrangeté, mais ce matériau "autre" menace même de s'intégrer au ménage d'Agaguk puisque c'est une des denrées qu'il aimerait échanger contre ses fourrures (77).[12] Il est évident qu'il reconnaît aussi l'utilité d'un chaudron de fer et d'une pioche (78), mais il est deux autres choses dont le couple ne peut plus se passer: le sel, essentiel au tannage des peaux, et surtout le fusil et les balles, sans lesquels il ne peut abattre de gibier. On se souviendra que si Agaguk a tué le trafiquant d'alcool (auquel Thériault avait donné une caractérisation négative justifiant son élimination aux yeux d'Agaguk . . . et du lecteur), c'est parce que celui-ci ne voulait lui échanger que de l'alcool (ou

du sel) contre ses peaux, alors que les Inuit déchus, eux, acceptaient entièrement ce marché. Shepard Krech III dans son étude remarquable, *The Ecological Indian*, souligne que, dans toute l'Amérique du Nord, l'alcool était rapidement devenu la monnaie d'échange de prédilection des commerçants (et des Indiens) (159). On sait le rôle que la Police Montée a joué au Canada face à ce problème, mais Thériault nous présente dans *Agaguk* une situation de trafic que les autorités semblent vouloir, tout au moins partiellement, tolérer (70). Sans doute les Blancs ressentent-ils, eux aussi, l'impérieux "besoin d'évasion" qui s'empare d'Agaguk . . . (69). Dans le cas du fier chasseur, la nécessité de l'échange correspond à chaque fois, pour reprendre une expression consacrée, à un "passage sous les fourches caudines." Il ne peut d'ailleurs relater que des bribes d'un de ces épisodes à Iriook en omettant "la blessure à son orgueil qui avait été, pour lui, le pire mal" (77). Ces face-à-face illustrent admirablement la maîtrise de l'écrivain: alternant les points de vue, mettant tantôt l'accent sur la perspective émotionnelle de l'Inuk, tantôt sur celle, calculatrice, du Blanc, il permet à chaque personnage de devenir, tour à tour, l'Autre, et au lecteur de mesurer l'écart qui les sépare. Par cette technique narrative, Thériault réussit à dépasser leur conflit ponctuel et à l'inscrire dans une dimension plus large (65): engendrée par l'impuissance, l'évasion d'Agaguk dans l'alcool (69-70) permet de mieux comprendre ce phénomène chez ses congénères.

Vivant à la périphérie du monde autochtone, les Blancs occupent toutes les positions de pouvoir (le "Ils" de Landowski). Les relations ancestrales, qui reposaient sur une codification d'alliances et d'exclusions, étaient néanmoins claires pour toutes les instances participantes. Les rapports avec les Blancs sont plus difficiles parce que les autochtones ont de la difficulté à maîtriser un système de valeurs qui met en jeu des impératifs économiques dont les variations leur sont totalement étrangères: le prix des fourrures, par exemple (63). Beaulieu a bien résumé la situation: les Inuit sont obligés de participer au "monde des Blancs qu'ils méprisent mais dans les pièges desquels ils ne peuvent pas finalement ne pas tomber" (144). L'exemple du fusil montre d'ailleurs bien à quel point le fier Agaguk est redevable, aux sens littéral et figuré, du monde des Blancs. Cette arme, pur produit d'une technologie "autre," fait désormais partie intégrante non seulement de la survie du chasseur mais aussi de son imaginaire: nous renvoyons le lecteur à la longue rêverie dans laquelle il transmet en pensée tout son savoir à son fils et où le fusil tient le rôle capital (48-49).

Les Inuit et le policier[13] / Agaguk et le loup:
C'est bien entendu par rapport au système policier et judiciaire des Blancs que les relations complexes du "Nous" et du "Ils" prennent tout leur sens, puisque les Inuit sont accusés et qu'ils perçoivent la *présence* des Blancs comme une menace à leur intégrité sociale. Alternant les chapitres qui se passent au village et ceux qui se déroulent sur la toundra, Thériault traite le meurtre du trafiquant Brown (impliquant Agaguk) et celui du policier Henderson (impliquant Ramook, son père) en parallèle, mais de manière différente, avant de les relier pour la confrontation finale: au village, la menace du Blanc est une présence effective, alors que sur la toundra, cette menace est surtout symbolique sous la forme du loup blanc (à l'exception des cinq pages où Iriook, prenant la parole, exonère Agaguk).

Avant d'aller plus loin dans cette partie de notre analyse, il faut mettre les choses au clair: ce sont deux modes de pensée bien définis qui s'affrontent, car il ne faudrait pas croire que les autochtones ne possédaient aucun système de justice. Farley Mowat en donne un exemple probant:

> When a man becomes mad [. . .] and murders or threatens to murder those who live about him, then, and then only, is the sentence of death invoked. There is no trial, three or four men most closely related to or concerned with the murderer meet and speak indirectly of the problem which faces the entire community. One of their numbers is usually designated as the executioner. But he is not an instrument of justice as we know it, for his task is not to punish, but to release [quickly and humanely] the soul of the madman [. . .]. When the deed is done, the executioner obeys the spirit laws and begs forgiveness from the ghost of the dead man. (179)[14]

Par rapport à cette tradition ancestrale, il est évident que lorsque des policiers blancs arrivent dans un village autochtone, c'est pour faire respecter la loi de l'Autre.

Dans une telle situation conflictuelle, la première réaction des Inuit est de compter sur les possibilités d'oubli offertes par l'immensité nordique,[15] mais lorsque cela ne marche pas, les conséquences sont généralement funestes pour les Inuit impliqués:

> If they are lucky and the white men do not hear of it, that is the end of the matter [. . .] otherwise, they are rewarded for the mental sufferings that they have endured by being hanged by the neck until they were dead. (Mowat 179)

Face à de telles pratiques, ce sont les Blancs qui apparaissent "ignorants," "violents" et "barbares" aux yeux des autochtones (Houston 115-16).

La deuxième réaction des Inuit est la patience et la ruse, qualités que leur expérience de chasseurs a particulièrement aguerries (*Agaguk* 183), car cette lutte contre l'Autre mutuellement exclusif se déroule sur le mode "du chat et de la souris." À l'occasion des nombreux face-à-face qu'engendre cette situation, Thériault démontre à nouveau son talent en faisant vivre intensément à ses lecteurs le calme externe et le bouillonnement interne de ce double duel. Henderson, le premier policier, perdra la vie à ce jeu dangereux lorsque la communauté retrouvera sa cohésion et ses réflexes ancestraux en éliminant Ayallik qui menace sa survie (152). Scott, le deuxième policier, semble moins bien connaître les subtilités de la mentalité inuit, mais il a entière confiance en son pouvoir. Aucun des cinq autres Blancs ne joue de rôle actif, mais c'est leur *présence* passive qui joue en leur faveur (228). Scott sait que les Inuit dépendent entièrement du commerce avec les Blancs (228), mais il compte surtout sur la technologie "autre" qu'il apporte avec lui, ou à tout le moins sur l'avantage psychologique qu'il peut en retirer. Là où il égale son prédécesseur en ruse, c'est lorsqu'il décrit les extraordinaires résultats "scientifiques" des Blancs en glissant son discours dans le cadre des croyances et des superstitions inuit (228-29). En perçant le mystère du meurtre du policier blanc, le plus important à ses yeux, Scott relègue au deuxième plan celui de Brown par Agaguk.

D'un point de vue narratif, cette vengeance du "même" n'est pourtant qu'une intrigue secondaire: la trame principale, c'est celle qui traite de l'évolution d'Agaguk par rapport à l'Autre. Dans ce contexte, nous suivrons Rénald Bérubé: l'épisode de la lutte "contre le loup blanc [est] sans doute le plus important de l'œuvre et [celui qui] donnera au roman son centre vital" (75). Cet animal, dont l'apparition sur la toundra coïncide avec la décision d'Henderson de passer à l'action dans le village (163-65), ne fait pas partie de l'ordre normal des choses: tout en lui (taille, couleur, comportement) rappelle à la mémoire d'Agaguk et d'Iriook "des chants [. . .] des aventures anciennes" que les aînés de la tribu racontaient (167) et dans lesquels un nom revenait: "Agiortok," l'Autre, le mauvais esprit ayant pris forme animale. Agaguk devra faire appel à toute son expérience pour le vaincre, et on sait, élément essentiel pour la suite de l'intrigue, le défigurement horrible qui, le rendant méconnaissable aux yeux de ses congénères, lui permettra de continuer sa vie sur la toundra (243-48). Le combat contre le loup blanc est donc le moment où se cristallisent à la fois le passé, le présent et l'avenir d'Agaguk, et c'est en terme d'épreuve au sens fort—initiatique—qu'il faut le considérer car il portera désormais la marque de sa *différence.*

Agaguk et son Autre:

Après avoir vu comment Agaguk, le personnage, devient explicitement "autre" (physiquement et mentalement), nous nous intéresserons maintenant à *Agaguk*, le roman, pour déchiffrer l'Autre qui s'y trouve implicitement.

Le traitement d'une culture étrangère par des auteurs de culture blanche a toujours posé des problèmes de crédibilité.[16] N'étant pas Inuit, nous ne pouvons nous prononcer sur le réalisme du roman de Thériault, mais nous avons identifié trois domaines problématiques: les éléments de colère et la violence qui les accompagne, certains aspects paradisiaques de l'existence des autochtones et la langue choisie pour faire entendre leur voix.

Les travaux de l'anthropologie ont fait ressortir les caractéristiques essentielles de la mentalité "primitive" qui, renvoyant au mode de représentation de l'esprit prélogique, diffère radicalement de la nôtre:

> Voilà pourquoi le primitif n'a pas devant la nature le détachement objectif de l'être "civilisé": la nature est sentie chez lui comme une présence vivante. (Simard 14-15)

Le Tellier va dans le même sens lorsqu'il indique que "dans la langue inupiak, il n'y avait pas de mot [. . .] pour ce que nous appelons la nature" (15). Comment alors interpréter cette phrase dans laquelle Thériault parle d'un univers où "chaque heure de vie est un combat contre la nature"? (46). Ce n'est pas la perspective autochtone qu'il présente ici, mais celle du "civilisé," "construite autour du conflit" avec les éléments géographiques et climatiques (Le Tellier 15). Dès les premières pages du roman, Thériault nous dépeint, en effet, Agaguk "la bave à la commissure des lèvres" hurlant "sur une note un son de rage extraordinaire": "Le vent! criait-il. Il est plus fort que moi! Rien ne doit être plus fort que moi" (17). La réaction d'incompréhension d'Iriook montre bien à quel point cette violence émotive est "autre" dans ce contexte. Si l'on en croit les commentaires bien informés de Farley Mowat, il n'y a aucune place dans une communauté indigène traditionnelle pour la colère, que ce soit d'un point de vue religieux/spirituel (émotion indigne d'un "homme," dans le sens inuit du terme) ou pratique (émotion dangereuse pour les autres) (176-77). Ces deux cas de figure sont présents dans le roman de Thériault: le premier, par rapport au vent, est assez bénin, mais le second est plus grave, puisque la violence d'Agaguk lors de la naissance de Tayaout ("Il la roua de coups de pied et de coups de poing") pourrait mettre en danger la vie de la mère et de l'enfant (87-88). Nous proposerons ici deux pistes d'interprétation. Si l'on peut percevoir cette attitude "autre" comme le signe d'une perte d'identité dans une société

en voie de désintégration, le thème de la sauvagerie est trop récurrent chez Thériault pour qu'on ne lui accorde pas la priorité:

> [Cette violence,] Thériault la fera sienne dans presque tous ses romans qui viendront après *La fille laide*—cette grande violence partout en soi comme hors de soi, cette grande violence qui appelle la colère, la mutilation, le meurtre ou le suicide, dans de terribles danses macabres faisant couler le sang. (Beaulieu 57)

Beaulieu, qui connaissait bien Thériault, affirme en effet que cette violence se trouve "dans le fond même de sa nature depuis l'origine du monde" (129). Si l'on accepte ce jugement, il devient clair que les réactions d'Agaguk sont totalement "autres" puisqu'elles correspondent à une projection de l'auteur plutôt qu'à une expression de démence du personnage (nous en verrons d'autres exemples plus avant).

Les commentaires de Thériault sur les enfants présentent une deuxième difficulté puisqu'il insiste en effet lourdement sur les bienfaits de l'éducation "primitive" par rapport à celle des villes (155-56). On retrouve dans ses propos un écho évident des avantages rousseauistes du milieu naturel: résistance physique accrue, mise en pratique de la curiosité innée et développement physique et mental plus harmonieux. Notre objectif n'est nullement ici d'entrer dans un débat pédago-philosophique, mais de montrer à quel point Thériault semble oublier, dans le panégyrique qu'il fait de l'éducation "à l'inuit," que la toundra est loin d'être l'endroit idéal pour laisser un bébé en liberté. Certaines mousses et plantes sont toxiques, et le danger des prédateurs, que Thériault mentionne ailleurs à deux reprises (8, 117-18), demeure constant. Qu'un mille-pattes coure sur le ventre de Tayaout (111-12) ne présente pas un grand péril, mais où sont les moustiques et mouches noires de la toundra dont la réputation n'est plus à faire? Si l'on pourrait interpréter leur absence du fait que les adultes y sont "habitués," on ne peut s'attendre à ce qu'il en soit de même pour un enfant. Afin de faire la part de l'imagination et de la réalité, nous proposons l'extrait suivant de Farley Mowat:

> While the sun shone, the heat was as intense as in the tropics, for the clarity of the arctic air does nothing to soften the sun's rays. Yet we were forced to wear sweaters and even caribou skin jackets. [The flies] rose from the lichens at our feet until they hung like a malevolent mist about us and took on the appearance of a low-lying cloud [. . . .] At times a kind of insanity would seize us and we would drop everything and run wildly in any direction until we were exhausted. But the pursuing hordes stayed with us and we got nothing from our frantic efforts except a wave of sweat that seemed to attract even more mosquitoes.
>
> From behind our ears, from beneath our chins, a steady dribble of blood matted into our clothing and trapped the insatiable flies until we both wore black

collars composed of their struggling bodies. The flies worked down under our shirts until our belts stopped them. Then they fed about our waists until the clothing stuck to us with drying blood. (79-80)

Même en tenant compte l'exagération de conteur à laquelle Mowat aurait pu se laisser aller, on ne trouve dans les romans inuit de Thériault aucune description se rapprochant tant soi peu de celle-là. Alors qu'il donne un grand réalisme à de nombreux épisodes (chasse, campement, déplacements, échanges, etc.) et aux conditions hivernales, c'est loin d'être le cas pour l'été. Le troisième problème tient à la langue. Terminant en apothéose le chapitre sur les avantages de l'éducation inuit, Agaguk s'exclame après que son enfant d'un an s'est tenu debout tout seul:

—Inuk!
C'était un homme, enfin. (157)

Cette grossière exagération fait sourire, et même rire pour peu que l'on connaisse la progression des noms en langue inuit:

Le petit enfant se dit: *Inuliratаaq*, personne récente.
À cinq ans, il est *sorucerq*, personne utile.
Adulte, il est *inuk*, une personne complète. (Le Tellier 43)

On sait l'importance que le terme "inuk" revêt pour Agaguk, puisque c'est ainsi, revendiquant cette identité, qu'il se démarque des autochtones déchus du village. Nous avons aussi remarqué son narcissisme de voir sa lignée perdurer, mais il ne fait aucun doute que cet exemple est une nouvelle projection de l'auteur, participant donc de l'ordre du "même," plutôt qu'une vraisemblance psychologique.

Au-delà de l'emploi du vocabulaire correct, les termes du problème sont simples: comment exprimer dans une langue un mode de pensée qui fonctionne sur des termes résolument "autres?" Il faut tout d'abord savoir que l'inupiak est une langue agglutinante: elle ne possède pas de verbe et les actions s'expriment par "des noms d'action placés en position de suffixe" (Le Tellier 19). Dans un intermède comique, un personnage d'*Inukshuk* s'amuse à traduire ainsi le vers célèbre du poème *El Desdichado*, "Je suis le ténébreux, le veuf, l'inconsolé": "Noir de l'esprit, mort de la femme de l'homme, pas de lumière du cœur" (19). Dans un autre ordre d'idée, "Où as-tu mal?" s'exprime de la manière suivante: "Par quelle route de ton corps la douleur passe-t-elle pour que tu souffres?" (51). Illustrant le fait que "le primitif n'a pas devant la nature le détachement objectif de l'être 'civilisé'" (Simard 15), Le Tellier souligne que le projet des Inuit pour la création du

Nunavut ("notre terre") avait comme titre *L'empreinte de nos pas dans la neige fraîche* (36). Ces exemples suffisent à démontrer que l'inupiak recouvre "une réalité psychologique différente de celle [véhiculée] dans les langues 'modernes'" (Simard 14), et ils suggèrent amplement la difficulté inhérente à traduire cette pensée d'une manière qui ne soit ni réductrice ni paternaliste.

Nous terminerons cet intermède linguistique en rappelant que la communication n'est pas toujours verbale: le silence peut aussi être chargé de sens, et paraître incompréhensible au Blanc, qui se retrouve alors en position résolument "autre." Le Tellier raconte ainsi la visite d'un Inuit à l'un de ses amis au cours de laquelle aucun mot ne fut échangé:

> Et lorsqu'au bout d'une demi-heure, peut-être un peu plus, Inaluk a salué Niam, et qu'il est reparti, j'ai eu l'impression d'être inachevé, comme un sourd qui aurait vu des musiciens jouer, sans jamais entendre leur musique. (36)

Si, comme Simon Harel le rappelle, "parler au nom de l'autre, telle est bien [. . .] la fonction de toute narration" (17), Yves Thériault a choisi un défi de taille en prenant comme thème la psyché inuit. Nous avons vu qu'il réussit admirablement à présenter des face-à-face Blancs/Inuit équilibrés qui font ressortir tout le côté "autre" de la situation pour chacun des protagonistes. Notre analyse a pourtant fait ressortir la *présence* constante de voix "autres," parfois en sourdine, parfois au premier plan, qui ne permet à Thériault de faire totalement corps ni avec ses personnages, ni avec l'intrigue qu'il propose, ni avec la langue dans laquelle ils s'expriment. Beaulieu n'a sans doute pas tort lorsqu'il indique que Thériault n'aimait pas "raconter sa vie et ne le fit jamais, même par personnages interposés dans ses romans" (124). Il serait effectivement difficile de trouver dans *Agaguk* des références biographiques pertinentes, mais il serait encore plus difficile de soutenir que ce texte colle parfaitement à la réalité physique et culturelle qu'il prétend décrire. André Renaud et Réjean Robidoux ont sans doute vu plus juste en énonçant que "derrière les nombreux personnages que livre cette œuvre volumineuse, se cache Yves Thériault lui-même" (92). Sur la base de ces remarques, d'aucuns diront peut-être que, lorsque Thériault annonce en "Avertissement" qu'il va décrire les Esquimaux "tels qu'ils étaient dans les années quarante," il est coupable d'une manipulation semblable à la radio des Blancs qu'il accuse de pervertir de l'intérieur le discours des "Inuit vrais" (*Tayaout* 73).

En 1967, Rénald Bérubé avait déjà dit d'*Agaguk* que c'était "une œuvre multiple" (75). Si ses commentaires se limitaient à la technique romanesque

de Thériault, au terme de notre étude, nous ne pouvons que confirmer son jugement et ajouter que ce texte se prête, aujourd'hui encore, à une lecture des plus productives.

Vice-versa, ce roman nous a permis d'illustrer la justesse des principes posés par Landowski; et nous devons, en dernière instance, nous défendre de les avoir détournés de leur cadre initial, car les "nous" et "ici" qu'il définit correspondent à une position d'intellectuel parisien de race blanche. N'est-ce donc pas outrepasser les limites de ses idées que de mettre en relation "l'assurance propre aux autochtones"—celle des Français envers les immigrés venus s'installer chez eux (16-19)—avec celle du village de Ramook envers les Montagnais, d'Agaguk envers sa propre tribu et des Inuit envers les policiers blancs? Nous pensons, au contraire, qu'il serait erroné de vouloir circonscrire ces réflexions aux seules conditions de leur énonciation. Pour qu'elles possèdent une validité irréfutable, ne faut-il pas, si elles fonctionnent pour une position d'identité donnée (le "nous" des Blancs), qu'elles soient tout aussi efficaces à partir de la position d'altérité correspondante (le "nous" des autres)? *Agaguk* nous a permis de faire ressortir la réversibilité de ces principes qui leur donne une portée universelle—à confirmer toutefois dans des textes plus strictement "autochtones"—tant sur le plan anthropologique qu'au niveau sociopolitique plus large qui en découle.

NOTES

1 Il serait intéressant de voir ce qu'il advient du jeu des figures de l'Autre dans les autres romans de "la trilogie inuit" de Thériault.

2 Nous savons que nous élargissons considérablement le propos de Landowski (qui identifie l'"autre" à partir d'une position de référence française): notre étude servira ainsi à tester les réflexions qu'il propose sur l'altérité tant "sur le plan du vécu individuel que celui de la conscience collective" (16) pour voir s'il est aussi possible d'appliquer ces notions au monde des autochtones. D'autres avant lui s'étaient intéressés à l'altérité, mais ce sont ses commentaires particulièrement pointus qui ont inspiré cette étude.

3 Nous écrivons le terme "présence" en italiques chaque fois que nous y attachons les connotations définies par Landowski.

4 Par souci de concision, et puisque *Agaguk* est un texte célèbre, nous ne citons généralement que les pages de référence.

5 C'est par cette technique artificielle que Thériault inclut les éléments "autres" de la culture autochtone qui importent à une bonne compréhension du texte.

6 McTavish est aussi un être composite, puisque sang-mêlé d'Esquimau et d'Ojibwé (63-72).

7 Petite clarification apportée par Hervé Le Tellier dans son livre, mi-journal de voyage, mi-roman épistolaire, *Inukshuk, l'homme debout*: "*Inuit* est le pluriel (trois personnes ou plus) d'*Inuk*, qui fait référence à une personne. *Inuuk* se rapporte à deux personnes" (86). Fait intéressant, il y mentionne un garçonnet qui s'appelle lui aussi Agaguk. . . .

8 Rapports conflictuels, et ce, malgré une parenté qui ne saurait être éloignée: l'appellation "Montagnais" a été donnée au XVII[e] siècle par les Français à un peuple qui s'appelait lui-même "Innu"—nom assez rapproché de "Inuit" et ayant le même sens, "les hommes" (Shepard Krech III 178).

9 S'il est vrai que l'article d'Émond traite surtout d'*Ashini*, un grand nombre de ses remarques s'appliquent très bien à *Agaguk*.

10 Dans ce document autobiographique, Mowat traite de la disparition d'une tribu inuit provoquée par une succession de famines (dans lesquelles les Blancs avaient d'ailleurs la responsabilité principale). Mowat y rappelle que des familles entières ont péri pour avoir placé les liens familiaux au-dessus de la stricte logique de la survie (172). Il met ainsi en garde les "moralistes" qui osent traiter les Inuit de "peuple barbare et bestial" (notre traduction) alors qu'ils n'ont jamais été confrontés à ce dilemme (173).

11 Selon Le Tellier, ces notions d'identité sexuelle sont nettement plus complexes: "à la naissance [. . .] un garçon peut recevoir le nom de sa grand-mère, ou une fille celui de son grand-père. Le garçon sera alors appelé 'maman' par sa propre mère, tandis que lui appellera sa mère 'ma fille'. On lui apprendra tout ce que doit savoir une fille: coudre, tenir la maison. Et il ne deviendra un homme que lorsque, justement, il deviendra un homme" (55).

12 Lorsque Thériault fait dire à Iriook "Au village, j'ai vu une femme qui en avait" (77), il semble avoir oublié que celle qui portait cette robe n'était autre que la Montagnaise haïe par Agaguk. . . .

13 Plusieurs policiers entrent en jeu, mais ils portent le même uniforme bleu et représentent le même pouvoir blanc . . . et anglophone.

14 L'auteur canadien James Houston en donne une excellente illustration dans *The White Dawn* (246-56). Bien que les trois naufragés ne soient pas dans une situation de pouvoir, c'est leur simple *présence* qui provoquera le dénouement tragique.

15 Dans *Amarok* de Bernard Clavel, c'est ainsi que les Inuit font aussi disparaître toute trace des deux fugitifs (251-52).

16 Le double titrage des chapitres (en inuktitut en grosses majuscules, puis en français en petites majuscules) semble vouloir donner la préséance au point de vue autochtone. Au crédit d'Yves Thériault, nous devons reconnaître que ses jugements outranciers sur les Inuit sont rares: "L'Inuk est rarement capable d'un tel raisonnement. Il tue comme il aime, comme il mange, comme il se débarrasse d'une puce au poil" (185), "Tout cela n'était pas bien raisonné en son âme de primitif" (238).

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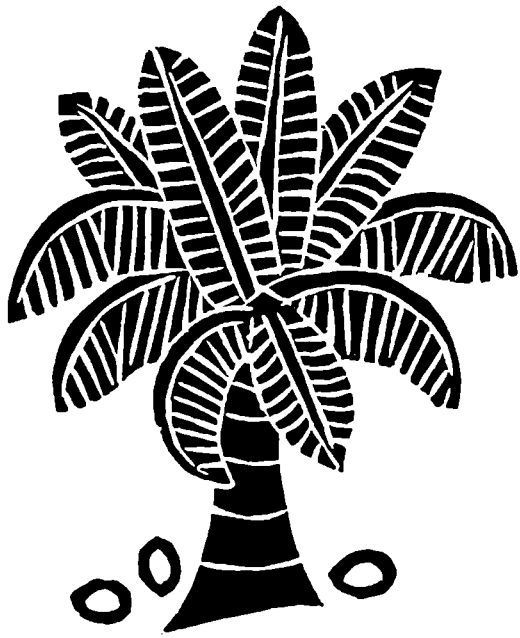

Grell V. Grant

A Winter Prayer

Outside this leafless
world, a slow fire
burns, the old cross

currents awaken. The wings I hear
beating against the north
wind are

my own. Sweet night beyond
the painful embrace of snow
and ice, flaming summer

light, open your red
petals. One by one,
gild my life

less dreams, and lift my body
out of this deep
dark winter. O patron

of exiles, unlock my December
fortress. Let me
sleep in the heart

of your blazing
tropical waves. Fiery
night, your eyes

glow much too far
away. Begin your fateful
voyage: orbit the cloudless

lantern, your wandering
star, closer to this
northern sky.

Wendy Roy

"Here is the picture as well as I can paint it"

Anna Jameson's Illustrations for *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*

Theoretical and descriptive analyses of travel writing often warn against reading such narratives as "straightforward transcriptions of the lives of the [. . .] travellers" (Mills 36) or "straightforwardly as eyewitnesses' reports" (MacLaren 41). Indeed, most contemporary readers and researchers accept the premise that travel narratives, like other prose narratives, are constructed and shaped for specific purposes and within specific cultural and social contexts. Paradoxically, however, analyses of travel writing often present the sketches, maps, and photographs that accompany those narratives as more or less straightforward illustrations of places, people, and landscapes. This unexamined approach to illustration is evident in the way that such images are often reprinted in studies of travel writing without much critical comment, as if they were merely methods of representing visually the travel writers and the places they visited. For example, all of the illustrations in Dorothy Middleton's *Victorian Lady Travellers* (1965), Mary Russell's *The Blessings of a Good Thick Skirt* (1986), and Dea Birkett's *Spinsters Abroad* (1989) are included only in order to show readers the women travellers and writers. Similarly, in her 1994 *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa*, Alison Blunt includes some of Kingsley's photographs for illustration, but never analyzes the photos themselves, or the sometimes contradictory relationships of gender and imperialism they exemplify.

Visual representations of travel are never value-free, since they are inflected by—and demonstrate—their creators' often complex subject positions. Nineteenth-century drawings and paintings in particular illustrate negotiations of the "tensions and contradictions of colonialist doctrines and practices"

(Tobin 1). These tensions and contradictions are evident in the pencil sketches, etchings, and a few pen sketches and watercolours that Anna Brownell Jameson produced on an 1837 journey in Canada. Although the sketches illustrate the travels Jameson described in her 1838 book *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, they were not published with the book. Only eight of the sketches and etchings have ever been published, and they have been discussed by only a few commentators, mostly in terms of their illustrative or artistic value (Gerry, York). I argue, however, that they can be viewed not only as works of art, not only as ethnographic and topographic records, but also as representations of Jameson's literal and figurative progress beyond what she calls "the bounds of civilised humanity" (*Winter Studies* 3: 163).[1] "Read" alongside her travel book, these sketches correspond with and contradict her textual descriptions of the landscapes and peoples she encountered. Together, the two media demonstrate the way in which complex constructions of self and other are shaped by the politics of colonialism, "race," culture, class, and gender.

Jameson was already an established English writer of biography and travel narratives when she visited Canada from December 1836 to September 1837. She had illustrated some of her own books and would later publish several books of art criticism (including the well-known two-volume *Sacred and Legendary Art* [1848], which she also illustrated).[2] After spending six months in Toronto with her estranged husband, Attorney-General of Upper Canada Robert Jameson, she embarked in June 1837 on a two-month trip by carriage and cart to Niagara Falls and the western regions of Upper Canada, through Detroit via steamship to the American island of Mackinac in Lake Huron, from thence to Sault Ste. Marie and Manitoulin Island by *bateau* (a small boat with oars and sails), and finally to Penetanguishene via canoe. Like Jameson's published account of her travels, her illustrations document her journey by focusing on her responses to Canadian landscapes, First-Nations cultures, and the tensions inherent in the relationship between the European colonists and the First-Nations groups they were displacing. Her own position within the British imperial venture and her responses to the doctrines of Romantic landscape discourse sometimes lead her to construct First-Nations peoples as part of the scenery, or as "types" or ethnographic specimens. At other times, Jameson individualizes First-Nations acquaintances to the extent that their features are distinct and their portraits are named. She also puts herself in the picture, providing complex visual constructions of the pre- to early-

Victorian woman traveller that enrich and challenge parallel textual representations in her book.

Jameson's illustrations from her "rambles" in Canada and the United States are collected in two main locations: fifty-six pencil sketches, one pen sketch, and four watercolours are in an album in the Toronto Public Library's reference collection, while five etchings (all but one based on a specific album sketch) are held by the Royal Ontario Museum. The album was long the property of a Toronto family, but was first loaned to the Toronto reference library, then donated in 2000. Because of its long private ownership, only three of its sketches have previously been reproduced, along with the five etchings, in a 1958 pamphlet introduced by G. H. Needler and titled *Early Canadian Sketches*.[3] Jameson may have herself created the etchings; certainly she wrote during her early days in Canada of preparing etchings for publication in a new edition of *Characteristics of Women* (*Anna Jameson* 140-41). Henry Scadding, whom Jameson met in Sorel, Quebec, on her return journey from Toronto to New York in the autumn of 1837, notes that she "had with her numerous beautiful water-colour sketches taken during her late tour, together with many etchings by her own hand" (11).

Throughout her book, Jameson repeatedly mentions the activity of sketching. In the section in which she describes a spring visit to Niagara Falls, she notes that when she sat down to draw the falls, "in a moment the paper was wet through" (2: 73). She later mentions sketching a rude inn near Chatham (2: 225) and scenery on Mackinac (3: 152), and carrying a sketchbook with her on the return canoe trip down Lake Huron (3: 315). She also describes scenes that she sketches, including Mackinac beach; the lodge near Sault Ste. Marie of Wayish,ky; and her journeys, including representations of herself and her travelling companions in sleigh, *bateau*, and canoe. Jameson begins to enjoy Toronto only in the spring, when she can sit and sketch the lake and at the same time describe it as a Romantic landscape in the journal that later became her book; as she writes, "Sat at the window drawing, or rather not drawing, but with a pencil in my hand. This beautiful Lake Ontario! [. . .]—it changed its hues every moment, the shades of purple and green fleeting over it, now dark, now lustrous, now pale—like a dolphin dying" (1: 291). She then points out the poetic roots of her description and mocks the excesses of Romantic poetry by adding, "or, to use a more exact though less poetical comparison, dappled, and varying like the back of a mackarel" (1: 291). Jameson's American host on Mackinac Island, Indian agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, took note of her artistic endeavours. In his *Personal Memoirs*, he wrote:

> She is, herself, an eminent landscape painter, or rather sketcher in crayon, and had her portfolio ever in hand. She did not hesitate freely to walk out to prominent points, of which the island has many, to complete her sketches. [. . .] She took a very lively interest in the Indian race, and their manners and customs, doubtless with views of benevolence for them as a peculiar race of man, but also as a fine subject of artistic observation. (561-62)

Schoolcraft thus identified Jameson's sketches as evidence of an interest in landscape and indigenous peoples that was artistic on one hand, and documentary or ethnographic on the other.

As well as sketching landscapes and peoples she encountered, Jameson also occasionally included herself as a figure in her drawings, representing not what she observed but what she experienced. One illustration, of which two slightly different versions exist in the form of a sketch and an etching, is of the winter journey to St. Catharines that Jameson made with "Mr. Campbell, the clerk of the assize" (1: 36; Fig. 1).[4] The sketch, labelled "Journey to Niagara, along the shores of Lake Ontario, January 1837," shows a man driving a sleigh while a lone woman sits in the back, her face turned toward the viewer.[5] This sketch demonstrates the process of travel and provides a chronology—Jameson travelled through this area, at this point in time—and thus reinforces and complements her written version of her experience. Indeed, the background scenery matches her textual descriptions of "spaces of cleared or half-cleared land, spotted over with the black charred stumps and blasted trunks of once magnificent trees, projecting from the snow drift," and of "wide openings [. . .] bringing us in sight of Lake Ontario, and even in some places down upon the edge of it" (1: 66).

Jameson's realistic and often negative textual and visual portrayals of that landscape can be compared to Catharine Parr Traill's descriptions in *The Backwoods of Canada* of the "odious stumps that disfigure the clearings" of the Canadian land through which she travelled (111), and to the woodcuts that illustrate those descriptions. Traill's text is nearly contemporaneous with Jameson's (and indeed, Clara Thomas [239 n.11.4] and Judith Johnston [111] speculate that Jameson read Traill's 1836 book before she came to Canada). As with Jameson, Traill's publishers chose not to use illustrations by her, although she could theoretically have supplied them.[6] Instead, publisher Charles Knight commissioned illustrations from a London firm (Thompson 31), causing Traill to complain later about the "wretched prints many of them miserable reprints from the Penny Magazine and not one descriptive of Canadian scenery" (qtd. in Peterman xlix).

Fig. 1. "Journey to Niagara, along the Shores of Lake Ontario, January 1837," pencil sketch by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-4.*

Because the artists are not credited in the book and the engravings appear to illustrate Traill's words, they can easily be mistaken for her work, despite discrepancies between text and woodcuts. Traill's book was presented as a guide for British settlers, and thus the publisher's woodcuts portray the landscape as more tidy and idyllic than her descriptions in the text. They also diverge widely from similar scenes sketched and described by Jameson, whose goal was to provide both a record of her own travels and an artistic, documentary, and ethnographic record of the people and landscape she encountered. Thus, while Jameson's sketch shows her alone in the back of a sleigh being driven through a blasted landscape, facing the viewer with an almost beseeching expression on her face (Fig. 1), Traill's illustrators present one idyllic picture of a nicely dressed couple being driven through a picturesque winter landscape and another of orderly fields of cleared stumps, with a zigzag fence diagonally bisecting the scene and pointing to the sun breaking through in the background (65, 129). Similarly, the illustration in Traill's book of a log cabin set among tall pine trees, with cattle in the foreground and a woman hanging clothes at the side, can be contrasted to Jameson's bleak portrayal of a log inn in denuded land encountered on her journey (Traill 95; Jameson album sketch 15).[7]

Although Jameson's drawings were completed by someone on the scene rather than by illustrators who had little or no first-hand knowledge of the area, her sketches are clearly also designed to convey a specific point of view. While her visual representation of the sleigh journey shows her as the only passenger, in the textual description of the same trip Jameson makes it clear that she and Campbell were in fact accompanied by at least one other man (1: 74).[8] Jameson's sleigh sketch is in part an illustration of her repeated and to some extent inaccurate claim that she was the first of her kind to make such a journey, and that she made that journey alone. She writes to her mother on 17 August 1837 that she is "the first Englishwoman—the first European female who ever accomplished this journey" (*Anna Jameson* 157) and, in the preface to her book, claims to be the first both to experience such adventures and to write about them: "While in Canada, I was thrown into scenes and regions hitherto undescribed by any traveller, [. . .] and into relations with the Indian tribes, such as few European women of refined and civilised habits have ever risked, and none have recorded" (1: vi). This passage is remarkable for the way that emphasizes the value of both doing and recording, and presents Jameson as "refined" and "civilised." As someone "refined," she is different from most British women in Canada, who are settlers from the lower classes. As someone "civilised," she is distinguished from the Aboriginal women she encounters. Her refinement and civilization thus allow her to claim to be "first," although other women, certainly First-Nations women and possibly other European women, have gone before her.[9]

Visual representations that emphasize her gender, her class, and her cultural origins support Jameson's textual claims that she will make her "summer rambles" alone. She writes, "I shall have neither companion nor man-servant, nor *femme de chambre*, nor even a 'little foot-page' to give notice of my fate, should I be swamped in a bog, or eaten up by a bear, or scalped, or disposed of in some strange way" (2: 8), and "Meantime I was alone—alone—and on my way to that ultimate somewhere of which I knew nothing" (2: 36-37). The language used to describe her journey thus emphasizes solitude even where that solitude is entirely figurative. Jameson was never truly alone on her journey—other people, and sometimes large groups of people, conveyed her from one place to another and provided accommodation—but she was often without the companionship of friends or acquaintances of her own economic, cultural, and social position, and she was sometimes without female companionship.

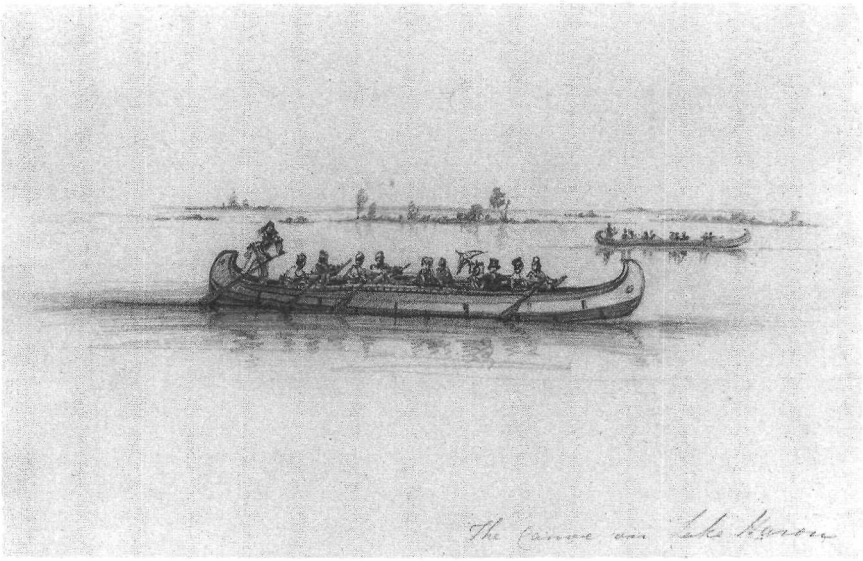

Fig. 2. "The canoe on Lake Huron," pencil sketch by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-35.*

Jameson's sketch of her return trip from Manitoulin to Penetanguishene by canoe represents that figurative solitude (Fig. 2). In her narrative, Jameson describes travelling in two canoes with "twenty-one men, and myself, the only woman" (3: 316). Her sketch shows two birchbark canoes carrying eleven people each, with the four passengers Jameson identifies in her book sitting in the middle to front sections of the foreground canoe: the son of Lieutenant-Governor Francis Bond Head; the interpreter, Solomon; Jameson herself; and the superintendent of Indian affairs, Samuel Peters Jarvis (3: 314-15). Two Métis paddlers sit in the bow with four in the back half of the canoe, recognizable not only because each wields a paddle but also because each wears "a handkerchief twisted round the head" (3: 316). The "Indian steersman, Martin," stands in the stern.

In the illustration, Jameson is on the side closest to the viewer, her face in profile and shielded by a bonnet that, along with the parasol she mentions in the text, identify her as the lone woman (3: 315). Beside her is a man also looking at the viewer and wearing a top hat, which identifies him as a gentleman: Mr. Jarvis. The illustration provides documentary visual evidence of Jameson's experience on her journey, and at the same time represents in concrete terms her solitude in terms of gender, and her femininity, gentility,

and cultural origins.[10] Bonnets and parasols are appurtenances of the European woman who must protect herself from the coarsening rays of the sun in order to preserve that distinctive marker of race, white skin. As Scadding noted when he met her in Sorel,

> The hands of Mrs. Jameson were remarkably beautiful. How their extreme whiteness and delicacy were preserved during the unavoidable inconveniences and exposures of the recent extensive canoe trip was a mystery, but I think in relation to some allusion to this escape I overheard a strong hint given to one of her young lady friends, that never under any circumstances must the hands be ungloved for one moment in the out-of-door air, or sun light, a precept enforced by a reiterated emphatic *never*. (12)

Jameson does not emphasize her use of gloves in *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*, but she does write about her parasol and she does illustrate herself with both parasol and bonnet. In a subsequent letter to one of her companions on the journey, an Anishinabe-Irish woman named Charlotte McMurray with whom Jameson became friends, Jameson writes that despite the care she took of her complexion, "it was however many days before my poor swelled & sunburnt face recovered its usual paleness" (Letter).[11]

In Jameson's references to drawings that do not portray herself on her journey, but instead show landforms, settlements, or other people, she draws explicit parallels between what she sketches and what she writes by using similar language to describe the two activities. Of her arrival at Mackinac, she writes, "a scene burst at once on my enchanted gaze, such as I never had imagined, such as I wish I could place before you in words,—but I despair, unless words were of light, and lustrous hues, and breathing music. However, here is the picture as well as I can paint it" (3: 24). Jameson did sketch this scene in pencil, and although her sketch is significantly less poetic than her textual introduction, it shows Mackinac to be much as she subsequently finds words to describe (Fig. 3). In that description, Jameson uses the word "picturesque"—which William Gilpin defined in 1781 as "that peculiar kind of beauty, which is agreeable in a picture" (xii)—to refer to both land and dwellings. She also invokes a Eurocentric sense of nobility and grandeur in the landscape:

> Immediately in front rose the abrupt and picturesque heights of the island, robed in richest foliage, and crowned by the lines of the little fortress, snow-white and gleaming in the morning light. At the base of these cliffs, all along the shore, immediately on the edge of the lake, which, transparent and unruffled, reflected every form as in a mirror, an encampment of Indian wigwams extended far as my eye could reach on either side. Even while I looked, the inmates were beginning to bestir themselves, and dusky figures were seen emerging into sight from their

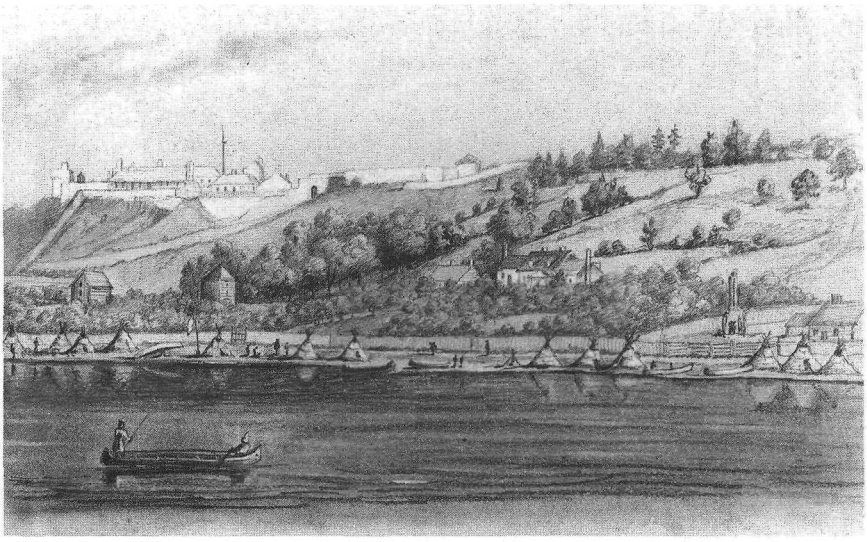

Fig. 3. "Island of Mackinaw — Lake Huron," pencil sketch by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-22.*

> picturesque dormitories, and stood gazing on us with folded arms, or were busied about their canoes, of which some hundreds lay along the beach. (3: 24-25)

As evidence of its status as base for the colonizing forces, the island is "robed" in trees and "crowned" by the fort, like an imperial monarch, while its inmates—the Anishinabe—are stereotypically "dusky" figures in "picturesque" dwellings.

As her use of the word "picturesque" demonstrates, Jameson's response to scenery and people in Upper Canada is part of the Romantic tradition.[12] She often employs a kind of painterly language to describe landscape, as in the above description of Mackinac. Introductory phrases such as "On the East," "On the opposite side," "Immediately in front," and "At the base" (3: 24-25), as well as a descriptive progression "from foreground to middle ground to distance," help "to place and orient the viewer" (Glickman 9). In a 1986 discussion of Jameson's landscape descriptions, Lorraine York suggests that "in *Winter Studies* one witnesses the frustrating attempt to apply artistic criteria of form and symmetry to a wild, recalcitrant landscape" (51). The result, York contends, is that Jameson's description of the expansiveness of Canadian landscape "is not one of awesome grandeur, but one of barren desolation" (47). I would argue, however, that for Jameson the Canadian

landscape in fact epitomizes the elements of awe and fear inherent in the Romantic sublime. An example is the passage in which Jameson depicts a campsite menaced by fire during her trip from Sault Ste. Marie to Manitoulin. She writes, "Wildly magnificent it was! beyond all expression beautiful, and awful too!" (3: 259), and notes that the scene at first "delighted" members of her party, but then inspired them with "fear" (3: 258). Indeed, Jameson's approach to landscape evokes the attitude toward danger that Susan Glickman identifies when she points to "the *prestige* of terror as an aesthetic category during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (45).

This valorization of terror is a characteristic of scenic tourism, which Elizabeth Bohls suggests "inscribed disinterestedness on the landscape, constructing scenes through its process of detachment from the material specificity of land and people's practical connection to it" (103). The aestheticization of scenery by early nineteenth-century artists and travellers was criticized by at least some of their contemporaries. Henry Schoolcraft suggested in 1837 that visitors to Mackinac, including Jameson, often attempted to distance themselves from what they saw by aestheticizing it. He wrote that the Englishmen and Englishwomen who visited him had difficulty realizing that what they were looking at existed, because they "look on America very much as one does when he peeps through a magnifying glass on pictures of foreign scenes, and the picturesque ruins of old cities." He concluded that "even Mrs. Jameson, who had the most accurate and artistic eye of all, [. . .] appeared to regard our vast woods, and wilds, and lakes, as a magnificent panorama, a painting in oil" (566). In this passage, Schoolcraft astutely points to the depersonalizing and simultaneous containment inherent in "picturesque" approaches to landscape.

Such detachment is evident in Jameson's narrative in her use of the visual term "picturesque" to describe the First-Nations people she encountered. When applied to individuals on Mackinac, "picturesque" comes to mean primarily the odd or curious. Jameson tells her reader that she wishes she could make a "sketch" of the people she sees in more than words: "There was not a figure among them that was not a study for a painter; and how I wished that my hand had been readier with the pencil to snatch some of those picturesque heads and attitudes! But it was all so new—I was so lost in gazing, listening, observing, and trying to comprehend, that I could not make a single sketch for you, except the above, in most poor and inadequate words" (3: 48). The effect of this initial description of Ojibwa and Odawa

peoples—which again metaphorically aligns writing with drawing—is to distance herself from them; they are not people, but objects to be delineated by her pencil and sketchpad. Her use of the languages of landscape and literature to refer to people romanticizes them, reinforces their difference, and at the same time defines and contains them. Although they are "other," if they can be written about using the idiom with which Jameson is familiar, they are both knowable and controllable.

In her early sketches in Canada, Jameson also contains First-Nations individuals by using compositional strategies, common to Romantic landscape painting, that position them as small figures in the foreground or middle distance to give the scene life and provide a sense of scale (Bohls 96). In one of her three sketches of Niagara Falls, for example, she places a figure of a man with feathers in his hair, leaning on a lance, in the upper foreground (Fig. 4).[13] According to Tzvetan Todorov, indigenous peoples "constitute a part of the landscape, [. . .] somewhere between birds and trees" for explorers and other travellers. This conclusion is too sweeping by far, but Jameson's representation of the man next to the waterfall undoubtedly associates him with the forces of nature, and also contains him by portraying him as just one part of an artistic representation of landscape. At the same time, it puts Romantic landscape conventions into effect by using him to provide perspective and measurement.

The Niagara Falls sketch was made early in Jameson's travels, before she had become well acquainted with any Aboriginal people and before she could provide the more integrated portrayal of them apparent in the third volume of her book. This more integrated approach is evident, I would argue, in the head-and-shoulders sketch that Jameson made of two Odawa elders she met on Mackinac and Manitoulin, labelled with their names: "Mokomaun ish" and "Kee me wun" (Fig. 5). Jameson writes about "Kee me wun" or "Kim,e,wun," a name she translates as "the Rain, or rather 'it rains'" (3: 53-54), at least three times in her book (see also 3: 138, 272). In her account of her early days on Mackinac, she describes him as

> one of the noblest figures I ever beheld, above six feet high, erect as a forest pine. A red and green handkerchief was twined round his head with much elegance, and knotted in front, with the two ends projecting; his black hair fell from beneath it, and his small black piercing eyes glittered from among its masses, like stars glancing through the thunder clouds. His ample blanket was thrown over his left shoulder, and brought under his right arm, so as to leave it free and exposed; and a sculptor might have envied the disposition of the whole drapery—it was so felicitous, so richly graceful. (3: 54)

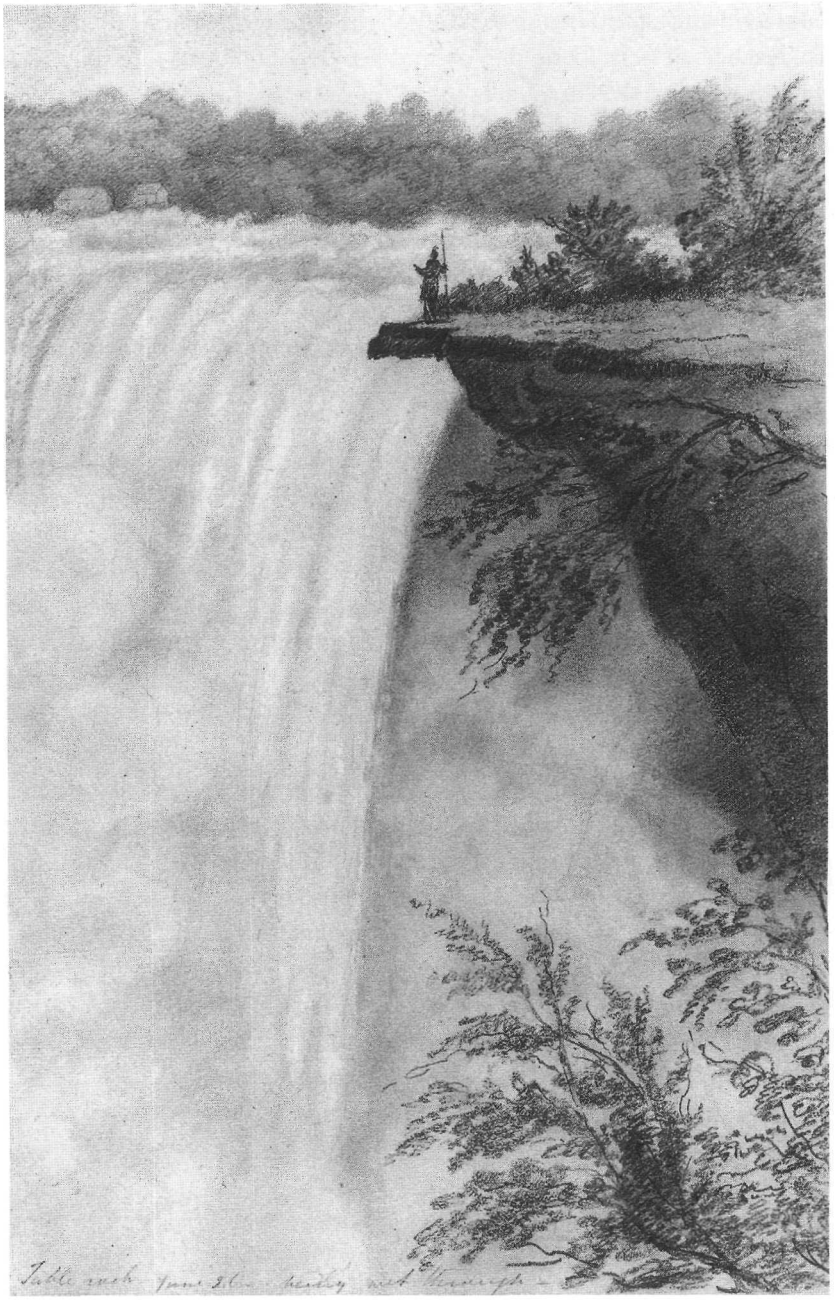

Fig. 4. "Table Rock, June 26, being wet through," pencil sketch by Anna Jameson.
Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-10.

Fig. 5. "Mokomaun ish" and "Kee me wun," pencil sketches by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-58.*

In this passage, Jameson interprets Kim,e,wun through the trope of the noble savage, a habit of mind evident in other descriptions of her First-Nations acquaintances.[14] While her allusions to pine trees and stars also equate Kim,e,wun with nature, the description of his blanket characterizes him as a work of art—a sculpture—and thus to some extent objectifies and contains him. Indeed, in sculptural terms, Jameson's head-and-shoulders drawing presents a kind of "bust." The rather rough sketch was likely made during a meeting between Indian agents and First-Nations groups on Mackinac at which Jameson recognized individual characteristics of which she approved in the men she encountered, while at the same time representing them as objects of artistic study; she writes of "five or six who had good heads—well developed, intellectual, and benevolent [. . .] my friend the Rain [. . .] conspicuous among them" (3: 138). Another possible occasion for the sketch is a gathering later at Manitoulin when she saw her "old acquaintance the Rain, looking magnificent" (3: 272).

At that second gathering, Jameson twice identifies the other figure on the portrait page. She notices one of the "remarkable chiefs of the Ottawas [. . .] Mocomaun,ish, (the Bad-knife)" (3: 272-73), then writes that when superintendent Jarvis stopped speaking to the council, "a fine Ottawa chief (I think

Mokomaun,ish) arose, and spoke at some length" (3: 285). The portrait of Mokomaun,ish (labelled Mokomaun ish) shows a man with a serious expression; his face is turned away from the observer in three-quarter profile, and his eyes appear to gaze at the side of the page. The drawing of Kim,e,wun (labelled Kee me wun) portrays him facing in the same direction, in complete profile. Ann Maxwell points out in *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions* that artistic representations in which the subjects are turned from the viewer and thus are not allowed to return the viewer's gaze are the most objectifying (13-14). Since Mokomaun,ish and Kim,e,wun turn away from the observer, it could be argued that these men are presented primarily as objects of the artist's and viewer's gaze. On the other hand, Beth Fowkes Tobin contends in *Picturing Imperial Power* that portraits by definition "imply an empowered subject. However delicate and complex the negotiations among sitter, artist, and patron, portraits are of somebody: an individual with a name, a family, and a home" (17). While the men in Jameson's portraits do not gaze at the observer, they have at least "achieved the status of subjects" in that both are represented as individuals (Tobin 17). As an exemplification of that status, their names are attached to their images, they are described in the text, and an attempt has been made in each portrait to capture distinctive features.[15]

In his 1990 analysis of Jameson's sketches and watercolours, Thomas Gerry refers to five "close-up portraits of individuals" which he suggests show evidence of "warm contact with the native people" (45). Gerry does not, however, point to the head-and-shoulders portraits of Kim,e,wun and Mokomaun,ish, possibly because the page of the album on which they are pasted is incorrectly labelled to indicate that the portraits were drawn on Jameson's return trip to England through the United States.[16] The five illustrations that Gerry mentions are not what I would define as portraits—none of the people in them is named or identifiable—and do not represent any of the people with whom Jameson had "warm contact."[17] Instead, these five full-figure illustrations signal the intense interest of the ethnographer in what she sees on her journey. They provide examples of what Tobin calls, in another context, "a visual description of what were presented as specimens of exotic species" (145). Indeed, the sketches graphically represent Jameson's repeated textual use of the word "specimen" to refer to First-Nations individuals (see for example 1: 26, 2: 33, and 3: 275, 276). Included among them are a pen sketch of a woman carrying a baby in a cradle on her back (Fig. 6), a watercolour of a grouping of three adults and a child (Fig. 7), and three watercolours of

Fig. 6. Untitled pen and ink drawing of woman and child, by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-23.*

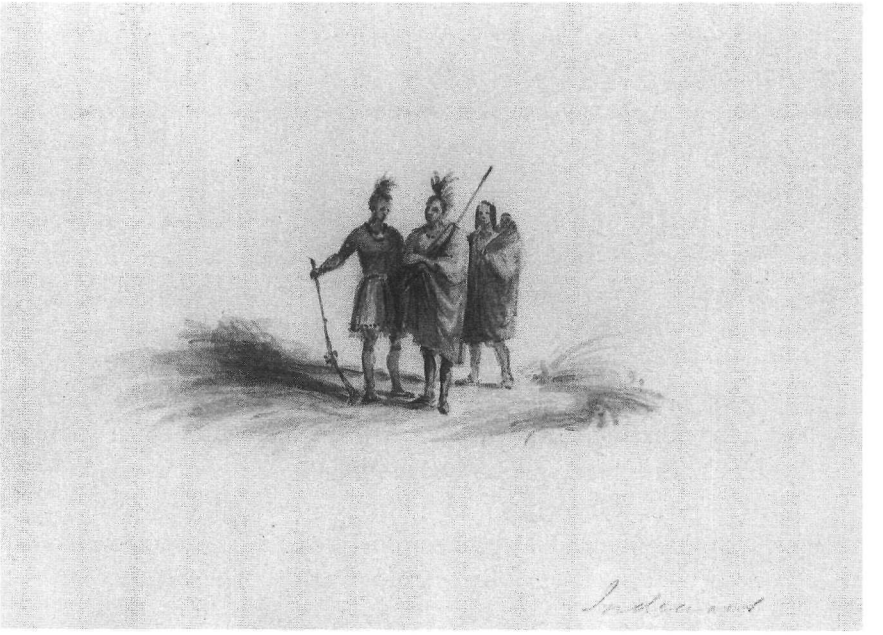

Fig. 7. "Indians," watercolour by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-37.*

men dancing (album sketches 27, 28a, and 28b; Fig. 8). All exemplify descriptions in Jameson's book intended to give readers a "picture" of the peoples she encounters, and of their cultural artifacts and social practices, including their dress, their modes of transporting children, and their dances.

According to Tobin, "Ethnographic art, despite its focus on the human figure, does not share portraiture's goals of reproducing an individual's countenance and conveying a sense of the subject's character. Instead, ethnographic art seeks to represent the typical and to suppress the individual" (147). While these five pictures are unusual for Jameson in that they are in pen and watercolour, for the most part they represent types rather than (as her two pencil portraits have done) individuals. Thus her untitled pen sketch illustrates her description of women on Mackinac who carry babies in "curious bark cradles" (3: 30). Similarly, although the watercolour tableau of the three adults and a child has a sense of deliberate artistry rather than solely of scientific illustration, it is labelled at the bottom simply "Indians." These people are carefully posed, but the sketch is designed most of all to show dress, cultural practices, and, through the guns the men either carry or lean against, the encroachment of European technology.

In *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles,* Jameson describes in detail two separate dances put on for her benefit, one at Mackinac and the other at Manitoulin. In her watercolour sketches of three of the dancers in motion, none is recognizable as any one of the individuals she describes (3: 145-49, 292-94), and indeed none is named, unlike her portraits of Mokomaun,ish and Kim,e,wun. The men appear instead to be "types" of dancers, composites dressed in various combinations of loin-cloths, moccasins and leggings, beads, paint, and feathers. Because these sketches are in colour, all of the figures are portrayed with very dark skins; the paintings therefore have a documentary focus designed to emphasize cultural difference. At the same time, two of the men look directly at the observer, and each has distinctive features (see, for example, Fig. 8). Thus although these three dancers are clearly objects of ethnographic investigation, they are allowed some individuality and some engagement with the investigator and the viewer.

The three watercolours, like the descriptions of the dancers in Jameson's text, also exemplify her fascination with the men's state of undress: "Of their style of clothing, I say nothing," she writes, "—for, as it is wisely said, nothing can come of *nothing*" (3: 145). In his study of travel writing, Dennis Porter argues that "the shock of such encounters with naked or seminaked

Fig. 8. Untitled watercolour of man dancing, by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-28a.*

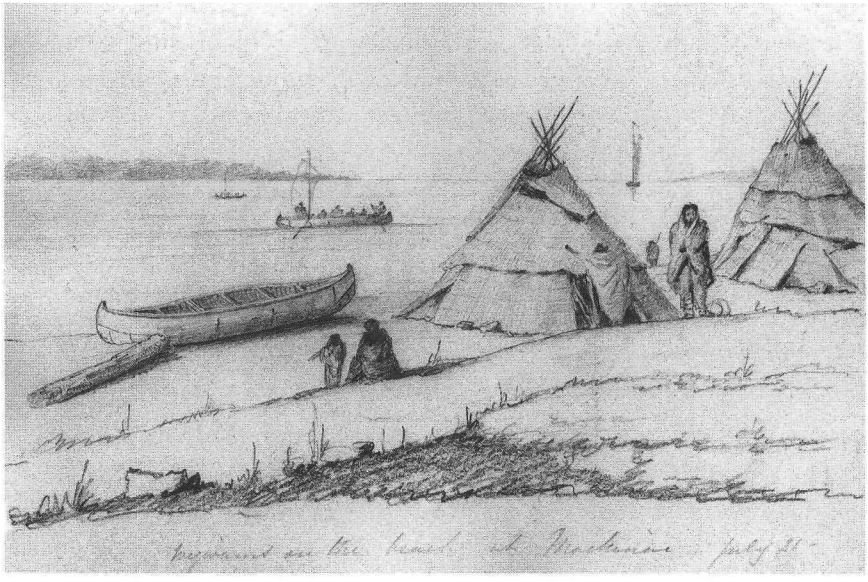

Fig. 9. "Wigwams on the beach at Mackinaw—July 21," pencil sketch by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-24.*

peoples of color seems to reside in the perception of similarity within radical difference" (12). Jameson's paintings register that shock, as do her textual accounts of the scene, which focus both on nakedness and on purported warlike tendencies. Earlier she has described in detail one individual, whom she provides with the European descriptor "dandy." She writes that "he had neither a coat nor any thing else that gentlemen are accustomed to wear; but then his face was most artistically painted [. . .]; and conspicuous above all, the eagle feather in his hair, showing he was a warrior, and had taken a scalp—*i.e.* killed his man" (3: 44). The juxtaposition of the words "dandy" and "gentlemen" with references to paint, feathers, and scalping emphasizes both the jarring juxtaposition of the familiar with the unfamiliar, and the fascination of the traveller with potential violence.

In other sketches, Jameson shows Anishinabe people who are also not individualized in terms of features, but at least are placed in relation to their natural surroundings, to everyday activities such as fishing or canoeing, and to their dwellings and their modes of transportation. An example is "Wigwams on the beach at Mackinaw—July 21," which shows tents, canoes, and people in a specific location on a specific date (Fig. 9). Jameson's documentary record is also sometimes explicitly tied to individuals whom she knew and described in detail. Her sketch of a lodge near Sault Ste. Marie illustrates both the dwelling of an Anishinabe man of high status and the dwelling of a warmly regarded acquaintance, the brother of her friend Susan Johnston (Fig. 10). It is labelled in a way that identifies it with an individual at a specific time and place: "Wayish-ky's Lodge—July 31, 1837." In her book, she writes:

> The lodge is of the genuine Chippewa form, like an egg cut in half lengthways. It is formed of poles stuck in the ground, and bent over at top, strengthened with a few wattles and boards; the whole is covered over with mats, birch-bark, and skins; a large blanket formed the door or curtain, which was not ungracefully looped aside. Wayish,ky, being a great man, has also a smaller lodge hard by, which serves as a storehouse and kitchen. (3: 186)

Jameson's description and the accompanying illustration can be compared to a painting by Paul Kane titled "Sault Ste. Marie, 1845" (Fig. 11). Kane's painting, of the same location eight years later, has very similar composition—lodges in the foreground, river in the middle distance, and the opposite shore in the background. While the painting is, like Jameson's sketch, clearly documentary, it exemplifies a much more deliberate sense of artistry, evident not only in the use of colour but also in the formal grouping of the

Fig. 10. "Wayish-ky's Lodge—July 31, 1837," pencil sketch by Anna Jameson. *Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library (TRL) 966-6L-31.*

Fig. 11. "Sault Ste. Marie, 1845," painting by Paul Kane. *Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada 912.1.9.*

central figures (who appear to represent the concept of the "noble savage"), the draping of blankets in doorways and over bushes, and the use of compositional features such as the large tree in the left foreground.

When Henry Schoolcraft described Jameson's 1837 visit to Mackinac Island, he linked her sketches to landscape paintings by the seventeenth-century French painter Claude, whose works epitomized Gilpin's notions of the picturesque (Brennan 16). Jameson's host wrote that when she "stepped out on the piazza and saw the wild Indians dancing; she evidently looked on with the eye of a Claude Lorraine or Michael Angelo [both *sic*]" (562). While Schoolcraft may have compared Jameson to well-known artists only because he wanted to stress her artistic activities, his comment also points to the Romantic containment of difference, the turning of people into parts of the landscape, evident in Claude's paintings and in some of Jameson's sketches and parts of her narrative. Bohls argues that women writers of the Romantic era made use of, but at the same time radically revised, the distancing aesthetic of the Romantic discourse of landscape. She suggests that their writings "point to the often inhumane consequences of denying the connection between aesthetic practices and the material, social, and political conditions of human existence" (10). Jameson's detailed and personalized descriptions and illustrations of Wayish,ky's lodge and of Mokomaun,ish and Kim,e,wun indeed render concrete the connection between aesthetic practice and practical human existence, unlike her other representations of First-Nations abodes and people as "picturesque" or as "types," and unlike Kane's painting or the illustrations for Traill's book. Although Jameson's ethnographic visual project at times slots First Nations into the classifications of natural history studies or of the picturesque, at other times it recognizes their status as human subjects. Studied alongside her visual representations of herself on her journey, Jameson's sketches of First-Nations individuals and settlements thus demonstrate the way in which imperialist and anti-imperialist discourses and discourses of femininity can both confirm and contradict each other.

NOTES

I would like to thank the Toronto Public Library for giving me access to Jameson's sketches, and Nathalie Cooke, Sherrill Grace, and the anonymous reviewers for *Canadian Literature* for their thoughtful comments on an earlier version of this article.

1 I quote from the 1838 three-volume edition of Jameson's work and retain, without comment, her idiosyncrasies of spelling, punctuation, and italicization.

2 Jameson set out from England at the beginning of October 1836 and did not return until February 1838, after having spent several months in the United States. Her previous publications included a fictionalized account of her travels in Italy (*The Diary of an Ennuyée* [1826]), three volumes of biography, a volume of literary criticism (*Characteristics of Women* [1832]), and a book based on her travels in Europe (*Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad* [1834]). Her subsequent pamphlets and books on art include *Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in or Near London* (1840), *Companion to the Private Galleries of Art in London* (1844), and *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters* (1845).

3 The album opens with a notice indicating that it was sold at auction in London, England, 20 Dec. 1886. As well as containing the 61 sketches and watercolours of the Canadian and American journey, it also includes 30 sketches showing Jameson's trip from England and travels in Europe. Thomas Gerry erroneously reports that none of the sketches has been published, but that Needler's booklet contains eight etchings based on the sketches (36). In fact, three of the eight illustrations in Needler's book appear to be reproductions of actual sketches from Jameson's album; four are etchings based on the sketches; and one is an etching that has no counterpart in the album, although it is a summer version of a winter scene represented in an album sketch.

4 In several other sketches of modes of travel, including an illustration of the second part of Jameson's sleigh journey from St. Catharines to Niagara with family friend John Lees Alma (album sketch 3; *Letters* 78 n.), and a sketch of a *bateau* near St. Joseph's island (album sketch 29), Jameson was probably also one of the figures pictured.

5 The differences between sketch and etching consist mostly in the stronger, darker lines of the etching, and in variations in the trees, stumps, and one of the horses. In both sketch and etching, the female figure is almost covered by furs, but turns her face toward the viewer; her features are more subtly drawn in the sketch, giving her a pensive expression.

6 Traill notes in one letter published in *The Backwoods of Canada* that she has attached a pen sketch of some of the flowers she describes (233).

7 Elizabeth Thompson argues that this picture "deviates from Traill's verbal representations of a similar site" because the stumps Traill describes "would preclude the picturesque by cluttering up the cleared space surrounding the cabin" (37).

8 In a letter to her friend Ottilie von Goethe, she does not name her companion in the sleigh, but writes that by her side was "a *thing*, of which you can form no conception, a *Canadian Dandy*" (*Letters* 77). Mr. Campbell, she notes in her book, was driving the sleigh (1: 65).

9 As Jameson later acknowledged, she was not the first traveller to describe Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie: Alexander Henry had included such descriptions in his 1809 *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories Between the Years 1760 and 1776*. She was not even the first woman: Harriet Martineau had included a brief description of the island in her 1837 *Society in America*.

10 In the etching of that scene in the Royal Ontario Museum's collection, space has been cropped from the perimeter to give the canoes more emphasis. In addition, the parasol and bonnet of the female figure are more prominent in the etching than in the sketch; the faces of Jarvis and Head are turned toward the viewer; and some of the handkerchiefs around the heads of the paddlers are replaced by hats.

11 Katharine Bassett Patterson kindly provided me with the transcription of this letter; see http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/projects/VWWLP/ for her useful database on the letters of Anna Jameson, Harriet Martineau, and their friends.

12 In *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape*, Susan Glickman demonstrates that the picturesque, as Gilpin initially envisioned it, at first incorporated aspects of both Edmund Burke's sublime, "that which awes or terrifies," and beautiful, "that which calms and pleases" (10-11). She suggests that the picturesque was redefined by later Romantic commentators until it came for the most part to represent the sublime. See Fowler (169), Freiwald (66), and Buss (54) for discussions of Jameson's sexualization and feminization of the Canadian landscape.

13 In contrast, the illustrators for Traill's book represent Montmorency Falls near Quebec City with a ship in the background, thus imbuing the landscape with the means for trade and settlement (23). Thompson argues that "While 'Falls of Montmorenci' does not recreate *what* Traill sees in her voyage [since Traill passed the falls at night], it is entirely faithful to *how* she sees and reports on the world around her" (35).

14 Jameson writes, for example, that the Anishinabe of Mackinac "realised all my ideas of the wild and lordly savage" (3: 30) and that she had never met with "a set of more perfect gentlemen, in *manner*" (3: 137).

15 The imaginative portrait of "Peter, the Chief" in Traill's book also shows the upper body of a man, his head and eyes directed slightly to the side (frontispiece).

16 The page is erroneously labelled "The Widow Forest's—Stockbridge. Where Harriet Martineau lodged." Several of the surrounding pages in the album are also mislabelled.

17 Although Jameson may have produced sketches of the Anishinabe friends she made on the trip, including Susan Johnston of Sault Ste. Marie and her daughters Charlotte McMurray and Jane Schoolcraft (wife of Henry Schoolcraft), they have not survived in her album or etchings.

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Making Places Happen

Michael Aleksiuk and Thomas Nelson, eds.
Landscapes of the Heart: Narratives of Nature and Self. NeWest $24.95

Laurie Ricou
The Arbutus/Madrone Files: Reading the Pacific Northwest. NeWest $34.95

Reviewed by Charles Dawson

Read or buy both these books! Ricou's *The Arbutus/Madrone Files* is a loving homage to story and place that remains alive to all the possibilities and limits of such a work. I am struck by the ways bi[bli]odiversity informs and extends the reach of this single work across "different limits and shifting centres." Its mix of confidence and respect recharged the field for me. The publishers describe the book as the first to focus on the Pacific Northwest as a literary region, specifically that area marked by the natural range of the *Arbutus menziesii*, spreading throughout Cascadia and across national borders. The tree name transforms at the 49th parallel; does anything else? That's just one part of the web of inquiries in this book that will appeal to readers of Canadian and U.S. literature, those who live in or know the Northwest (or are ready to reconceptualize the place) and indeed anyone who wants to see what good eco-criticism can look like. Just as the Northwest is many places and many stories, *The Arbutus /Madrone Files* is many books, focused by its generosity of attention and scholarship.

Ricou claims that "Our stories told and written many times make places happen." He honours the "delight and texture of place-writing," noting that "any conclusion is only one further extension of the binational region this book has been imagining, a pacific Northwest whose stories incorporate the transnational and the bio-regional." Inclusiveness, as reader and scholar, is one of Ricou's strengths: "With the writers gathering in this book, and with the arbutus/madrone trees of varied forms, I have learned to be at home—often uneasily—in a region that crosses the *pacific* with the *north* and again with the *west*." This sense of overlap and tension extends to Ricou's shrewd analysis of cross-cultural storying and silence.

Much of Ricou's poised scope comes from his use of "files" as a structural method. So notions of transposition (Intertidal File, Woodswords File) overlap (Rain File, Salmon File) to challenge cultural or critical complacency (and mighty seriousness). A generous series of "AfterFiles" discuss further readings and other details. In their self-contained but overlapping reference to a Canadian and a U.S. text, each file concentrates Ricou's assertion that "a regional literature and culture might be discovered where the boundary becomes indeterminate, perhaps it must be discovered in a shared ecology far too international to claim."

Ricou examines story and place in work by Daphne Marlatt, Ursula Le Guin, Ken Kesey, Joy Kogawa, David Wagoner, Jack Hodgins, Lee Maracle, Kim Stafford and

numerous others (including artists generously reproduced in the centre plates); he also looks at fundamentals like rain, salmon, and "things sasquatchian." Files often pair older work (Martin A. Grainger's "journey into the heart of Carr-ness," *Woodsmen of the West* [1908] and Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*, for instance) while tracking cultural and historical contexts. The mix is rich but not cloying. *Files* is an illuminating *and* enjoyable book. There's plenty that will bring readers closer to their own place stories, not least Ricou's own inclusiveness. His attention and commitment enliven and sustain the work of the critic in this time of scattered story and modified seed.

Both books under review are personal and political. In part, place writing attempts to align the cultural/aesthetic realm to the earth outside the text. *Landscapes of the Heart: Narratives of Nature and Self* suggests, from its title on, that this bridging work begins with an emotional response to place. Many of the essays link that personal response to subsequent political action. The essays inspire one to take up pen, placard and field book. Generally Alberta/BC based, they still refer to global issues (such as genetic modification and community work). Edward O. Wilson writes: "let us all be environmentalists, in order to avoid the ignorant mistakes of previous generations." All of the essayists share a passion for local places and intimate modes of belonging.

The essayist's desire to protect is often fuelled by a personal experience of habitat loss. Fondly recalled havens are altered or damaged, courtesy of local/transnational exigencies. Michael Aleksiuk's essay speaks to this worldly assault. But it's not all doom: J Douglas Porteous's essay is called "Slaughterhouse: How Vandals Destroyed My Home and What I Did About It." A number of the writers describe local projects that have given them a stronger sense of history and community.

Women authors make up just three of the eleven essayists. Aritha van Herk's "Body Shock" is a marvellous work of grounded rapture; Lisa Lynch shares her moving reconnection with the river of her childhood; Cheryl Lousley's "Fragments of Potential" works rage and doubt in agonized (*and* supportive) ways. Richard Pickard's valuable meditation on work and place notes: "I don't think that any of us expected that through professional and scholarly success I would feel as if I had lost the earth." Michael M'Gonigle discusses global environmental diplomacy and local activism. In his view, middle-class people must take responsibility: "that sector of society is where so many of our environmental problems originate and it is there too where the power lies to originate change." He goes on to assert that "as a culture we have not yet begun to live with our places, and until we do that, we cannot know what we are losing." Loss is central to Robert G. Williamson's "The Arctic Habitat and the Integrated Self," which shares (effectively) decades of collaboration with Inuit communities. His example of collaboration with First Nation groups is instructive in a book like this. He proposes formation of an international indigenous environmental monitoring agency with indigenous leadership guiding the work of Aboriginal people on the ground.

A Cosy World?

Paul Almond and Michael Ballantyne
High Hopes: Coming of Age at the Mid-Century.
ECW $19.95

Reviewed by John Xiros Cooper

Now living in comfortable retirement, the authors remember their very pleasant university years at McGill and Oxford in the early 1950s. Poetry was their passion. It co-existed, at least on the evidence of this book, rather easily with a privileged

upbringing in Westmount, the Eastern Townships, Bishop's College School, McGill in its WASP-y heyday, and vacations at St. Andrews, New Brunswick (with Governor-General Earl Alexander of Tunis nearby). Ten years later the Quiet Revolution would say goodbye to all that.

Early in the book Michael Ballantyne refers to that older world as "cosy," its undemanding "existence" in mid-century Montreal characterised by a "quite appalling indecency." "Campus unrest," we are told "meant only that you didn't get enough sleep before an exam." Old Montrealers will recognize this little world very well. After the McGill frat parties (they were both loyal Zetes) and the annual St. Andrew's Ball, most of Paul Almond's and Ballantyne's contemporaries entered the "'respectable' professions, the banks, corporate life."

They, however, did not. They were both undergraduate poets and, in Ballantyne's words, "budding literary types." Upon graduation, they forwent the respectability of the old domed Bank of Montreal in Place d'Armes or the M.A.A.A. on Peel Street or the grey monolith of the Sun Life building in Dominion Square. They chose, instead, a different kind of respectability. Ballantyne turned to journalism with the Montreal *Star* (before its demise) and then went on to the *Reader's Digest* offices in Westmount. Almond, after Oxford, found his way into the film and TV business as a director and producer.

In making the book, the Bishop's College School chums pooled their old letters to each other, interspersed letters from influential poets and writers like Christopher Isherwood, Stephen Spender, John Lehmann, John Hayward (T. S. Eliot's invalid London flatmate) and wrote a linking commentary to give the collection a narrative coherence. This is a different kind of memoir, where the voice of a single memoirist recedes and an ensemble of voices is allowed to emerge. We hear the two young tenors in full-throated ease in the early Fifties, followed by the worldly counterpoint of their ageing baritones, recalling fondly the youthful lyricism. The duet is broken here and there by the letters to Paul of the British writers he idolised. The book ends with a strange *chorale funèbre* of newspaper obituaries of the famous and almost famous people for whom they (but especially Paul) had provided groupie services when young.

The letters begin when Almond decides to go to California to look up Isherwood. Not that he's invited of course. The author of *The Berlin Stories* is, according to the boys, the most prominent writer on this side of the Atlantic and, therefore, fair game for the starry-eyed Paul. Luckily Paul has a friend with an MG who happens to be driving across America to LA and so in May 1949, they set off for the West Coast staying in the network of Zeta Psi fraternity houses across the continent. Not exactly *On the Road* stuff.

Paul then decides Oxford University is the only university wide, deep, and high enough to suit him, so off he goes to Balliol College for three years, leaving Michael behind at McGill. As a portrait of life among the well-heeled Anglos of Montreal in the last decade before their recession as a force in Québécois society, the book is very good. For one thing, the letters reveal the endemic cultural colonialism. Even in 1999, Almond laments the passing of "Westmount . . . which tribalism has plunged into a sad eclipse but where remnants of the great British civilization can still be seen." That "the debutante balls in the Windsor Hotel" in the 1950s don't count as the sign of an even more pernicious Anglo tribalism in Montreal is part of the blindness that makes this book such an accurate portrait of the age.

We also learn about Canadian Oxford, like Almond's own successes on the Oxford

drama scene and his pride in winning an ice hockey blue. Peter Dale Scott, F.R.'s son is there, as is "Chuck" Taylor, the philosopher. We hear also about the coming generation of British directors and actors who will help re-shape British theatre, film, and broadcasting in the years to come, Tony Richardson, Maggie Smith, John Schlesinger, the BBC's Mitchell Raper, to name a few.

We also have a portrait of the literary scene in and around McGill University in those years. Unfortunately, Ballantyne's letters are not as vivid and self-promoting as Almond's and McGill ends up sounding rather sophomoric. The effect has the usual colonial tilt: vital, edgy living is to be found in Oxford and London, backwater inconsequence at McGill and Montreal. On 30 May 1952, Ballantyne proudly begins a letter:

> You may address me henceforth as J.M. Ballantyne B.A. I graduated the day before yesterday & will go into law next fall. This does not mean, of course, that I am giving up my literary ambitions.

Meanwhile Almond is adventuring with the Oxford and Cambridge Players staging plays across England heading for the Edinburgh Festival. The contrast couldn't be more clear.

The book does have a number of positives. One is the prescience of John Heath Stubbs, the poet, in recognizing that Geoffrey Hill was the talent to watch among the student poets at Oxford. Another is the extent to which the Auden generation—Auden himself, Spender, Isherwood, Day Lewis—were still the top dogs on the landscape long after they had produced their best work. A third is the reminder of T. S. Eliot's pre-eminence in post-war Anglo-American culture. In 1999, Almond and Ballantyne remember reverently Eliot's presence and jeer at recent scholarship, my own included I suppose, that has attempted to shift criticism away from the usual Tom-olatry to something approaching a historically accurate assessment.

And finally, the book's greatest value lies in reminding us of a great Canadian poet, now long forgotten, who spent the 1940s in Montreal teaching at McGill. Patrick Anderson is the real hero of this self-indulgent book. The mention of his name brought back memories of my own reading and my own coming of age in Montreal a decade and a half after Almond and Ballantyne. It sent me to my bookshelf and my battered copy of Anderson's *Selected Poems*. Erudite, gay, marooned in Anglo Montreal for more than a decade, living among philistines and being indulged by undergraduate prigs like Ballantyne and Almond, Anderson captured wartime Montreal in his cool, elegant, witty lines. There was nothing cosy about Anderson. Poetry was not an adolescent "passion"; it was quite simply the air he breathed.

Men's Business

Tim Armstrong, ed.
American Bodies: Cultural Histories of the Physique. New York UP US $55.00/$20.00

Daniel Coleman
Masculine Migrations: Reading the Postcolonial Male in New Canadian Narratives. U Toronto P $40.00/$22.00

Angus McLaren
The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930. U Chicago P US $25.00

Reviewed by Terry Goldie

In some Australian Aboriginal cultures, like many others which might be called "traditional," there is an absolute division between men and women in many matters. In the spiritual realm, there are knowledges so absolutely gendered that no one of the opposite sex can have the slightest inkling. Contemporary Australian English refers to this as "women's business" and "men's business." Liberal intellectuals accept this barrier as part of the value of Aboriginal cultures. There is little discussion of how

alien it is from western gender claims, where many of us try to liberate knowledges from gender, even irritatingly recalcitrant matters such as menstruation and pregnancy. Our gender divisions are attributed to the persistence of male hegemony. And yet the attractions of tradition go beyond patriarchal nostalgia.

There are many ways in which masculinity studies is caught in this bind between the assumed evils of patriarchy and the lure of tradition, even in examinations of modern cultures. While the proponents of "maleness" tend to be kin to Robert Bly's mythopoeic drum-beaters, most of those who study masculinity in the academy are male feminists and not a few are gay (including the present reviewer). Studying the problems produced by masculinity, for both men and women, comes easy to us, but asserting the value of maleness much less so.

Two of these books demonstrate this dichotomy while a third only glimpses it. *American Bodies*, a collection of articles by participants in a British American Studies conference, looks at many aspects of the bodies of both sexes, usually in the tone of removed observation common to masculinity studies rather than the overt feminism that is still part of most work on women. As is often the case with such conference proceedings, many pieces cover familiar territory while the more innovative are limited in argument. "Wearing their Hearts on their Sleeves," by Simon P. Newman, considers tattoos on American seamen of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but offers only vague suggestions about what the tattoos might signify.

Daniel Coleman and Angus McLaren have more to say. McLaren's *The Trials of Masculinity* is a social history created from legal records. The original impetus for such work is no doubt Michel Foucault, but I first encountered it in this form in Judith Allen's *Sex and Secrets: Crimes Involving Australian Women Since 1880* (1990). There are many similarities between Allen's and McLaren's work, not the least of which is the conflict between the claim that most aspects of behaviour are socially constructed and the underlying assumption that male behaviour is inevitably dysfunctional.

McLaren notes that the late nineteenth century saw the absence of "real men" as a major problem. People feared the effeminate male but also the cad. The one, through homosexuality or transvestitism, demonstrated feminine weakness. The other did what a real man would never do, which is abuse the weakness of the female (as opposed to participating in the quite acceptable general oppression of women). On the other hand, criminal acts which were seen as excessive versions of reasonable masculinity, such as murdering a man who had stolen a wife, were usually deemed understandable.

McLaren's precise analysis holds him in good stead. When in the last section he turns to "medical discourses" he shows that he has learned his Foucault lessons well and ranges through the important studies of sexuality in the late nineteenth century to demonstrate its applicability and its influence. He shows the uneasy balancing acts, of the sexologists on the one side, many of whom would have been judged by society to be perverts if their personal proclivities had been known, and of the enforcers of hegemonic society on the other, the courts and the journalists, who yearned to show how their actions and statements conformed to the latest scientific studies.

McLaren's study is well worth reading but he slips too easily over the vast geographical differences between his various cases, as suburban London provides the material for a discussion of men fooled by a false matrimonial agency and rural British Columbia is the setting for his examination of murder. Equally problematic is his time frame. His key case of transvestitism is from a trial in 1931, although his conclusion makes a

strong claim for the First World War as the watershed for changes in views of masculinity. On the other hand, his focus on criminal trials sometimes makes him miss alternative sources of insight. He is interested in Oscar Wilde as a defendant but he mentions Wilde's *Portrait of Dorian Gray* only briefly. Yet *Portrait* is a particularly interesting text in terms of McLaren's argument as it explicitly links effeminacy and the cad. The plot shows the foppish homosocial man as exactly the type to mistreat weak females.

Coleman's *Masculine Migrations* is the best of this group. Fittingly, as the one literary study, it is the most pleasurable to read. Coleman introduces with ease a number of theoretical models as he examines six Canadian works of fiction. Still, while his readings of works by Austin Clarke, Dany Laferrière, Neil Bissoondath, Michael Ondaatje, Rohinton Mistry and Ven Begamudré are apt, none will surprise most readers. However, Coleman also includes autobiographical reflections about being a married heterosexual white male who grew up in Ethiopia as the child of Canadian missionaries. The links between his readings and his personal life are honest, sometimes very much at his own expense, and they are excellent examples of the associations we all have while reading but so seldom articulate, especially in print. While I was reading the criticism with a certain sense of duty, I was looking forward to the next autobiographical section, not least to see the insightful links to the novels.

As a teacher of postcolonial studies, I often find graduate students overwhelmed by white privilege. I have already offered Coleman's work to two of them as a way of dealing with this problem. Still, while Coleman confronts his silver spoon he remains constrained by his apologies for it. This suits the reminiscences but limits his analysis. For example, he seems easily to accept the Oedipus complex as a model for the western heterosexual male but rejects it for everyone else. Well, no. There are many of the former who are far less Oedipal than Freud imagines and many studies which show us outsiders to be profoundly Oedipal in many ways. We are still waiting for the straight white male, the primary beneficiary of men's business, who can look beyond the good side or the bad. The wealth of men's business is a coin with many edges.

Producing Culture

Alison Beale and Annette Van Den Bosch, eds.
Ghosts in the Machine: Women and Cultural Policy in Canada and Australia. Garamond $24.95

Clarence Karr
Authors and Audiences: Popular Canadian Fiction in the Early Twentieth Century. McGill-Queen's UP $27.95

Reviewed by Janice Fiamengo

The more things change, the more they remain the same. Women and people of Colour are more visible now in the Canadian and Australian arts scenes than at any time in the past, yet there are some depressing continuities: women artists still have lower status and incomes than men; government funding for the arts fails to make gender and race equity a top priority; and technology remains a predominantly male domain. The persistence of these problems is made more urgent by the shift, in the last decade, towards efficiency and downsizing in state policy, which means a reduction in arts support. What is the position of women in this fragile cultural sphere? How does cultural policy reflect and shape gendered hierarchies? And to what extent can feminist and anti-racist cultural workers influence how decisions are made and arts funding allocated? The essays in *Ghosts in the Machine* address these questions.

Two essays near the beginning of the collection frame the competing perspectives

on cultural policy that structure the volume. Andrea Hull takes a pragmatic approach to arts funding, viewing the move to private and corporate financing of the arts in a positive light. Speaking of the "cultural industries," Hull advocates ever greater integration of culture into government economic agendas in order to produce "rewarding new partnerships." That such industry partnerships usually cast the arts as valuable only in business terms is not addressed by Hull, but it is a theme taken up by other contributors. Barbara Godard, for example, speaks directly to problems in "a rhetoric of market place success in which exchange is the only criterion of value." Far from celebrating the new partnerships fostered between artists and financiers, Godard portrays artists trapped by the need to placate funding bodies of whom they are (rightly) suspicious. Examining the increasing emphasis on the arts as a business where innovation equals new technologies, Godard calls for artists and cultural theorists to disseminate alternative notions of the public good.

Many of the contributors take up Godard's focus on the difficult necessity of feminist intervention in government policy. Patricia Gillard relates her experiences as a policy advisor on multi-media services, noting how thoroughly the language of high-tech and consumer choice has subsumed that of creativity and citizenship in government policy; however, she stresses that involvement by artists and activists has the potential to shift the emphasis from commercial profit to equity, accessibility and community development. Monika Kin Gagnon examines three anti-racist cultural forums organized by First Nations and artists of Colour; although they met considerable resistance and ultimately foundered on internal tensions, such efforts prove that inclusivity need not mean integration "into existing dominant (white) structures." Annette Van Den Bosch traces the devaluing of women's artistic work to the persistence of the Great Master model of artistic development to argue that feminist critique of patriarchal models can help to promote appropriate funding mechanisms for women. Andra McCartney considers how women are alienated from technology in electroacoustic institutions, providing specific recommendations to make these crucial places of apprenticeship more useful to women.

The volume is weakened by sloppy editing: comma and apostrophe errors are rife throughout. Nonetheless, *Ghosts in the Machine* usefully outlines the many arenas in which gender intersects with cultural policy and may aid in its transformation. Many of the contributors acknowledge what Alison Beale examines in detail, that the 1990s has seen a new gendering of the cultural sphere, in which export industries—films, cd roms, telecommunications and broadband equipment—are supported by government as remunerative products while other forms of cultural production, such as the fine and performing arts, are relegated to the soft, private sphere; thus we have a new-old division between "the feminine welfare state sector" and "the export earning, technologised world of the masculine 'bottom line.'" Although the contributors disagree about the extent to which women have the power to shape policy, all agree that without feminist and anti-racist intervention, "the conventional relations of ruling will be scripted all over again in new fields."

Taking a more optimistic view of the possibilities for writers to achieve popular success without selling out their values, Clarence Karr's *Authors and Audiences* is a study of popular fiction in Canada from 1890-1920 that focuses on five best-selling novelists: Charles Gordon (Ralph Connor), Robert Stead, Nellie McClung, L.M. Montgomery, and Arthur Stringer. Karr analyses the material factors—including improved communications, the proliferation

of inexpensive magazines, increased literacy, more leisure time, and the spread of advertising—that enabled writers from obscure parts of Canada to become internationally loved and financially successful. His chapters on their literary apprenticeships, relationships with agents and publishers, and audience response yield fascinating information and make a significant contribution to the history of the mass-marketed book in Canada. We learn, for example, that Charles Gordon was a procrastinator with little faith in his own talents; without the emotional support of his publisher and friend, who often had to cajole and berate Gordon into meeting deadlines, Gordon would never have been the publishing sensation that he became. Arthur Stringer, in contrast, was a meticulous and self-disciplined writer who profited from pre-publication magazine serialization and an astute agent to promote his lucrative professional career. Nellie McClung found a friend and supporter in her editor at the Methodist Book and Publishing House, who wept over the concluding chapters of *Sowing Seeds in Danny*. Not so fortunately, L.M. Montgomery was swindled out of thousands of dollars in royalties by an unscrupulous publisher who took advantage of her inexperience to lock her into a disadvantageous contract; she learned from the experience, however, suing the publisher and guarding her future interests carefully. A number of these writers experienced the exhilaration and frustration of having their fiction dramatized on the silver screen. All wrote unselfconsciously as Canadians at a time when the distinction between elite literature and popular culture had not yet solidified. Fascinating nuggets of fact and useful contextual overviews are abundantly available in this well-researched study.

Less convincing in a book focusing on cultural history are some awkward forays into literary and cultural theory, particularly Karr's contention that the five authors in the study should not be regarded as conventional writers of sentimental and romantic fiction but should instead be understood as modern authors responding to the complex experience of modernity. That popular literature should not be dismissed or ridiculed seems inarguable, but Karr does not convince me that these five writers, beloved for their moral seriousness and tearful scenes, were "often on the cutting edge of modernity" and he too often exaggerates the bold subversiveness of their fiction. In order to claim that such fiction deserves serious consideration, it would be more useful to read sentimentality and romance conventions as themselves complex responses to modernity. Karr's chapter on the letters fans wrote to Montgomery, Stringer and Connor amply demonstrates the impact these novels had on their readers: one Lutheran pastor broke from his church to begin a new ministry after reading Connor, while Stringer inspired outrage and thankfulness with stories of divorce and female independence. Karr's analysis of gender's relative unimportance in reader response (men wrote of weeping and self-transformation as frequently as women) is a valuable contribution to theories of reception.

Karr's study of early Canadian popular fiction makes for a compelling read and will surely dispel the lingering prejudice that Canadian literature did not properly begin until the 1920s. The five writers considered here earned substantial international recognition for their work and proved that one could become famous without leaving Canada at the turn of the century. The fact that Karr is largely breaking new ground in addressing the import of their work says something about our continued forgetting of a complex cultural history.

Des bons usages du Je

Jean-François Beauchemin
Les choses terrestres. Québec Amérique n.p.

Hélène Desjardins
Le dernier roman. La Courte Echelle n.p.

Reviewed by Christian Delacampagne

Si vous demandez en librairie le dernier roman d'Hélène Desjardins, vous achèterez un livre qui s'intitule précisément *Le dernier roman* et qui raconte, comme il se doit, l'histoire d'un écrivain mettant la dernière main à son dernier roman, dont le texte constitue justement la moitié du livre que vous venez d'acheter. . . . Mais que ces jeux de miroirs ne vous préoccupent pas : *Le dernier roman* est avant tout un excellent *thriller*. On pourrait même lui prédire un grand avenir cinématographique, à ceci près qu'une adaptation en images de ce récit narré par deux voix parallèles—celle du bourreau (le mari, écrivain à succès) et celle de sa victime (sa femme et principale inspiratrice)—risquerait de dissiper, au moins partiellement, le nuage d'ambiguïtés dans lequel il baigne, et qui en constitue le charme essentiel. Le spectateur du film, en effet, ne tarderait pas à s'apercevoir que la femme dont parle le mari et celle qui parle en son nom propre ne font qu'une seule et même personne. Pour le lecteur, en revanche, cette "clef" ne finit par devenir évidente qu'au bout d'un certain temps, après une longue période de doute savamment entretenue par le fait qu'Anne-Marie, l'héroïne d'Hélène Desjardins, nous est présentée, au départ, comme amnésique : dès lors, toutes les hypothèses qu'Anne-Marie tente de forger pour trouver un sens au comportement énigmatique de Pierre, qu'on lui présente comme son mari, possèdent chacune un grain de vraisemblance—jusqu'à ce que, peu à peu, finisse par s'imposer la bonne (Pierre est un criminel paranoïaque), et que le roman coure alors à grandes enjambées vers sa fin tragique (qu'on ne vous racontera pas).

Très différent à tous points de vue, le dernier livre de Jean-François Beauchemin, *Les Choses terrestres*, n'est pas du tout un roman d'action. Le "suspense" y est en fait réduit au minimum : Jérôme, assisté de sa femme Joëlle, prend en charge son frère Jules, un jeune handicapé mental devenu aphasique au lendemain de la mort de sa mère, et de surcroît atteint par une sorte de cancer auquel il va heureusement échapper, à la fin de l'histoire, grâce aux effets bienfaisants d'une énergique *"cure de beauté"* administrée par une infirmière de choc (et de charme). L'intérêt du roman est évidemment ailleurs. Dans la description, d'abord, d'un milieu populaire composé de braves gens un peu loufoques, chômeurs, fauchés, oisifs, clochards, mais également rêveurs, bricoleurs et recycleurs toujours prêts à s'entraider les uns les autres puisque, dans le monde tel qu'il va, les pauvres ont intérêt—c'est du moins ce qu'affirme Jean-François Beauchemin—à ne pas trop compter sur l'assistance de Dieu. Dans la langue inventive, truculente et souvent poétique de l'auteur, ensuite, qui joue avec les mots, la vraisemblance et la logique dans une ambiance de liberté totale : monsieur Poussain, ancien *"inspecteur des mercredis dans une fabrique de calendriers,"* ne parle que par phrases interrogatives, le chauffeur de taxi demande à son beau-frère au chômage de lui tenir lieu de *"compteur"* à voix haute un jour par semaine, les chiens tiennent des propos désabusés sur le sens de la vie et les souris jouent du violon, tandis qu'une vieille pantoufle enterrée dans le sol du potager donne naissance, quelques jours plus tard, à un magnifique *"arbre à pantoufles rouges."* On l'a compris : les meilleures pages des *Choses terrestres* ne sont pas sans rappeler le Vian de *L'Ecume des jours*—ce qui n'est pas une mauvaise référence !

Il n'y aurait donc, à première vue, pas grand chose de commun entre ces deux romans, si ce n'est qu'ils ont tous deux pour auteurs de jeunes écrivains québecois

qui n'en sont plus tout à fait à leurs débuts. A mieux y regarder, cependant, on ne peut qu'être frappé par la manière dont ces deux romanciers ont choisi l'un et l'autre d'exploiter toutes les ressources (qui sont considérables) du récit en première personne, une forme narrative que les expérimentations littéraires des trois ou quatre dernières décennies semblaient avoir provisoirement discréditée. Cette réhabilitation du "je" est-elle surprenante ? Pas vraiment, si l'on songe que Marguerite Duras, Claude Simon et Alain Robbe-Grillet eux-mêmes sont récemment revenus, dans leurs derniers textes, à la première personne (que Nathalie Sarraute, pour sa part, n'avait jamais abandonnée). Comme si, après tant d'années placées sous le signe d'un "objectivisme" influencé par le roman américain, nos romanciers actuels, vieux ou jeunes, avaient choisi de se laisser porter, à rebours, par la mode du "retour du sujet." On se gardera bien de leur en tenir grief. Plus que tout autre genre littéraire (à l'exception de la poésie proprement dite), le roman est un exercice de construction qui suppose, pour matière première, l'autobiographie. Et il est finalement plus honnête—et plus difficile—d'assumer ce fait que d'essayer de le refouler (du moins lorsqu'on n'est pas un romancier joycien ou bien un membre de l'Oulipo).

Certes, la part de l'autobiographie est probablement moins importante—ou moins apparente—dans le roman d'Hélène Desjardins (bien qu'elle raconte l'histoire d'un écrivain) que dans celui de Jean-François Beauchemin, qui ne se cache guère de donner, au personnage de Jérôme, ses propres vues sur l'existence. Mais le lecteur ne saurait dire plus précisément quelles sont, dans chaque cas, les proportions respectives de la réalité vécue et du fantasme. Une fois refermés, ces deux livres conservent en effet, chacun sur son mode propre, leur part de mystère. N'est-ce pas la meilleure preuve, au fond, de l'inépuisable vitalité du roman québecois—voire du roman en général ?

Looking at Narcissus

Steven Bruhm

Reflecting Narcissus: A Queer Aesthetic. U of Minnesota P $44.95

Reviewed by Stephen Guy-Bray

Like everyone who has actually read classical literature, I have been puzzled and irritated by the fact that the story of Narcissus is understood as a story about self-love rather than a story about homosexual love, which is what it is in Ovid. Furthermore, I have been alarmed by the fact that when homoeroticism does enter discussions of Narcissus, the myth has been used to stigmatize homosexuals as self-involved. The term "narcissism" has even entered popular culture, and the misreading of the Narcissus story has thus been perpetuated on a large scale. I am happy to report that Steven Bruhm's new book provides a solution to this problem.

Bruhm does not offer a new reading of the Narcissus story itself, although there is some discussion of the various ancient versions; he concentrates on how the story has been used and misused in the last two centuries in both literature and psychoanalytic writing. Perhaps the strongest section of his book is the introduction, in which Bruhm deals effectively and concisely with Freud's use of narcissism and with more recent responses to Freud, particularly from queer theorists. Freud's distinction between narcissistic and anaclitic modes of sexuality is of particular importance to this section and, indeed, to *Reflecting Narcissus* as a whole, and Bruhm's discussion of this distinction and the use to which it has been put is very interesting. Ultimately, of course, both homosexuality and heterosexuality can be defined as either (or simultaneously) narcissistic or anaclitic. Bruhm's insistence on this point should help to open up new ways of looking at sexuality.

Reflecting Narcissus makes frequent use of Freud and of psychoanalytic theorizing more

generally. It is a densely written and argued book that requires considerable familiarity with these theories. Readers who do not have this familiarity may find the book somewhat daunting, but they should persevere. For one thing, *Reflecting Narcissus* provides a very perceptive and efficiently executed introduction to recent psychoanalytic debates within queer studies. For another, Bruhm also provides a series of interesting readings of texts. The first chapter looks at poems by August Schlegel, Coleridge, and Byron. For me, this was the book's highpoint, as I think these are the most interesting of the writers Bruhm discusses. The book continues with explorations of Gide, Wilde, Hesse, Tennessee Williams, Nabokov, and Peter Straub. Bruhm's choice of literary texts will probably appear idiosyncratic to most people (and I had hoped never to have to think about Hesse or Nabokov again), but in each case his analysis is interesting and deepens his discussion of the theoretical issues that are his main concern.

Reflecting Narcissus has a brief conclusion that contains a look at Reginald Shepherd, a contemporary American poet about whom I would have liked to hear more. Bruhm riskily, but perhaps wisely, resists the temptation to sum everything up too neatly, although I would have appreciated a slightly more general treatment of his subject at the very end of the book. These quibbles apart, I think *Reflecting Narcissus* is a valuable book that will be interesting and instructive to a wide range of readers.

Théâtre et traduction

Normand Chaurette. Linda Gaboriau, trad.
All the Verdis of Venice. Talonbooks $15.95

Michel Marc Bouchard. Linda Gaboriau, trad.
Down Dangerous Passes Road. Talonbooks $14.95

Reviewed by Alain-Michel Rocheleau

En 2000, Talonbooks de Vancouver publiait la version anglaise de deux pièces fort appréciées du public québécois: *Je vous écris du Caire* (1996) de Normand Chaurette et *Le Chemin des passes-dangereuses* (1998) de Michel Marc Bouchard. La fable du premier texte peut se résumer de la façon suivante. Fait prisonnier à la Scala de Milan et menacé d'une arme par le directeur du lieu, le compositeur Giuseppe Verdi se voit forcé d'écrire en quarante-huit heures un opéra en cinq actes (*Don Carlos*), commandé un an et demi plus tôt, pour célébrer la splendeur de l'Italie unifiée. Même si le maestro souhaite se rendre au Caire pour terminer l'écriture d' *Aïda*, il acceptera la commande du directeur en autant que Tereza Stolz consente à interpréter le rôle de la reine d'Espagne. Tout en composant *Don Carlos*, Verdi se remémore les lettres passionnées envoyées jadis à sa cantatrice préférée. Le départ momentané de cette dernière donne lieu à un dialogue intensif entre le compositeur et son double, le Souffleur (Verdi II), prenant vite l'aspect d'une crise de conscience identitaire que Chaurette met subtilement en évidence tout au long de l'histoire.

Ce qui ressort avant tout de la lecture de *All the Verdis of Venice*, c'est la complexité du système sémantique à l'intérieur duquel la déconstruction du personnage de Verdi prend forme. Alors qu'au départ, le maestro et le Souffleur possèdent une identité clairement définie, un mécanisme d'appropriation de souvenirs, de sentiments et de répliques provoque, au terme de l'action, l'amalgame du statut identitaire de ces deux personnages, alors appelés Verdi I et Verdi II. Grâce aux effets dynamiques qu'il provoque, ce mécanisme, véritable système en miroir auquel s'associent d'autres modes de dédoublement-répétition comme le jeu dans le jeu ou la pièce dans la pièce, altère les limites perceptuelles entre le rêve et la réalité chez l'ensemble des protagonistes, tout en participant à la structuration de la fable.

Outre les qualités attribuables à cette septième pièce de Chaurette, le travail de tra-

duction de Linda Gaboriau témoigne d'un sérieux désir d'adéquation à l' œuvre originale. Dans l'ensemble, la version anglaise suit assez fidèlement l'économie verbale du texte de départ, dont elle se distingue néanmoins par l'élimination (ou parfois l'ajout) de bouts de répliques et de didascalies. À titre d'exemple, "On voit bien que la *Gazetta di Milano* qui paraît le jeudi ne se rend pas jusqu'au Caire" devient "It's obvious that the *Gazetta Musicale di Milano* never reaches Cairo." Sa volonté de rejoindre le contexte récepteur se manifeste aussi dans l'adaptation d'expressions ou d'idiotismes comme "Dieu merci" et "Fini les *a parte* avec le maestro," qu'elle traduit respectivement par "Perfect" et "No more tête-à-têtes." Dans quelques passages, Gaboriau semble animée par l'intention d'expliquer le message de certaines répliques et n'hésite pas à traduire, avec pertinence, "Au timbre printanier. C'est encore l'hiver" par "With his youthful timbre. Time spares no man!" D'autres choix de traduction sont, par contre, beaucoup plus gratuits, comme "Ce papier date d'il y a trente ans" qui devient "That article was written more than twenty years ago."

La démarche traductive accomplie dans *Down Dangerous Passes Road* de Michel Marc Bouchard semble elle aussi motivée par une recherche d'adéquation au texte original. Aux niveaux onomastique et toponymique, par exemple, la traduction a retenu le prénom des trois personnages (Ambroise devient cependant Ambrose, dans la version anglaise) et de l'endroit où se déroule l'action. Certaines adaptations sont aussi destinées à faciliter la réception de la pièce dans un contexte d'accueil autre que québécois. Ainsi, "T'es ben smatte d'être-là" devient "It was nice of you to come" et "sportif en ciboire!" devient "what a sport!" Puisque le texte de Bouchard (de facture hautement réaliste) est écrit dans une langue comportant de nombreux idiomes régionaux, la version traduite les reproduit par des élisions empruntées à la langue orale comme "Pa" pour "Pepa," et par des contractions de mots comme "Where's" pour "Oùsqu'y est." Enfin, d'autres traductions relèvent purement du jugement esthétique de Gaboriau, comme "You're such a snob" pour "Laisse faire tes phrases de snob."

Accessible mais sans être facile, ce neuvième texte de Bouchard met en scène trois passagers d'une camionnette qui n'ont d'autres choix que de se parler, à la suite d'un accident les impliquant dans le tournant du chemin des passes-dangereuses. En attendant d'être secourus, ces trois frères (toujours vivants ou déjà morts . . .) renouent avec des souvenirs lointains, se témoignent des sentiments tendres et de rancœur qu'ils n'ont jamais pu s'avouer, puis deviennent les auditeurs impuissants des rêves inachevés de chacun: Carl, le cadet, ne cesse d'espérer une vie traditionnelle déjà toute tracée; Ambroise, homosexuel, aimerait vendre son appartement montréalais et prendre soin de son amant sidatique, alors que Victor, l'aîné, planteur d'arbres et père de famille, voudrait changer son existence qu'il juge insignifiante. Au-delà des différences de chacun, ces trois individus parviennent à s'écouter véritablement et finissent par avouer, d'un commun accord, la honte qu'ils éprouvent envers leur père, un "ivrogne griffonneux," mort noyé au même endroit quelques années plus tôt.

Sans être impudente, cette pièce nous amène à poser un regard critique sur la société contemporaine, sur des individus vivant en marge de celle-ci et préférant tous le rêve à la réalité. Pour eux, d'ailleurs, l'activité onirique constitue la seule manière qu'ils ont de survivre à une existence par trop décevante. À l'aide de structures en abyme dans lesquelles s'imbriquent jeu et réalité, mensonge et vérité, l'auteur trace le portrait d'un univers familial sclérosé, où l'impuissance d'un père, le désespoir d'une

mère et l'embarras de jeunes garçons, bien qu'à peine dévoilés dans les dialogues, sont évocateurs. En traitant de ces thèmes toujours délicats par l'entremise d'images allégoriques, Michel Marc Bouchard conserve aux relations de ses personnages leur part d'humanité mais aussi d'ambiguïté.

Explorations Commercial & Personal

Jean Murray Cole, ed.
This Blessed Wilderness: Archibald McDonald's Letters from the Columbia, 1822-44.
UBC P $75.00 (cloth); $24.95 (paper)

Philip Teece
A Shimmer on the Horizon. Orca $24.95

Reviewed by Bryan N.S. Gooch

Jean Murray Cole's edition of a generous selection of letters by the Hudson's Bay Company Chief Factor Archibald McDonald is a welcome supplement to the body of printed primary source material concerning western exploration, fur trade, and settlement; it is also a useful companion to Morag Maclachlan's *The Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30.* While journal entries can be succinct and somewhat impersonal, revealing essential details regarding trade, the maintenance of company establishments, problems with food supplies, and so on, the letters of a chief trader or factor, not only to his commercial masters, but to friends and colleagues, are usually far more discursive, and reveal, often at some length, the *minutiae* of outpost life and travel, domestic scenes, reactions to hardship and privation. They also discuss delights of various kinds, for example, successful trading forays, and sufficient salmon to carry a fort through the winter, and they give news of happy, growing children. McDonald is articulate, perceptive, good humoured, honest, professional, and without malice. His prose is easy and conversational; he writes, one suspects, very much as he would talk to his correspondents, who range from Sir James Douglas, Sir George Simpson (the *grand man* of the HBC), and Professor Sir William Hooker (Glasgow University, later Keeper of Kew Gardens) for whom he collected specimens, to friends like Edward Ermatinger (retired from the Company and living in St. Thomas, Ont.) and missionary Elkanah Walker (who settled in the Columbia territory).

Cole begins with a helpful introduction in which she discusses, for instance, McDonald's background, the character of the letters, the amalgamation of the North West Company and the HBC, the nature of the Columbia territory. The letters, carefully edited and annotated when necessary, are divided into four main groups reflecting McDonald's appointments: 1) Fort George and Thompson River, 1822-28; 2) Fort Langley, 1829-33; 3) Fort Colville, 1834-44 (near and now flooded by the Grand Coulee Dam); and 4) "Envoi," 1845-49 (covering McDonald's retirement, including his journey east and eventual resettlement near Montreal). An Afterword provides details about his family and in an Appendix, brief notes on individuals mentioned in the text. A bibliography and index conclude the volume. What emerges from the correspondence is not only courage and dedication but a revealing, first-hand view of the journeys of far brigades, camp and boat construction, and day-to-day life marked by the arrival of traders, friends, and other visitors. It becomes abundantly clear that much of the area McDonald knew was thoroughly well-known before mid-century, and one is drawn to the conclusion that Moberly, Rogers, and other explorers decades later were not really pushing through a trackless wilderness, however romantic that notion might seem. A few detailed route maps would have been useful, especially for the reader unfamiliar with the territory discussed.

Philip Teece's *A Shimmer on the Horizon* brings the reader to another kind of explo-

ration: sailing single-handed up British Columbia's inside passage to Haro Strait in company with a female friend sailing a second boat. This is a voyage of discovery, geographical and personal, as they move away from the marine traffic of the Strait of Georgia into the remote, sheltered inlets of the northern waters. Their quest, both in terms of self-discovery and finding a place to which they can eventually return to build the perfect escape-cottage, is successful, and the tale, with its account of joys and tribulations, is told in a sensitive, reflective way. This is not simply a kind of travelogue of the sights-along-the-coast variety, though vignettes of locations visited abound (for instance, Lasqueti and Cortes Islands, and the incomparable little Mittlenach Island, a miniature mid-Strait wilderness preserve with its rather unique ecosystem), but a personal and visual account of a summer's voyage into waters both tranquil and challenging. Like McDonald's letters, Teece's narrative offers the directness of the first-hand view, and does so with honesty, good humour, and felicity.

Linked Stories

Libby Creelman
Walking in Paradise. The Porcupine's Quill $18.95

Gail Anderson-Dargatz
The Miss Hereford Stories. Douglas & McIntyre $18.95

Rick Maddocks
Sputnik Diner. Knopf Canada $29.95

Reviewed by Roderick W. Harvey

Linked stories are often unified through recurring characters, distinctive settings, or the persistent explication of various themes. If read together, they can form the chapters of a novel, as in Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women.* The linked stories in Libby Creelman's *Walking in Paradise,* Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Miss Hereford Stories,* and Rick Maddocks's *Sputnik Diner* vary in their successful management of the common ground that connects their narrative segments.

Creelman's stories are preoccupied with the rituals of family life. There is no consistent group of characters here, but the family activities—holidays, swimming, sailing, going to the beach—provide a common link between a variety of families. Often there are strong images of the effects of time. In "Three Weeks," a family visits their aging house in Maine: "The house itself is a small cape with pitched roof and weathered, nearly white, clapboards. Black shutters had long ago fallen off and were stacked now in an attic corner, the paint lifting like the wings of dark moths." "Sunken Island" describes a family at a cottage where the grandmother entertains the narrator with stories about the past.

These stories are mainly set in New England holiday places, and in some cases there are links with aspects of regional family history. In "Pilgrims" the main character, Charles Standish Avery, is said to be descended from "Myles Standish himself, and from Barbara, the woman Miles married when he couldn't marry Priscilla, though Great-Aunt Rebecca said there was no truth to that romance." Thinking of these "undisciplined pioneers roaming the New England woods, half-naked, filthy, starved," Rebecca is "mortified." History is re-created and made real in the present through the reminiscences of various characters.

In no sense didactic or moralistic, Creelman presents moments of realization, small epiphanies, as they appear in the course of daily experiences. At the end of "The Biggest Mistake," for example, there is the simple but telling assertion about human self-interest: "The truth about children, Roy realizes, is that no matter how you measure your love for them, you love your own best." In the context of growing up, these stories are successfully unified as they describe the development of human awareness.

A different kind of linkage is provided in Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Miss Hereford Stories*, a collection set in the rural community of Likely, Alberta. In the western Canadian tradition of W. O. Mitchell and Jack Hodgins, these are humourous, earthy stories that depend on a tradition of frontier humour, tall tales, and the daily activities of local citizens. Comic characters, fragmented anecdotes, comparisons between farm animals and the people who work the land—this is a kind of humour that depends on an accurate, detailed perception of small-town rural life. This is often new information to an urban reader, but the reader from a farming background would recognize such activities as just another part of growing up.

The successful characterizations in Anderson-Dargatz's stories are eccentrics who avoid the limited comic stereotypes of frontier humour and who seem to exist as individuals living real lives. Like the eccentrics in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, they seem memorable because they are so different from the norm. One such is Al MacLean, the bank manager who moves to Likely to "take advantage of the cheap land and houses." Unlike most of the other residents, he insists on jogging while carrying on "conversations with himself," conversations that exclude politics because "it was difficult to maintain an interesting conversation about politics without a little heated debate." Instead, he talks about the Oilers and how difficult it is to park his car in Edmonton.

Though her emphasis is comic rather than philosophical, there are lessons to be learned from these stories. Anderson-Dargatz presents the world of Likely with sympathy and humour, showing tact and feeling for the absurdity of common social situations.

This amused, tolerant attitude certainly is different from the point of view presented in Rick Maddocks's *Sputnik Diner*. These stories revolve around activities at the Sputnik Diner in Nanticoke, Ontario, a part of the truck-stop world often portrayed in modern country music and films. The three main characters in these stories—Marcel, the owner; Buzz, the cook; and Grace, the waitress—reveal themselves through scenes of eating, drinking, and talking. The reader discovers that on most afternoons, the eccentric Marcel "hung the Closed sign up in the window, sat behind the counter with his gin and lemonade, and jawed with George and George, a couple of old pisspots grinning across from him." Marcel usually expresses himself by using malapropisms and profanity. Grace is somewhat more reflective and insightful than the other characters, though she seems exhausted and self-defeating: "And she's lifted up, perhaps across days or months, and she's set down in the back seat of a noisy car where glass towers and red-brick buildings fall away on all sides and there are feathers or cottonwood parachutes floating thick in air." The stories portray individuals who live in a rather physically limited universe.

Like many contemporary writers, Maddocks uses a combination of postrealist irony, campy pop humour, and stream-of-consciousness. The most interesting and revealing story in this collection is "Lessons from the Sputnik Diner," in which the narrator reveals the fragmented nature of what he—and the reader of the stories—can learn from the diner world.

Evil, and All That

Lynn Crosbie
Dorothy L'Amour. Harper*Flamingo* $26.00

Caroline Adderson
A History of Forgetting. Key Porter $24.95

Reviewed by Brett Josef Grubisic

For better or worse, Douglas Coupland's *Generation X* has come not only to name a demographic group but to define its char-

acteristics. Accordingly, we might expect members of such a group to engage with a serious topic like evil with a mixture of avoidance, anxiety or apathy. Lynn Crosbie and Caroline Adderson, both born in 1963, suggest the frailty of Gen X generalities. Though their novels meditate on evil in distinct styles, they are united in their creativity and refusal to overlook horror (when ironic detachment à la Gen X would be so much easier).

Like Lynn Crosbie's "critfiction" *Paul's Case, Dorothy L'Amour* is a formally complex work that manipulates thoroughly mediated crimes in order to shift and undermine the "facts" of the cases and the "lessons" we learn from them. Crosbie examines the life and times of Dorothy Stratten, the former Vancouver Dairy Queen counter girl, *Playboy* Playmate of the Year and actor who was murdered by her estranged husband in 1980.

The subject of numerous biographies, films, and sundry journalistic articles, the Stratten whom Crosbie portrays is daringly unrealistic. Unlike most fictional investigations of a historical figure, *Dorothy L'Amour* expresses little concern with verisimilitude. Yes, Crosbie's novel is "about" Dorothy Stratten, celebrity murder victim. Yet on the surface Crosbie's raunchy and funny narrative discloses a journal-writing Stratten whose delirious incoherence places her well outside victim status. At the same time, Crosbie's approach provokes questions about celebrity and our fascination with it and forces readers to ponder the very nature of representation.

Stratten's beguiling journal begins with her 1960 birth, recalled as an operatic calamity: "My mother's anguish broke the windows, her aria of love soaring higher, into rage: My God why have you repaid me this way?" From that point on, Stratten traverses the cultural map; she'll discuss an obscure Roman manuscript, and a moment later wander the Playboy Mansion, smoking marijuana in peek-a-boo lingerie. All the while her inflated, elaborate language is redolent of Pater and the French Decadent writers who preceded him. Patently false in biographical and elocutionary details, Dorothy's picaresque reminiscence establishes a resounding but clearly suspect life story.

Under Crosbie's direction, self-important and narcissistic Hugh Hefner, *Playboy* founder and author of *The Playboy Philosophy*, plays a pivotal role. Forever speaking in the first person plural ("used in works of philosophical exposition," he explains), Hefner has an ambivalent role in the making of Stratten's diary. In the final section, another popular icon, Madonna (Ciccone), discovers Hefner's journal, and inadvertently reveals that Dorothy's autobiography may have been penned in fact by Hefner as an odd hagiographic gesture. He has reformed banal blonde Stratten (whom, he recalls, "was a sweet girl, who liked to roller-skate, play checkers") perhaps in order to give her brief life greater pathos than he felt it actually had. In any case, via Crosbie the meaning of "Dorothy Stratten" remains resolutely opaque.

It's not so much the banality of evil as its pervasiveness that draws Caroline Adderson's attention in the absorbing *A History of Forgetting*. Set in present-day dreary, rain-soaked Vancouver, Adderson's tale begins with a foreboding second-person account of a taxi journey to Auschwitz. Adderson then returns to tense domestic relations in the novel's first sections, focussing on the painfully slow separation of a long-term couple, Malcolm and Denis. The elder of the two men, Denis, suffers from Alzheimer's disease. His decline is marked by forgetfulness, of course, yet also by his increased anger, frustration and aggression. Faced with a lover he no longer knows, Malcolm must make the awful decision about how to best provide care.

Malcolm's old-fashioned sense of decorum (and his equally old-fashioned sense of

homosexual discretion) keeps him at odds with his fellow stylists at his hair salon job. Formerly a star employee at a shop catering to elderly Kerrisdale women, Malcolm with the dun-coloured dye-job as snobbish and outmoded when the salon is bought and given a fashion makeover. He is befriended by Alison, the shop's apprentice, who is naive and apolitical, a generation or two from Malcolm and surely a world apart.

The murder of another hairdresser by a troupe of homophobic neo-Nazis cements their awkward friendship. While the pair's spontaneous trip to Poland to confront the wellspring of evil at Auschwitz does not result in catharsis, it does suggest the possibility for the kind of deep personal bond that helps make community vital. With *A History of Forgetting*, Adderson challenges the myth that bad things happen far away, or else on the TV news. Her vision is bleak, brightened only briefly by transcendent moments of connection.

Théâtre franco-ontarien

Jean Marc Dalpé
Le chien. Prise de parole $11.00

Michael Gauthier
L'hypocrite. Prise de parole $15.00

Robert Marinier
L'insomnie. Prise de parole $15.00

Reviewed by Sylvain Marois

Depuis près de 30 ans, les *Éditions Prise de parole* font connaître les œuvres des créateurs franco-ontariens et plus particulièrement des auteurs dramatiques de ce coin de pays. C'est grâce à la diffusion réalisée par cette maison d'édition de Sudbury qu'il nous est possible de lire les œuvres de Michael Gauthier, de Jean Marc Dalpé et de Robert Marinier. Ces trois auteurs représentent bien la richesse et la diversité de la dramaturgie ontarienne contemporaine.

Le Chien, traduit en anglais par Dalpé et Maureen Labonté, présenté en lecture publique le 3 septembre 1987 à Québec, s'est mérité le Prix littéraire du Gouverneur général 1988. Ce texte, aux dialogues forts et percutants, nous raconte le retour de Jay dans son petit village du nord de l'Ontario la journée même de l'enterrement de son grand-père. S'il avait quitté sept ans auparavant, suite à une altercation avec son paternel, il revenait "pour faire la paix." Ce ne sera toutefois pas possible . . . L'action se déroule sur une période de quelques jours, mais nous entraîne, dans un collage de monologues habillement enchaînés, du début du siècle à aujourd'hui. C'est ainsi que chacun des personnages nous raconte sa vie, sa perspective, ses souvenirs et nous offre son point de vue sur les différents drames qui ont ponctué la vie de cette famille et contribué à son éclatement.

Jean Marc Dalpé démontre, encore une fois—comme dans *Lucky Lady* (Boréal, 1995), par exemple—son grand talent de dialoguiste. La langue de Dalpé est média et message à la fois. C'est une langue qui dit tout, autant par son contenu que par sa structure, et qui révèle les personnages en même temps qu'elle intéresse le lecteur. La structure interne du texte n'a pas qu'une valeur esthétique : elle participe à la construction de la tension, de la progression et au rythme de la pièce. C'est aussi cette langue qui permet à Dalpé d'aborder la relation père-fils, un thème tout aussi usé que riche, et d'en synthétiser l'essence dans un bref échange entre Jay et son père. [Jay] : "J'veux tu m'dises que j'suis correct! J'veux tu dises que tu m'aimes! J'veux tu serres dans tes bras, Pa!" [Père] : "J'peux pas. C'est trop tard."

Le Chien a connu depuis une belle carrière, car en plus du Prix du Gouverneur général, il a été joué en France et au Canada à plusieurs reprises et a été enregistré par Radio-Canada en vue d'une diffusion radiophonique.

L'Hypocrite, précédé de *Crime* (2001), dans *Contes sudburois*, chez Prise de parole,

est le premier texte dramatique professionnel pour adolescents signé par Michael Gauthier. Ce choix de public a des conséquences sur le récit, sa structure, les dialogues et le style de l'écriture adoptée. *L'Hypocrite* nous raconte l'histoire de Éric et Chuck qui connaîtront, à la suite du passage vers l'école secondaire, l'ensemble des passions et émotions normalement rattachées au monde dit "des adultes." Mensonge, manipulation, amour, amitié et cruauté se superposent et s'entrechoquent dans ce bref texte dramatique pour en faire une sorte de fable didactique sur les difficultés et maux quotidiens des "jeunes d'aujourd'hui." Les trente-six courtes scènes, bien adaptées au public cible, nous entraînent dans la réalité de ces deux jeunes adolescents dont un, Éric, qui tombera amoureux d'Hélène, délaissant ainsi son meilleur ami Chuck . . . S'ensuit une valse qui exposera les "dangers de l'hypocrisie." La force de ce texte de Gauthier ne réside pas tant dans l'originalité du thème que dans les dialogues. En effet, bien que certains anglicismes utilisés semblent parfois parachutés en milieu de phrase, les dialogues sont solidement construits et ponctuent bien la progression dramatique. De plus, leur ton, parfois saccadé et souvent simple, colle bien au langage associé aux "ados" tout en révélant une certaine candeur. L'éternelle dualité amitié-amour y est bien décrite et la tension associée aux choix des personnages y est, elle aussi, bien présente.

L'Hypocrite est un bon texte dont l'efficacité dramatique ne masque toutefois pas les ambitions pédagogiques de l'auteur. Son désir avoué de faire du théâtre pour les adolescents—et peut-être encore plus précisément pour les jeunes Franco-Ontariens—est présent à chaque page et pourrait avoir un résultat opposé de celui souhaité, soit de ne pas intéresser son public cible parce que trop caricatural, trop didactique : trop *ado.*

Robert Marinier, auteur de *L'Insomnie,* est bien connu dans la famille dramatique franco-ontarienne. Il a, par exemple, agit à titre de conseiller dramaturgique pour *L'Hypocrite* et a co-écrit *Les Rogers* (1985) avec Jean Marc Dalpé.

L'Insomnie est une très belle fable, magnifiquement écrite, qui nous transporte dans le monde sans sommeil de Gilles Boudin. En effet, ce dernier n'a pas dormi depuis six mois! De sa première nuit d'insomnie à la suite du départ de sa femme et de ses deux filles, Gilles nous raconte comment il devient incapable de dire "je." comment il vit, partagé entre une incertaine réalité, affecté par le manque de sommeil et de nombreux "flash-back" qui l'exposent à des moments, parfois vrais et faux, de sa vie passée, présente ou future. Incapable de dormir, et ne sachant comment remplir tout son temps libre, Gilles décide de "travailler, travailler, travailler" jour et nuit. Ensuite, dans de sublimes juxtapositions des inconvénients de la réalité quotidienne, de questionnements philosophiques et de retournements absurdes, Gilles Boudin errera entre les mesquineries de ses collègues de bureau, les insondables méandres de l'âme humaine et les bienfaits thérapeutiques trouvés au fond d'une sécheuse . . .

Ce *one-man show* contient une juste dose d'originalité du discours, de "spleen" existentiel et de surprises formelles. Boudin se demande, au moment de suivre Ti-Bé dans la sécheuse de la buanderie, s'il devrait suivre un inconnu tout en sachant, au fond de lui-même, qu'il le suivra. Il se demande donc si "c'est la preuve que les choix, les décisions ne font pas partie des hautes fonctions de la conscience humaine, mais font plutôt partie des fonctions plus primitives du cerveau? Ou est-ce que c'est tout simplement le désir inconscient qu'on retrouve chez bien des gens de vouloir savoir ça serait comment rentrer dans une sécheuse?" On constate bien le

changement de style et le glissement vers l'oralité entre la première et la deuxième questions. Enfin, le ton naïf de certains échanges, l'apparente perte de contrôle du personnage principal et sa continuelle stupéfaction, véhiculent un contenu métaphorique très contemporain. On pense, par exemple, au repli du personnage sur son travail—seule activité signifiante pouvant tout autant distraire son cerveau malade qu'occuper ses nuits—et qui n'est pas sans rappeler le *workoolisme* envahissant la société actuelle. *L'Insomnie* est un texte solide et bien écrit qui, derrière le malaise social de son personnage principal et son vocabulaire parfois lyrique et coloré, n'est pas sans rappeler un certain Achille Talon . . .

Les trois textes présentés ici témoignent de la vivacité et de la diversité de la dramaturgie franco-ontarienne actuelle. Si la qualité dramaturgique est naturellement inégale, la structure linguistique et l'efficacité des dialogues de Jean Marc Dalpé, le public cible (un public trop négligé) de *L'Hypocrite* et l'originalité du discours et de la forme de *L'Insomnie* démontrent et confirment la bonne santé cette écriture dramatique de l'Ontario français.

Homosexualité et Suicide

Michel Dorais

Mort ou fif. La face cachée du suicide chez les garçons. VLB éditeur $14.95

Reviewed by Alain-Michel Rocheleau

À l'heure où bon nombre d'individus hésitent encore à reconnaître une possible corrélation entre la stigmatisation de l'homosexualité et le nombre effarant de tentatives de suicide chez les jeunes gays, le dixième ouvrage de Michel Dorais tend à illustrer ce fait et à démontrer que, contrairement aux adultes, les homosexuels de quatorze à vingt-cinq ans ne disposent d'aucun réseau de ressources institutionnelles capable de les aider.

Après avoir colligé des témoignages de gays et de garçons identifiés comme tels, qui ont accepté avec courage de parler de leurs tentatives de suicide, Dorais fait ressortir dans *Mort ou fif* quelques-uns des contextes et motifs directement liés à ces gestes de désespoir. Le but de cette étude qualitative, dans laquelle les récits de vie occupent un large espace, vise d'ailleurs à mettre en lumière les déplorables conditions d'existence réservées à ces jeunes, aussi bien à l'école, dans leur famille que dans leur environnement social, conditions le plus souvent reflétées dans les représentations négatives de l'homosexualité que diffusent les médias et qui en ont incité plus d'un à tenter de s'enlever la vie. Selon les dires de l'auteur, ces secteurs jouent, dans un premier temps, "un rôle déterminant dans [le] malaise [de plusieurs homos] face à leur orientation sexuelle et dans leurs idéations puis leurs tentatives de suicide ultérieures." Dans un deuxième temps, ils sont souvent à l'origine d'un tarissement moral étroitement lié à une claustration psychologique (et parfois même physique) à laquelle la majorité des jeunes gays ont été confrontés depuis leur jeune âge du fait de leur "particularité," "de l'incitation à la honte d'être ce qu'ils sont et de la stigmatisation (réelle ou anticipée) qu'ils encourent en raison de leurs désirs." Dans cette étude, Michel Dorais parvient à nous convaincre—si besoin est—qu'une absence d'écoute, d'aide ou de soutien, permettant à ses répondants de confier à quelqu'un leur désarroi, d'obtenir du réconfort et de nourrir l'espoir de jours meilleurs, figure parmi les facteurs qui incitent les homosexuels de quatorze à vingt-cinq ans à vouloir se suicider. De toute évidence, le silence, l'indifférence, l'irrespect, l'intolérance que les jeunes homosexuels subissent dans leur milieu de vie et dans la société, en général, restent toujours hautement problématiques.

En situant sa démarche exploratoire dans

une perspective de type sociologique et tout en référant aux travaux d'auteurs réputés comme Erving Goffman, Howard Becker, Heinz Leyman, David Plummer et Christine Flynn Saulnier, Michel Dorais, de l'Université Laval, a su élaborer une typologie des hommes gays aux épithètes plutôt originales, de façon à décrire le profil de ses trente-deux répondants. Cette classification met en évidence le *fif de service* (qui, très tôt dans son existence, est la cible de moqueries, d'harcèlement ou de violence en raison d'une orientation homosexuelle perçue chez celui-ci), *le parfait garçon* (qui cherche à se conformer aux attentes de son milieu social, quitte à nier son homosexualité), *le caméléon* (qui joue à être ou à se montrer hétérosexuel, en dépit de ses fortes attirances homosexuelles) et, enfin, *le rebelle* (qui, tout en refusant l'intolérance et l'homophobie de son entourage, développe une résistance qui le protégera d'une possible dépression). En fonction de ces quatre profils, les jeunes homosexuels développeraient différentes stratégies de survie, que Dorais appelle "scénarios adaptatifs au rejet."

Si *Mort ou fif : La face cachée du suicide chez les garçons* a le mérite de se faire un appel pressant à une prévention plus rigoureuse du suicide chez les jeunes gays, démarche qui passe par une meilleure information ou campagne de sensibilisation auprès des personnes que ces jeunes côtoient quotidiennement, on se doit d'avouer en contrepartie que cet ouvrage de 112 pages, destiné "au grand public [. . .], [p]arents, éducateurs, professeurs et aidants de toutes sortes," aurait pu être beaucoup mieux documenté. Par exemple, l'auteur écrit: "Quand on connaît le haut taux d'abandons scolaires des garçons du Québec, on peut se demander si l'on peut se permettre d'ignorer le phénomène chez les jeunes homosexuels si, comme nous le croyons, les répondants à notre enquête sont indicatifs d'une tendance dont l'ampleur serait insoupçonnée." À quel taux d'abandons scolaires et à quelle période Dorais fait-il référence ici? Aux cinq dernières années? Enfin, l'échantillon final sur lequel s'appuie l'étude de l'auteur, soit trente-deux jeunes hommes (vingt-quatre gays, huit hétérosexuels), nous apparaît plutôt "limité," pour dire le moins. Ce petit échantillon, certes, n'invalide nullement les résultats de cette recherche qualitative mais réduit la portée d'une éventuelle extrapolation des données et témoignages recueillis.

The Story's the Thing

Jennifer Duncan
Sanctuary and Other Stories. DC Books n.p.

Helen Pereira
Birds of Paradise. Killick $12.95

Robyn Sarah
Promise of Shelter. Porcupine's Quill $14.95

Reviewed by Neil Besner

That powerful currents of short fiction written by women flow through some of the richest veins in our contemporary writing is not news. Nor is it news that another generation of writers, Gallant and Munro chief among them, now seems to have prefigured this one, and continues to write from a different, if still warmly resonant time. Anxieties of influence notwithstanding, Jennifer Duncan's and Robyn Sarah's collections can be added to recent books of stories by writers like Elyse Gasco, Zsuzsi Gartner, Debbie Howlett, Sarah O'Leary, Frances Itani, Julie Keith, Alyssa York, and Brenda Baker—all well worth re-reading.

Helen Pereira's *Birds of Paradise* adds to another growing assembly: competent, engaging writing that does not surprise, that is not unpleasant to read, but that does not really enlarge or modify one's sense either of life or of art. The title story typifies Pereira's mildly attractive kind of inspiration: Emma, a retired schoolteacher in Toronto, literally has her dream come true when an exotic and erotic Eastern poet

materializes at a reading; they meet as if pre-ordained, and they plan an enchanted life together. There is nothing very wrong with "Birds of Paradise": Emma's actualized fantasy has its attractions, counterpointing the aridities of her previous waking life, and no-one would begrudge her this dreamworld or misunderstand its origins. But there is little very right with the story, either—no striking word, phrase, or image, not a great deal to think about in plot or character or conception. At best there is a fresh and appealing naiveté in Emma's new hope, but that is not enough to sustain the story. Ordinary lives and their disappointments and aspirations can make for exciting writing, to be sure, but that does not happen here, or in any of the other stories in the collection.

Much more is afoot in Jennifer Duncan's first book. These nervy wired stories fibrillate with the energy of their raw inquiry into the trippy fastdance of contemporary identities adrift and amok in downtown T.O. and environs; at this level, the stories revel in a stark new naturalism sharply attuned to a stark new milieu. But these are stories that also preen, first, in language, at once swooning through their speakers' poetic riffs and disowning them with an elaborate knowing shrug.

Duncan's narrators enact streetkid and punk sensibility from the inside; think of Russell Smith's characters, but one step more self aware, two steps more poetic, and three steps younger. Duncan makes this ethos at once available enough and strange enough to middle-class readers that the writing mockingly invites us into the lurch and careen of staged identities strutting amidst eerily familiar relationships (the late sixties inverted in the late nineties?), invoked as kitchen-sink spectacles in dingy lofts with dirty skylights. Duncan is always aware that writing, reading, and life are intimately related *and* radically different, and that representation requires faith in language, not in the thing represented. There are real, eloquent, and unanswered questions posed in these stories about what constitutes an identity for these versions of selfhood, and these characters' styles of speech and thought, of love and desire and pain, are palpably invoked and performed. The only reservation I have about her writing is with its narrow range: even on first reading the cumulative effect of her stories threatens to become repetitious, which is too bad, given her abundant talent. And a cavil: her openings, by the time I got to the end of the book, it had begun to seem overworked, reading a bit too much like set pieces because their verve simply could not be sustained at such a keen pitch for more than a paragraph (or stanza).

If Duncan's stories glory in preening and strutting, and they do, Robyn Sarah's in *Promise of Shelter* perform a more mysteriously subtle art, and finally, it's Robyn Sarah's stories that invite longer, more measured, and, I think, more deeply satisfying reflection on the range and the staying powers of the contemporary short story. As much as I admire Duncan's talent, I recognize that, in part, I have been invited into a lurid antechamber and that I read, in part, as a voyeur. Nothing wrong with that; I like William Burroughs for related reasons. But Sarah's stories speak from a temperate middle ground. They are written directly from the centre of conventional realism. They have no glitter or flash. They are not magical. But their powers are plain and ample, and they are not afraid of depicting the common ground of ordinary experience in a quiet and luminous prose. Consider the opening story, "Unlit Water." Baldly summarized, the story tells of two contemporary families in Montreal who live together in mildly straitened circumstances in a duplex. The husbands are brothers; one couple has two children, the other none. The group goes down to the St. Lawrence on a warm summer night to watch the annual fire-

works festival from the water's edge. One mother is afraid of the children getting too close to the unlit water and falling in. The others in the group can't understand what they see as her excessive fear.

That's it. Of course this brutal summary leaves out everything important: the quality of the mother's fear is made to seem totally ordinary, altogether terrifying, completely plausible, and altogether unavoidable. It simply *is*, and all of our psychology and intuition and interpretive skills will not read it away. That is why and how the story ends in this way:

> Almost crying, she felt that all she wanted in the world was to pull up stakes, to move back and keep moving back, to pick up their blanket and tow it safely away from the water. But people had piled up in a dense wall behind them now, and the fireworks were beginning.

Yes, we can observe that the ground might seem fluid (the blanket "towed" safely along), and yes, we can push the beginning fireworks towards larger frames and modes of meaning; but neither move is imperative and neither is insistent. This is language in the service of another cumulation, circling around the mother's fear, which is the insistent core gathering at the story's centre, and which radiates, quietly, throughout, assigning its meanings as it goes, until we apprehend the whole extended family through the mother's eyes.

Eloquent with plain-speaking, these stories have just made me feel foolish exclaiming over them, like some poor Gabriel Conroy with his thought-tormented music. I think that is because they are very fine.

Wartime Memories

H.A. Enzer and S. Solotaroff-Enzer, eds.
Anne Frank: Reflections on Her Life and Legacy. U of Illinois P $34.95

Michel Mielnicki and John Munro
Bialystok to Birkenau: The Holocaust Journey of Michel Mielnicki. Ronsdale $19.95

Reviewed by Norman Ravvin

Two counter-images run through *Anne Frank: Reflections on Her Life and Legacy*, a volume described by its editors as an "anthology" gathering the "disparate facts and interpretations" concerning Anne Frank. These two images stand in opposition to one another: they are the final scene of the 1955 play *The Diary of Anne Frank*, in which the Broadway Anne asserts that "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart"; the second is an eyewitness account of her in Bergen-Belsen, "in rags . . . her emaciated, sunken face in darkness." This latter image has not, of course, been a part of Anne Frank's legacy, and it is the goal of a number of the writers collected here to make it so. By including early writings on the diary from personal acquaintances, critics, and historians, the editors convey how the reception of the diary and its author's growing celebrity have changed over the years.

Part of this change has to do with the diary's publishing history—a 1947 Dutch version, a 1950 German one, English translation in 1952, culminating in the *Critical Edition*, Dutch and English versions of which appeared in 1986 and 1989. A number of the pieces in *Anne Frank: Reflections on Her Life and Legacy* take account of editorial decisions by Otto Frank, translators, and publishers, which affected the way the diary was presented. Selections by Philip Roth and Berteke Waaldijk also point to Anne's own editing, during which she rewrote the sections dated from June 1942 to March 1944 with an eye toward the

possibility of postwar publication.

It is the writerly aspect of the diary that now interests many critics and readers, and has even driven the claims of a wide range of Holocaust deniers that the diary is a hoax. Deborah Lipstadt's short piece, "Twisting the Truth: The Diary of Anne Frank," catalogues the twisted claimants who have dedicated themselves to such work. The list includes David Irving and Robert Faurisson. The involvement of these men in the argument for the diary's fraudulence should give pause to readers who are willing to give their scholarly methods credit in other contexts.

Scandal and conspiracy theories have shadowed the diary in other, less sinister ways. Meyer Levin's obsession with the diary's legacy is described in Judith Doneson's "The American History of Anne Frank's Diary," as well as in Lawrence Graver's "Don Quixote and the Star of David." Focused on the impact of the dramatic adaptation of the diary, these essays tell a fascinating narrative that touches on 1950s American politics, the nature of Broadway success, the place of Jews in postwar society, and the ability of art to contend with the events of the war. Included in *Anne Frank* are a number of important reviews of the play based on the diary, which convey the broad range of discomfort, satisfaction, and ambiguous feelings raised by the dramatization undertaken by Frances Gooderich and Albert Hackett under the supervision of Lillian Hellman. A 1997 revival of the play, rewritten and, one might even say, readapted from the diary, is also discussed in a reprinted *New York Times* review. These review articles are short, with a somewhat ephemeral quality, though a few do convey a deeper sense of the problems raised by the legacy of the diary. Of the works included in *Anne Frank*, it is the "Femme Fatale" section from Philip Roth's *The Ghost Writer* that conveys these problems most succinctly, though the entire novel makes for more satisfying reading than the single chapter taken out of context.

Among the other pieces included in *Anne Frank* are James Young's essay on the memorialization of Anne in Holland; an essay on the impact of the 1959 Hollywood film version of the play; and a description of Anne's reading during her time in hiding. The most startling essays are personal accounts of the Frank family's capture and imprisonment in Westerbork, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen. Alongside these is Bruno Bettelheim's much-criticized "The Ignored Lesson of Anne Frank," which takes the provocative view that the Franks, in part, brought their doom upon themselves by trying to hide as a family. Though recent representations of Anne Frank have tried to attend to the specific horror of her death, she remains a relatively soothing symbol. Memoirs like Michel Mielnicki's *From Bialystok to Birkenau* present an alternative. A child himself when the Germans invaded his hometown, Wasilkow, in northeastern Poland, Mielnicki presents a detailed and matter-of-fact portrait of the war as it came to his part of the world: his family flees their home; enters the Bialystok ghetto; manages to remain together in the relatively benign ghetto of Pruzany on the border of a primeval forest; then arrives at the loading ramps of Auschwitz where his parents are killed. Mielnicki survived the majority of the war in Birkenau, then another bout of slave labour at Mittelbau-Dora, near Weimar, then, finally, a forced march in the winter snows of 1944 to Bergen-Belsen.

One might argue that this is an archetypal Holocaust narrative, and Mielnicki is successful at retelling his catalogue of suffering, while reflecting on such concerns as the prewar Jewish life of the *shtetl*, the Polish response to German invasion, and the ineffability of the survival instinct. It is on the latter topic that Mielnicki's book is especially instructive, since he focuses on key events

and decisions that led him on to new circumstances and (relatively) improved possibilities for survival. In Birkenau he "networked" his way from one work assignment to the next, keeping himself under the eye of protective *Kapos*—both Jewish and not. He is willing, as well, to point to the unpredictability and absurdity of occasions in the course of camp life, which might have led to his death. Among the most bizarre of these is his recollection of two encounters with Joseph Mengele:

> I have never forgotten the scene: I come up, click my naked heels, stand straight, and salute, "*Herr Oberst*, number 98040." Mengele, elegant and aloof in his immaculate, starched, white doctor's coat and beautiful, shiny, knee-high black boots, casts a critical eye over my thin body with its blonde fuzz and asks, "*Bist du Deutscher?*" I reply, "*Nein, Herr Oberst. Ich bin Jude.*" "What a pity," he says, then smiles, "go to this side."
>
> The second time I came before Mengele was a few weeks later. Same procedure. I was as skinny as the first time. I raised my arm in salute, and said in effect, "Yes, Sir, here I am at your service." He looked at me, and responded, "You are here again? Good for you. Go."

Mielnicki knows to report on an event like this, and not philosophize about it. His willingness to frame parts of his account with black humour and profanity, alongside an otherwise even and relatively colloquial prose, helps convey the memoirist's sense of loss and bafflement before the experience he is describing.

Bialystok to Birkenau is co-written by the Canadian historian John Munro, who describes in his epilogue the hundreds of pages of transcribed interviews that served as the foundation of his efforts "to make Michel's voice a living part of the text." Collaboration is a tricky aspect of autobiographical writing, and though we can assume that Munro has helped to edit and organize *Bialystok to Birkenau*, the reader does gain an intimate sense of Mielnicki's lost childhood, his parents' small-town Jewish world, and his willingness to commit himself to Holocaust education. Mielnicki's book, then, portrays a Holocaust life: what came before, the awfulness of wartime, and the consequences of survival. This broad tableau makes *Bialystok to Birkenau* a personal record as well as a text well suited to Holocaust education.

Cultural Mediators

Jutta Ernst, Klaus Martens, eds.
"Je vous écris, en hâte et fiévreusement." Felix Paul Greve-André Gide: Korrespondenz und Dokumentation. Röhrig Universitätsverlag n.p.

Klaus Martens, ed.
Pioneering North America: Mediators of European Literature and Culture. Königshausen & Neumann n.p.

Reviewed by Rosmarin Heidenreich

The publication of the correspondence between André Gide and Felix Paul Greve, better known to Canadian readers as Frederick Philip Grove, is a milestone in the research of Greve/Grove's European years. It sheds an entirely new light on the relationship between the two men, eloquently subsumed in the phrase quoted in the title, variations of which characterized the closing of many of the letters on both sides of the correspondence. Meticulously documented, carefully but not pedantically annotated, the correspondence itself is preceded by an illuminating introduction and a penetrating essay, both by Martens, the latter piece indicating the degree to which Greve's fortunes, after he had served his prison term, were affected by the machinations of his rival Franz Blei.

This volume conclusively lays to rest the hitherto prevailing notion that Greve was a kind of Gide groupie. In his introduction Martens observes that the correspondence

reveals that Greve was at least as important to Gide as Gide was to Greve. Martens' interpretation of the relationship would also explain the intensity of the two men's first encounter, in which a central issue is the opposition between life and art: Gide argues for the supremacy of the artist, who prefers to *faire agir* rather than act himself, a position he will reiterate in his letters, while Greve avows his preference for action: "L'œuvre d'art n'est pour moi qu'un pis-aller. Je préfère la vie."

Gide's attraction to Greve was essentially narcissistic: Greve the man-of-action fed Gide's artistic inspiration, which involved observation from a distance. Gide, awaiting Greve in Paris, knew that the latter had just been released from prison, while Greve was initially unaware that Gide had been informed of this. It is Greve's life, and, one senses, his dramatic appearance on arriving in Paris that left such a lasting impression on Gide. In his diary Gide writes: "Je vis aussitôt cette figure glabre, comme passée au chlore, ce corps trop grand pour qui tous les sièges sont bas . . . Je souhaitai ardemment que ce fût lui. C'était lui."

Indeed, the letters support Martens' contention that for Gide, Greve was a sort of alter ego in whom Gide saw a reflection of a possible version of his own life. This explains why, after the first meeting, he preferred correspondence to personal encounters. In one of his early letters, Gide writes to Greve: "De toutes les figures que j'ai rencontrées, vous êtes une de celles qui m'a le plus intéressé [. . .] Vous m'intéressez autant que le premier jour, et c'est là, si je puisse ainsi dire, un intérêt de cœur autant que de la tête, mais à moins que ce ne soit pour pénétrer un peu plus avant dans votre vie, je n'éprouve pas le besoin de vous revoir."

Martens, who has also published a new study of Greve's European years that greatly expands and in some cases contradicts the earlier findings of Douglas O. Spettigue (*Felix Paul Greves Karriere: Frederick Philip Grove in Deutschland*), offers an intriguing analysis of Grove's motivation in writing his "autobiography": in *In Search of Myself*, Grove cites the biography of the "young Frenchman" that has been brought to him as an incentive to write his own life story. Martens suggests that this act has a subtext: while Gide's life is written about by someone else, Grove must write (act) himself. What may have been crucial, according to Martens, in motivating Grove's oblique allusions to Gide in his "autobiography," was his frustration at the absence of any references to Grove (as Greve) in Gide's biography or, indeed, his autobiography (*Si le grain ne meurt*).

The correspondence consists mainly of Greve's letters to Gide, the other side of the correspondence presumably having been destroyed or lost after Greve's "death" in 1909. However, thanks to the cooperation of Madame Gide, the book does include drafts of a number of Gide's letters to Greve. Taken together, these letters reveal much about the relationship between the two writers, and document Greve's astonishing productivity as a translator and writer. They also chronicle Greve's desperation for ever more translation work, in order to pay his crushing debt to Kilian, and his exhaustion and increasing hopelessness at the circumstances in which he finds himself. In a poignant letter dated August 28, 1906, he writes to Gide: "Je ne crois plus au succès. Je ne suis plus qu'une machine à écrire, et je deviens stupide, inintéressant. Je convoite une cahute pour m'étendre sur une paillasse. C'est triste mais c'est vrai. À force d'être surexcité et fatigué on devient comme ça."

The text is interspersed with copies of manuscripts and letters as well as beautifully reproduced, full-page copies of title pages of the works of Grove-Greve and Gide. The correspondence is followed by a number of excerpts from Grove/Greve's writings, and concludes with the transcription of Gide's journal notes describing his first encounter with Felix Paul Greve.

The second volume under review reveals the richness and breadth of the concept of cultural mediation when it is imaginatively and systematically applied. The book contains twenty highly specialized and divergent essays thoughtfully grouped into four sections, and a brief but graceful explanatory preface by editor Klaus Martens, who directs the Saarbrücken project on the mediation of world literature under whose aegis this collection was undertaken.

The opening section consists of three essays devoted to cultural mediator *par excellence* Felix Paul Greve/Frederick Philip Grove and one by Irene Gammel on the extraordinary role of his onetime common-law wife, "Baroness Else," in the modernist project to "renew American culture" led by *The Little Review* and other "little" magazines. In the second section, titled "Mediators of Literature," an intriguing essay by Katharina Bunzman documenting the mutual influence of Djuna Barnes and European surrealism functions as a sort of transition to the first, given the close connections between Barnes and Else von Freytag-Loringhofen. Three of the contributions in this section examine various aspects of translation. Wolfgang Görtshacher's essay discussses Michael Hamburger and Christopher Middleton's translations which facilitated the reception of many German writers in the United States, despite the ignorance of and prejudice against all things German in 1940s Britain. Three highly original contributions conclude this eclectic section. In a piece by Stephen Shapiro titled "The Moment of the Condom" the introduction of condoms into the U.S. through a Philadelphia bookstore run by French colonial exile Moreau de Saint-Méry becomes an act of cultural mediation read in terms of Foucauldian concepts of sexuality. Another essay by Martin Meyer describes how the U.S. Armed Services Editions, which provided free reading material for millions during and shortly after the Second World War, functioned as an instrument of transatlantic cultural mediation. The essay also discusses the economic and political dimensions of the ASE. The final contribution in this section by Dirk de Gees, looking at intercultural phenomena in terms of functionalist analysis, examines the relations between Flemish and foreign cultures with a closer look at the role of American literature in Belgium during the Second World War.

The third section of the book focuses on issues of theory and genre and includes a fascinating piece by Werner Reinhart on the occurrence of the Hansel and Gretel theme in American poems by women, while contributions in the fourth and last section, titled "Literature and the Other Arts," range from Delsarte's influence on American theatre in a piece by Wendel Stone to photography. Christoph Ribbat's superb essay "The European Eye: Refugee Photographers from Nazi Germany" is an eloquent conclusion to this remarkable volume.

Italian Migration

Donna R. Gabaccia
Italy's Many Diasporas. U of Washington P
US $22.00

Filippo Salvatore. Trans. Domenic Cusmano
Ancient Memories, Modern Identities. Guernica
$20.00

Luigi Romeo
Canadian Poems—Bilingual Edition. Pentland n.p.

Nicholas De Maria Harney
Eh, Paesan! Being Italian in Toronto. U of Toronto P $17.95

Reviewed by Jacqueline Samperi Mangan

At first glance these four books have little in common beyond Italian subject matter. Romeo writes intellectual and vibrant poetry; Gabaccia studies Italian global migration; Salvatore interviews young authors who reveal their ambivalent North American identities; and Harney explores the identities of Italian immigrants

in Toronto. Yet each author illuminates the rich complexities of Italian migration in North America and in the world.

Gabaccia's lengthy migration study shows the recent emergence of Italian identity. Since Italians were never a "victim Diaspora" like, for example, Africans and Jews, migrant Italians did not feel a great sense of loss for their nation and did not form a national community. It was common for the men to migrate and leave behind their families. Unlike persecuted groups, who fled their land and were unable to return, the Italian migrant had the intention of returning. Only in these past decades have Italians come to identify with a national identity, much of it stereotypical. Some migrants return to Italy to experience high fashion, car racing, Tuscan food and other "corporate versions of modern urban pleasures of Italian style." But the vast majority are descendants of the workers who travelled the world in search of economic security. These migrants distrust the Italian state and commit themselves more readily to their local community and family. The Catholic faith is the sole pillar for these globally dispersed Italian migrants whose identities are linked by Gabaccia to "the everyday pleasures—of food, family, parish and home place, all things that can be enjoyed and savoured anywhere in the world that people call home."

In *Ancient Memories, Modern Identities* Salvatore's interviews recount Italian settlement stories in large cities like Montreal and Toronto. The birth and lives of the various "Little Italies" in Canada form the first part of the book. The second part traces the origin of the Italo-Canadian literary corpus from the early 1930's onwards to its blossoming in the 1970s and beyond. Highlighted in this section are works by Liborio Lattoni, Mario Duliani, Giose Rimanelli, Pietro Corsi, Tonino Caticchio, Ermanno La Riccia, Dino Minni, Marco Micone, Mary Melfi, Lisa Carducci, Vittorio Rossi and Nino Ricci. Antonio D'Alfonso has most effectively disseminated Italian Canadian literature by founding Guernica Editions and focusing on literary works by minority writers. The third part of the book dicusses three film producers who describe the identity of an Italo-Canadian artist caught in a political ideology. *Ancient Memories, Modern Identities* reflects on the identity crisis that writers and artists must undergo in the modern Canadian world and the shadows of the ancient culture of their Italian villages that follow them.

Romeo's *Canadian Poems* finds beauty in the memories of childhood, of Tropea, the hometown in Italy, and in the nature of a distant time. The poems "Non Sequitur" and "Quinta dimensione" denounce the madness of the human race. In the Preface and the Explanatory and Historical Notes, Romeo writes about the creation of the poems and their historical place in his life.

Nicholas DeMaria Harney writes about the Italians in Toronto and, transcending Italian stereotypes, studies the impact that Italian culture and people have had on an Anglo-Saxon Canadian city. Beyond the clichés of Mafia guys and poor ignorant peasants lies a reality that is contradictory and varied. Moving from how Italians perceived themselves and how they evolved in the social and political micro-structure of the city of Toronto, to the perception and occasional misperception of the Italians by the anglophone population, Harney digs deep into all social, historical, ideological and political strata of Italian identities. Schools and get-together bars, government and regional clubs, church and speciality shops, all contribute to keeping the Italian community healthy despite the conflicts within it. But most important is how the city of Toronto has been influenced by this dynamic culture.

What makes the Italian culture so popular among non-Italians and why has it been absorbed so readily by North Americans in

these last decades? Is this popular culture one that Italian migrants perceive as congruent with their own identities? A kaleidoscope of answers is found in these very different books.

Gabrial's Lowry

Jan Gabrial
Inside the Volcano: My Life With Malcolm Lowry.
St. Martin's $24.95

Reviewed by Miguel Mota

Two pages into Jan Gabrial's account of her relationship with Malcolm Lowry, we read of the aftermath of their first meeting in Granada in 1933: "In Paris and Berlin I'd juggled dates, three, four, and sometimes five a day, but they'd been carefree, lighthearted, undemanding. Now, drowning in ardor, exhaustion had set in. I was back at the pension by ten, praying for sleep, but Malcolm was waiting and Malcolm wanted to walk. For three more hours, then, we walked, words bubbling forth from Malc as from a stream. Parting, we pledged we'd meet in London during August. Before dropping rocklike into bed, I managed a few lines: 'Why do my love affairs always come in clusters?'" This is heady stuff. And it is indicative too of the often breathless prose in which Gabrial tells her story. There is scarcely a "touch" in the book that is not "titillating;" rarely does someone walk when he can "dash." The result is a charming, frequently melodramatic, at times necessarily idiosyncratic tale of Jan Gabrial's years with Lowry—from their meeting in Spain in 1933, through their marriage in Paris in 1934, to their bitter separation in Mexico three years later.

Undoubtedly, some will see this kind of book typically as the exploitation of a genius by an opportunistic, lesser mortal. But the "genius" in this case has had a long list of supporters and apologists, while Jan Gabrial, until relatively recently, has been largely vilified, when not ignored outrightly, by Lowry readers. And although Gordon Bowker's biography of Lowry and Sherrill Grace's collected letters have begun to flesh out a more complicated character, it is good to see Gabrial contributing her own fuller voice here to the Lowry legend.

Gabrial expends much effort in providing a corrective to previous portrayals of her as a superficial and faithless traitor by such Lowry companions as Arthur Calder-Marshall in his *Malcolm Lowry Remembered* and Conrad Aiken in his novel *Ushant.* Neither is she reluctant to chastise such Lowry biographers as Douglas Day for what she considers lack of proper research and a too-easy acceptance of others' accounts. There is, perhaps naturally, a touch of defensiveness here and there throughout the memoir, with the result that, perhaps not unexpectedly, Lowry himself often comes across as a minor character in someone else's story. The now familiar tales of drunkenness, insecurity, charm, and genius are all there—and of course, Lowry's now too familiar small penis makes the odd cameo appearance—but alongside these we are given a glimpse into how a human being who obviously cared deeply for Lowry managed to survive co-existing with such a volatile personality while still pursuing her own desires.

Though Gabrial declares that she has "tried not to give a one-sided picture of our life together," there is, thankfully, still much innuendo and accusation of the kind for which, let's acknowledge it, many of us hope from this kind of memoir. Thus, when referring to Lowry's spiteful, scathing final letter to her in 1940, after their divorce had become final, Gabrial writes: "There was an odd thing about this quasi diatribe: for the first time, in all the countless letters he had written me over the years, my name was misspelled on the envelope, and the letter itself was dated, another variant." The barely concealed implication here, of course, is that it was Margerie Bonner, by then living

with Lowry in Vancouver, who had composed and sent the letter, the same Margerie who, referred to this time simply as "the lady," is heard shouting "savagely" in the background during a telephone conversation between Gabrial and Lowry: "*Tell her to go to hell! Tell her to go to hell!*"

Gabrial uses a theatre conceit to title her chapters—"Prologue," "Curtain Raiser," "Act One," and so on—which is appropriate, for what we have here is a different performance of Jan Gabrial's and Malcolm Lowry's lives together during the 1930s. In Gabrial's version, Lowry finally is a "dazzling man," who loved her dearly but loved his misery more. This book may not achieve the seriousness or depth of scholarly work, but neither is it meant to. It's a highly pleasurable read.

Story and Desire

Douglas Glover
16 Categories of Desire. Goose Lane $18.95

Norman Levine
By A Frozen River. Key Porter $21.95

Reviewed by Claire Wilkshire

Douglas Glover's *16 Categories of Desire* begins and ends, appropriately enough, with stories of insatiable lust, of death and wanting. Norman Levine's *By A Frozen River* opens and closes with stories built around family photographs—here too, death and desire are at the centre, and while the most important threads of the final story have to do with family and mortality, the book closes on a strong image of desire unfulfilled.

16 Categories of Desire is an uneven collection, the work of a highly gifted writer not always on top of his game. The book starts and ends well but bogs down in the middle. "Iglaf and Swan" is a tiresome, self-absorbed story about tiresome, self-absorbed characters. The narrator of "The Left Ladies Club" is permitted to ramble on with cheery vacuousness for nearly twenty pages. "Abrupt Extinctions" (told from the point of view of the last dinosaur) and "The Indonesian Client" (*1984*ish: escape from the excesses of the corporate world) suffer from their gimmicky premises. That having been said, one solid Glover story is worth a good deal, and several such stories appear here. By far the most striking of these is "My Romance." It deals with a couple whose child dies in infancy, and in typical Glover style manages to encompass not only sock-you-in-the-gut grief but also a weird assortment of episodes involving the philosophizing of desire, a pet monkey who escapes death by Russian roulette and vanishes into the backwoods, the narrator's affair with the masochistic Dr. Tithonous, and a trigger-happy ATV driver who stops drinking when he discovers his motel-owner parents loved each other after all. The tone slides easily from an almost amused self-reflexiveness to horror figured in deceptively simple images, with a variety of modalities in between, and this versatility is one of the story's chief strengths.

In "La Corriveau" and the title piece, the protagonists (both women, both first-person narrators) tell their stories with panache, with an air of defiance. "La Corriveau" is a historical-allegorical-ironical rewrite of a legend in which a helpless woman lures men with her pathetic cries for help and then slaughters them; she was allegedly hanged and left to rot in a cage. In this story, La Corriveau is an English-Canadian tourist in Quebec: so relations in the story strain along cultural-linguistic as well as gender lines ("they have that motto *Je me souviens*, which I translate loosely as 'I remember myself'"). In "16 Categories of Desire" the narrator fondly recalls the nymphomaniac nun, Sister Mary Buntline, who taught her about smoking and sex when she was twelve. The Sister's categories of desire form the basis for a comic narrative of excess which is full of nostalgia—nostalgia being here a doubled desire, since

it represents not merely longing for the past but for that particular past because it was full of longing.

By A Frozen River is a handsome collection, one which includes stories from throughout Levine's career. Norman Levine is one of Canada's great neglected writers, someone whose work seems to receive more praise outside this country than inside it. There are (at least) three important reasons for this. One is that expatriates are often viewed with enormous suspicion: in the past, reviews of Levine's work referred almost obsessively to Levine's extended residence in England, and the merits of the collections appeared less interesting than the question of where he lived and why. Another is that his work was seen to be autobiographical, and this notion distracted from a serious assessment of the stories as fiction. Finally, the issue of style: like Mavis Gallant (another expatriate), Levine creates relatively detached narrators who do not make clear and obvious pronouncements about how aspects of character or incident are to be understood. This does not make for light reading. As John Metcalf writes in the Introduction, "Levine refuses to explain or interpret his scenes for us; requiring us, in a sense, to *compose* the story for ourselves. It is that act of composition that turns these stories into such powerful emotional experiences."

Impossible to comment here on twenty-seven beautifully crafted stories. Even choosing some especially good ones is a problem: the list grows long. Consider, for example, two lines of dialogue from "A Visit." Writer-protagonist Gordon and his family in Cornwall endure a visit from Canadian relatives. His sister Mona surveys the "shabby furniture" and suggests a change of job: "You could work yourself up and become a journalist." Gordon replies: "Journalists come down to interview me." These two brief statements communicate everything about Mona's attitude toward her brother: her condescension, her inability to understand what he sees as valuable, her aggressive obsession with social status. Gordon's response, with its play on "come down," underlines his determination to pursue his career as a writer; the assertion demonstrates his resolve. At the same time, the mildness with which he expresses himself suggests that Gordon is not, in the end, as certain as he would like to be about the choices he has made. As is always the case in Levine's stories, simple statements are more suggestive than they appear on the surface.

In Glover's collection, desire leaps off the page—it's not uncomplicated, but there is no mistaking it. "Mama," says the protagonist of the title story, "why it so hard to get a man to do you? Seem like it ought to be a simple thing. Say come here fella and bathe me in your jets of sperm. Mama pretend she don't hear me." In Levine's stories desire is just as present, but in an utterly different form—it appears as a kind of quiet ferocity of feeling, rarely stated directly. Levine's narrators lay out perfectly constructed images like place settings—the implements are there, but it's up to the reader to decide how to handle them.

Chasing Tales

Grey Owl
Tales of an Empty Cabin. Key Porter $18.95

Armand Garnet Ruffo
Grey Owl: The Mystery of Archie Belaney. Coteau Books $14.95
At Geronimo's Grave. Coteau Books $14.95

Reviewed by Stephanie McKenzie

One assumes that Key Porter's decision to reissue Grey Owl's last book, *Tales of an Empty Cabin*, had something to do with the fact that Richard Attenborough directed a popular, yet poor, movie about Grey Owl in 1998. One might assume so because Key Porter's text is limited by its lack of a preface or afterward. There is a short, introductory

"Note on the Author" which gives bare information about the counterfeit guise Archie Belaney adopted and which praises Grey Owl for his "passion for nature" and his "empathy for the land that nurtured him." However, there is neither an explanation why Key Porter picked up the publishing rights to *Tales of an Empty Cabin* nor any indication why this text was reprinted at a time when contemporary Native literature is thriving and when debates about appropriation of voice have been challenging old publishing practices.

The text is attractive, though. The cover boasts a seductive photo of Grey Owl which was taken by W. J. Oliver and which shows Grey Owl sitting pensively on his canoe in front of one of his famous log cabins. This printing also includes a number of photos which, aside from one snapshot of Archie Belaney as a thirteen-year-old in Hastings, England, all capitalize on the solitary, adult Grey Owl who preferred time alone, or time alone with his beavers, to time with his numerous wives.

Published a year before Key Porter's reissue of *Tales of an Empty Cabin*, Armand Garnet Ruffo's response to the enigma of Grey Owl, *Grey Owl: The Mystery of Archie Belaney*, is one of the finest books I have read for quite some time. *The Mystery of Archie Belaney* is poetic, historical biography, and it is every bit as thorough as Lovat Dickson's popular biography, *Wilderness Man: The Strange Story of Grey Owl* (Macmillan 1973). Ruffo provides a chronological account of Grey Owl's life, imagining Archie Belaney's years as a troubled child in Hastings, re-creating Grey Owl's adventures in Temagami, Temiskaming, Bisco, Temiscouata, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and tracing his harried lecture circuit in England, Canada and the United States. *The Mystery of Archie Belaney* is also a fantastic love story. Grey Owl's loss of Anahareo plagues Ruffo's readers. Ruffo leaves his readers wishing there were one more poem which defied recorded history and which permitted these lovers one more moment together. Above all else, though, this is the story of a writer. Ruffo has identified Grey Owl as an artist, and Ruffo's book is, more than anything, a tribute to a solitary soul who *must* write, even to the point of death.

The Mystery of Archie Belaney is as conflicted as Grey Owl himself, but, unlike Grey Owl, Ruffo's poetry boasts of its contradictions and does not try to cover them up. Indeed, the tension which *The Mystery of Archie Belaney* creates is the book's greatest strength. Ruffo does not condemn Grey Owl's decision to be "an immigrant extrapper from England, / [who] promote[s] an indigenous philosophy for Canada" ("Archie Belaney, 1931"), although Ruffo does take some playful jabs at his hero. Ruffo portrays Grey Owl as the conflicted counterfeit he was—as a Brit-turned-Indian, a confused bigamist, a knife-wielding drunk, and a proponent of animal rights and aboriginal values. But he does not deem Grey Owl to be one of those "other so-called Great Canadians / who pass and continue to pass their kind of legacy / on to their heirs, always at the expense of the country" ("Grey Owl, 1936"). Ruffo's readers must decide what to make of this tale, this memory, this man. There is great sympathy here for Grey Owl, especially in that opening poem which depicts Archie Belaney as a scared child, distraught beyond belief that his father, as he has come to understand it, has left him to live "out there / among the Red Indians" ("Influences").

Published in 2001, Ruffo's next poetic response to a well-known historical figure, *At Geronimo's Grave*, is not as strong as *The Mystery of Archie Belaney*. Here, Ruffo's narrator tries to commune with the past and with Geronimo in an attempt to understand the present and to offer up a prayer for those who are "lost to this century / turned highway" ("She Asked Me").

However, this collection is not as cohesive a work as *The Mystery of Archie Belaney.* Moving as it does between unknown characters who speak from the present about love, the destruction of aboriginal cultures, and the environment and specific characters who remember Geronimo and what he fought for, this text does not entice its readers to bond with Geronimo in the same way as the readers of *The Mystery of Archie Belaney* bond with Grey Owl. Ruffo loses his readers' interest somewhat when he moves into the abstract and philosophizes in a general way ("Contemplating Surrender," "Birth of the Sacred," and "Raining Ice" are notable examples), and his writing is strongest when he is more concrete and when his poems respond to specific epigraphs which provide an immediate frame of reference. For example, "World View," which is prefaced by the explanation that "suicide in Canada among Native people between the ages of 12 to 25 is the highest in the world," is a shocking and memorable record of the "walking wounded."

The collection grows stronger toward the latter half of the second section, "Drum Song." Here, Ruffo's polemical and prose-poetic style captivates readers, and it is at this moment that one is reminded that this is a style which has been mastered, and, perhaps, created anew, by a significant number of contemporary aboriginal authors in Canada. One is reminded here of Maria Campbell, Lee Maracle, Thomas King, Jeannette Armstrong, and Greg Young-Ing who write crafted, poetic essays which are not choked by theoretical language but by a desire to tell readers something important and by a desire to be understood.

These concerns aside, my favorite poem in this collection is "Rockin' Chair Lady," the story of Native jazz singer Mildred Bailey who," . . . [b]ound for the city, / . . . got a job with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra . . . and hit the jazz scene / big time, in a world of big band swing." This poem is as strong as any of those included in *The Mystery of Archie Belaney,* and along with both of these collections, announces the arrival of a gifted and important voice in both contemporary Canadian and Aboriginal literary history.

Body Count

Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon
Bodily Charm: Living Opera. U of Nebraska P $39.95

Reviewed by J. L. Wisenthal

The hero of *Bodily Charm: Living Opera* is not an operatic character or a singer or a composer, but rather a god: Dionysus, god of wine, ecstasy, dance, and for Linda and Michael Hutcheon the real god of opera. The authors of this book by no means deny the restraining role of Apollo, but their argument is that in some contemporary responses to opera the Apollonian tends to suppress the Dionysian, and they have set out to restore a proper balance. This means asserting the central value and importance of what they call "the Dionysian body" in opera, and making their readers *see* opera as well as hear it. If Dionysus is their hero, then their villains are twofold: audiophiles and musicologists. Audiophiles reduce the experience of opera to one of listening to disembodied recordings, while musicologists (or many of them) reduce the experience of opera to its music alone, at the expense of language and drama.

The Hutcheons demonstrate the extent to which "the production and reception of opera are intensely bodily acts," and what they advocate is full carnal knowledge of opera, an experience, in the opera house, of the medium's Dionysian physicality. It is in actual, live performance that one becomes properly aware of the importance of bodies in opera, in three different ways. First, there

is the body as represented in operas, and the book shows (in convincing detail) "how operatic plots persist in telling the story of the Dionysian body, however much Apollonian artistic convention may attempt its repression." Second, there are the bodies of the performers to be seen on the stage, and third, there are the bodies of audience members, reacting in powerfully physical ways to the performance.

For the study of a composite art like opera, it is highly appropriate to have a composite author–or at least authors from diverse disciplines. The academic diversity of this volume, as in the case of the Hutcheons' earlier *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*, is impressive. The encounter between Linda Hutcheon's knowledge of literature and literary theory and Michael Hutcheon's knowledge of medicine and medical history yields a rich approach to the nature of opera, an approach in which the body is solidly grounded in both critical theory and medical research. The generous endnotes, which occupy almost a third of the volume, range from Umberto Eco's *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* to Wright's *The Nose and Throat in Medical History*, and Troup and Luke's "The Epiglottis as an Articulator in Singing," and we learn a great deal about such subjects as disability theory (in relation to the deformed bodies of operatic characters) and the physiology of listening (in relation to the experience of audiences). There is also an interesting discussion of Maria Callas's celebrated weight loss in the 1950s, although no firm conclusion is reached as to whether this affected her voice adversely or whether in general a big body is a necessary condition for a powerful voice.

The Hutcheons are reacting against "the continuing valuing of music over drama by some musicologists writing about opera," and this leads to what some readers might see as a slight devaluing of the essential musical element of opera. The book does have some extremely valuable and perceptive accounts of musical effects in operatic passages, but there are no musical quotations from scores, and libretti are given considerable prominence, as is suggested by the Hutcheons' practice of citing operas by both composer and librettist (as in "Gluck and Calzabigi's *Orfeo ed Euridice*"). In their discussion of *Rigoletto*, they note that "Perhaps in part because of Verdi's music, Rigoletto is considerably more moving a character than [Hugo's] Triboulet"–the cautious "perhaps in part" is a qualification that not every student of opera would want to retain in this sentence.

Bodily Charm engages with a wide range of operas, from the early seventeenth to the late twentieth century, and it includes some marvellous accounts of many individual works. The Hutcheons' most memorable bravura performance, in my view, is their presentation of *Salome*, in which they place Strauss's 1905 opera in such contexts as Dionysian dancing and medical discourses of the late nineteenth century. They offer fine insights into contradictions between Salome as young virgin and as *femme fatale*, and into contemporary medical views of female physiology and behaviour. *Salome* is an opera in which the body is obviously crucial, but the Hutcheons' study makes us aware that physical human realities are present in all of opera, and that for a full, proper experience of the medium they are not to be ignored.

Historical Novel & *Bildungsroman*

Wayne Johnston
The Navigator of New York. Knopf $37.00

Reviewed by Lothar Hönnighausen

In chapter nine of *The Navigator of New York*, the hero, seventeen-year-old Devlin Stead, reads up on explorations because both Dr. Francis Stead, the man he believed

to be his father, and Dr. Frederick Cook, the man who actually is his father, are explorers. Devlin, a student of Bishop Feild's, takes "from the library and reads Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* [1589]," the venerable book on British explorers from the Cabots to Sir Walter Ralegh. Noting that in this book "explorers were referred to as navigators," the hero and narrator assists Johnston in explaining the archaic term in his title. But why use such an archaic term to begin with and why the "navigator of *New York*"?

Because *navigator*, like *sot-weed factor* in the title of John Barth's novel, comes with a historical aura and, in some respects, *The Navigator of New York* is a historical novel. Among its main characters are historical figures such as Robert Edwin Peary (1856-1920) and Frederick Albert Cook (1865-1940). The *Encyclopedia Britannica* identifies Peary as an "American Arctic explorer usually credited with leading the first expedition to the North Pole (1909)" and Cook as an "American physician and explorer whose claim that he had discovered the North Pole in 1908 made him a controversial figure." Further, the time covered in the novel, 1881 to 1909, is made to tally with Peary's three Greenland expeditions and the actual or alleged discovery of the North Pole—by either Cook in 1908 and/or Peary in 1909. Finally, Johnston draws a detailed historical picture of contemporary New York, with panoramas of Manhattan and Brooklyn, with shanty towns and a ball at the Vanderbilt's, with the leitmotifs of the el train and Brooklyn bridge, with crowds of immigrants and traffic jams of horsedrawn and horseless carriages:

> There [in Brooklyn] were far more motor cars than in Manhattan, though they were still greatly outnumbered by horse-drawn vehicles. A gleaming barouche with its hood raised to shield its owners from the sun went by, drawn by two horses as well groomed as the driver, who was standing at the reins as if to signal the priority of his vehicle over all the rest.

Lively city scenes are a particularly attractive feature of this novel. In fact, the "realistic" descriptions of its three narrative spheres (Devlin Stead's narrow and oppressive Newfoundland milieu, the turn-of-the-century New York he moves to, and the far North of the polar expeditions he undertakes with Dr. Cook, his father) show an obsession with getting even the smallest details of his historical painting exactly right.

And yet *The Navigator of New York* reminds one more of Doctorow's postmodern fiction than of the historical novels of the nineteenth century. Indeed, a closer looks reveals that Johnston's interest is not so much in capturing a milieu than in recreating it as aesthetic ambience. He uses this ambience in establishing the social context of Amelia's and Cook's love affair in New York, of their son Devlin's very different lifestyle in the metropolis, and of the novel's quests and explorations. However, Johnston approaches his vivid descriptions with an artistic distance reminding one of the parodic quotations in postmodern architecture. Although he combines historic and fictional characters like the historical novelists of the nineteenth century, Johnston does not want to lend additional credence to his fictional characters by juxtaposing them with historical figures. Rather, his goal seems to be to fictionalize historical figures in order to transcend their historical limitations and open up their fictional potential.

In the following scene in Etah (North Greenland), Johnston vividly contrasts Peary's wife and daughter with the Inuits, among them "Peary's Eskimo wife." It is a good example of his postmodern delight in reenacting the poses of late Victorian colonialism.

> She [Mrs. Peary] was dressed as though for a chilly day at Coney Island. She wore a long serge skirt, a waist-length cloak

> that buttoned up the front, a flat cap with a spotted veil. . . She exuded many forms of aloofness all at once: that of a woman from the coarse company of men. . .that of a white woman among Eskimos, to whose level she would never sink no matter how long she was stranded with them in the Arctic. . . Sometimes the Eskimos, clad in light pelts and furs and moccasins, all with the same shoulder-length tangled mass of black hair, would come down from their tupiks on the hill and follow in a train behind the Pearys, chattering and laughing, some of the women bearing babies on their backs.

What must have particularily recommended the Peary and Cook material to Johnston in his postmodern reworking of history was that as far as the discovery of the North Pole is concerned, "The truth remains uncertain" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). It is also uncertain who the *Navigator* of Johnston's title is. Obviously, Peary and Cook, and even Francis Stead have a claim, since they are all "navigators" and they all use New York in order to court the necessary support for their expeditions, but it is Devlin Stead who most deserves the epithet "the navigator of New York" because he does not participate only in arctic expeditions but in the course of the novel appears as *the* explorer of New York. It is through Devlin's eyes that Johnston makes us see how turn-of-the-century New York is the economic and cultural context of the period's fascination with explorers and exploring. As recipient of his father's letters and as partner of his conversations Devlin imbibes the boosterism of New York: "In every field—science, commerce, transportation, communications—inventors file for patents every day. . . .The tendency of almost everything is 'up'." The most remarkable icons of this upward tendency are the skyscrapers:

> There is no room left in the sought-after parts of Manhattan for new building sites, so they are tearing down the old buildings. . .Last year, when a building of twenty storeys was completed, the papers said that no higher building could be made. Now higher ones are being built and even higher ones being talked about—thirty, forty-storey buildings that will make the greatest of cathedrals seem like a parish church.

The spuriousness of the culture of which the *navigations* are a central expression is intimately related to the duplicity tainting Devlin's family relations. Dr. Cook is the central embodiment of this duplicity, in his professional life as an explorer and in his personal life as Amelia's lover, as husband, and, above all, as Devlin's father. Ironically, it is precisely this duplicity that makes him the catalyst in Devlin's maturation process. Devlin first experiences the trauma of the absent father when Dr. Francis Stead leaves his family. This situation changes dramatically, but hardly improves, when Devlin learns from Dr. Cook's first letter that he is Cook's natural son. Rather, the boy is thrown into a confused state of tumultous hopes and anxieties. These ambivalent feelings undergo subtle modifications when Cook, not acknowledging Devlin as his son, makes him his secretary and allows him to live in an unused, Kafkaesque wing of his wife's mansion. Devlin's quest for a mature attitude towards his father, whose faults become more apparent as their relationship becomes more intense, is as fascinating as his exploration of New York and the Arctic with which it is intimately connected.

Johnston has devised a kind of postmodern parody of traditional plots, with a series of carefully timed revelations. But what readers will remember most are the splendid scenes, the sharp style, and the lack of closure. When Devlin and the reader learn that Dr. Frederick Cook, not Dr. Francis Stead, is his father, that the reason for Stead's escape into exploration and for his neglect of Amelia and Devlin is his jeal-

ousy, that Amelia did not commit suicide but was murdered by Francis Stead, they are forced to revise and rethink the entire structural and psychological configuration of the novel. This book is a major accomplishment.

Writing, Self, & Sex

Evelyn Lau
Inside Out: Reflections on a Life so Far.
Doubleday Canada $29. 95

Simone Poirier-Bures
Nicole. Pottersfield P $16.95

Bill Brownstein
Sex Carnival. ECW P $22.95

Reviewed by Chinmoy Banerjee

Inside Out is Evelyn Lau's memoir of the ten years since the publication of her first book, *Runaway: the Diary of a Street Kid.* It records the years of Lau's life in writing, a life she has sought with an intense passion and singular focus. Lau's life and writing are possessed by her past, the writing always attempting to control the confusion of experience with "words as neat as pins." She grew up, Lau says, both at home and on the street, "without a sense of where lines should be drawn," and this blurring of the boundary between the inside and the outside becomes the program of her writing. Setting "no limits to what I could reveal about myself or others in my life" becomes her signature, the mark of her integrity, making her writing into her authentic body, the site where she lives out of the power of those who control her physical body. That's why she responds to Kinsella's lawsuit against her for her article on their relationship with an enormous sense of surprise and violation.

Prostitution, Lau says, "has left its seal and shadow on everything," setting her apart, as she had feared it would, and also hoped because it protected her with a wall, making relationships less possible. It is art she wants, not the claustrophobia of a relationship. Lau's dedication to art is Flaubertian: it is an altar at which she is ready to sacrifice all life, her own and that of those involved with her. She makes art out of her pain and will not take medication to relieve it. She notes the tediousness of people who talk about their depression but she then writes vividly and interestingly about her own depression. She makes us feel the emotional and physical wrenching of her bulimia. At the end she writes movingly of finding a room of her own but dreams that the hideous purple dresser of her childhood is sitting in it, real and immovable. Despairingly, she thinks, "it would be there in the days and dreams that stretched ahead," but one hopes for the sake of her art that she will be able to move it out and produce a writing that moves beyond her own pathology and develops an interest in others.

Simone Poirier-Bures combines memoir and autobiographical fiction to reconstruct the experience of growing up poor and Acadian in Halifax in the 1950s and early 1960s. Brief stories sketch the life of a family with an elderly candyman father, a schoolteacher mother, and a basement full of candy. Nicole discovers betrayal when her friends abandon her as she throws up after a tram ride downtown. A lady in a car takes her home. She wants to reward the lady with candy from her basement but takes a step from disappointment to growth when her mother doesn't offer the candy and explains that the lady wouldn't want it. From what her mother tells her, Nicole speculates that making babies is like the mass, "When a man and a woman say the wedding vows, the man's sperm automatically enters the woman's body, just as Christ's body enters the host when the priest says the words." On a visit to her relatives after having won a scholarship to the U. S., Nicole finds them speaking to her in their thickly accented English, wishes to let

them know that she still speaks French but can't bring herself to speak their way. But her aunts and uncles, who "had always seemed so smart, so funny" seemed "different, now, speaking English . . . diminished somehow, speaking in that slow, halting way." Poirer-Bures manages to say a good deal in a few words.

Bill Brownstein offers an amused survey of the contemporary explosion in sexual expression and its commodificaton by looking at conventions in Las Vegas, the porn industry, Hugh Hefner, fellatio training in Hollywood, S & M in New York, the sex mart in Amsterdam, the difference of the Parisians, and swinging in Montreal. He situates the porn industry morally by placing it beside the $1.5 million wedding of Céline Dion at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, with Berber tents, camels, jugglers and belly dancers: "To many persons on this planet, an indulgent wedding circus with dromedaries and jugglers is more perverse than anything coming out of the adult-video biz—including a ten person anal gang bang." Indeed, people in the porn industry turn out to be remarkably moral. Annabel Chong, who broke the world record by sleeping with 251 men in ten hours, sought "horizontal fame" while studying fine arts the University of Southern California and attempting to be a dutiful daughter. Disturbed by finding that all the men involved in the marathon had not been screened for HIV and not being paid what she had been promised, she went back to school to finish her degree and returned to the industry as director, producer and star in her own films. Monet, another porno star turned director to take control over her work, made a documentary, *Porn: It's a Living,* out of her annoyance when a fellow dog-owner ran away from her when learning of her career.

There is so much porn around—more than ten billion dollars were spent in the U.S. on porn-related products in 1999; there are about sixty thousand sex-oriented Web sites—that John Leslie, one of the greats of the industry muses, "With all the porno out there, is anybody having actual sex anymore? I really wonder."

Variations autofictives

Didier Leclair
Toronto, je t'aime. Vermillion n.p.

Christian Mistral
Valium. XYZ éditeur n.p.

Reviewed by Janine Gallant

On assiste, depuis un certain temps, à un regain d'intérêt pour le genre de l'autofiction. Parmi les nombreuses tentatives récentes dans le paysage littéraire canadien francophone se distinguent deux romans qui feront l'objet de ce compte rendu, soit *Toronto, je t'aime* de Didier Leclair et *Valium* de Christian Mistral. Tous deux, classés comme "roman", sont narrés par un "je" qui présente des ressemblances, à des degrés variables, avec l'auteur lui-même. Là s'arrête toutefois leur parenté. Didier Leclair, né à Montréal, mais ayant grandi en Afrique, vit et travaille à Toronto depuis quelques années. Son premier roman, *Toronto, je t'aime* lui a valu le Prix Trillium 2001. Raymond, Béninois vivotant tant bien que mal à l'aide de travaux ménagers et du marché noir, décide un jour de quitter cette misère et de s'envoler pour Toronto, où habite un ami, Eddy, parti plus tôt pour faire carrière au cinéma. Une fois projeté dans Toronto, "Ray" apprend qu'Eddy s'est momentanément éclipsé à Montréal. Il se voit donc obligé de partager un logement exigu, enfoui dans un quartier pauvre de la Ville reine, avec les nombreux colocataires d'Eddy. C'est Joseph Dorsinville, Haïtien bon vivant qui s'amuse à conter des histoires abracadabrantes sur son passé. C'est encore Bob, "Jamaïcain de Détroit" habité par la haine contre l'ordre établi de Toronto,

le rendant peu accueillant, voire hostile, à l'égard du nouveau venu d'Afrique pour qui l'Amérique est une terre promise. C'est aussi Koffi, qui "boulonne" dans des boîtes de nuit. À ce microcosme torontois qui entoure Ray viennent bientôt s'ajouter Maria, Portugaise d'origine, ex-toxicomane, ex de Joseph puis amante d'un jour de Ray, et les fréquentations riches de cette dernière.

On le sent bien, le roman offre davantage des impressions qu'une véritable intrigue linéaire. Et c'est sans doute une de ses forces, cette manière de présenter au lecteur un univers par petites touches, tels ces personnages, d'abord mystérieux puis se construisant au fur et à mesure que le texte avance. Le narrateur lui-même se laisse découvrir peu à peu par le biais de retours en arrière fréquents, fruits d'une rêverie que provoque la douleur de son exil. Les atmosphères psychologiques, comme cette tension qui s'installe entre Ray et les amis d'un ami, Noirs d'Amérique auxquels il ne peut s'identifier, sont bien transmises au lecteur et souvent touchantes. De plus, tous ces lieux arpentés par le narrateur qui se bousculent dans sa tête sont évoqués avec verve, de la pauvreté du quartier où il loge à l'étourdissant et envoûtant centre-ville, en passant par les lieux qui ne sont maintenant présents que par les souvenirs, ces bords de mer béninois que le narrateur tente de ramener à son esprit presque toutes les nuits. Toutes ces qualités ne masquent cependant pas complètement certaines imperfections, notamment sur le plan formel. Certes, il y a ça et là des passages d'une très belle poésie, mais le style est le plus souvent convenu. On rencontre aussi par moments des changements brusques de ton ou de registre de langue qui semblent plus attribuables à la maladresse qu'à la recherche d'un effet. Même certaines réflexions, étouffées par un symbolisme un peu lourd, laissent deviner une inclination à cultiver les poncifs.

Si le roman de Leclair ne laisse que deviner des rapports avec ses propres souvenirs et son propre vécu, Mistral explore à fond l'autofiction en relatant dans *Valium* les événements entourant la publication de son premier roman, *Vamp*. C'est donc un certain Christian Mistral qui narre le récit et qui s'apprête à fêter ses vingt-quatre ans au moment où s'ouvre le roman. Le jour de son anniversaire sert de prétexte au narrateur pour présenter ses fidèles compagnons : le fantasque Fantasio, poursuivi par "deux ou trois gars" à qui il doit de l'argent, qui se verra bientôt obligé de s'enfuir vers l'Ouest canadien, un long périple en autobus dont on aura des bribes par le biais des lettres qu'il envoie au narrateur, et Léo, Espagnol "quichottesque" qui gravite autour du narrateur tout le long du roman. À cet univers de fête oscillant entre le joyeux et le tragique, vient se greffer peu à peu une histoire d'amour double : Christian se met d'abord à fréquenter Jo Genêt, journaliste qui l'avait interviewé naguère et qu'il revoit au moment où il assure la promotion de son premier roman au Salon du livre de Montréal. À ce même Salon, l'écrivain est frappé par la grâce de Marie-Raspberry qui se mettra bientôt à lui envoyer des missives de plus en plus passionnées auxquelles l'amant de Jo ne saura résister. Le chassé-croisé culminera dans une fin tragique.

Cette trame événementielle qui ne craint pas la démesure s'avère tout à fait réjouissante dans sa forme. Ainsi, le vocabulaire souvent recherché rencontre par moments le joual, créant un mélange insolite qui confère une certaine fraîcheur au roman. Les jeux d'intertextes cherchent à créer un effet similaire, Sartre voisinant avec Astérix. Par ailleurs, la prose truculente de Mistral revêt un caractère ludique indéniable. Les expressions consacrées seront par exemple déformées avec humour au gré des événements ("faisant la ronde autour du pot," "propos anodins sur la pluie et la tempête," "m'ont mis la puce au tympan," etc.). Cette originalité donne l'impression de voir se bâtir un

précieux florilège de l'écriture mistralienne où s'enchevêtrent de manière ingénieuse des éléments a priori incompatibles. D'autre part, le narrateur, qui ne tente jamais de masquer sa présence et qui cultive même le dialogue avec son lecteur, n'est pas sans rappeler celui de Diderot. Il conviera le lecteur à une sorte de réflexion sur le pouvoir de la littérature, comme lorsque la trame narrative va vers sa fin tragique et qu'il se penche sur le caractère littéraire qu'ont pris les personnages de son récit, ces amantes devenues "femmes de papier." La présence ouverte des effets de la littérature et de ses diverses formes possède d'autant plus de ramifications que presque tous les personnages s'improvisent écrivains à un moment ou à un autre dans le récit, le résultat de leur création littéraire venant se nicher dans le roman lui-même. Bref, *Valium* se présente comme un petit laboratoire fort intéressant où l'on explore les limites du langage et des formes littéraires, en restant toujours à la frontière du tragique et du comique.

Frye on Christianity

Alvin A. Lee and Jean O'Grady, eds.
Northrop Frye on Religion. U Toronto P $75 cloth $29.95 paper

Reviewed by Graham N. Forst

The title of this book, which represents volume four of the projected thirty-one volumes of the University of Toronto Press's megaproject, *The Collected Works of Northrop Frye*, is at once a misnomer, and, in a way, a redundancy.

First, the misnomer: Frye here (as elsewhere) has virtually nothing to say about religion in general (Buddhism rates two minor entries in four hundred pages of text, Hinduism six, and Islam twelve: the world's native religions are limited to one entry, under "North American legends"). Thus, when, in the very earliest (1933) piece in the collection, the twenty-one-year-old Frye states that "our civilization is so far committed to Christianity . . . that we [may regard] 'Christianity' and 'religion' as interchangeable terms" we sense Frye had arrived early at a position that he never substantially modified over the next sixty or so years.

The *redundancy* in the title stems from the fact that virtually everything Frye ever wrote about, here and elsewhere, whether it be language and literature, human love, nature, politics, history, time, philosophy, sex, psychology, education and the social role of the university and so on, was amplified and influenced by his Christian convictions. In other words, everywhere in Frye hovers a "philosopheme" as Derrida called it, of a "Presence which is ourselves yet infinitely bigger than ourselves, which lives with us but will not disappear into death when we do." (In Frye's defence, this "philosopheme" is not the creator demiurge of the "P" narrative of the Pentateuch, but a "humanized god" in the literal sense of the word "humanized": a god who "has entered human life . . . works with human instruments under the limitations of the human condition [and] suffers with man's humiliation as well as sharing his rare genuine triumphs.") This belief feeds directly into Frye's never-failing conviction of the liberating power of imaginative language, a conviction which drives almost all his essays and addresses to an "anagogic" conclusion, as can be proved by just looking at the last sentence of virtually every piece in this collection.

Northrop Frye on Religion assembles all Frye's occasional and periodical writings on Christianity. It excludes, of course, his two late books on the Bible and literature (*The Great Code* and *Words With Power*) but includes the two short monographs *Creation and Recreation* (1980)—which contains Frye's mature thinking about the origins and social impact of the creation myth in the Old Testament—and *The Double Vision* (1990), which is a condensed (but wonderfully eloquent) statement of

the arguments of *Words With Power*. Also included are various addresses, editorials, sermons, memorial services, wedding services, baccalaureate services and prayers (which are, in a way that reminds us sharply that Frye was an ordained minister, addressed to "the eternal father in Heaven" and to "Our Saviour and Redeemer").

Throughout *Northrop Frye on Religion*, the too-often clichéd subjects of God, sin, and redemption are invigorated (as we should expect from Frye) by an ever-present wit, and a *freshness* of thought and style: one almost wouldn't mind going to church to hear the traditionalists' god referred to as "a dead, stuffed, grinning Santa Claus."

There is, of course, a great deal of repetition throughout *Northrop Frye on Religion*, not only of language and examples and citations, but also of those driving ideas which Frye held to to the end, although they became increasingly unfashionable: the Bible as a unified text (a "comic Romance"), the Bible as a repository of myths and metaphors that have "shaped the western mind," the need to understand the Bible "spiritually" rather than historically, the primacy of poetic language, the socially transforming force of the arts, and of course, the social need for intelligent criticism, which teaches us how to make the crucial distinction between myth and ideologies.

As with all the volumes released so far by the University of Toronto Press in this series, *Northrop Frye on Religion* is meticulously edited: I found only two minor errors: a reference to a non-existent Biblical verse (I Samuel 5:17 [sic]), and an erroneous dating in the index of Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* as 1956.

In a crabby little Foreward to the Princeton University Press' recent (2000) re-issue of Frye's classic *Anatomy of Criticism*, Harold Bloom speaks disdainfully of the "irenic" pietism of this "Low Church minister." In fact, however, the lasting impression from reading *Northrop Frye on Religion* is how thoroughly *Dionysian* Frye's take on Christianity was: no gentle-Jesus-meek-and-mild-here—Frye's Jesus, like Blake's, is a "revolutionary and iconoclast" who, when asked where the Kingdom of Heaven was, pointed within, not to the sky.

Bloom's slur (and it *would* be a slur to Bloom) is less defensible: one wonders for example whether Frye would have noticed, or cared, that in the index to *Northrop Frye on Religion*, "Catholicism" receives its own entry, rather than a sub-entry under Christianity.

Peopling the Wound

Mark Macdonald
Home. Arsenal Pulp $15.95

Jan Thornhill
Drought and Other Stories. Cormorant $18.95

Madeline Sonik
Drying the Bones. Nightwood n.p.

Reviewed by Stuart Sillars

The opening item in Mark Macdonald's collection, headed "Contents," is a series of short paragraphs each sketching an item suggesting the person whose identities it has shaped and whose life it records and distorts. This sparse, garage-sale suggestiveness conveys with an immediate yet imprecise force the displaced world that the volume generates, along axes of both character and narrative. Sometimes, objects dominate lives: the central figure in "Walls" becomes obsessed with protecting an inherited house against its inner decay, in a tale in which physicality stands as metaphor of bodily corruption and the second law of thermodynamics. Elsewhere the displacement is psychological: the narrator in "Puss" is both cat and cat-like, out-felining the literal to suggest a being both sinister and touching in its power to consume and sleep. "Deaths" is a macabre chronicle of an old man who lives in a cycle of deaths and resurrections; it ritualizes the pains of

the care-giving relatives to translate the rhythm of crisis and slackness familiar to visitors in suburban care-homes into something darkly comic yet, in its longer current, ultimately unredemptive. At times the world thus generated is sombre indeed, a subtle lyricism provides some relief. "Crying Outside" could be merely another catalogue of urban loneliness, but instead the close detailing of sounds and appearances—though not so close to mark its narrator as obsessional—redirects it to a kind of strangeness that hints of the cathartic, perhaps even the redemptive. These stories move us, inexorably but with lyrical gentleness, to a dignified grasp of existential absurdity.

Jan Thornhill's *Drought* is billed as the first work for adults by this much-published writer and illustrator of children's stories. Thornhill's exuberance, free-spinning sense of fantasy, and complex combination of moods make her voice instantly recognizable and, in the best of these pieces, quite compelling. All of the stories are concerned with the difficulties of human relationships—between men and women, between adults and children, between children—and many draw a parallel relation with the natural world that at once offers consolation and further complicates the business of staying alive. All have a lightness of touch that conceals genuinely original humour, combined with a sense of control that paces and moderates the darker tinges, of which there are many. "Simple Solutions," a tale in which a couple's battle against mice is balanced against burgeoning domestic violence, shows Thornhill at her best. As the story develops, the two conflicts are cross-cut to show an intimate symbolic relation all the stronger for never being made explicit, but this is more than a tale of the appallingly easy slide into brutality. There is humour, for example, in a list of explanations headed "Possible Responses to Questions about the Origin of Black Eyes," and in the increasingly bizarre suggestions about the noisy private lives of the mice, the latter almost, but not quite, cancelling the seriousness of the former. There is also a disturbing sensitivity to the complicity of violence, in the "absolute awe" with which the woman narrator responds to the first blow and her subsequent realization of "the power in making him hit me." Similar cross-cutting is used in "Extremes" where a woman's unachieved affair with a married man is balanced against an operation for breast cancer. Her delight that her rival has chipped nail varnish is matched by her immediate response to the operation, but the latter is shocking because of its brief revelation: "I'm 20. I'm strong." At the end, as she clutches flowers against her, "cradled like a baby" to cool the bruises, there is both loss and courage. The volume is full of similar alarming reassurances, delivered in writing of immediate authority and with an unusual sense of structural rhythm and pace.

Madeline Sonik's debut collection, *Drying the Bones*, may initially appear more conventional, but this should not conceal the precision and narrative of her stories. This is a larger volume—25 stories, 223 pages—and the inclusion of so many pieces, and the range of styles they demonstrate, initially put it at a disadvantage. The first group of stories shares a landscape of the dispossessed—refugees from poverty, child abuse, sickness, drugs and alcohol. The usual suspects multiply to generate a kinetic energy of unease that almost becomes parodic, so that the powerful effect of these pieces, initially published separately, decreases rather than multiplies when they are ingested together. Yet, just as this is becoming oppressive, the approach shifts: the most effective of these earlier pieces are probably "Cellar Dust" and "Home Sick," where humour—albeit not technically of the subtlest order in the latter—allows erstwhile victims their revenge against exploitation

by corrupt care-givers, both familial and institutional. A pair of stories, "Lucky Boy" and "The Cherry Tree," play with Japanese settings and structures to develop a new, twisted form of folk tale; a final set move towards the kind of inventiveness that is invariably labelled "magical realism," a reference that is perhaps a little more fitting here because many share a loose Latin setting and a mingled sense of displacement and wonder amidst their violence. While the stories are much closer to established categories, this should not be taken as a mark of weakness, save in the Blakean sense: though flawed, this is a collection of industrial, global stigmata that are revealed under raking light. The war between Mama Cassava and the animate evil of the government buildings that "want to cut apart the moon" in "The Overseer," the dark, Lamia-like elision of dancer and snake in "The Apostle," and the twisted nurture and revenge of the title story all suggest an appropriation of other traditions in the sounding of a new voice.

Truth & Time

Linden MacIntyre
The Long Stretch. Stoddart $29.95

Don Dickinson
Robbiestime. Harper*Flamingo* $32.00

Reviewed by Lisa Grekul

Writing from their experiences in two very different regional contexts, first-time novelist Linden MacIntyre and veteran writer Don Dickinson, at first glance, seem to have little in common. MacIntyre, an award-winning journalist (co-host of the CBC news program *the fifth estate*), divides his time between Toronto and Cape Breton. Dickinson, on the other hand, is an award-winning short-story writer and novelist (author of *Blue Husbands* and *The Crew*), born and raised in Saskatchewan, and presently living in British Columbia. In *The Long Stretch*, MacIntyre documents a rural Maritime community's regional particularities, while the backdrop of *Robbiestime* is a small prairie tourist town. But, insofar as the narrators of both novels are entangled in the aftermath of the Second World War, haunted by events that took place before they were born, *The Long Stretch* and *Robbiestime* are more similar than we might initially expect.

Set in Port Hastings, Cape Breton, 1983, *The Long Stretch* is a complex story that spans half a century as it chronicles a small town in the process of losing its Gaelic roots to the machinery of modernity. The novel focuses on two generations of three families and the uneasy relationships between those who have stayed "home" and those who have gone "away." Infused with the drama of love, war, and mystery, the narrative is structured around a dialogue between two cousins who are coming to terms with the destructive repercussions of family secrets. MacIntyre's prose is deceptively simple and straightforward, rich with local colloquialism and humour, and moving in its honest portrayal of a community in crisis.

Narrated by John Gillis, a recovering alcoholic who (aside from four years of migrant mining work in his youth) has always lived on a rural section of road called the Long Stretch, the novel begins when John's cousin, Sextus, returns from Toronto for a surprise visit. The two cousins commence a night of hard drinking and truth-telling during which the details of their troubled relationship slowly unfold. In fact, the source of their "bad blood" can be traced back to the complicated connections between John's father (Alexander "Sandy" Gillis), Sextus's father (Jack Gillis), and Angus MacAskill; their children—John, Sextus, and Effie—form a second trilogy of characters, deeply wounded by the actions of the first.

Why were there tensions between Sandy,

Jack, and Angus? What was the "awful thing" between Sandy and Angus, in particular, that "kept bringing them together"? And why must John, Sextus, and Effie spend "years dealing with the fallout"? John is reluctant to discuss the past with Sextus who, after all, wrote a scandalous book based on John's life (he "stole my life and ran with it") and then ran away with John's wife, Effie. Sextus, however, insists on talking about their shared history because "some of us have a responsibility to the future." Over the course of their conversation, multiple secrets are uncovered—secrets that involve adultery, suicide, incest, and murder. But it is only through dialogue between John and Sextus, through their sharing of stories, that the full truth comes to light. Ultimately, and ironically, what the two men discover is that the truth is less important than healing the damage done by years of supposition and speculation.

Narrated by eleven-year old Robbie Hendershot, *Robbiestime* revisits the coming-of-age story of a boy on the prairies (in many ways, it invites comparison with W.O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind*). Like MacIntyre, Dickinson explores one family's struggle to cope with the emotional "fallout" of World War II. But Dickinson's novel, set in Wasagam, Saskatchewan, 1958, deals with the matters of more immediate post-war displacement and dysfunction. For Robbie, the business of growing up—learning about God, friendship, and family—is complicated by events that took place before his birth, in a country he has never seen.

Indeed, distinguishing between "home" and "away" is no easy task for the Hendershot family uprooted after the war (from Aylesbury to Prince Albert to Wasagam) and, in particular, for Robbie's mother who longs to return to her family in England. As with *The Long Stretch*, *Robbiestime* hinges on a mystery: why have Robbie's mum and dad always fought? What is the secret behind their wedding photo, the "something Dad did so terrible so disgusting that he never told anybody about it not even Mum"? What is it that "Mum did" as a result? While in *The Long Stretch* MacIntyre rather problematically glosses over the ways in which the women are affected by the war and by family secrets, Dickinson explicitly addresses the situation of women in post-war patriarchal family and community structures. And one of the most compelling aspects of the novel is its exploration of enduring (post)colonial relations between Canada and England.

In a narrative rife with run-on sentences and invented words, Robbie's voice is unforgettable both for its stylistic naiveté and for its sophisticated insights into human nature. His story begins with reflections on his family's history as a timeline, as a collage of pictures, as, perhaps, "a coal black tunnel like a mine shaft where all the ghosts from way back stumble around." Robbie's parents, Jake and Meg, met and married in England during the war, then moved around Saskatchewan, struggling to make ends meet with four children (Lyle, Stephie, Robbie, K-man) and little money. Meg, impatient with her impractical husband and disillusioned by this "empty" country, constantly compares their life in Canada to her childhood in England. And Jake, while well-meaning, exacerbates her misery with his boyish approach to the practicalities of life.

Robbie, then, spends a great deal of time trying to sort out the reasons for his parents' unhappy marriage. He is aided by his best friend and spiritual advisor, the "wise old duck" Eugene Kozicki, and his brilliant older sister Stephie, with her ubiquitous *Encyclopedia Britannica*, who models herself on Joan of Arc. Stephie (who experiences her own growing pains as she makes the transition from girlhood to womanhood) becomes Robbie's philosophical mentor. She surmises that, in order to understand

their parents' problems, they need to understand their parents' lives *beforethewar*, *duringthewar*, and *afterthewar*. In fact, every person, according to Stephie, has his or her own timeline, though it "doesn't have to be divided up at all . . . I've got *Stephiestime* and Lyle's got *Lylestime* and K-man's got K-*manstime* and you've got *Robbiestime*." As Robbie tries to make sense of his mother's trip to England, his grandfather's death, and Eugene's accident, he builds on Stephie's timeline theory: "what if I carry *everybodystime*, what if I did? Then nothing would end, everything would go on forever . . . maybe *Robbiestime* is *everybodystime*." History, for Robbie, is transformed from a mysterious burden to a triumphant gift.

These are novels about place, but they also transcend the "local" in their treatment of community and family history. In the end, what matters for both novelists is not that we condemn the ghosts of the past but, rather, how we accept and ultimately overcome the repercussions of history.

Re-Visioning Crusoe

Yann Martel
Life of Pi. Knopf $32.95

Reviewed by Linda M. Morra

The tripartite structure of *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel's second novel and winner of the 2002 Booker Prize, corresponds to three major periods of the protagonist's life: his adult life in Canada where he meets the narrator and divulges his life-story; his childhood in India followed by a traumatic experience at sea; and his rescue and recovery in Mexico. Initially, some cursory narrative details of the second and third of these parts suggest parallels with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Pi—whose equally resonant birth name, Piscine Molitor, is derived from the "crowning aquatic glory of Paris"—is lost at sea after a shipwreck. Like Crusoe, he survives the cruelties of starvation, isolation, loneliness (if one disqualifies the presence of Richard Parker, a Bengal tiger), and the elements, as he also becomes preoccupied with making a raft and the tools and means upon which his survival depends.

Martel's novel, however, is no simple variant of the Crusoe adventure story. In fact, *Life of Pi* seems designed to impugn the bourgeois Puritan ideology that underlies *Robinson Crusoe*. An examination of the protagonists and their respective circumstances demonstrates this significant difference. Crusoe, the son of a wealthy merchant, initiates a sea voyage of his own volition rather than entering into business, as his father desires. No such option is given to Pi, whose sea voyage is born of necessity, not whimsical inclination. Notwithstanding the series of misfortunes he encounters, Crusoe is adept at duplicating his father's business practices: he not only survives the shipwreck, but also applies the work ethic he has inherited from his father and amasses a small fortune. In contrast, Pi is obliged to relocate to Canada from Pondicherry, India, with his family and their menagerie of animals (which were part of a zoo, the family business) because of the country's economic instability and political turmoil. No amount of hard labour would have transformed the zoo into a lucrative business since, as the narrator observes, "the Greater Good and the Greater Profit are not compatible aims."

The shipwreck is purportedly caused by a combination of bad weather and a mechanical failure; however, the shipping company demonstrates an utter lack of concern for its missing passengers, including Pi's family, "a lowly Indian family with a bothersome cargo," and for its ship, a "third-rate rustbucket," because both were deemed economically insignificant. Within the ship itself, a hierarchy exists: there are the offi-

cers, who had "little to do with us," and the passengers, whose physical containment at the bottom of the ship's hold indicates their social position. If social rank, as Martel observes about the animal kingdom, "determines whom [one] associates with and how," then it also determines one's significance and worth: not only are Pi's parents obliged to relocate from India as the result of their dire financial situation, their disappearance is virtually overlooked because of their low social status.

Martel's novel is a kind of fictional biography, and, as such, displays certain hagiographical tendencies: presumably, Pi's life is meant to be regarded as an exemplar. In this respect, the book also seems to critique the confessional, instructional facet of Defoe's book, which derives its moral orientation from its resemblance to Puritan moral tracts. The autonomy and economic rewards that Crusoe and an upwardly mobile middle class enjoyed may have been the result of a solid work ethic, but they were also the product of imperial exploitation. Martel's choice of an impoverished Indian for his protagonist seems implicitly to make this point about Crusoe's position in the world. Moreover, if Crusoe himself discovers religious belief and experiences a conversion because of his hardships, Pi demonstrates a kind of spiritual precocity since he has explored—even celebrated—three major religious belief systems in advance of his ordeal at sea. A religious conversion is not engendered by his sufferings; instead, religious beliefs and rituals sustain him throughout his perils. Narrative itself becomes a means of sheltering from the cruelties of survival. The two versions of Pi's life conveyed to the Japanese investigators at the end indicate that narrative, like religion, renders the cruelties of survival more tolerable.

Still, the narrator's claim at the opening of the book is somewhat overwrought: that this is a "a story that will make you believe in God" seems to suggest a level of profundity and sophistication that the novel does not quite attain. The expectation built into Martel's fiction is that it will transform reality in order to effect a transformation in its readers, but that expectation overestimates the power of the story. While *Life of Pi* is, at turns, interesting, clever, and layered, it is also inconsistently compelling and occasionally contrived.

Canadian Gardening

Carol Martin
A History of Canadian Gardening. McArthur $29.95

Collin Varner and Christine Allen
Gardens of Vancouver. Raincoast Books $36.95

Reviewed by Gisela Hönnighausen

This richly illustrated book describes four centuries of Canadian gardening beginning with the agricultural achievements of the Iroquois and the Hurons long before the Europeans arrived. The second chapter is dedicated to the early explorers and their interest in the flora and fauna of the newly discovered land, their collections and descriptions of plants and the trading of plants and seeds between the continents during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. When the first French settlers came to the East Coast, their main concern was the supply of food. Thus a history of Canadian gardening differs greatly from the history of European gardening of the same period.

Early gardening in Canada was mainly limited to vegetable gardens and orchards ("Gardening for the sake of beauty was a luxury [the early settlers] could not afford"). Nevertheless, even in these vegetable gardens, an urge for "symmetry and luxurious layout" was clearly noticeable. New challenges in gardening confronted the American Loyalists moving to the west of the country and the Hudson's Bay Company trying to

grow vegetables in the North. It is the second and third generations of newcomers who—after the pioneer work of the first settlers—were able to care for the garden for beauty's sake. The creation of the first nurseries, the publication of the first seed catalogues and gardeners' handbooks, and the invention of the lawn mower are symptomatic of a new concept of gardening. The horticultural changes of the nineteenth century caused a transformation of the Canadian landscape. Emerging with the rise of big cities and the social reforms accompanying them, the new horticultural spirit led to the City Beautiful Movement. The belief in the restorative powers of nature moved gardening into a new moral light. Public Gardens were established in the big cities and became a part of urban planning. Further, gardening was introduced in the school curriculum through the so-called Macdonald Movement, and railway stations became targets of a newly awakened interest in gardening and in beautifying an otherwise dull environment. This widespread interest in gardening is mirrored in a number of publications and the rise of garden clubs and horticultural societies which facilitated the exchange of seeds and plants among friends and hobby gardeners. In the Canadian context, as the author points out, gardening can never be isolated from farming. The foundation of the Central Experimental Farm (1886) and the development of an experimental farm system was a milestone not only in Canadian farming but in horticulture as well.

The often inhospitable climate of the Canadian regions requires thorough research for new species. While the experimental farms go back to the nineteenth century, most of the Botanical Gardens were established throughout the twentieth century. The book introduces some of the most famous Botanical Gardens with their special areas of concentration "often based on the climate and geography of their location." The development of "new seeds for a new land" became the main goal of twentieth century horticulture. In the late 1960s and the 1970s the back-to-the-land movement with its nostalgic search for a simpler life made home gardening once again extremely popular. A new attitude towards nature and environment also sharpened the eye for Canadian heritage. Native seeds were rediscovered and propagated in the Heritage Seed Program. Wild flower gardens and road beautifying programs mirror the recent interest in the protection of the environment. "Gardens, Gardens, Everywhere", the final chapter, sketches new tendencies in gardening.

Despite the fact that Martin seeks to write a history of Canadian gardening, some references to international tendencies might have been useful. A number of the phenomena described are not typically or exclusively Canadian, but part of more general movements: The City Beautiful Movement, for example, should be considered within the context of the social reforms of Ruskin and, in particular, William Morris which resulted in building the first Garden Cities in England. This is not so much a question of direct influence but of comparable social conditions entailing similar reactions. The back-to-the-land movement of the 1960s and 70s is related to the foundation of the "Green" parties in Europe and originates from the same political and social situation. Moreover, road beautifying programs and wild flower gardens are just as popular in Europe as they are in Canada and derive from the same newly awakened concern for the environment.

However, this undoubtedly is a valuable book for all garden lovers interested in cultural history. The author has an admirable way of putting the right pictures and the right quotations in the right place. Carol Martin's *A History of Canadian Gardening* is not merely a history of Canadian gardening, it is more: it is a cultural history of

Canadian gardens, full of information and beautifully illustrated.

"Since a garden is always a work in progress, a volatile thing" it is the authors' aim "to record a few of the best [gardens] at a moment when Vancouver is in the midst of a gardening renaissance." An introductory survey of the history of gardening on the West Coast by Christine Allen is followed by the presentation of 26 outstanding private gardens of Vancouver, classified according to the different types of influences (English Influence, Cottage Style, Courtyard Gardens, Grand Estates, Tropical Visions, Oriental Influences, Plant Collections, North American Influence). A quotation summarizing the owner's concept serves as an epigraph for each section. The beautifully designed and coloured garden plans provide an insight into the individual garden while the wonderful photos by John Dowell capture the highlights in greater detail.

This book conveys the intimate atmosphere of private gardens which one would otherwise not have the opportunity to share. The text, which combines poetic description and botanical information, is a real treasure for every garden lover. This is a most delightful book to browse through and a mine of inspiration.

Rewriting Identity

Ashok Mathur
The Short, Happy Life of Harry Kumar. Arsenal Pulp $19.95

Neil Bissoondath
Doing the Heart Good. Cormorant $34.95

Bharati Mukherjee
Desirable Daughters. Harper*Flamingo* $34.95

Reviewed by Katherine Miller

Metaphors of identity and place permeate these novels, whose characters careen between different countries, cultures, and languages, often feeling at home in none. Neil Bissoondath's narrator is an English-speaker living in Quebec. Ashok Mathur's title character has an English mother and an Indian father; consequently, he is left "haplessly in the middle and, as was his wont, hopelessly confused." Tara, one of Bharati Mukherjee's desirable daughters, feels "lost inside an Salman Rushdie novel, a once-firm identity smashed by hammer blows, melted down and reemerging as something wondrous, or grotesque." With varying degrees of success, the writers reconfigure the many permutations of their characters' identities, rewriting myth and personal history.

The Short, Happy Life of Harry Kumar follows the adventures of Harry Kumar who is, in his own words, "an ordinary guy who holds out promise to do ordinary things for the rest of his ordinary life." Fortunately, this novel is short, clocking in at only 223 pages. For the first third, Mathur describes Harry's life in mind-numbing detail; he then resorts to the surreal for dramatic impact. After Harry's friend, Sita, is kidnapped by a god, Anna Varre, Harry follows a number of clues embedded in the oddest of locations: the voice-recognition software in a bank; the leg of a picnic bench on Galiano Island; a computer print-out in a non-existent Writer's studio. As the narrator tells us:

> it's up to Harry and his global peripateticisms to find her [Sita], thus beginning an island quest that takes him to Galiano Island, Toronto Island, the island continent of Australia, and soon to an island-off-an-island on the continent's west coast, and yes, finally to yet another south Pacific island where all will come clear. Can you feel the gusto of the travel narrative, truly bringing vigour into tired old sedentary bones?

The above paragraph captures many of the novel's problems and obsessions: the frequent plot reiterations; the run-on, clause-laden sentences; the annoyingly self-aware questions; the focus on islands as a

metaphor for the postcolonial condition. A final showdown between Harry and Anna Varre at Hell's Gate, Rotorua, results in Sita's rescue; however, in true postmodern style, little changes.

Using the central characters' names as clues, the narrator rewrites the *Ramayana* tale of the kidnapping of Sita by the demon Ravanna. Harry's dog, Han (named after the monkey-general, Hanuman), contributes the occasional moment of energy and humour. A description of Han endlessly climbing the sandstone Pinnacles in western Australia, a "crazed canine . . . searching for something lost, potentially never to be refound," suggests some examination of temporal dislocations, of the eternal quest for meaning behind narrative. However, after Han bites someone for the fifth time and Harry claims that this has never happened before, the humour begins to wear thin.

Ultimately, the novel fails at the most basic task of narrative: keeping the reader interested. To rewrite history/myth, something more is needed than an attractive but bland hero, his vicious sidekick, a beautiful but passive heroine, and a long-winded god/narrator. Mathur promises a rewriting of story but, as his own narrator acknowledges, "sometimes stories change in such subtle ways that they tell the same old saga."

In *Doing the Heart Good*, Neil Bissoondath also attempts to make the ordinary interesting. Alistair Mackenzie, a retired English professor, moves in with his daughter, son-in-law, and grandson after his own house is destroyed. Mackenzie begins scribbling his memories on sheets of vellum, originally bought for his daughter as a Christmas present. He recalls his first meeting with his wife, his friendship with an obnoxious writer (which allows Bissoondath to slip in a few caustic comments on pseudo-writers who spend their days in bars), his mentorship of a blind student—all of the people, now gone, who were once part of his life. Mackenzie's eventless life is offset by snapshots of eccentric characters: his wild sister who married a circus performer, a maimed war veteran, a dwarf accountant. Through his evocation of the past, Mackenzie displays his faith in memory as a form of magic, "which permits events a life long after they've ended."

More than faith, however, this novel examines the power of language, both to recreate the past and to create identity. Speaking of his relationship with Jack, his francophone his son-in-law, Mackenzie marvels at "the unfathomable fervour his language inspires in him," how "his language, that of the book, that of first endearments and early scoldings, the language that speaks to him beyond meaning, in which he dreams, is the language of his very breath." In a moving comparison, Mackenzie looks at his own language, English, which is also his lifeblood, but which for Jack has the harsh connotations that German has for Mackenzie, a World War II veteran. Unfortunately, such moments of lyricism are undercut by clunky metaphors and by the narrator's dull life. The passage quoted above is marred by the pretentiousness of the concluding sentence: "This language that was like a cradle chiselled from crystal containing swift shards of light and edges of dreams, subtleties as surreptitious as salamanders."

Towards the second half of the novel, I increasingly felt that I was listening to the disjointed ramblings of an elderly man, past the prime of life, anxious not to be forgotten. While the evocation of this voice is technically admirable, the story itself bogs down in unrealistic details and unbelievable or stereotypical characters. When Mackenzie's house burns down after his neighbour's Quebec flag is set on fire, the overly obvious symbolic event brings about *rapprochement* between Mackenzie and his neighbour, Monsieur Tremblay, but the incident seems forced. Just as Mackenzie's limited French allows him "no subtlety,"

the novel makes its points bluntly. I wanted to enjoy *Doing the Heart Good.* In the end, however, I felt I had simply tolerated it.

Desirable Daughters succeeds where both of the previous novels fail: it engages the reader in a dizzying and absorbing journey through the complications of modern life. Bharati Mukherjee's novels and short story collections, which include *Jasmine, Wife,* and *The Holder of the World,* explore the shifting identities of diasporic women, both in the present-day United States and India and in the past. *Desirable Daughters* opens with the story of Tara Lata, the Tree Wife, who is the narrator's namesake and ancestor. Through the impact of the past upon the present, Mukherjee examines "the stubborn potency of myth in the face of overwhelming change" in the lives of the three desirable daughters: Padma, Parvati, and Tara.

Tara, the divorced wife of a Silicon Valley billionaire, lives in a remodelled house in San Francisco with her fifteen-year-old son and her red-bearded, ex-biker Buddhist boyfriend. When Chris Dey shows up in her living room, claiming to be the illegitimate son of her oldest sister, Padma, Tara questions her perceptions about her life with her family in Calcutta in the late fifties and early sixties. As Chris's involvement in her life becomes more sinister, Tara struggles to unravel the secrecy surrounding her past, to discover the truth behind her sisters' prevarications and fragmented stories. Plot recapitulation would only spoil the novel's many surprises: read it for yourself. *Desirable Daughters* confirms Mukherjee's place as a complex writer with a keen eye for the subtleties of Indo-American life and a superb gift for characterization.

This Book Will Go On

Susan Musgrave
Cargo of Orchids. Knopf Canada $32.95

Blanche Howard
Penelope's Way. Coteau Books $19.95

Helen Humphreys
Afterimage. Harper*Flamingo*Canada $28.00

Reviewed by Shannon Cowan

Although I like happy endings, I also appreciate believable awful endings, novels pitted with landmines, because as duly noted in the tradition of Canadian writing, reality often results in frostbite. Can the level of optimism with which a writer writes affect the credibility of a novel? Keeping in mind that tolerance for optimism is highly subjective, I think it can. The following three novels by Canadian women apply optimism to different degrees, painting different portraits of what is credible and believable in fiction writing today.

To begin with, take a convicted murderer living on death row charged with the killing of her only son. Add addiction and poor judgment, South American drug cartels, women who will shoot you in the heart just as soon as look at you, backstreet crime combined with sweltering tropical weather, and you have the bones of Susan Musgrave's latest novel, *Cargo of Orchids.* Sound a little dark? It is, but Musgrave is so cunningly witty, that you find yourself laughing out loud despite the fact that you are shocked.

While she awaits her execution in the Heaven Valley State Facility for Women somewhere in the United States, an unnamed narrator writes the story leading up to her incarceration. With this character and others, Musgrave is skilled at speaking the language of inmates, at expressing the sharp irony of those condemned to death yet expected to sign release forms approving their own execution. Beneath a running depiction of the bread and circuses of the American justice system is the pain of drug

addiction responsible for leading so many into jail in the first place:

> I don't know if anyone would have acted differently had they been in my place. It has been more than ten years since I've used cocaine, but even today, or whenever I think about it, my mouth waters and my palms start to sweat. Somewhere deep in my old brain there must be a memory stored from the first time I did a line and cocaine became my fate, my sweet annihilating angel. But you never understand the nature of the drug—you only understand the nature of the sorrow.

As with her past work, Musgrave is careful to frame the darkness of her characters' situations with humour, a humour that is less angry than despairing. This tenuous balance is expressed in a conversation between the main character and her classification officer: "'Do you think you are a good risk to be let back into society?' my classification officer asks. A good risk? Well, I tell her, I won't invade Kosovo."

As impossible as it is to read this book without feeling some of that wit and inevitable sorrow, it is equally impossible to keep a distance between the characters' lives and our own. In and out of penitentiaries, on bottomless airplanes stuffed with contraband drugs, inside stolen cars and trucks and stinking hotels with rotting plaster ceilings, Musgrave's characters rise off the page, demanding shock and sympathy.

Blanche Howard's new novel *Penelope's Way* chronicles a year in the life of North Vancouverite Penelope Stevens. Like Musgrave's, Howard's quirky humour is clean and compelling. Her paragraphs languish on the page as if you had all day to read them. Therein lies my only complaint with this novel: thick on description and all those lovely details we have come to love in Howard's writing, *Penelope* is thin on reality. Although Penelope—a septuagenarian, a scholar of the Meaning of Life, a lover of Rum Baba, an occasional adulteress, and a player of bridge—is memorable, she is so, well, *happy*. Despite the fact that her son, a Unitarian minister, is seeing auras; despite the fact that her out-of-work librarian daughter is a shipwreck zone for relationships, is raising a son single-handedly, and later, is struck down by illness; despite all of these things and more, there is always the sense that everything will work out fine in the end. Little surprise when everything does.

Still, Howard has a knack for description and knows her settings. In the final fifty pages of the novel, Penelope's motives and those of her family surface with a clarity that is a relief to the reader. This uplifting novel in the end is well worth the read, particularly for a brilliant scene involving Brenda, Penelope's daughter, and a pair of skis.

Annie Phelan of Helen Humphrey's *Afterimage* is an Irish maid working in nineteenth-century England. The novel opens with Annie's arrival at a new household belonging to wealthy, unorthodox gentry, both of whom are angst-ridden artists. The triangle formed by these three characters is fascinating, structured around portraits inspired by the work of Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron. Humphrey's brings up so many interesting questions about the nature of art, sexuality, power, and relationships, that I was amazed when the novel came to its stunning (and not entirely expected) conclusion. Like Musgrave, Humphreys is careful with her optimism: people in Ireland have been recently displaced by "the hunger," while expeditions to Canada's Arctic have been known to end in cannibalism, lead-induced mania, or frozen boots. Set during a time in history when photography was changing the way things were seen, *Afterimage* gives us the portrait of three people struggling to come to terms with their own stations. So much of the text is stunning visual reflection that at times we are almost unable to access the characters behind the backdrop. As Eldon Dashell points out: "Isabelle is

right. The future is the photograph. And a photograph is always a destination. It is not concerned with getting there, but being there." Humphreys exercises her tremendous poetic talent bringing us "there." There are times, however, when we would like to move beyond surfaces.

Split Self: Single Nation

Sonia Mycak
In Search of the Split Subject: Psychoanalysis, Phenomenology, and the Novels of Margaret Atwood. ECW Press $19.95

Margaret Atwood, Victor-Lévy Beaulieu
Deux Sollicitudes. Éditions Trois-Pistoles n.p.

Reviewed by Nathalie Cooke

The link between these two books is Margaret Atwood: her novels are the subject of Mycak's critical analysis; and *Deux Sollicitudes* records interviews between Atwood and Quebec writer Victor-Lévy Beaulieu. But whereas one book is about division—specifically in those complex and, Mycak argues, "divided" protagonists who narrate Atwood's novels—the other involves Atwood in a symbolic and historic gesture aimed at overcoming division—on the cultural and national level.

Deux Sollicitudes, as its play on "Two Solitudes" suggests, represents a symbolic coming together of Canada's two distinct cultures. The book transcribes an extended discussion—in French—between two of Canada's foremost authors, which took place in their homes in Toronto and Trois-Pistoles in 1995 (the year of the referendum), and aired in twenty segments on Radio-Canada between January and June 1996. Indeed, that Atwood spoke French throughout these discussions is itself a clear gesture on her part towards cultural unity. Further, the book opens with a discussion of common cultural ground—as Atwood talks about her childhood near Temiscaming—and moves towards a frank and amicable acknowledgement of differing opinions about national politics only towards the end of the book. As Doris Dumais says in her preface, "c'est dans une fraternelle complicité qui'ils se raconteront l'un à l'autre."

The preface, clearly addressed to a French Canadian reader, provides a brief introduction to Margaret Atwood while assuming a familiarity with Victor-Lévy Beaulieu. By the end of the book, however, all readers have had a leisurely introduction to both writers through discussions on such wide-ranging topics as cultural background, childhood, writing, literature, politics. The Atwood section (when Victor-Lévy Beaulieu interviews Atwood) tends to follow her life and career in loosely chronological fashion as the two writers begin to get to know each other; the Beaulieu section (when Atwood interviews Victor-Lévy Beaulieu), largely a function of Atwood's interviewing technique and Beaulieu's engaging willingness to speak openly and daringly, moves quickly from a discussion of his personal life to larger discussions about philosophy, literature, life. That his literary interests have led him towards such well-known writers as Balzac, Hugo, Joyce, Kerouac and Melville makes the discussion accessible for those not intimately familiar with Quebec literature. Those same readers might notice typos relating to names of English-language writers (Margaret Lawrence, Moody, Munroe, Beatrix Porter, Seaton, Shelly) and book titles (Proulx's *The Shipping Years*, for example); but these strike me as technicalities in a book which provides, in interesting and readable form, a wealth of information about both writers as well as a glimpse into their perspective on the cultural contexts of their time.

The divided "Atwoodian subject" lies at the heart of Sonia Mycak's critical book. Mycak uses psychoanalysis, phenomenology and poststructuralism (particularly notions of discursivity), not to mention a pretty sophisticated vocabulary (despite

Mycak's glossary of terms, I still found myself needing a dictionary in places), in the service of a surprisingly traditional premise. Working on the assumption that, as she puts it, "character analysis is a perfectly respectable form of literary criticism," Mycak explores the divided, "fractured, disintegrating, alienated, or displaced" protagonists in six of Atwood's nine novels in order to provide close readings of the novels and to investigate and explain the divided self. Period. That is actually where Mycak distinguishes herself from other critics, most of whom *do* acknowledge the problematically divided protagonists in Atwood's work, but do so in order to make a different point—about the author, her narrative strategies, the reader or reading process, or about the divided self's relevance to the novels' larger feminist, postcolonial or ideological concerns more generally. As if to compensate for the lack of these secondary critical objectives, at the beginning of each chapter Mycak is careful to summarize her argument and to point out how her reading of the novel challenges or goes beyond those of other Atwood critics. The effect is that Mycak proves herself to be very aware of the critical context of her work, and in clear control of her own argument.

Mycak is careful to point out that she is not a psychoanalytic theorist per se, but rather that she uses the "nontherapeutic function of the discipline" so as to render more precise her analysis of character. She aims, that is, to describe Atwood's characters rather than to suggest "cures" for them, as many critics have done to date. How often, for example, have we heard that Joan Foster of *Lady Oracle* should just "get it together"—phrased in more formal critical terms, of course!

Of the missing novels: in an appendix, Mycak argues that *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Surfacing* are "fundamentally different in form," and would, therefore, be better served by approaches focusing on gender difference and genre; and, because of the timing of publication, no discussion of *Alias Grace* is included. The latter is particularly unfortunate since Grace Marks is surely one of Atwood's most obviously divided protagonists. But Atwood is hard to keep up with. As it is, Mycak's close reading of *The Robber Bride* is one of the first commentaries on the novel published in book form.

Detailed discussion of *Alias Grace* is also absent from *Deux Sollicitudes*, because the discussions were taped as Atwood was in the process of writing the novel and she is superstitious about commenting on a work in progress. Beaulieu, on the other hand, does talk about his various literary projects, but he is such a prolific writer (three books written by Victor Lévy Beaulieu were published by Éditions Trois-Pistoles in 1996 alone) that constraints of time and space make detailed commentary on individual works impossible. (One exception occurs when Beaulieu outlines his family's reaction to the partially autobiographical novel, *Race de monde.*)

Both books make a significant contribution to the dialogue surrounding the work of these well known writers. They also remind us that, for Atwood and Beaulieu, the work of writing is ongoing and (happily) so is the dialogue between writers in Canada.

Patience & Perseverance & Integrity

David Adams Richards

Lines on the Water: A Fisherman's Life on the Miramichi. Doubleday Canada $18.95

The Bay of Love and Sorrows. McClelland and Stewart $29.99

Mercy Among the Children. Doubleday Canada $32.95

Reviewed by Gordon Fisher

"Patience and Perseverance and Integrity" is the name of a fishing lure used by a fisherman in *Lines on the Water: A Fisherman's Life on the Miramichi.* It appears in an

anecdote which illustrates these virtues, not in terms of public acclaim, but as the key to individual dignity and peace in a confused and troubled world. These virtues, along with monumental unfairness, unrelenting torment, and moral uncertainty, are at the heart of David Adams Richards' two novels, *The Bay of Love and Sorrows* and *Mercy among the Children.*

Lines on the Water: A Fisherman's Life on the Miramichi is a meandering account of the author's fishing experiences. He writes of childhood memories and adult adventures; he describes friends and acquaintances for whom the Miramichi is home. Only rarely does he refer to the "sports," the wealthy outsiders who hire the local people as guides, luxuriate in the catered comfort of their fishing camps, and take their memories home to distant cities. Unlike many fishing writers, Richards does not go into the details of lures (flies), but he does describe the topography of favourite rapids and pools, and the various fishing techniques appropriate to different rivers and fish. His style is anecdotal, not pedantic, and his tone reflects his obvious love for the region and the people who live and work there. Mindful of the knowledge and experience of those people, he is modest about his own successes and unabashed by his failures.

Richards won the Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction in 1998 for *Lines on the Water,* but its appeal is not immediately apparent to a non-fisherman. Despite his careful delineation of the distinct features of the rivers that form the Miramichi system, the rivers and pools blur into one after a while. Writing about fishing can often lead to quasi-mystical rhapsodizing about sparkling rivers and dark forests, the far-flung sweep of a salmon's life, and the cosmic connection between the fisherman and his prey—concepts that are almost never adequately captured by words on a page—but while Richards does reflect an awareness of these unfathomable mysteries, there isn't much rhapsodizing in *Lines on the Water.* Instead, Richards puts it all in perspective on the last page, with a touch as light and precise as a fly touching the water above a lurking trout. After he has recounted the anecdote about Patience and Perseverance and Integrity to a longtime fishing companion, his listener responds:

> "David. Don't let anyone else hear you talking like that.
> I can take it—because I know you."
> "Well," I said, finishing my tea, "tomorrow is another day—"

Tomorrow is a long time coming for many of the characters in *The Bay of Love and Sorrows* and *Mercy Among the Children.* In these novels, the picture postcard view of the Miramichi is darker and clouded by something like an invisible mist, noxious and stifling, that touches almost everyone and every relationship, and dampens all but the most strenuous effort to escape its coils.

In *The Bay of Love and Sorrows,* this invisible mist is a form of moral uncertainty and inertia that holds people back from taking the actions they know to be sensible or right. The first half of the novel is largely occupied by the events of the summer of 1974. Michael Skid, a young man from a wealthy family, alienated by a dispute with an old friend, Tom Donnerel, gets involved with some new friends and a manipulative ex-convict, Everette Huch, who embroils him in a scheme to make money by selling drugs. Imbued with a vague sense of rebellion against his family values and an equally unfocused drift towards excitement and adventure, Michael is unable to recognize or resist the malevolence he encounters as the drug scheme gets more serious. His new friends look to him for leadership, but he fails to give them the help they need to escape the physical abuse and crushing poverty that circumscribes their lives. Tom Donnerel, painfully shy, inarticulate, but with a fierce integrity, cannot bring himself to put the past aside and renew the friend-

ship with Michael when the opportunity arises. He suffers in self-imposed isolation as his girlfriend Karrie is drawn away, in her innocence and romantic optimism,and unknowingly becomes part of the drug scheme herself. Like the proverbial butterfly whose wingbeats in Beijing set in motion a train of atmospheric events that lead to a thunderstorm, a cruel Fate determines that individual actions of the summer give rise to consequences far beyond any reasonable expectations. The first half of the novel culminates with a murder.

How individuals and the community as a whole reacts to that murder is the focus of the second half of the novel. The murder leads to the accidental death of a retarded man; further misunderstandings turn the local community against an innocent man. In the face of such hostility, and racked by his own pain, the man refuses to defend himself and is sent to jail. A determined police officer continues to investigate the murder; new evidence comes to light. Guilt begins to haunt those linked to the murder. But there is no dramatic *dénouement* as in mystery novels where the detective confronts the villain and ties up all the loose ends in a brilliant summary of the case. Bit by bit, the truth is revealed. By the end of the novel, three more people have died, and many lives have been changed in the aftermath. Richards takes the reader deep into the lives of Michael, Tom, and Karrie, revealing their hopes, their fears, and their uncertainties, and their ignorance. The reader learns more about Everette Hutch than Michael and Karrie ever know, and in this case, it is ignorance that is tragic, not self-knowledge. Other characters are treated sympathetically for the most part, and one of the most poignant aspects of the novel is the reader's awareness of the pain that most of the characters feel: their desperation, their suffering, and their awareness of being trapped by poverty—and their pasts.

Where *The Bay of Love and Sorrows* is a meticulously drafted watercolour, *Mercy Among the Children* is a large oil on canvas. Winner of the Governor General's Award for Fiction in 2000, co-winner of the Giller Prize for Fiction in 2000, and winner of the Canadian Booksellers Association Libris Award for Fiction Book of the Year in 2001, *Mercy Among the Children* is remarkably similar to *The Bay of Love and Sorrows*, not just in the Miramichi setting, but in a wide range of details. It is almost as if the earlier novel, written in 1998, was a trial run for the later one. *Mercy Among the Children* spans a longer period of time, from the 1960s to the 1990s, but the action develops as slowly and deliberately as in the earlier novel. From the very start, the central character, Sydney Henderson, is victimized by a cruel and unrelentingly malign Fate that had almost destroyed his father. The narrator, Sydney's son Lyle, describes how well-meaning actions are taken at exactly the wrong time: events are easily misinterpreted and motives meanly twisted; injustice piles on injustice. A crime is committed, a young man is killed. Sydney Henderson, with good—or defensible—reasons for acting the way he does, is pathologically unwilling to defend himself from charges of murder and the lynch-mob mentality of the local community. His wife and children suffer cruelly as a result. As in *The Bay of Love and Sorrows* a retarded man is involved in the crucial events. Again, a beautiful, promiscuous young woman plays a prominent role in those events. A university professor is shown to be shallow and unhelpful in *The Bay of Love and Sorrows* ; in *Mercy Among the Children,* a university professor, reputed to be a defender of the poor and downtrodden, proves to be arrogantly dismissive when asked for help. The person who is responsible for the death is violent, deceitful, and manipulative. The police officer who appeared in *The Bay of Love and Sorrows* investigates this murder after everyone else considers the case closed. In

the end, the guilty parties are punished, not so much by the justice system as by their own awareness of what they've done. But along the way, good people die and lives are broken.

The parallels are not exact. In *Mercy Among the Children*, the story has more threads, the cast is larger, and the issues are broader. We learn more about the past history of Sydney and his father, about the people who have maligned and abused him; we get a fuller sense of the economic and social power structures of the community. The relationships between the characters are more convoluted, and many important connections are not revealed until late in the story. An environmental issue—the belated impact of careless use and disposal of toxic herbicides—underlies a large part of the story. The power of the local millowner, the hypocrisy of the local priest, the slyness of a local lawyer all affect the course of events in both predictable and unpredicted ways. In *Mercy Among the Children* , extreme poverty is the miasma that envelopes protagonists and antagonists alike. Without the sense of self-worth that comes from fulfilling a traditional role of provider for, and protector of, a family, men seem to turn unthinkingly to the only power they have: the ability to hand out physical punishment. Abusive fathers and beaten women and children form the social background of the poorest families. No wonder that their struggle is for self-respect as well as for simple survival.

Both novels present a bleak picture of the world. There is little happiness in these novels. For most people, rich and poor alike, happiness is a something small and temporary. Chance and coincidence play a large role, and while random theory would indicate that both good and bad things happen by chance, ill-fate looms much larger than good luck in the lives of most characters. There are not many admirable characters, and only a few are fully developed; we don't know much about why they are strong or loyal or how they remain unswayed by the dark currents of hostility and intolerance that swirl around them. Worst of all, they are not exempt from the vagaries of Fate. For some, tomorrow never comes; for most, their lives continue with little improvement over the past. A better tomorrow is still a long way off. Yet the major strength of both novels is Richards' awareness of the human condition. He knows that people are not perfect; he portrays strength alongside weakness, compassion alongside callousness. Bad things do happen to good people, and there are "good" reasons why some people are "bad." Reading these novels, moved almost to tears by concern for the characters, by the depth of suffering and pain, one wants to cry out "Don't do it!" or "Speak up!" or "Defend yourself!" just as a pantomime audience warns the hero or heroine of the villain's approach. But the poor know that speaking up, while important, is not enough, and in *Mercy Among the Children*, in particular, Richards presents a moving indictment of the social forces that still make it hard for people to escape the stigma of their pasts and find the dignity that every individual deserves

Are patience and perseverance the answer? Although they seem to be positive aspects of several characters in both novels, they also seem to destroy Tom Donnerel and Sydney Henderson, and bring torment to Sydney's family. They also seem to be inherent traits, not ones that can be learned and adopted from the outside world, and they don't serve to change the world, or one's position in it. Or do they? Perhaps that is the question that Richards is addressing in these novels. Readers will have to provide their own answers.

Risk-taking

Emma Richler
Sister Crazy. Knopf Canada $29.95

Jane Finlay-Young
From Bruised Fell. Penguin $22.99

Kate Sterns
Down There by the Train. Knopf Canada $29.95

Melissa Hardy
The Uncharted Heart. Knopf Canada $29.95

Reviewed by Afra Kavanagh

All the works in this review are by Canadian women, all excellent writers who take risks and succeed in subverting our expectations, either through their choice of content or viewpoint. Three of the works deal with the challenges of women's developing subjectivity. Two write "being" in new and exciting ways: Sterns surprises us by her Gothic and humourous treatment of love and loss within families, and Hardy depicts the lives of a variety of people whose world was dominated by mud, ice and daily violence in Timmins, Ontario, during the gold rush in the early 1900s. The other two, Richler and Findlay-Young, write memoir-like elegies narrated by daughters to whom family is everything.

While it is now conventional in some areas to blame most mental illness on inadequate parenting, new research and personal accounts of depression tell a different story—like Richler's—of an individual who has loving parents and is a connected person but nevertheless suffers from depression or is unable to cope with external pressures. Richler writes about a family that seems to work, and about children who have vast resources. But her narrator, Jemma, is a depressive who is unable to form relationships outside the family. Her great sorrow is that she cannot hold on to the golden years before her older brothers began to break away from the family. She becomes, after leaving home, the knife-wielding "author" of her self-inflicted wounds. She sees herself as a stigmatist, a modern St. Francis of Assissi, and imitates him—he spoke to birds and other creatures and called all things Brother or Sister—by referring to herself as "Sister Crazy." In the final paragraphs, in an unlikely but clever blending of the legend of the Eucharist and the theory of relativity, Jemma offers her body and blood in memory of her family.

The novel is an illuminating study of Jemma and her family, and reveals the discord between her and her world and the resulting disjointedness of her character and motives through the discontinuities in her thinking as reflected by the text; episodes or images are connected only through associations that are personal and capricious. But the novel does not clarify, any more than personal experience or a doctor can at this time, why, for example, Jemma's "almost-twin" brother is able to make the transition from home to the wide world, and she is not. The book's real strength is in reproducing for our benefit the solace the protagonist finds in words and images, in books and movies. The richness of meaning they bring into her life sustains her and keeps the reader engaged.

Being sustained by the word and by writing things out is also the fate of Missy, the narrator of *From Bruised Fell.* This novel focuses on the pain and loneliness of Missy, who describes the trauma of being rejected by her mother. This repudiation begins at a place that Missy tells us about in a way that reveals the difference between her mother's sensibility and her own: "Mummy calls this place Bruised Fell because of the colour. I don't like that name; it makes my tummy turn to think I am walking on something hurt, something soft and purple that has fallen." Clearly, her mother relishes the drama of the place while she (Missy) is already becoming a writer, focused on the name and the feelings it evokes. The novel ends with Missy sitting down to write the novel we have just finished reading in which she describes how she and her sister, Ruby, are

so affected by their mother's repudiation that they too become dysfunctional, and remain obsessed with her even after they move away to Canada with their father. Missy sees her family's story as the dramatic interplay between her mother's wildness and her father's caution, and between her mother's damaging words and her own silence, self-imposed because of the mother's swift and cruel reactions to her speaking up. She waits and watches, and finally breaks her silence at the suggestion of her analyst as a way to deal with the pain she feels as she watches the anorectic Ruby shrivel. Missy uses the powerful images of wind and rain to describe her mother's abandon, seeing it and depicting it as force of nature. She sees her mother as the major influence on her and Ruby, even as she is inscribing the potent role of character and choice in personal development—evident in the differences between her and Ruby and between the mother and her own sister. Even though Findlay-Young uses a traditional linear narrative to depict mental illness and other problems of growing up female, she takes the risk of entrusting the story to a ten-year-old narrator. The risk pays off. *From Bruised Fell* succeeds because of Missy's voice and her wrenching account of a child's fears and desire for "normalcy."

Down there by the Train, the last of the novels in this group, is disappointing because it does not balance sufficiently the elements of comedy and romance. But Kate Sterns is a first-rate wordsmith, and this, her second novel, is full of clever dialogue and dazzling images. The novel begins well enough with Levon Hawke out on parole after two years in prison for an unlikely break-and-entry. He heads out across a frozen lake to the island where he will work at his cousin Simon's bakery, and meets the heart-sick Obdulia, whose mother committed suicide ten years earlier. That first night is rendered as a wonderful dreamscape, but Levon's falling in love with Obdulia, as strangely handled as it is, is the last "normal" event in this narrative; after this, the action is dominated by characters and schemes that more rightfully belong in a script for the Addams Family television show.

Because Sterns may have intended to satirize certain practices and therapies, we can forgive the obtrusive narrator and innumerable word-plays (some of which recall adolescent movie humour). What we can't forgive is her inability to make us care about these eccentric characters whose current preoccupation is to prepare a life-size dough replica of Obdulia's dead mother that she would then eat, thus incorporating the mom and getting over her grief.

The last work in this list, Melissa Hardy's *The Uncharted Heart*, is a collection of short stories. These read like tall tales and do not, like traditional short stories, focus on a single "subject" or event. Instead, they focus on encounters between local characters and, for example, Natives, Chinese or manifestations of the supernatural. The title story describes a man who leaves the city to escape the repressive society he grew up in and to seek a place that is both vast and private. He finds this in the form of an uncharted lake and a mysterious Native woman and keeps both secret. "Paper Son" tells the story of the remorselessness and cultural arrogance of a Chinese house boy who causes the opium addiction and death of his Canadian employer's wife. Hardy's stories are realistic in detail despite a "magical" element. They are also rich in insight and give us a sense of the author communicating "the mysterious and difficult truth of things," but with wit and humour.

Encounters: Literatures in English

Robert L. Ross
Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction: An Anthology.
Garland Publishing Inc. $75.00

Reviewed by Stella Algoo-Baksh

In his controversial and provocative essay, "'Commonwealth Literature' Does not Exist," Salman Rushdie claims that:

> if all literatures could be studied together, a shape would emerge which would truly reflect the new shape of the language of the world, and we could see that English literature has never been in better shape, because the world language now possesses a world literature, which is proliferating in every conceivable direction.

The selection of postcolonial works contained in *Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction: An Anthology* demonstrates the profound wisdom of Rushdie's assertion.

The book contains thirty-five selections from major postcolonial writers, among them V.S. Naipaul, Margaret Laurence, Peter Carey, J.M. Coetzee, R.K. Narayan, Chinua Achebe, Doris Lessing, and Margaret Atwood, and foregrounds indigenous and settler cultures while drawing upon works from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is divided into four sections, each focusing on a specific kind of encounter. The first section, "Colonial Encounters" investigates themes such as personal isolation, cruelty, fortitude and tenacity. The second "Postcolonial Encounters," centres on issues such as dislocation, relocation, violence and victory, while the third, "Immigrant-Encounters," explores the vicissitudes or joys of immigration and the divesting of the past. The final section, "Personal Encounters," highlights experiences in specific countries such as Australia and India which "at the same time are ordinary occurrences within boundaries." The book also offers a highly informative general introduction, while each selection from the authors represented is preceded by pithy bio-critical information.

The general introduction examines a number of significant issues. One of these concerns the use of English in the literature of countries where the language was foisted on the colonised and could therefore be perceived as marginalising or even erasing local culture, history and language. The introduction explores the argument of many postcolonial writers who defend their use of English as a visible means of reaching an international readership. Also broached is the question of configurations of the English language, its metamorphosis in numerous countries where it is not the mother-tongue but where it has been "adapted, revised, colored, twisted, accented, disfigured, augmented, and reworked" by "non-literary and literary users around the world." It is noted also that even in countries such as Australia, Canada and South Africa where English is the mother-tongue of the major groups, the language has been affected by the indigenous languages and is reflected in such elements as its dialect, slang and syntax.

Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction eschews "theoretical bases or biases, the kind of linguistic political, cultural, gender or territorial matters that occupy postcolonial theorists." Its aim, the editor asserts, is to offer "the best that has been thought and said" of "writing from the colonial and postcolonial period." As he notes, however, selection is always a thorny issue since it is dependent on a specific individual's choice. As such, this collection may not meet the approval of many readers or academics. Nevertheless, it is a valuable text for the lay reader, the undergraduate in colonial and postcolonial, Cultural Studies and literature in general.

Ross provides a sampling of the wealth of international literature in English. In accomplishing this task, he opens up new

territory for the uninitiated and makes accessible, in Rushdie's words, "new angles at which to enter reality." This anthology, furthermore, illustrates Rushdie's point that "the English language ceased to be the sole possession of the English some time ago." The "rough beasts" have actually slouched into Bethlehem.

Technology in the Wilderness

Wade Rowland

Spirit of the Web: The Age of Information from Telegraph to Internet. Key Porter $26.95

Reviewed by Christopher Keep

A group of adventurers making their way through the densely wooded terrain of Northern British Columbia in 1872 stumbled into a wide clearing near the Nacharcole River. There, to their collective amazement, stretched a line of telegraph poles proceeding for a few miles to the north, great coils of cable hanging limply from outstretched arms. Hundreds of miles from the nearest city, unlinked to the main communications lines, and now somehow strangely abandoned, as if remnants of some ancient telegraphing civilization, the sight evoked an understandable awe and wonder. "A telegraph in the wilderness!" exclaimed one of the travellers. "What could it mean?"

This curious episode in the history of communications technology is one of several such telling and engaging anecdotes in *Spirit of the Web.* The telegraph in the wilderness, it turns out, was part of a little remembered attempt to connect North America to Europe by running a cable from San Francisco, up through the BC interior, across the Bering Straits, and then from Siberia to St. Petersburg. The project was bankrolled by Western Union, and construction began in 1865. Large sections of the line had been completed in the remote regions of both Canada and Siberia when news came that Cyrus W. Field's fifth attempt to lay a trans-atlantic telegraph cable between Britain and North America had finally succeeded and, in the process, rendered the much more hazardous and costly land route useless. Western Union recalled its engineers, and left the completed portions to be slowly reclaimed by the forest, but the episode provides a telling critique of the very book in which it is included. For Rowland, the ill-fated venture is but a momentary misstep in the grand march of human progress. The "spirit" of his title refers not so much to the communications technologies, from the alphabet to the internet, whose stories form this narrative, but to humanity's "innate" need to communicate, and the way in which this essentially egalitarian and liberating force has informed the information revolution. The analogue technologies of the industrial age, such as the telegraph, radio, and television, Rowland argues, were "top down" in structure, that is, owned by governments or large corporations that controlled the nature of the information that passed through their networks; digital technologies, and in particular the personal computer, are "bottom up" devices: they place the means of production in the hands of the individual user, thus subverting the hierarchical organization of society preserved by the analogue devices. Where radio and tv were unilateral, allowing only one message to be transmitted from a central authority, the internet is bilateral, allowing information users to be producers also, to become in effect their own content. The Information Age, Rowland concludes, "holds the promise of a truer, more authentic political and economic democracy, not only by providing the tools to make the sought-after ideal a functioning reality, but by stimulating a social structure within which it is not just desirable in the abstract,

but a practical necessity." Such unabashed optimism is refreshing given the techno-doomsaying of Sven Birkerts, Neil Postman and others, who have seen the rise of network society as the end of literacy, democracy, and the humanist ideals that have guided society in the past.

Rowland sets out his argument in a clear and lucid fashion that shows a real talent not only for explaining the scientific intricacies of the technologies—one comes away from the book with a good sense of how a semiconductor actually works—but for drawing out the larger conceptual and philosophical ramifications of such innovations. To this end, Rowland provides a useful introduction for the lay person of the historical development of communications technologies, sketching colourful glimpses into the stories of the inventions and their inventors, from Samuel Morse and the telegraph to Marc Andressen and the web browser. But the book is much weaker when it moves away from the history of ideas and ventures into the terrain of cultural and political analysis. The way in which the telegraph helped consolidate the project of empire in the nineteenth century, or the relationship between the campaigns for female emancipation and the role of women workers in the telephone industry, go largely unexplored as the book strives to show how communication technologies represent a return to "our roots as a literate people, roots that reach back nearly two millennia." Rowland cites Marshall McLuhan to back up such claims, but not entirely accurately: electric media were not, for McLuhan, a means of returning us to the democratic forms of society characterized by Ancient Greece and the alphabet, but to an even earlier point in our historical development, the preliterate "tribal man" whose fundamental orality stands in marked distinction to the culture of the eye that followed: the development of the computer marked not the consolidation of the humanist subject, but its dissolution.

Which brings us back to the telegraph line discovered in the woods of British Columbia. Evincing a particular fondness for evolutionary theory and analogies, Rowland gives us the history of communications technologies as a progressive and teleological process whereby those forms and devices that are best adapted to the needs of the individual gradually triumph over those which are not: the telephone supersedes the telegraph, and the personal computer succeeds the mainframe in a kind of technological version of the "survival of the fittest." Such a neat and orderly progression, however, is largely an effect of Rowland's own master narrative, of the manner in which he has constructed his argument such that the analogue "naturally" gives way to the digital. The connection between Charles Babbage, the nineteenth-century inventor of the "Difference Engine," a mechanical device for the calculation of navigational tables, and the designers of the ENIAC computer, a connection which Rowland follows many other recent writers in affirming, is spurious at best. Babbage was not, in any simple sense, the "father" of the computer; the electronic engineers who worked on the early circuitry were in fact largely unaware of Babbage's failed plans and certainly did not understand their work as a development of his efforts. Indeed, it is just as possible to argue, as Maurice Wilkes has done, that Babbage did more to delay the advent of the computer than to usher it in. Such attempts as Rowland's to construct a clear line of succession from the telegraph to the internet, tell us more about our desire to accommodate the strange and the new within our assumptive world, to ground historical change within familiar (and familial) patterns of cause and effect, than they do about the cultural specificity and meaning of these devices. The glass insulators that are still used for tea mugs in

Siberian farmhouses, like the suspension bridge that the First Nations people in B.C. built from the telegraph poles left behind by the Western Union construction crews, are the archaeological evidence of the impossibility of any single master narrative to accommodate the complex and uncertain nature of technological development at its interface with culture.

The Continuing Story

Mary Henley Rubio and Elizabeth Hillman Waterston, eds.
The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, Volume Four, 1929-1935. Oxford UP $36.95

Reviewed by Cecily Devereux

The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery currently number four volumes: the first presents selections from the years between 1889, when Montgomery was fifteen years old, and 1910; volumes two and three represent the years from 1910 to 1921, and 1921 to 1929; the fourth volume, published in 1998, covers 1929 to 1935. (The fifth volume will take readers to her death in 1942.) These journals, the handwritten originals of which are held at the McLaughlin Library, University of Guelph, are extraordinary documents, not only in terms of the information they provide about living, writing, and being a woman in English Canada in the first half of the twentieth century, but also because they have radically complicated our understanding of Montgomery. They have revealed a figure who was profoundly unhappy for much of her life; who struggled with her desires as they conflicted with her sense of social hierarchies; whose commitment to Presbyterianism was intense, even dogmatic, at the same time as her ideas of God and prayer showed a strong opposition to dogma and organized religion; who was intensely ambitious; whose massive international appeal was hardly ever a factor in her relations with family and community; who was mobbed by adoring fans, appeared to take both criticism and international popularity in stride, but obsessively revisited the petty slights she had suffered at the hands of neighbours and family; who was endlessly generous in her support of family members in need; who often demonstrated a need to control the circumstances of her life and her family, and felt a frustration at not being able to do so.

The book is sometimes depressing reading, as there is so little joy in these years for Montgomery, but it is also, like the three preceding selections, compelling. In volume four, Montgomery is often deeply unhappy. (One of the most moving aspects of the journals is their account of Ewan Macdonald's depression, the urgency with which Montgomery struggles to hide the signs of his episodes of despair and her own fear and exhaustion, and the failure of social and medical systems to support him.) But Montgomery dramatizes her unhappiness. Her journal, clearly, was for her a place to organize and make sense of things in her life by constructing them as story, connecting events, and by situating occurrences and people in relation to herself as the story's heroine. In this volume, however, there is none of the coyness of the early years; here, readers are given an image of Montgomery as a figure whose life is "one of torment." "After all," she writes in 1934, "spring must come even in my tortured life . . . ." Montgomery always intended her journals to be published: she was constructing an image of herself for the reader of the journals, even, indeed, editing and rewriting the journals as she traces and reorganizes the account of her life. In the years represented by volume four, Montgomery is producing work at her regular pace: between 1929 and 1935, she published *Magic for Marigold* (1929), *A Tangled Web* (1931), *Pat of Silver Bush* (1933), and *Mistress Pat* (1935). She also contributed to a collection of biographical

essays, *Courageous Women* (1934). The writing of books, however, is hardly mentioned. While it is not unusual for Montgomery to be reticent about her fiction (she generally did not say much in her journals about her writing, other than to note the completion of a work, or to note payment or cumulative earnings), it does seem that by the early thirties writing has become more of a struggle. "I could not write last night," she notes on 20 October 1934. "For a long time now I have noticed this."

Volume four shows the same scrupulous attention to detail and accuracy that has characterized the editing of all of the preceding volumes. The editors have provided relevant and necessary information without disrupting the text. Supplementary material is included in chronologically organized notes that are easy to read. The Introduction is, as always, generous, instructive, and clear. It may be a poignant indication of Montgomery's difficulties during these years that Volume four has, as Rubio and Waterston note, "comparatively less material omitted . . . than . . . the earlier volumes."

No Free Lunches

Sarah Sceats

Food, Consumption and the Body in Contemporary Women's Fiction. Cambridge UP $86.95

Reviewed by Nicholas Travers

Food is at the centre of our lives, and in ways many of us have rarely considered. This book shows that cannibalism, starvation and sex (among other issues) are as significant to a discussion of food as, say, table manners. Sceats also demonstrates that food can be a key to explicating fiction. Bringing together women writers of food-saturated fiction, this text is essential reading for students of food, but also for readers of Margaret Atwood, Angela Carter, Dorris Lessing, Michèle Roberts and Alice Thomas Ellis.

However, *Food, Consumption and the Body* lacks a unifying argument. An attempt to sum up the text leaves us with the underwhelming thesis that the above writers are all, indeed, food-obsessed. Neither the text as a whole nor its chapters push toward conclusions or generalizations. Chapters rarely achieve critical syntheses. Perhaps the scope is at fault: attempting to cover food and what it entails, attempting to include the novels of five authors, and to do so from a multitude of critical perpectives is asking a lot of two hundred pages.

That said, the reader is still likely to marvel at Sceats' range as a scholar. The author seeks "to mirror the contradictory, integrative and associative functions of eating itself." Sceats is at her best extending her discussion away from the novels to consider the wider implications of food in our society. In chapter one, for example, the author sketches the connections between food and sex. Metaphorically the two are inextricable, and psychoanalytically, sexual desire finds its earliest object in the original source of food, the mother's breast. Indeed, Sceats suggests that food and sex are pleasures of equal psychic importance—that perhaps we don't think of sex in terms of food any more than we think of food in terms of sex.

Sceats' discussion of cannibalism is also remarkable. In chapter three the author proposes that eating is an attempt to *control* the threat of the outside world—literally, by ingesting and incorporating what is beyond us. Through her analysis of Carter's fiction we are urged to reconsider cannibalism as much less extreme as is commonly assumed: from babies seeking to absorb mother at the breast to metaphorical ideas of incorporating what is outside us, cannibalism hovers much closer to the commonplace than we might expect.

Food provides women's bodies with empowerment or subjugation. Chapter three discusses starvation and the destructive

ideal of thinness. By contrast, the fat woman in Carter and Atwood is a thriving embodiment of *appetites*, both sexual and gastronomic.

Hailing Mary

Diane Schoemperlen

Our Lady of the Lost and Found. HarperCollins $32.00

Reviewed by Michelle Hartley

Diane Schoemperlen's novel begins with an engaging premise: what would happen if the Virgin Mary, in need of a much-deserved rest, landed on the doorstep of your average citizen? Schoemperlen follows this premise down its logical paths: well, she'd want a shower, and some space, and maybe a trip to the mall. The difficulty with the novel, and why I think the book ultimately fails, relates directly to this quotation from Schoemperlen in an interview with *Studies in Canadian Literature* (1996): "It seems to me in retrospect that the most important thing about a novel is that you must have a story to tell, and the fact that it's longer than a short story is really what makes it different." A novel is more than a long short story. Short stories can rely on an interesting premise and an innovative form; novels require character development and the novelist's ability to make the reader care what happens enough to finish it. Here is where *Our Lady of the Lost and Found* comes up short. The initial idea would have made an intriguing short story—especially the section where the middle-aged narrator and the middle-aged Mary head to the Mall, a section which allows Schoemperlen to use her talent for gentle satire towards Canadian society, and provide the Virgin with some good quips—but it cannot withstand the extended treatment of a novel.

The structure of the novel, with its one-word thematic chapter headings such as "Facts," "Time," and the repeated presence of "History" (a chapter heading for eight chapters), demonstrates the author's central concern with the relationship between history and fiction. She cites Merilyn Simonds' article in Brick, "Liars and Damned Liars" (1997), as solidifying her own interest in "the fiction/ non-fiction continuum" and "the question as to when they took the *story* out of *History*." A compelling subject and question for any writer. However, Schoemperlen seems to allow her enthusiasm for non-fiction to overrun her story in this novel. There is a tension between the author's obvious fascination with her Marian research and her fiction writing. Perhaps her attachment to her sources did not allow enough scope for creativity; perhaps she did not take enough time to adapt her research to her purposes. The details of daily life that authors like Carol Shields invest with meaning are here often presented solely as minor details, sometimes generating a disquisition on luck, calendars and history, sometimes not. There are some times when history and fiction marry quite nicely, as in the cleverly imagined scene when Mary warns the author/narrator of the consequences of letting the world know of her presence. Historically, those who have had visitations have led desperately uncomfortable lives afterward—or they died young. "Divine wrath?" the narrator suggests, as one consequence; however, Mary responds (with one of the novel's truly humourous moments of dialogue):

> If you break this promise, divine wrath will be the least of your problems. . . . Divine wrath will not even be necessary. If people find out that I have been here, that I have talked to you, eaten with you, and slept in your house, they will descend upon you in droves. They will make a plague of locusts look like a minor inconvenience.
>
> She took a deep breath and her voice became that of a fire-and-brimstone

preacher hectoring his flock. Clearly, this was nothing like the casual conversation she had made over lunch.

The understated humour works in this passage, as, to give Schoemperlen her due, it does at numerous moments in the novel; it is unfortunate that they are overshadowed by superfluous details that are meant to prove the normalcy of her narrator and deflating the reader's assumptions that with the divine comes the exciting.

Lovers of lists and facts will love this novel for the breadth and variety of knowledge the author supplies (Schoemperlen's narrator points out that we can divide the world "between those who make lists and those who do not"). Schoemperlen's fascination with history leads her to provide the minutiae of character, including the classical allusions inherent in Mary's running shoes: "Most people who wear this brand do not know that Nike was the goddess of victory and constant companion of Zeus. She was one of a family of abstractions who were the offspring of the Titan Pallas and the goddess of the River Styx. Nike's brothers were Cratus (Strength), Zelus (Emulation), and Bia (Violence). Whether or not Mary knew the genesis of their name, the backs of her runners were broken and the left lace was knotted and frayed." Those who are not lovers of the details of the quotidian will want to steer clear of this promising yet disappointing novel.

A Safari with a Difference

Robert Sedlack

The African Safari Papers. Doubleday Canada $32.95

Reviewed by Evelyn Cobley

Readers expecting a travelogue or serious treatment of Africa may well be disappointed by this darkly comic fictional journal narrated by Richard, a highly neurotic teenager accompanying his parents on the family trip of a lifetime to Africa. The setting for an exploration into the dynamics of a dysfunctional group is well chosen: a safari affords family members no escape from each other. What makes this setting even more claustrophobic is the father's decision to pay for a private safari. There are no other tourists to mediate the relationship between the three characters; there is only their mysterious Kenyan guide, Gabriel. Sliding between Western and African ways of communicating with the family (he has studied medicine in London), Gabriel interferes in the family wars and complicates matters.

In less exotic settings, it is possible to defuse a tension-filled situation by going out to meet other people; on a safari, any thought of taking a walk is immediately checked by the realization that one could be killed and eaten by a lion, a crocodile, even a hyena. Since the focus of the novel is elsewhere, the treatment of Africa is disappointingly cursory, with the author making little attempt to present a general portrait of Kenya or its people. Comments on "the native Africans, who continued to stare with hatred," or on the "thrill" of experiencing the country and its animals tend to remain superficial. But the author seems to have some first-hand knowledge of the typical safari experience. The background to the family drama is evoked with a good eye to the reactions any tourist might have to both the joys and discomforts felt

when one is a visitor in a land belonging to wild animals. Although Richard's objections to mass tourism, to the "overweight, pasty, white mediocrity circling the lions and snapping and pointing and giggling and gasping and burping," are fully justified, his criticism is rarely relieved by a more positive appreciation of animals. His encounters with animals are always about his reactions: watching a lion kill a zebra, he is nauseated; swimming across a river, he is scared of hyenas. His most authentic African moment comes when he is being stared at by a lion and realizes that he is being regarded as food.

Yet the portrayal of the fluctuating and ultimately deteriorating relationships between the drug-addicted and sex-crazed son, the depressed and increasingly suicidal mother, and the alcoholic and frustrated father makes *The African Safari Papers* a novel well worth reading. Using a self-incriminating narrator, the author is able to play on many registers of comedy, irony, and sadly human folly. Written in the brash style of a Generation Xer, the journal is focalized through a consciousness whose self-image is often at odds with the image others reflect back to him. The "frustrating dynamic"—"When mom is down, dad is up. When mom is up, dad is down"—is observed with painful accuracy. Richard himself alternates between hating his parents and feeling sorry for them. Most of all, though, he is self-absorbed, selfish, and occasionally sadistic. Seeking answers to his problems, he interprets the world around him to suit a self-image which the reader recognizes as delusional. Although Richard believes that everybody around him has serious problems, others indicate that it is he who is "messed up," is in "crisis," and needs "help." Far from being innocently blind to his own faults, Richard is at times a most self-conscious character. His self-awareness ranges from subtle hints to outright self-interpretations. In one case, Richard laughs "too hard and too long, a mad, nervous laugh" when asked by Gabriel "Do you think you might be crazy like your mother?" More explicitly, he tends to analyze himself, castigating himself for being "such a baby," "a puking wimp" or "a fucking redneck," for being "concerned for me" rather than for his mother, and for being "so damn selfish." Most of all, he sees himself a "a loser," a "total and complete failure" who has "opinions on everything."

In fact, the author has a tendency to editorialize too much; he can never quite stop himself from explaining what would better be left for the reader to figure out. However, much of the pleasure in reading this novel stems both from the narrator's self-incrimination and from the ambiguity created by his unreliability. Not only is his view of others often undercut by how own problems, but he creates many highly embarrassing situations for himself as when he interprets the most innocent gestures and words by women as a sexual come-on or when he imagines that his mother must at some point have molested him.

Written with energy and acerbic wit, the novel asks us to sympathize with a character who appeals to us through his self-loathing vulnerability while also repelling us through his callous selfishness. In many ways a highly entertaining novel, *The African Safari Papers* is at the same time a painfully astute depiction of a troubled teenager and his equally troubled parents.

Notions of Love

Cordelia Strube
The Barking Dog. Thomas Allen $34.95

Dorothy Speak
The Wife Tree. Random House $32.95

Reviewed by Susan Wasserman

In *The Barking Dog,* Cordelia Strube's fifth novel, narrator Greer Pentland offers a familiar but nonetheless shocking vision

of contemporary apocalypse. Think *Heart of Darkness* meets *The Silent Spring*. A catalogue of human failings and offences punctuates Greer's harrowing account of personal adversity. Divorced from a philandering louse, the single parent of a deeply troubled teenage son, she awakes one day to find her world hideously altered by an aggressive cancer and her son's murder of an elderly couple. Sam bludgeoned his victims with a shovel, an act apparently committed while sleep-walking. Strube draws us into the narrator's physical suffering and her agonizing need to understand how someone she knows intimately and loves unconditionally could be capable of the foulest of crimes. With Sam's transgression—as senseless and motiveless as the violent media stories that fill her with dread—the corrupt world is no longer *out there*. Throughout, Greer faces her ordeals without self-pity and wields an endearing irreverence for just about everything.

Salvaging what she can from her damaged sense of self—her feelings of worthlessness stemming from her disfiguring mastectomy and ebbing strength, her failed marriage, and her guilt for having worked instead of being an at-home mom—she tries desperately to mend her fractured relationship with her son. Devoted as she is to him, Greer struggles to believe in his innocence: "He pulls away from me. . . . I find myself praying even though there is no God. Please . . . make him not evil."

Through her exchanges of gloom-and-doom stories—gleaned from daily papers and televised evening news—with her equally socially conscious and outraged 88-year-old aunt Sybil, we are taken deep into the slag-heap of the unregenerate: the tragedy of our environmental poisoning, the tyranny of media images, and the assorted atrocities that we commit daily against one another. Greer worries about garbage build-up, carcinogens, and mercury rain. She rails against sensationalized news as entertainment, the justice system as a three-ring circus, and the self-absorption and amorality of those around her. In this world, pregnant women shoot their unborn babies and mothers torture their offspring: "A three-year-old girl was raped, beaten, sexually abused with a 'blunt instrument,' whipped with chains and a cat-o'-nine-tails, shackled while her feet were burned—all by her mother and her current beau."

Embedded in the novel's brutal imagery (and Sybil's insistence that the personal *is* political) is a cautionary, if somewhat heavy-handed, warning: confront social ills; avoid dangerous passivity; take care of one another. If not, we won't survive. Greer strives to do her part—for example, caring for the deranged daughter of the murdered couple—but ultimately reaches a saturation point, surrendering to her impotence to change the status quo, including her genetic fate. And fasten your seatbelts for the ending—which I won't give away. If I have a complaint, it's that the final segments are overly dramatic, even manipulative. Even so, this is a fascinating read. Strube stuns us with her sharp images and draws us in with her protagonist's heartbreaking and heroic struggle.

If *The Barking Dog* has a placeless, post-millennial feel to it, *The Wife Tree*, Dorothy Speak's first novel, revels in its Canadian specificity—from the strong evocation of Ontario seasons and prairie landscape to the rich, southern Ontario Gothic style. At seventy-five, "old and crumbling," Morgan Hazzard is reviewing her life—a painful retrospective reminiscent of Margaret Laurence's Hagar Shipley, but without Hagar's irascibility and contempt. Morgan escorts us though a ten-month period in present time, with sweeping flashbacks forming a large part of the narrative, conjuring her grandparents' and parents' rough lives and her own oppressive youth. The book is full of the domestic drama that

has filled her life: an illegitimate baby, a daughter's suicide, incest, betrayal, abuse, forgiveness, and hopeful beginnings.

The diary format evokes another Canadian classic character: the stalwart Mrs. Bentley in Sinclair Ross's *As For Me and My House.* Mrs. Bentley and Morgan—at least Speak's character is allowed a first name!—share similar trials: loveless marriages, extreme feelings of inadequacy, knowledge of their husbands' infidelity and of their own potential for betrayal. But, in the end, Morgan finds a freedom far less qualified than her predecessor's. Morgan's slow metamorphosis occurs inversely to her husband's slow death. William has suffered a stroke, and is starving himself in the hospital, having lost any will to go on. His paralysis has destroyed his ability to speak. Silenced all her married life by her domineering, emotionally brittle mate, Morgan now articulates her life like someone who has saved herself from drowning. She writes, at first cautiously, then prolifically, intimately, passionately.

Like *The Barking Dog, The Wife Tree* is about the difficulties of motherhood. Morgan's diary entries are often letters to her "girls," her adult daughters who are "scattered all over the globe." She has never had the courage to send these letters, because, she says, they contain too much of the painful past and because she is intimidated by her "worldly-wise" offspring. They mock her—taking their cue from William—making her feel stupid, old-fashioned, and guilty for her failures as a mother. Looking at Morris, the only one of her six living children to remain in the area, she realizes how damaged he is, how "imperfectly" she loved him. And she hasn't inspired enough love and homing-instinct in her daughters to seduce them to visit her or even keep in touch. Both Greer and Morgan had bad mothers, a handicap that Greer overcomes but that haunts Morgan. Greer's attachment to her son gives her the strength to live, whereas Morgan withdraws from her children because they diminish her: "'In recent years . . . my children have made me feel . . . quite insignificant. There's no way to be a good parent. . . . And eventually there comes a time when it's wise to stop loving your children.'"

Similarly, she recognizes the wisdom in shedding a sense of responsibility to her marriage along with the notion of herself as a defective wife, an impression planted in their wedding bed when William declares, "'There's a coldness to you, Morgan. It freezes a man's balls.'" Her emotional separation is boosted by the revelation of William's decades-long affair: "What a relief it is to unburden oneself of the notion of love." This is not loss or surrender, but reclamation and reconstruction. Through dismantling the past, Morgan moulds herself out of the reconfigured pieces. She blossoms physically, too, overcoming near-blindness and relishing in her new muscularity, a result of her daily treks to the hospital. Having survived a tough and unexpected rebirth, she acknowledges her contentment: "The freedom to follow a path of my choosing, to set my own pace brings me deep satisfaction. I see the orange light [of sunset] shining along my limbs like a reviving fire and somehow feel I'm being brought back to life."

Languaged Memory

Rosemary Sullivan
The Red Shoes: Margaret Atwood Starting Out. Harper*Flamingo* $32.00

Dawn Thompson
Writing A Poltics of Reception: Memory, Holography and Women Writers in Canada. U Toronto P $35.00

Reviewed by Rosmarin Heidenreich

After her stunning biographies of the tragedy-ridden lives of writers Elizabeth Smart and Gwendolyn McEwen, in *The Red Shoes* Rosemary Sullivan seeks to identify

the circumstances that have made Margaret Atwood a phenomenally successful writer, a veritable cultural icon, who has nevertheless been able to lead a happy, harmonious family life in a household complete with "major appliances," a term used by Atwood to express her subversion of the romantic stereotype of an artist's life. This stereotype is subsumed in the title: *The Red Shoes*, a 1940s film based on a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, is about a dancer who has to choose between art and love. She ends up choosing her art, which costs her her life. Margaret Atwood saw the film as a child, and never forgot its message.

As in her previous biographies, Sullivan makes no attempt to disguise the fact that she is very much in sympathy with her subject. In the case of Atwood, who has been variously described as a Medusa, an intimidating ice-queen, and a man-hating feminist, Sullivan's marshalling of facts and anecdotes attesting to Atwood's personal warmth, generosity and commitment to people as well as causes sets the record straight. Sullivan is equally clear-eyed in her discussion of the critical reception of Atwood's work: she quotes positive and negative reviews fairly, presenting a balanced overview of how the works were seen when they first appeared. The one exception to this is Atwood's critical book, *Survival*, where Sullivan, adopting Atwood's position, seems to disqualify the criticisms leveled at it as personal attacks. With its strictly thematic approach, *Survival*, given that it was published at a time when postmodernism was at its height, was seen by many writers as well as critics as simplistic, reductive and unacceptably selective. Established authors whose works did not corroborate, or, indeed, contradicted Atwood's thesis were quite simply excluded.

Although the facts of Margaret Atwood's biography, both personal and literary, are familiar enough to serious readers of Canadian literature, Sullivan's book contains descriptions of encounters and anecdotes that are not only delightfully gossipy but also highly illuminating: the reactions of the two Margarets (Atwood and Laurence), whose reputations mutually intimidated the two writers, on first crossing paths in the washroom after receiving Governor-General's Awards (for poetry and fiction respectively); Timothy Findley's moving depiction of Atwood's first visit, with Graeme Gibson, to Stone Orchard, his farm in southern Ontario; the account of Atwood's and first husband Jim Polk's bizarre wedding ceremony.

What Sullivan has also done, in this meticulously researched and documented book, is to frame the biographical narrative with perceptive, quasi-sociological vignettes of the *Zeitgeist* that characterized Canadian life from the 1940s to the 1970s. Her sidebars on the cultural life of Toronto through these crucial decades, besides being informative in themselves, reveal Atwood's role in the various subcultures that grew up around institutions such as the Anansi Press and the Writer's Union.

In her introduction, Rosemary Sullivan describes her book on Margaret Atwood as a "non-biography" written from "the middle distance," whose intention in examining Atwood's life is to shed light on the transformation of the role of women writers from muse to confident writer. Pointing to the number of successful female writers of Atwood's generation, she remarks that "[T]hese women have irrevocably changed the iconography that attaches to both the male and the female artist." Sullivan makes a strong case that Margaret Atwood has played a unique, but also paradigmatic, role in transforming women writers' understanding of the relationship between life and art.

Dawn Thompson's book examines works of five Canadian women writers using the principle of the holograph to describe the constant changes in perception generated by the production and reception of literary texts.

The virtuality of memory is crucial in applying this holographic principle. Alluding to her epigraphs, in which she cites Foucault and Derrida, Thompson defines memory as a construct, a sort of work-in-progress, that can be rewritten, repositioning its various elements, becoming a vehicle for changing reality and hence a political strategy. Holography is an intriguing and productive concept to apply to literary texts, particularly postmodern ones: in holography there is no horizon, no fixed point of view, thus theoretically obliterating the "horizon of expectation" usually seen to be central to the interaction between text and reader. However, Thompson focuses less on the phenomenological implications of holographic memory in writing and reading literary texts than on its emancipatory potential. This political focus is reflected in the works she analyzes, all with strong autobiographical features, written by lesbian, black, Métis and French-Jewish-Canadian women authors respectively (Nicole Brossard, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Beatrice Culleton, Régine Robin). Margaret Atwood is represented with *Surfacing*, on the grounds that it "employs experimentation with language and memory to point towards a utopian integration of women into their environment."

The holographic approach Thompson proposes is suggestive and original. It is therefore regrettable that she does not present a full and systematic overview of her theoretical apparatus at the outset. Instead, to augment her brief introductory chapter, she has inserted lengthy theoretical discussions at various points in each of the chapters dealing with the works themselves, which disrupts her readings of the texts and at times threatens to bury them. It also results in some repetition. Thompson draws on quantum physics and neurobiology as well as a great variety of literary theories, making liberal use of the disparate discourses derived from them in each of her applications. This occasionally results in a blurring of the intended focus and in prose that is sometimes ponderous. At only a little over 100 pages, this volume is simply not substantial enough to sustain the multiple theoretical premises that it seeks to accommodate.

Inside the House

Leona Theis
Sightlines. Coteau Books $16.95

Cynthia Holz
Semi Detached. Key Porter Books $22.95

Julia Gaunce
Rocket Science. Pedlar Press $21.95

Reviewed by Sara Crangle

Sightlines is set in Flat Hill, a small Saskatchewan town named after the gentle, crestless slope on which it is situated. The landscape of the stories contained within this volume is as ostensibly unremarkable, shaped and weathered as it is by the upheavals of domesticity: the gullies left in walls from thrown rolling pins, the tunnels dug in the earth by the burial of children's toys, dogs, artifacts, sons. The book is populated by familiar figures: dutiful daughters with the "mundane burden" of being good girls, school bullies named Ox, local alcoholics. The strength of the book comes from its cohesion: it is small-town fiction in which each story and each character intertwines, sometimes unexpectedly, with the others.

Theis's "Marking Time" traces Stephen Parker's early adolescence, replete with ill mother, vacuous father, frivolous younger sister and a bedroom without a door. Lured more by boredom than a keening for mischief, Stephen begins to spend time with town roughs Ox and Shiner; on Canada Day Ox suggests a dip in the local water tower from which Stephen, a hopeless swimmer, never emerges. The story briefly

skips a beat, then returns to the chronicling of time, circling back to the previous June, and Stephen's preoccupation with a model T-bird kit, his determination to check his impatience as he "[glues] the bits together." "Edges," which follows "Marking Time," depicts Stephen's sister Frances, now an adult, captivated by the need for "'some small calamity from time to time, some real or imagined fear" so as not to"'run out of reasons for just getting through one day after another.'" Thus the need to punctuate dogged time is passed on through the siblings. The only difference is that Frances, at her father's insistence, has become an accomplished swimmer.

The lack of direction shared by Stephen and Frances echoes throughout the stories. In "Wheels," Old Stumpy, who lost his feet to frostbite when he spent a drunken and unconscious winter's night outside, now sits in his wheelchair and regularly oils and tunes the watch that belonged to his dead wife, whom he neglected when she was chronically ill. Evelyn, Stumpy's daughter, moves to Regina to avoid the shot-gun wedding endured by most Flat Hill girls, but finds she belongs nowhere. The circularity of the stories becomes a kind of honing in: the book opens with Kate, a child playing with matches and aimlessly doodling, and ends with her also, an adult victimized by arson, a frustrated artist in Saskatoon, journeying to Flat Hill just to get out of the city. In "Memorable Acts," the final story, and the only one written in first person, both the artist Kate, and the writer Theis, close in on Flat Hill; Kate observes that its landmarks and population "are nothing more and nothing less than places from which to begin." "Pick one" Kate tells herself, and Theis does, weaving the life of each chosen character into the next.

The inertia and domestic strife that flicker through *Sightlines* also define Cynthia Holz's *Semi Detached*, which explores the marital experiment of Barbara and Elliot Rifkin. After thirty-three years together, Barbara and Elliot divide their family home into two apartments in order to experience living alone. Both eagerly anticipate solitude and relief from the scrutiny of the other; Barbara is especially bogged down by the domestic drudgery she feels Elliot takes for granted. Minor irritants aside, the primary reason for their creation of shared but separate accommodation, is, as Barbara realizes, their need for "a new way of speaking," something to overcome the tonguetiedness engendered by old age and entrenched habits.

This decision marks the major divergence from routine offered by *Semi Detached*. But in spite of their agreed-upon change in living arrangements, neither Barbara nor Elliot seems to find the language necessary to articulate their new-found selves and needs. From the outset, they neglect to discuss their sexual desires, and this, by omission, becomes the crux of the problems of their new life: how to remain intimate, but apart? In the absence of discussion, Barbara cultivates a hopeless infatuation with a younger man, and Elliot moves in with his cooking instructor, whom he desires largely for her ability to replicate the domestic comforts missing from his life without Barbara. Barbara resolutely accepts first, their lack of sex, and then, Elliot's departure. The couple lives apart as they lived together: resigned to their own, and their partner's, inadequacies.

Holz does not intend for inertia to dominate *Semi Detached*, and deliberately includes elements meant to signify how each half of this couple is positively changed by their marital experiment. Elliot, who has never mastered the domestic arts and has a bad temper, learns to cook a few dishes and to control his body and mind with Tai Chi; Barbara, whose life has been defined by the rearing of children and teaching high school art, spends hours in her basement, working rigorously at a

potter's wheel—by the end, she has a public show of her pottery, at which her artistry is recognized. And Barbara travels by herself, thereby indulging in a desire that Elliot, who dislikes travel, rarely accommodated. It is while Barbara ruminates over a photograph taken of her by a stranger on a rainy day in New York that Holz's prose excels: "the camera had caught her shy and open-mouthed, like an infant astonished by her unaccountable hunger . . . [she was] shiny and wet, sliding into the arms of the world." Elliot's flawless nighttime performance of the 108 movements of Tai Chi Chuan outside Barbara's window is a similarly lovely moment.

But these moments are rare. More common are incidents and phrases that betray their heavy-handed construction, as when Elliot, departing their family home to live with his new girlfriend, pounds on Barbara's door while she sits watching a talk-show on jilted women and violent men. Or bald statements like Barbara's observation that the man who lives upstairs "was wearing tight jeans and his ass made a round silhouette." Similarly, Elliot's eventual epiphany about his enduring love for Barbara is muddied by his realization that "[h]is girlfriend required more elaborate pleasures than his wife". Ultimately, this is a novel powered by inertia, as further evidenced by the sub-plots involving Barbara and Elliot's children, and their disastrous relationships that perpetuate the unceasing flow of unconscious human habit.

By contrast, *Rocket Science* is a dynamic and complex rendering of character and family. Mr. and Mrs. Wicker (so called throughout the novel), their daughter Vicki, and Mr. Wicker's mother Peach, live in an apartment building in which Mr. Wicker is a custodian obsessed with duties such as "the trapping and collecting of lint pelts." Mr. Wicker is a self-described "mountain of love" whose vulnerability is stressed in moments such as his tentative purchase of a chisel at the local hardware store, when he "takes his wallet in his mouth like a kitten, fumbles in his pockets for a coupon." His violence and objectification of women seep slowly through the text, culminating in the revelatory passage in which he "thinks tenderly" of the night he brutally squeezed Mrs. Wicker's head "as though [it] were a pumpkin or a pillow, trying to make her stop blinking or to stop staring, he can't remember which." At this moment we understand not only Mrs. Wicker's general malaise, her avoidance of home, and her burgeoning attraction for fellow tenant Mrs. Beele, but also Vicki's desperate categorization of the world around her, which she calls her work. Vicki is attempting to exert a pseudo-scientific order over her fragmented, disordered family life: to understand "freaks of nature" like the night Mrs. Wicker went through the plate glass window of the lobby while Mr. Wicker stood behind her.

What draws the novel together is the synecdochic thread of "team spirit," a sporting metaphor that represents each character's relationship to their community. At the dentist's office, Mr. Wicker does not mind having his teeth scraped because he wants "Dr. Shaw to know they are on the same team"; Mrs. Wicker attends a neighbour's garage sale "to show a little team spirit"; and at a pleasurable evening at a karaoke bar, Mr. Beele observes that "[t]here is a lot of team spirit in the air." So ubiquitous is this phrase that when the Beeles are described as lacking team spirit, the statement functions as an alarm; Vicki, especially, is fascinated by their son Tony's shunning of team play. And indeed, it is the Beeles, particularly Mrs. Beele, who shatter the tacit functionality of the Wicker's world, driving a wedge through the gaping cracks of Wicker family life. Mrs. Beele is, as Vicki suspects she will become, "a very special instance of the freak occurrence who may turn out to be a persistent problem."

In *Rocket Science* the family is constructed as a team within a team. The ties that bind prove elastic, are snipped, and rebound. There is momentum towards change that is scarcely contained by Gaunce's tightly coiled sentences, and her juxtaposition of seemingly disparate observations that become, as the novel progresses, as cohesive as they are contemplative. Her writing is taut and snappy; she is as sparse, in her way, as Leona Theis is in hers, but Gaunce's writing is loaded where Theis's is gentle. It is this punchiness, this aversion to the inertia that marks *Semi Detached*, that makes *Rocket Science* such a fabulous read.

Critical Allegories

Cecelia Tichi
Embodiment of a Nation: Human Form in American Places. Harvard UP $64.95

Reviewed by Lothar Hönnighausen

Some time ago, a colleague of mine had an argument with her students about the usefulness of studying "old-fashioned" literary forms such as allegory, emblems, and etymologizing metaphors. She explained to them that while these devices did indeed flourish in medieval and Renaissance culture, their use in recent times is also quite widespread. *Embodiment of a Nation* illustrates how, in the wake of Heidegger's and Derrida's etymologizing wordplay and Irigaray's and Kolodny's metaphorizing gender studies, a mode of scholarly discourse has established itself in which allegorizing, emblematizing and etymologizing serve as major cognitive devices and expository strategies.

Although this form of academic writing has become so fashionable that today few doctoral dissertations are without its vestiges, scholars do not seem to have reflected much on its methodological assumptions and implications. Cecelia Tichi's book, dealing with major issues of contemporary cultural criticism, gives ample occasion to observe the advantages as well as the shortcomings of these new allegorizing culture studies. In contrast to previous literary criticism that used causal relationships as a central cognitive metaphor—without acknowledging its metaphoric character—Tichi employs a dominant interpretive metaphor, "embodying /embodiment," that since Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land* (1975) has been frequently engaged as a critical tool. The popularity of this metaphor is revealing since it reflects the sociocultural Freudianism, emancipatory pretensions, and didactic preoccupation with allegoresis in the cultural criticism of our time. Tichi's originality lies in her dexterous, often ingenious, and sometimes mannered variations on the metaphoric theme of "embodying / embodiment."

In her study of embodiments of American culture, she has assembled a system of six cardinal landscape images arranged in a binary, or more precisely, in antagonistic fashion. The concept of "Nature's nation" (Perry Miller) serves her as a kind of epistemic reference point. In part one, "Crania Americana", Tichi opposes the presidential heads at Mt. Rushmore (South Dakota) with Thoreau's Walden Pond; in part two, "Frontier Incarnations", she arranges, in contrapuntal order, the geyser Old Faithful in Yellowstone Park alongside the moon-motif (the moon of NASA as well as the female moon of myth), and in part three, she contrasts the health-giving waters of Hot Springs and the polluted waters of Love Canal. This arrangement of three symmetrical blocks is enhanced by an evolving linear structure running through the whole book, from the negative male image of Mt. Rushmore to the apogee of environmental pollution, Love Canal. At the same time, there is a contrapuntal movement, identified as positive and female, "flowing" from Walden Pond to Hot Springs and the redemption of

Love Canal through the environmentalist Lois Gibbs.

The whole structure is based on a system of ideological oppositions (male=bad= imperialism=economic exploitation of people and resources=pollution vs. female=good=healing power=ecological responsibility) that are as predictable as those in Edmund Spenser's allegorical epic *The Fairie Queene.* Readers whose appreciation of a clear-cut world picture is greater than their sense of humour will occasionally be disconcerted by the juggling Tichi has to do to keep the statics of her doll's house under control. But few will quarrel with her when she explodes the ideology behind Gutzon Borglum's monumental sculptures as "de-facing" nature and "the sacred land of the Oglala Sioux" or when she expresses her admiration for "Lois Gibbs as an effective environmental activist in the pollution scandal of Love Canal." However, I for one do not only appreciate the essayistic charm of the allegorical reading and writing of Tichi and others, but also feel a strong temptation to parody their schematisms and ingenious mannerisms.

Following Marge Piercy in *The Moon Is Always Female,* Tichi insists that "The cultural debate converges only on one point: that the moon is always female." One could add further evidence such as the Endymion motif and the iconography of the madonna cult, but one should perhaps remind Tichi that in some languages and literatures the moon is masculine. Although she presents ample evidence of the moon as new frontier incarnation in the context of space travel, she is not overgenerous with her literary examples. Her study of the moon in Norman Mailer's *American Dream* is thorough and perceptive, but this novel today appears strangely thin and dated; Paul Auster's *The Moon Palace* (1989) would certainly have been closer to today's sensibility.

If Tichi's *Embodiment of a Nation* seems sometimes a bit mannered, it is nevertheless a rich and relevant book, offering an enlightened overview of major phenomena of American culture.

The Tartan Connection

Elizabeth Waterston

Rapt in Plaid: Canadian Literature and Scottish Tradition. U of Toronto P $45.00

Reviewed by Sharon Alker

Rapt in Plaid combines an extensive literary analysis of the Scottish influence on Canadian writing with a memoir of Elizabeth Waterston's personal experience as a graduate student, professor, researcher and editor within the field of Canadian Studies as it developed from the 1940s. The result is a refreshing and engaging work, a good read for both academics and the general book lover. The substantial range of Canadian and Scottish works Waterston compares is impressive. Familiar texts are re-contextualized. Marginalized works and genres are unearthed and shown to be important links to understanding how Canadian literature has embraced and transformed Scottish forms, themes and sentiments. Examples include the work of James Barrie, whose "Kailyard" novels have been harshly treated by Scottish critics, and the work of Catherine Sinclair, a Victorian Scot whose fiction has been bypassed by twentieth-century readers and critics.

The book is divided into four parts, each with introductory and conclusive material that generally blends personal memoir with a critical context for the chapters in that section. The chapters trace the influence of specific Scottish writers on their Canadian counterparts. The first section explores various ways in which Canadian poets, such as Robert Service, Pauline Johnson and Isabella Valancy Crawford, adapt the poetic forms, dialect and themes of Robert Burns and Walter Scott. Shifting genres, Waterston then considers the response of

Canadian fiction to Scott's novels, covering work by authors from John Richardson to Timothy Findley.

The second section traces the influence of two distinct modes of discourse on Canadian writing. Writers from Susanna Moodie to Carol Shields are seen as inheritors of the pragmatic realism and episodic structure of John Galt. The tumultuous rhetoric and explicit symbols of Thomas Carlyle, in contrast, have also influenced writers such as Northrop Frye and Margaret Laurence. The third section foregrounds marginal genres. Connections are drawn between the children's poetry of Robert Louis Stevenson and that of Dennis Lee; James Barrie's novels and the writings of his long-time fan, L.M. Montgomery; and John Buchan's violent thrillers and the novels of David Walker and Hugh MacLennan.

The final section compares the work of Scottish women writers to that of Canadians such as Margaret Murray Robertson and Sara Jeanette Duncan. Scottish women's literature is a relatively new area of scholarship, made accessible only recently by *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan. Waterston effectively uses this material, not only to shed light on Canadian literary tendencies, but also to counter the commonplace claim that there was no worthy Scottish literature between Scott and Stevenson.

It would have been easy, in a book of this nature, to simply identify areas of intersection in form, narrative patterns and general themes. However, Waterston's methodology is not trans-historical. She traces the complex blend of historical forces and national influences that shape Scottish works and the factors that contribute to their transformation in Canada. At times, the sheer range of literary material she covers makes it difficult to engage in extensive historical analysis. She makes a number of tantalizing references to a geo-political comparison between Scotland and Canada, suggesting both northern nations were uneasy with their overbearing southern neighbours, a contrast that would have been fascinating to explore further. Waterston is also aware of the dangers of her decision to "focus attention on a single, imported strand in the national fabric," as she notes in the preface. Yet, the strong and complex understanding of this Scottish strand that she provides can only contribute to our overall comprehension of the heterogeneity of Canadian literature.

An Epistolary Tandem

Richard B. Wright

Clara Callan. Harper*Flamingo*Canada $32.00

Reviewed by Marta Dvorak

Following Ondaatje's feat to become the second author to win both the Giller Prize and the Governor General's Award for fiction in the same year, Richard B. Wright has been a cult figure in certain circles since the early 1970s when he published his first novel *The Weekend Man*. His ninth book, *Clara Callan*, blending the modes of the journal and the epistolary novel, has generated appeal with its portrayal of early twentieth-century small town life. Rather like Bonnie Burnard in *A Good House*, Wright sets out to construct the chronicle of a society through the family history of two sisters—the elder, Clara, remaining a schoolteacher in small town Ontario, the younger, Nora, moving to New York to become an actress in a popular radio serial. Organised in sections headed by year reminiscent of Burnard and Shields, the author concentrates on the decade of the thirties, and leaps ahead to the end of the twentieth century only in the afterword. The choice of decade and the Canada/ USA epistolary tandem allow Wright to trace the landmarks of North American social evolution against the backdrop of a larger international stage. Geopolitical events from the

Depression to the ascendance of Hitler and Mussolini are blended with local events or the advent of new technologies. Certain writers can weave fictional events into such a historical backdrop effortlessly, but with Wright the effect is contrived yet obvious. The afterword with its fast forward into the future (the readerly present) ostensibly to provide a veneer of veracity, with its casual mentions of McCarthyism, the Vietnam War and so forth, adds no depth or texture, and ends on a pat twist which caters to the tenor of the times.

The novel relies on the stereotype, both social—practically all the protagonists are stock characters—and linguistic. Clichés abound, and the narrative patterns are simplistic and predictable. The motifs structuring the novel are quickly identifiable, and just as quickly become mechanical. They include Clara's struggle to keep the old-fashioned coal furnace going, her attempts to write poetry, her sudden loss of faith, the obsession with the man who raped her, and the heavyhanded parallel made between the "real" lives of the two sisters and the (inverted) fictional lives of the sisters in "A House on Chestnut Street," the radio serial that Nora stars in. Nora's radio commercials interweave with Clara's struggles to write, thus foregrounding the Americanization of Nora, and an axiological gap that, as in a crude fable, goes beyond the individual protagonists and synecdochically evokes the Canada/ USA dichotomy. Clara buys Keats's letters, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, and Heine's poetry, while Nora buys the novel all New York is reading: *Gone with the Wind.*

The collusion of different sub-genres is clumsy, the different forms of life-writing overlapping redundantly: Clara inexplicably retells in letters what she has already recounted in her diary, offering no new angle of vision or fresh representation to speak of. The simulated diary style is awkward and spurious: Wright mixes stilted compound sentences containing multiple verb phrases with attempts at the slapdash sentence fragments we write when the text is for our own eyes only, as if eliding the first-person subject in a sentence that is nonetheless properly punctuated and capitalized suffices to produce an effect of improvisatory orality. The desired oral register is rarely attained by a language that remains wooden—from precious questions ("what is transpiring these days in that metropolitan life of yours?") and stilted confidences ("So in my heart I fear there will be war with them one day") to the mechanical use of the rhetorical question and exclamation ("What pleasure we took in each other! Don't you agree? Please tell me that you were as happy as I was in that cabin last Saturday?") Happily, Wright does make one voice ring true—that of Evelyn, the cynical script-writer churning out her hackneyed stories. Certain meditative passages are remarkably fine: a schoolteacher's confrontation of the medieval and the modern mind through two quotations from Dante and Pascal, for instance, strikingly calls attention to the power of vision as well as to the ephemerality of our world view. Thankfully, we readers encounter now and again contemplative phrases of an arresting beauty: along with the protagonist travelling over the depths of the sea, we are allowed to glimpse beneath the surface "the abyss that awaits the careless or unfortunate."

Word Jazz 4:
Ajay Heble and Don McKay

Kevin McNeilly

Ajay Heble's *Landing on the Wrong Note: Jazz, Dissonance and Critical Practice* (Routledge, $34.95) is an important book that negotiates the often unstable and complex disciplinary turf shared, and sometimes contested, between literary studies and improvised music: a project toward which I've been making various gambits in these "Word Jazz" essays. Heble—the Artistic Director and Founder of the innovative Guelph Jazz Festival and a notable scholar of Canadian literatures—offers an insightful critical overview of potential intersections between word and jazz, sense and sound, text and world, not simply to affect an aficionado's guide to the music, but to use discussions of players and performances to offer a critical and academic audience "a highly purposeful point of entry into some of the key—and most hotly contested—cultural debates and arguments of our era." Jazz, as he puts is, "is an exemplary paradigm for thinking about contemporary critical practice." Each of his seven chapters traverses a fairly wide aggregate of theoretical models—ranging from Julia Kristeva's semanalysis and Stuart Hall's interrogations of race and identity politics to Linda Hutcheon's postmodernism, Charles Taylor's late liberalism or Jürgen Habermas's critical history of the public sphere—to analyze the performance of a specific musician or group, including Charlie Parker (filtered through Amiri Baraka's play *Dutchman*), the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Billie Holiday, Sun Ra, Mary Lou Williams, Pauline Oliveros, John Zorn and Charles Gayle, among others. Heble has little time for musicological formalism, and the book contains no analysis of transcriptions or scores; indeed, one of his key points is that improvised music both challenges and disables such established analytic methodologies, undoing many of the presuppositions on which they might be based. Instead, he focuses on what he calls the material contexts of jazz.

While his title appears to announce an attempt to connect innovative, discordant or challenging musical forms with what he names an oppositional politics, and to collapse "political dissidence and musical dissonance," Heble is rightly cautious from the get-go about summarily allegorizing sound or accepting such collisions merely at face value. Using avant-garde jazz as a point of departure for theorizing culture, Heble pursues the intersections between music and "the ways in which that music is historically situated and culturally produced." He openly acknowledges an extensive debt to Edward Said, and calls for a criticism that, while tied to a rigorous formal engagement with texts (whether literary or musical), recognizes that art is inevitably "practiced in a social and cultural setting," and that its meaning arises, often problematically, at the crossroads between word and world. But Heble's readings aren't simply historiographic, either, although they are

clearly informed by a vast archive of jazz and jazz history. Rather, he engages in "a rather tricky balancing act" between the historical and the aesthetic, by intervening critically and self-consciously in the dissonances—here as much a trope as a literary form—between practice and context, music and noise, coherence and chaos, artist and audience, between "textuality and, yes, real life," to discover the ways in which social meaning is both produced and deployed.

Dissonance, those wrong notes, refers to a simultaneity of two sounds that won't meld. The critical voice in *Landing on the Wrong Note* repeatedly doubles back, debating and resituating itself even as it articulates a particular critical position or reading. Heble's criticism actively seeks out points of irresolution, even (or perhaps especially) in its own discourse, to enable what he sees as necessary dislocations; his criticism seems to recast Said's critical *topoi* of travel and exile as "out" improvisations, assessing the dynamics of social and cultural power from his own shifting position, as listener, writer and festival director. The ethical impulse behind his criticism is informed by a need to discover a mode of responsive and responsible audience; what he produces is an answerable style that seems to evolve as the book progresses, in a hybrid series of conversations developing through dialectic and self-corrective into dialogue (with citations from musicians and critics, although Heble has admittedly, and a bit uncomfortably, eschewed interviewing his subjects), dialogism, dilemma, collaboration (in a chapter, written together with Gillian Siddall, on gender and improvisation), and outright debate. His first chapter—"The Poetics of Jazz: From Semiotic to Symbolic"—reproduces an edited version of an essay first published in 1988, but with a set of marginalia or what he calls "sidebars," in which Heble takes issue both with his earlier presumptions about the politics of musical dissonance (admitting, for example, that his sweeping generalizations about Louis Armstrong's diatonic improvising force him unfairly to discount any political potential within Satchmo's playing) and with his own post-structuralist tendencies (repeatedly introducing categories of the practical and the worldly, of "social and cultural context," into his otherwise rather narrowly formal analysis). His tactic isn't to erase or rewrite his past critical performances so much as to engage in a process of rethinking what jazz is and does, a rethinking that becomes in his book essentially, and simultaneously, a species of improvisation and critique.

What, Heble asks himself, informs and enables the kinds of choices he must make as an engaged listener? He discloses—makes open—the process of coming to terms with alternative political stances, whether you agree with them or not, and effectively opens up even his own position to scrutiny and debate: inviting disagreements and essentially furthering the work of critical exchange. Heble asks sincerely and rigorously what it means to practice criticism, and because of this ongoing scrutiny his voice never sits easily with itself: it is a performance (thus, a "voice"), enacting, testing and interrogating itself, rather than blithely pronouncing. To his credit, his style is uncluttered by unnecessary jargon or tortured syntax; his writing is as plainspoken as it is intellectually informed by current theoretical debates. There are substantial sets of quotations from other critics and theorists, but Heble is neither deferential nor abstruse, as his work pursues its public mandate, making connections between the academy and "the world outside"; he circulates through the discourses, discovering tensions and collusions, disjunctions and linkages.

Don McKay's *Another Gravity* (McClelland and Stewart, $16.99)—winner of the 2000 Governor General's Award for Poetry—

isn't exactly about jazz, and if I were only after texts that thematize the music, I would do better to browse his 1997 collection *Apparatus*, which contains pieces inspired by Bill Evans and Miles Davis. Nevertheless, McKay's recent work, even as it returns to and intensifies some of his ornithological obsessions, seems to me to enact a poetic version of Heble's listening practice. McKay is an improvisor: not that his poems, despite their often brilliant and idiosyncratic immediacy, are merely unruly one-offs, but because his focus in these open-form lyrics is on the extemporaneous, on the complex torsions between the verbal and the temporal. His poems gather lines of flight, accumulating sequences of tangents and excursuses that locate their tensile rhythms—that is, their stretched time, their textures of recurrence—in sets of gestures outward, gestures that despite themselves also circle back, centrifugal. Writing *ex tempore*, I mean to say, discovers its attachment to the temporal exactly in its efforts to push beyond the limits of the present tense, in its forward reach. At first audition, McKay's poems feel like accretions of random tropes, series of appositives and substitutions—as in "Turbulence," which starts with a definition from a textbook on the principles of flight (Sir Graham Sutton's *Mastery of Air*), and proceeds to fray and re-weave its web of technical abstraction, teasing out metaphors, off-rhymes, bent coinages and syntactical loops from the turgid prose of his arcane original, using a technique McKay names in passing "precious deformation":

> we can say agitated
> particles, we can say at present no,
> at present there is precious
> deformation, the ferocity exhibits final
> oscar nominations of those random
> characters, the claws, irregulars, the
> plaths of suspense,
> the partisans of sale, the compost rabble
> and the lynx that undermines [. . .].

McKay's language swoops and dawdles, tugs and eddies, agitating—that is, skitterishly stirring up—within a few brief phrases, a diction drawn nearly simultaneously from the Academy Awards, from Sylvia Plath's "Ariel," from sports commentary, from zoological field guides, and elsewhere. The poem's conflicted present, that we can say we cannot say what there is, is no admission of verbal failure; McKay self-evidently has plenty to say, and the poem, even as it closes, wants to keep going. What his writing worries at—wryly, lovingly—is the thematic, the oversimplifying tendencies of making sense, of resolving into a fixed meaning, a coherent identity, a voice: "Sometimes a voice—have you heard this?— / wants not to be a voice any longer, wants something / whispering between the words, some / rumour of its formal life." McKay's stylistic signature is for me obvious and easily recognized, marked as much by its preoccupations (with birds, for instance, or Canadian highways) as by its almost obsessive undermining with reflexives. How can a voice be defined by its own subversion? Just as a "typical" McKay poem might cluster a sequence of wildly discrepant images and verbal shapes around a common thematic, appearing to accumulate its moment of inertia in surges of phrases and echoes that never quite repeat, inexactitudes that fritter the same coherence they seem to promise, so too McKay's voice discovers its thickness, its heft, in the exact moment of its own undoing.

The topos of voice, as with Heble's criticism, is crucial to these poems. Poetry, certainly, offers a form of enactment where criticism can only present self-conscious commentary; poetry performs, where criticism gesticulates at performance. Tellingly, McKay begins two poems with the same clutch of lines—"Sometimes a voice—have you heard this?— / wants not to be a voice any longer"—but his direction shifts, as if we were reading not variant drafts of the

same texts, but successive improvisations (or "departures" as the final poems in the collection might put it) that find their trajectories outward from a shared origin. The catch is that we both have and have not "heard this" before: the same story unfolds in another way and, to adapt a phrase from the jazz critic Whitney Balliett, follows not only the sound but also the sense of surprise: or better, its rhythm. McKay's poems engage the materiality of their language, what he might call in this collection its gravity, its coefficient of drag, specifically at the level of ῥυθμός, in the tensions between measure and flux. This is, I think, exactly the divide that Heble negotiates in the first chapter of *Landing on the Wrong Note*, where he assesses free improvisation in terms derived from Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*, as an upsurge of what she calls the semiotic—of pre-coded libidinal energies—into the symbolic order. Rhythm, we should recall, is a key example of the semiotic in Kristeva's early work. McKay, too, has called on this same Kristeva, in one of a pair of essays on Dylan Thomas he published in 1986; addressing the "chronic incompleteness" of readings of Thomas's work, he aims not to overwrite the poetry with another a critical "romance of loss and recovery" so much as to address its open and unfinished business, which he sets in motion, neatly, with a deliberate parody of Kristeva. In "the long, lyrical essay I imagine she might write" on Thomas, McKay conjectures her finding him "accosting sophisticated language with its own anterior materiality" (see *Queen's Quarterly* 93.4 [1986]: 794-807). Extending Kristeva's semiotic and symbolic to produce his own critical dyad on Thomas, McKay juxtaposes "material anarchy and controlling myth." And it is really the former term that interests me here, because it suggests just what rhythm in poetry—McKay's poetry—actually does.

There are always moons in the thirty-five texts of *Another Gravity*, an image that not only preoccupies McKay because of its cultural embeddedness, but also draws him, as the collection's title suggests, toward the often unremarked materiality of the human form, of bodies. Focusing on the dissonance between acts of poetic defiance—on flights of fancy so to speak—and the inevitable inertia of our physical presences, of our being here and now, these poems trace plummets and tumbles, some deliberate and some inadvertent, as they try to catch gravity, as he puts it, "bursting into bloom." Those moments of liquid awareness, of "a loneliness / which must be entered rather than resolved, the moon's / pull on the roof which made those asphalt shingles / shine" bear witness to what can best be called an ecology, to a kind of homecoming in departure, a prodigal rootedness, a radical drift: "A gravity / against the ground, a love / that summons no one home / and calls things to their water-souls." "Leaving home," as he nicely puts it in "UFO," "loves homing." McKay writes as a latter-day Heraklitos, seeking permanence, as Charles Olson famously wrote, nowhere but in the will to change. His poems oscillate between momentary arrest and irresistible transit, as in "Nocturnal Migrants" (from which I have just been quoting), when the poet, having slipped on a wet kitchen floor in the middle of the night, is able to leave himself "on pause," as he surfs images, neither quite awake nor asleep, factual or imaginary, but swimming with words through the simultaneity of his levels of perception. The mirror of self-consciousness, of a phenomenology *en abyme*, suspended at the verge of a Heideggerian *Abgrund*, caught in the briefly held flux of its dislocation, its extemporaneousness, is in McKay not abstruse but homey, housebound in the body's "old bone river," always tumbling back into its material being, the awkward and lovely thud we can hear as the poem winds off. The corporeality of a McKay text, its worlding, is also always caught up in the materi-

ality of language itself, its rhythm, its blips and leaps, its "slow, slow jazz."

McKay's other article on Dylan Thomas, published in the Summer 1986 number of the *University of Toronto Quarterly*, reassesses the dissociated tissues of "Altarwise by Owl-light" to refute what had become standard critical charges of artistic failure against the Welsh poet, but McKay's comments, at times, sound more as though they reflect his own fractal sensibility: "As we read, the unregulated phrases tend to rub and mingle promiscuously, creating a reading experience that is both exciting and disturbing." Yes, absolutely. But reading here, just as I have been trying to perform it, is essentially a phenomenology of style. Is there any sense in which we might extend that reading along the lines suggested by Heble, beyond an eroticized formalism, to address the dynamics—even the politics—of power? How does poetic power devolve onto the cultural? McKay's poems rarely literalize race, class or even gender in the ways that Heble has argued a jazz poetry might. But the tangibility of McKay's work, its specificity, its culture, consists still in its fabricated heft, its improvisational tug at ear, lung, flesh: "What goes up / improvises, makes itself a shelf out of nowt." Improvising, as he defines it, is literalizing, giving form, blowing, "ushering the air." McKay's sensibility never lets him get away with any pretense of abstraction or withdrawal, no hugely romanticized epiphanies or enduring moments of being; instead, poetry pops its own bubble, and finds in snap dissociations a way of happening, a cognizant burst:

O
who do you think you are so
hugely paused, pissing off both
gravity and time,
refusing to be born into the next
inexorable instant?
We wait in our
pocket of held breath:
Do it for us.

Where Heble wants to engage with specific histories and socio-political contexts, especially an African-American public sphere, McKay's subject, his concern, is historicity itself, is the fact of entering some history or other, of doing. These stunning and brilliant poems, as they pause and find lift, hover and plunge, manage to stretch time, and to knead at our human pulse. They want to make contact, to be with us, to gesture at touch. For us. They do.

Cultural Industries

Marc Côté

By the time General Distribution Services and General Publishing filed for bankruptcy—on August 19 and August 22, 2002, respectively—Cormorant Books had gone eight months without payment for the sales of our books. We had been locked into a sales and distribution agreement by court order, which led directly five months later to a loss of $54,000. We had announced five new titles for the fall of 2002, but were able to release only two. The future, that unlimited variable of potential for all publishers, appeared very short and narrow—a path no one wanted to walk. Our business was in serious trouble. How did we get here?

For the purpose of this argument, let's agree that Canadian writers and publishers are among the best in the world. Let's also agree that Canadians buy and read more books than do people in many other countries. Commitment, dedication, and hard work need not be disputed. Many of the publishing companies most respected today began humbly at a kitchen table or in a cafeteria, with the first and most difficult years made possible by enormous talent and unpaid efforts. (This includes the founders, in 1985, of Cormorant Books—Jan and Gary Geddes.) So—if we have this necessary foundation for a strong publishing industry—what's the problem?

Publishing in Canada has never been an undertaking for the faint of heart. Whether or not reports and studies from UNESCO say otherwise, the simple truth is that this country does not have the necessary population with a common language to sustain a viable industry. Basic economics work against Canada sustaining four hundred companies producing six thousand titles a year in two official languages.

We do not have a vibrant market place, nor do we have enlightened government intervention.

The market place is shaped by several factors and is not, as has been the commonly held belief of trickle-down economists and politicians, a magical mechanism that rewards the best, the brightest, and the most efficient. The book market is shaped first and foremost by a high rate of literacy. By literacy, I don't mean just the basic ability to read and write to the point of filling out a job application. I mean literacy in the sense of an individual being able to read two newspapers with differing editorial policies and being able to retain a distinct understanding of both, with the necessary skill of evaluating each. I mean literacy in the sense of a greater appreciation for and understanding of the essay, the poem, the novel, the article at hand. I mean cultural literacy. Without well-educated readers, there is no book market.

The Canadian retail book market is shaped by government policy and practice more than any other industry, including banking. In the past ten years, the federal Liberals have overseen the creation of a book-selling monopoly, which has already

provided one singularly ugly demonstration of its ability to destabilize the publishing industry. What should be a market full of many venues reflecting a large diversity of tastes has become polarized. On the one hand, there is the chain, which represents homogeneity. On the other hand, we have mostly niche booksellers. (Count among these Montreal's Double Hook, the only shop in Canada to specialize in Canadian authors.) Homogeneity represents more than 60 % of all retail book sales in Canada.

But publishing isn't just a business like any other business. Yes, it is susceptible to the problems a dominant player can cause—say, by returning millions of dollars of books instead of making payments. No, most of the publishing activity in Canada is not predicated on wide margins and high profits. If it were, there would be fewer publishers. It's that pivotal point where commerce and culture come together—the "cultural industries," as federal and provincial governments describe film, sound recording, and book and magazine publishing.

(It's worth noting here that when governments create policy to support funding initiatives, the emphasis is always on "culture." Later, when the same bureaucrats design mechanisms of delivery, the emphasis shifts to "industry." In other words, the necessity to fund the production of quality fiction, drama, and poetry is the *raison d'être* of cultural policy, but the government delivers millions of dollars annually to companies with highly successful commercial lists, nary a novel or poetry collection to be found.)

But government's role in publishing need not be restricted to providing funding to off-set the pressures of competition from south of the border and the business practices of monopolies. There's a more fundamental role to be played.

The first Canadian book I read in school was *The Wonderful World of Og*, by Pierre Berton. It was charming. It was grade five. The teacher enthused: we were reading a *Canadian* book. As a class project, we wrote to the author. He wrote back. I was hooked.

The next "Canadian" book I read was Margaret Craven's *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, Canadian by virtue of setting only—Margaret Craven was American. That was grade eight. In grade nine, we read *Never Cry Wolf*, Farley Mowat's work of literary non-fiction. In grade ten, our history book informed us that the Second World War began on December 7, 1941. When I pointed out this error to the teacher, he silenced me. A note from my mother explained to him that although the war began for the U.S.A. on that date, Canada had already been involved for two years and three months.

I managed to graduate from high school without encountering a single Canadian textbook or novel on the curriculum, although a grade twelve teacher suggested that I read *Fifth Business* by Robertson Davies, by then available in Penguin paperbacks, the necessary intellectual imprimatur.

Why are books that have been written and published in Canada so important? And why does it matter that we teach and sell them? Because we are continually defining ourselves by what we write, publish, read, and study. The images, language, and stories that live in our imaginations are very important; they help to reënforce our sense of self.

A thriving and vibrant publishing industry signifies, I believe, a successful democracy. But Canadian publishing is not prospering, and I think this bodes ill for our nation. To survive, we need more students, more readers, more book buyers, and better funding.

For reviews of books published by Cormorant Books, see p. 159, 166 of this issue of CL.

Articles and Last Pages

Marie Thérèse **Blanc** is a doctoral candidate at McGill University's Department of English, where she is completing an interdisciplinary dissertation on Canadian literature and law. She holds degrees in civil and common law from McGill University.

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Wendy **Roy** is researching women's travel writing in Canada as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of British Columbia. She has previously published on Margaret Laurence's African writings and on autobiographical form and theory in Carol Shields's fiction.

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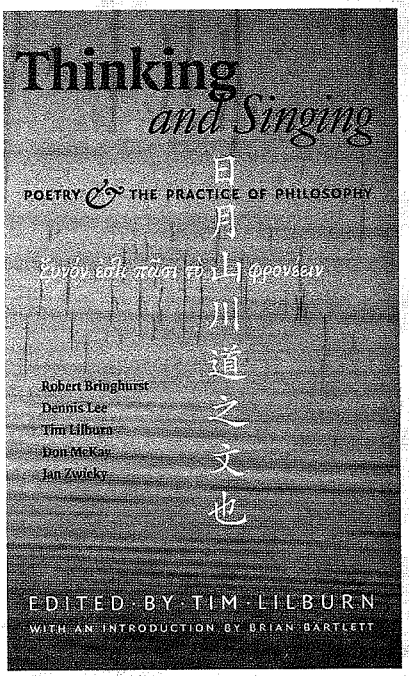
Poems

Grell V. **Grant** teaches at John Abbott College, Bill **Howell** lives in Toronto, Carol **Langille** in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Hannah **Main-van der Kamp** in Victoria, and rob **mclennan** in Ottawa.

Reviews

Stella **Algoo-Baksh** teaches at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Sharon **Alker**, John Xiros **Cooper**, Bryan N.S. **Gooch**, Lisa **Grekul**, Brett Josef **Grubisic**, Stephen **Guy-Bray**, Linda **Morra**, Miguel **Mota**, Alain-Michel **Rocheleau**, and Jonathan **Wisenthal** teach at the University of British Columbia, Chinmoy **Banerjee** teaches at Simon Fraser University, Neil **Besner** at the University of Winnipeg, Evelyn **Cobley** at the University of Victoria, Nathalie **Cooke** at McGill University, Shannon **Cowan** lives in Errington, Sara **Crangle** in Halifax, Charles **Dawson** in Wellington (New Zealand), Christian **Delacampagne** teaches at Johns Hopkins University, Cecily **Devereux** at the University of Alberta, Marta **Dvorak** teaches at Université Paris III - Sordonne, Janice **Fiamengo** teaches at the University of Ottawa, Gordon **Fisher** lives in Vancouver, Graham **Forst** teaches at Capilano College, Janine **Gallant** at the Université de Moncton, Terry **Goldie** at York University, Michelle **Hartley** and Christopher **Keep** at the University of Western Ontario, Roderick W. **Harvey** at Medicine Hat College, Rosmarin **Heidenreich** at the Collège universitaire de St-Boniface, Lothar **Hönnighausen** recently retired from the Universität of Bonn, Gisela **Hönnighausen** lives in Vinxel near Bonn, Afra **Kavanagh** teaches at the University College of Cape Breton, Jacqueline Samperi **Mangan** lives in Calgary, Sylvain **Marois** in Québec, Stephanie M. **McKenzie** teaches at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Katherine **Miller** at the University of New Brunswick, Norman **Ravvin** at Concordia University, Stuart **Sillars** at Universitetet i Bergen, Nicholas **Travers** and Susan **Wasserman** lives in Vancouver, and Claire **Wilkshire** in St John's, Nfld.

What results when five friends, who happen to be great poets, think, write, and talk about philosophy and poetry for several years?



Thinking and Singing is the distillation of this five-pointed conversation and it's worth reading and teaching. It is like no other book of poetic discussion.

Thinking and Singing: Poetry and the Practice of Philosophy, edited by Tim Lilburn, with an introduction by Brian Bartlett. Contributors: Robert Bringhurst, Dennis Lee, Tim Lilburn, Don McKay, Jan Zwicky.

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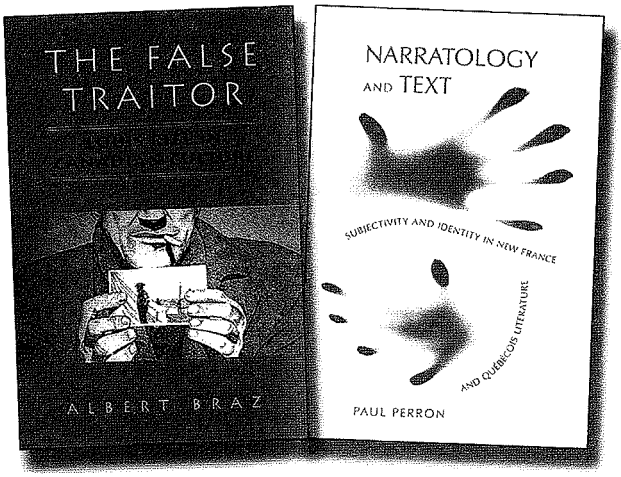

The False Traitor

Louis Riel in Canadian Culture

Albert Braz

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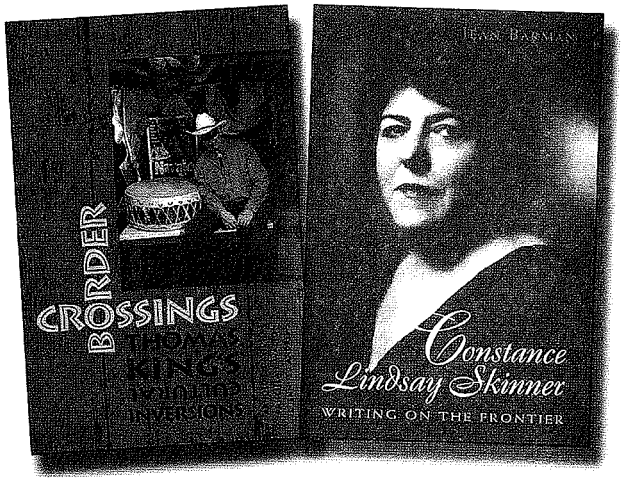

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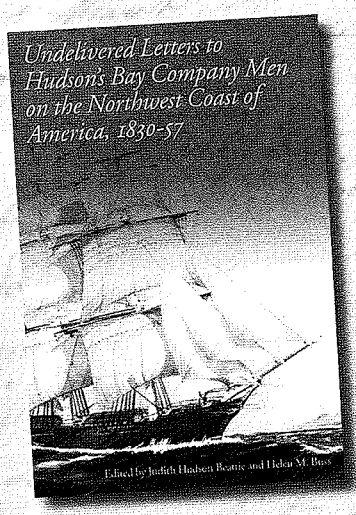

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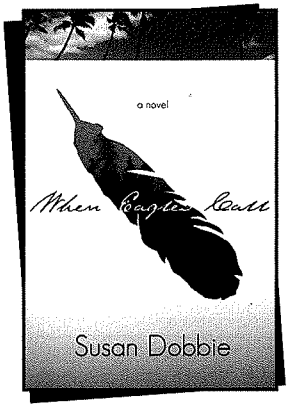

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