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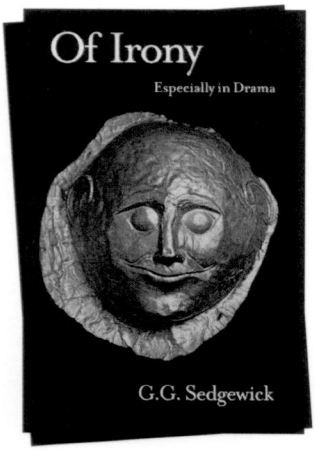

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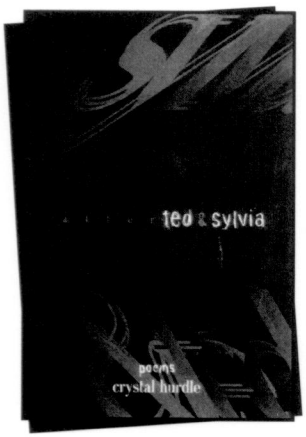

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Canadian Literature / Littérature *canadienne*

A Quarterly of Criticism and Review

Number 179, Winter 2003

Published by The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Editor: Eva-Marie Kröller

Associate Editors: Susan Fisher (Acting Editor), Kevin McNeilly, Glenn Deer (Reviews), Iain Higgins (Poetry), Alain-Michel Rocheleau (Francophone Writing)

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Publications Mail registration number 08647
GST R108161779

Publication of *Canadian Literature* is assisted by the University of British Columbia, the University College of the Fraser Valley, and SSHRCC. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Canadian Literature is indexed in *Canadian Periodical Index, Canadian Magazine Index, American Humanities Index*; and the MLA *International Bibliography*, among numerous others. The journal is indexed and abstracted by EBSCO, PROQUEST and ABES. Full text of articles and reviews from 1997 is available by PROQUEST. The journal is available in microfilm from University Microfilm International.

For subscriptions, back issues (as available), and annual and cumulative indexes, write: Managing Editor, *Canadian Literature*, The University of British Columbia, Buchanan E158, 1866 Main Mall, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z1

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http://www.canlit.ca

2004 SUBSCRIPTION: $49 INDIVIDUAL;
$69 INSTITUTIONAL; PLUS GST IN CANADA; US FUNDS OUTSIDE CANADA

ISSN 0008-4360

Managing Editor: Donna Chin
Donna.Chin@ubc.ca
Design: George Vaitkunas
Illustrations: George Kuthan
Printing: Hignell Printing Limited
Typefaces: Minion and Univers
Paper: recycled and acid-free

Canadian Literature, a peer-reviewed journal, welcomes submissions of articles, interviews, and other commentaries relating to writers and writing in Canada, and of previously unpublished poems by Canadian writers. The journal does not publish fiction.

Articles of approximately 6500 words (including Notes and Works Cited), double spaced, in 12-point font size, should be submitted in triplicate, with the author's name deleted from 2 copies, and addressed to The Editor, *Canadian Literature*, The University of British Columbia, Buchanan E158, 1866 Main Mall, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6T 1Z1. Submissions should include a brief biographical note and a self-addressed return envelope, either with Canadian stamps or accompanied by International Postal Reply Coupons. Submissions without SASE cannot be returned.

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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 6500 mots, 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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Preface

Canadian Literature at 45

David Staines

The University of British Columbia should be very proud of its major literary journal, *Canadian Literature*, and that pride should be especially pronounced with this current issue on "Literature and War," a splendid collection of essays and reviews. This issue also marks the final one that has been gathered together under the journal's third editor, Eva-Marie Kröller.

In the first issue of the journal back in the summer of 1959, the founding editor, George Woodcock, enunciated clearly his purpose in creating this distinctive journal:

> *Canadian Literature* seeks to establish no clan, little or large. It will not adopt a narrowly academic approach, nor will it try to restrict its pages to any school of criticism or any class of writers. It is published by a university, but many of its present and future contributors live and work outside academic circles, and long may they continue to do so, for the independent men and women of letters are the solid core of any mature literature. Good writing, writing that says something fresh and valuable on literature in Canada is what we seek, no matter where it originates. It can be in English or in French, and it need not necessarily be by Canadians, since we intend to publish the reviews of writers from south of the border or east of the Atlantic, who can observe what is being produced here from an external and detached viewpoint.

And that is precisely what Woodcock accomplished. In that inaugural issue there were articles on anglophone literature, there was an English article on a Quebec writer, there was a French article on Quebec literature, there was an assessment of three poets by Roy Fuller, and there was an essay

on Canadian magazines by Dwight Macdonald. That tradition has continued from the first issue until the present issue #179.

In 1959 Canadian literature was just beginning to be treated with a modicum of respect. The Massey Report had already appeared in 1951, leading to the creation of the Canada Council in 1957. The New Canadian Library published its initial four volumes in the same year. And then came *Canadian Literature*, daring to focus on the literature of our country!

George Woodcock retired as editor on 1 July 1977, and W. H. New succeeded him. In issue #74 of the autumn of 1977, New wrote in his opening editorial:

> Eighteen years ago few Canadian works were in print (the New Canadian Library, for example, had only just started), booksellers were inclined to hide what Canadian books they stocked, and few readers could be relied upon to be familiar with titles, names and plots. Writers had to be identified, plots to be explained. Much of the critical process was devoted to gathering information and, under various guises, listing it. Now, though this process has by no means been completed, the work that has been done has made us aware of the complexities of the literature we are studying and suspicious of the generalizations that have often been accepted as axioms.

New continued Woodcock's catholic approach to the nature of the journal throughout his eighteen-year mandate as editor. In his final editorial, he saluted the recently deceased Woodcock in words that could well be applied to his own major work in literary studies: he "helped us turn the study of Canadian culture from a marginal activity into an act of creative necessity, an engagement with the values of the future and the past."

When Eva-Marie Kröller assumed the editorship with issue #146, this founding journal continued its mandate first enunciated by Woodcock and superbly continued by New. A formidable scholar and a strong champion of literary studies, Kröller wrote her first editorial on the growing tendency of universities and specifically literary journals to adopt and succumb to the pressures of the corporate vision. Rejecting this encroaching debasement of the integrity of journals, she has steadfastly maintained the Woodcock and New approach to *Canadian Literature.* For thirty-four issues and almost nine years, she has produced a superb journal that is the envy of all other similar though later journals in Canada. "Good writing, writing that says something fresh and valuable on literature in Canada is what we seek, no matter where it originates."

After forty-five years of publication, *Canadian Literature*—under its three editors, George Woodcock, W. H. New, and Eva-Marie Kröller—is

still the finest journal published on Canadian literary studies. Indeed it is an example for other journals to follow. Long may *Canadian Literature* continue on its stellar path!

Eva-Marie Kröller has been associated with Canadian Literature *since 1986, when she began as an Assistant Editor. In 1990 she became an Associate Editor and then, in 1995, assumed the position of Editor. Over the last eight years, Eva-Marie has guided* Canadian Literature *as it has evolved into a peer-reviewed journal with an international editorial board.*

Travailleuse acharnée, généreuse de son temps comme de ses idées, animée par une quête de justice et d'équité, Eva-Marie Kröller aura fortement marqué, par sa présence à la tête de l'équipe éditoriale de Littérature canadienne, *l'évolution de la revue ces huit dernières années. Son grand dévouement, son esprit d'équipe, sa rigueur et son efficacité au travail ne seront nullement oubliés.*

Through all of the challenges and difficulties of her position, she has remained an independent-minded, generous, and thoroughly humane colleague and friend. Her achievement at Canadian Literature *has been personal and human as well as academic and institutional. Who could ask for more?*

We are dismayed that she will no longer be with the journal, but we wish her every success as she returns to full-time teaching and research. A-M. R. / S.F. / I.H.

It is with pleasure that we welcome Laurie Ricou back to Canadian Literature. *Laurie, an Associate Editor from 1983 to 1996, will become the new Editor. He is the author of several important critical studies, most recently* The Arbutus/Madrone Files: Reading the Pacific Northwest *(2001); he has also been a mentor to emerging poets. These include Marilyn Iwama, whose first volume of poetry,* Skin Whispers Down, *will be published by Thistledown Press this fall; her poem "Potluck" appears in this issue. During Laurie Ricou's time as Associate Editor, Stephanie Bolster (1998 winner of the Governor General's Award for poetry) worked as* CL*'s editorial assistant; her poem "Split-Leafed Maple" is featured in this issue.* E-M.K.

Stephanie Bolster

Split-Leafed Maple

This is the tree I did not want cut.
That shone on my adolescence, stooped
in reddish light. The tree that kept on
growing until, returning after half a year
away, I found the room dark. And yet
I loved it still, and told my father that, and that
was the mistake. This is the tree
whose roots were dangerous.
He'd have to cut it—now I'd made him
culpable. (No help the flowers
he'd plant there; no help the light.)
This is the tree he would cut, come fall.
Come my return to elsewhere. I was home
but away when it happened. I was
on Salt Spring. He woke to water,
running. This is the tree that startled
the plumbers: so big, so near the house.
They cut the problem roots; enough
for now. This is the tree that still stood
as our car backed out, as the plane rose
and the world wavered. This is the way
the world wavers, for what won't
be there when I return and for
what else one day won't.

Editorial

The Study of War

Susan Fisher

In his memoir *A Padre's Pilgrimage*, Colonel George Fallis recounts the origins of his ambition to build a national memorial chapel for Canada's war dead. At a funeral in the Ypres Salient in 1915, one of the soldiers present said, "Padre, after the war is over some chaplain should build a memorial in Canada in memory of fellows like these who have given their all." When Fallis became the minister of a Vancouver congregation in 1920, he determined to build a memorial chapel. Eight years later, after an energetic fund-raising program that took him into the offices of tycoons, premiers, and cabinet ministers across the country, Fallis presided at the opening of Canadian Memorial Chapel (now Canadian Memorial United Church). The crowning glory of Fallis's memorial project is the sequence of stained glass windows. Ten along the transept and nave represent each of the nine provinces plus the Yukon. The chancel window, designed to represent youth and sacrifice, was donated by the widow of the Victoria candy manufacturer, C.W. Rogers, who during the war had sent "thousands of pounds of his choice candy to the B.C. soldiers overseas." Above the north entry is the All Canada window, depicting the work of "all men and women of Canada throughout the war." Some time after the building of the chapel, several smaller windows dedicated to the branches of the service (including the nursing sisters) were added in the vestibule.

The architects had determined that each provincial window should have a religious motif; below would appear the provincial coat of arms, flanked by two historical scenes. The ten religious motifs, selected by Fallis, range from the nativity and the Call of the Disciples ("symbolizing Enlistment")

to the Sermon on the Mount ("symbolizing Blessed are the Peacemakers"). The final scene is the empty tomb of Christ ("symbolizing The Immortality of those who made the Supreme Sacrifice"). The only overt reference to war appears in the caption running across each provincial window—"To the Glory of God and In Memory of the Men of . . . Who Gave Their Lives in the World War."

Fallis's memoir does not record who chose the historical scenes, but, like the religious tableaux, they embody a series of messages about the war. The window for Manitoba features a scene of Thomas Scott's trial, and another of La Vérendrye building Fort Rouge; the British Columbia window depicts Vancouver's ship in Nootka Sound and Simon Fraser overlooking the river that bears his name; the Quebec window has Maisonneuve landing on the island of Montreal in 1642, and Frontenac making a treaty with the Aboriginal people. What unites these various scenes is a common emphasis on discovery and conquest. Canada was a new-made land, born out of trial and struggle; World War I, though it had exacted losses far worse than any previous conflict, would not destroy the nation. Like the events depicted in the All Canada window—the driving of the last spike, the fall of Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, and the return of the Loyalists—the First World War would be remembered as a formative event in Canadian history, one that had tempered the raw youth of the nation into a formidable adulthood.

The memorial chapel, with its windows and its replicas of the Books of Remembrance from the Peace Tower, has endured as a beautiful if sometimes unrecognized monument both to the war dead and to the attitudes of their contemporaries. A less enduring record of those attitudes is to be found in the war literature chosen for school readers of the time. The 1927 *Ryerson Book of Verse and Prose* (Book One), edited by Lorne Pierce and Arthur Yates, places John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields" in a section entitled "Master-Builders," alongside biographical sketches of Marie Hébert and Alexander Mackenzie. Like Hébert and Mackenzie, the Canadians buried in Flanders were to be remembered as builders of our nation. Book Three, in its section "War and Peace," presents (in the company of works by Byron, Scott, and Carlyle) Sir Arthur Currie's "Backs to the Wall," an excerpt from his Special Order to the Canadian Corps on March 27, 1918:

> Under the orders of your devoted officers in the coming battle you will advance, or fall where you stand facing the enemy. To those who will fall I say, "You will not die but step into immortality. Your mothers will not lament your fate, but will be proud to have borne such sons. Your names will be revered forever and ever by your grateful country, and God will take you unto Himself."

This, presumably, was what Currie's soldiers needed and wanted to hear on the eve of battle; after the war, its value as a specimen of martial rhetoric lay in the nobility it conferred on the fallen. But reading it now, in 2003, one cannot help but detect in Currie's promise of eternal reward a disquieting similarity to the words that inspire suicide bombers. Also in this anthology is "Our Glorious Dead," delivered by Arthur Meighen at the unveiling of the Cross of Sacrifice at Vimy Ridge on July 3, 1921. Because it emphasizes loss, not martyrdom, Meighen's speech has worn better than Currie's:

> We live among the ruins and echoes of Armageddon. Its shadow is receding backward into history.
>
> At this time the proper occupation of the living is, first, to honour our heroic dead; next, to repair the havoc, human and material, that surrounds us; and, lastly, to learn aright and apply with courage the lessons of the war.

In his preface to *A Book of Modern Prose*, published in 1938, editor W.L. Macdonald asserted that "war means more to this generation than it has ever meant to any previous age." Evidently even twenty years on, the Great War was regarded as a very present shadow over the lives of the young. Among the texts selected by Macdonald to reflect this concern are Meighen's speech at Vimy; a *New York Times* article on the 1920 unveiling in London of the memorial to the unknown soldier; a description by Winston Churchill of Armistice Day in 1918; and "Birds on the Western Front" by H.H. Munro (Saki), a droll piece that coolly describes the birdlife to be observed midst the carnage.

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the attention of anthologizers had shifted almost completely to the second war. Harold Dew's 1946 *Poems Past and Present* includes none of the Great War poets. In their stead are E.J. Pratt, with an excerpt from *Dunkirk*, and the American poet Robert Nathan, with a poem on Dunkirk and an elegy for a soldier who died on Luzon. The 1947 reader *Proud Procession*, authorized for Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario, includes an essay on Dunkirk from the *New York Times*, and "The Little Boats of Britain: A Ballad of Dunkirk" by Sara Carsley, an Irishwoman who had emigrated to Alberta. There is also an uncaptioned drawing of the monument at Vimy Ridge—so familiar an image that even schoolchildren would recognize it? "In Flanders Fields" makes its inevitable appearance, alongside a biographical sketch of McCrae by Helen Palk.

An anthology from the 1960s, *Man's Values*, shows a shift away from Canada's wars and the old imperial connection. The section entitled "Man

and War" contains fifty-one selections, ranging from a description from the *Mahabharata* of the warrior Arjuna to Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est" and Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier." Canadians are represented by two works: a poem by F. R. Scott entitled "Conflict," and Mordecai Richler's "Benny, the war in Europe, and Myerson's daughter Bella."

In contemporary high school readers, war writing no longer occupies much space. Heroism still matters, but it is illustrated by stories of individuals triumphing over adversity, not soldiers sacrificing themselves for the nation. *Crossroads 10*, published by Gage in 2000, includes the short story "War" by Timothy Findley, but this piece, despite its title, hardly deals with war at all. Set in the 1940s, it describes the confusion of a young boy who learns that his father has joined the army. The boy runs away and hides, and when he is discovered, he throws stones at his father, injuring the beloved parent whom he is afraid of losing. Even though it might be possible to read this story as an allegory of the origins of violence, the accompanying study questions ignore the topic of war.

Echoes: Fiction, Media, and Non-Fiction (12), published by Oxford in 2002, does acknowledge war writing, but there are no Canadian selections. For the First War, there is Ezra Pound's "These Fought in Any Case," denouncing the "old men's lies" that sent soldiers to their death. For the Second War, there are Ernie Pyle's "On the Road to Berlin" and a translation from Hungarian of Agnes Gergely's "Crazed Man in Concentration Camp." More recent conflicts are introduced through "A Story of War and Change," written by a young Iranian who was a medic during the First Gulf War, and "The Dead of September 11," a eulogy by Toni Morrison that first appeared in *Vanity Fair*. Canadian involvement in war is recognized only through two "visuals": *Dressing Station in the Field* by the Belgian painter Alfred Bastien, which was commissioned by Lord Beaverbrook's Canadian War Memorials Fund, and a group of Canadian propaganda posters from World War II, including one captioned "Get Your Teeth in the Job." It features a beaver gnawing into a tree, in the upper branches of which perches a nervous-looking Hitler.

Imprints, published by Gage in 2002, similarly neglects Canada's involvement in war. It includes two stories about the Vietnam War: Bao Ninh's "A Marker on the Side of the Boat" and Tim O'Brien's "On the Rainy River." Like *Echoes*, it refers to the terrorist attacks: "Artists Respond to September 11, 2001" presents a range of images that students are asked to comment on and evaluate.

Clearly, Canadian students are no longer expected to learn about the nation's wars (or at least not through the medium of literature). To the students of today, the trenches of the Western Front have become as remote as the windy plains of Troy. Ernest Renan, in his famous address "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" asserted that "in terms of national memories, sorrow is worth more than triumph, for it imposes duties, it demands some common effort." But is it reasonable to expect Canadian students of today to feel some kinship with the boys from Unity, Saskatchewan or Foremost, Alberta who fell in the First World War? I recently asked a class if anyone had a relative who had fought on the Western Front. Of the few who could answer the question, one replied that her great-grandfather had fought as a German soldier, and another said that his had been a sepoy in the Indian Army.

War is, as one scholar put it, a "dismal study." Why inflict it on our students, especially when much Canadian war literature, it must be admitted, never rises above sentimental versifying or bellicose rhetoric? One good reason is that this material is an invaluable repository of attitudes towards nation and empire, gender and race, individual and state. I would like to think that another good reason for teaching Canadian war literature is that our students might thereby become better Canadians—more committed to maintaining civil order, more ready to contribute to the common good, more determined to preserve our national patrimony—but it would be naïve to believe, as I think early anthologizers did, that the literature of war could instill such values. Perhaps we should teach Canadian war literature because it reminds us to cherish peace and a quiet life, and to forget neither the men and women who died nor the human folly that caused their deaths. The Canadians of Colonel Fallis's generation believed unshakeably in the importance of this duty to the fallen. They believed too that remembrance would ensure a lasting peace. We can no longer share this optimistic conviction, but we can at least remember the fallen and how and why they died, if only for the reason that, as a nation, we promised that we would.

My thanks to the Reverend Bruce Sanguin and Melinda Munro of Canadian Memorial United Church for their kindness in showing me the church and explaining its history.

Her Excellency Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada / Gouverneure Générale du Canada

Eulogy for Canada's Unknown Soldier

Wars are as old as history. Over two thousand years ago, Herodotus wrote, "In peace, sons bury their fathers; in war, fathers bury their sons." Today, we are gathered together as one, to bury someone's son. The only certainty about him is that he was young. If death is a debt we all must pay, he paid before he owed it.

We do not know whose son he was. We do not know his name. We do not know if he was a MacPherson or a Chartrand. He could have been a Kaminski or a Swiftarrow. We do not know if he was a father himself. We do not know if his mother or wife received that telegram with the words "Missing In Action" typed with electrifying clarity on the anonymous piece of paper. We do not know whether he had begun truly to live his life as a truck driver or a scientist, a miner or a teacher, a farmer or a student. We do not know where he came from.

Was it the Prairies whose rolling sinuous curves recall a certain kind of eternity?

Was he someone who loved our lakes and knew them from a canoe?

Was he someone who saw the whales at the mouth of the Saguenay?

Was he someone who hiked in the Rockies or went sailing in the Atlantic or in the Gulf Islands?

Did he have brown eyes?

Did he know what it was to love someone and be loved back?

Was he a father who had not seen his child?

Did he love hockey? Did he play defence?

Did he play football? Could he kick a field goal?

Did he like to fix cars? Did he dream of owning a Buick?

Did he read poetry?

Did he get into fights?

Did he have freckles?

Did he think nobody understood him?

Did he just want to go out and have a good time with the boys?

We will never know the answers to these questions. We will never know him. But we come today to do him honour as someone who could have been all these things and now is no more. We who are left have all kinds of questions that only he could answer. And we, by this act today, are admitting with terrible finality that we will never know those answers.

We cannot know him. And no honour we do him can give him the future that was destroyed when he was killed. Whatever life he could have led, whatever choices he could have made are all shuttered. They are over. We are honouring that unacceptable thing—a life stopped by doing one's duty. The end of a future, the death of dreams.

Yet we give thanks for those who were willing to sacrifice themselves and who gave their youth and their future so that we could live in peace. With their lives they ransomed our future.

We have a wealth of witnesses in Canada to describe to us the unspeakable horror and frightening maelstrom that war brings. What that first world war was like has been described in our poetry, novels and paintings. Some of our greatest artists came out of that conflict, able to create beauty out of the hell that they had seen. The renowned member of the Group of Seven, F.H. Varley, was one of those artists. Writing in April 1918 he said,

> You in Canada . . . cannot realize at all what war is like. You must see it and live it. You must see the barren deserts war has made of once fertile country . . . see the turned-up graves, see the dead on the field, freakishly mutilated—headless, legless, stomachless, a perfect body and a passive face and a broken empty skull—see your own countrymen, unidentified, thrown into a cart, their coats over them, boys digging a grave in a land of yellow slimy mud and green pools of water under a weeping sky. You must

have heard the screeching shells and have the shrapnel fall around you, whistling by you—seen the results of it, seen scores of horses, bits of horses lying around in the open—in the street and soldiers marching by these scenes as if they never knew of their presence. Until you've lived this . . . you cannot know.

It is a frightening thing for human beings to think that we could die and that no one would know to mark our grave, to say where we had come from, to say when we had been born and when exactly we died. In honouring this unknown soldier today, through this funeral and this burial, we are embracing the fact of the anonymity and saying that because we do not know him and we do not know what he could have become, he has become more than one body, more than one grave. He is an ideal. He is a symbol of all sacrifice. He is every soldier in all our wars.

Our veterans, who are here with us today, know what it is to have been in battle and to have seen their friends cut down in their youth. That is why remembrance is so necessary and yet so difficult. It is necessary because we must not forget and it is difficult because the pain is never forgotten.

And the sense of loss, what this soldier's family must have felt is captured in a poem by Jacques Brault, the Quebec poet who lost his brother in Sicily in the Second World War, and wrote *Suite Fraternelle*:

I remember you my brother Gilles lying forgotten in the earth of Sicily . . .
I know now that you are dead, a cold, hard lump in your throat fear lying heavy in your belly I still hear your twenty years swaying in the blasted July weeds . . .
There is only one name on my lips, and it is yours Gilles
You did not die in vain Gilles and you carry on through our changing seasons
And we, we carry on as well, like the laughter of waves that sweep across each tearful cove . . .
Your death gives off light Gilles and illuminates a brother's memories . . .
The grass grows on your tomb Gilles and the sand creeps up
And the nearby sea feels the pull of your death
You live on in us as you never could in yourself
You are where we will be you open the road for us.

When a word like Sicily is heard, it reverberates with all the far countries where our youth died. When we hear Normandy, Vimy, Hong Kong, we know that what happened so far away, paradoxically, made our country and the future of our society. These young people and soldiers bought our future for us. And for that, we are eternally grateful.

Whatever dreams we have, they were shared in some measure by this man who is only unknown by name but who is known in the hearts of all Canadians by all the virtues that we respect—selflessness, honour, courage and commitment.

We are now able to understand what was written in 1916 by the grandson of Louis Joseph Papineau, Major Talbot Papineau, who was killed two years later: "Is their sacrifice to go for nothing or will it not cement a foundation for a true Canadian nation, a Canadian nation independent in thought, independent in action, independent even in its political organization—but in spirit united for high international and humane purposes . . . ?"

The wars fought by Canadians in the twentieth century were not fought for the purpose of uniting Canada, but the country that emerged was forged in the smithy of sacrifice. We will not forget that.

This unknown soldier was not able to live out his allotted span of life to contribute to his country. But in giving himself totally through duty, commitment, love and honour, he has become part of us forever. As we are part of him.

Éloge funèbre au soldat canadien inconnu

La guerre est aussi vieille que l'histoire. Il y a plus de deux mille ans, Hérodote écrivait : "en temps de paix, les fils enterrent leur père; en temps de guerre, les pères enterrent leurs fils."

Aujourd'hui, tous ensemble réunis, nous ne faisons qu'un, afin d'ensevelir le fils de quelqu'un. La seule certitude que nous ayons à son sujet, c'est qu'il était jeune. Si la mort est une dette que nous devons tous payer, ce fils l'a payée avant même de l'encourir.

Nous ignorons de qui il était le fils. Nous ignorons son nom. Nous ne savons pas si c'était un MacPherson ou un Chartrand. Il aurait pu s'appeler Kaminski ou Swiftarrow. Nous ne savons pas s'il était père lui-même. Nous ne savons pas si sa mère ou son épouse reçut le télégramme portant ces mots marqués sur un bout de papier anonyme mais avec une clarté électrisante : "Disparu au combat." Nous ne savons pas s'il avait vraiment commencé à vivre sa propre vie, comme chauffeur de camion, scientifique, mineur, enseignant, fermier ou étudiant. Nous ne savons pas d'où il était.

Était-il des Prairies dont les courbes vallonnées et sinueuses nous rappellent une certaine forme d'éternité?

Était-il quelqu'un qui aimait nos lacs et qui les sillonnait de son canot?

Était-il quelqu'un qui contemplait les baleines à l'embouchure du Saguenay?

Était-il quelqu'un à faire des randonnées dans les Rocheuses ou de la voile sur l'Atlantique ou dans les îles de la région du Golfe?

Avait-il des yeux bruns?

Savait-il ce que c'est que d'aimer et d'être aimé en retour?

Était-ce un père qui n'avait pas encore vu son enfant?

Aimait-il le hockey? Était-il défenseur?

Jouait-il au football? Pouvait-il marquer des points?

Aimait-il réparer des voitures? Rêvait-il de posséder une Buick?

Lisait-il de la poésie?

Était-il bagarreur?

Avait-il des taches de rousseur?

Croyait-il que personne ne le comprenait?

Désirait-il simplement sortir et s'amuser avec les copains?

Nous ne le saurons jamais. Nous ne le connaîtrons jamais.

Mais nous venons aujourd'hui lui rendre honneur comme à quelqu'un qui aurait pu être tout cela et qui maintenant n'est plus. Nous qui sommes restés, nous nous demandons toutes sortes de questions auxquelles lui seul pourrait répondre. Et par le geste que nous posons aujourd'hui, nous admettons de façon terriblement irrévocable que nous ne connaîtrons jamais ces réponses.

Nous ne pouvons pas le connaître. Et quelque hommage que nous lui rendions ne pourra jamais lui rendre le futur qui lui fut enlevé quand il fut tué. Toute vie qu'il aurait pu mener, tout choix qu'il aurait pu faire, tout fut pour rien. Il est mort. Nous honorons une chose si difficile à accepter—que quelqu'un meure en faisant son devoir. La fin de tout un futur, la mort de ses rêves.

Nous sommes pourtant redevables à ceux qui étaient disposés à se sacrifier et qui ont donné leur jeunesse et leur futur pour que nous puissions vivre en paix. Leur vie fut la rançon qu'ils payèrent pour que nous, nous vivions.

Nous avons un grand nombre de témoins au Canada pour nous décrire l'innommable horreur et l'effroyable tourmente que la guerre apporte. Ce que fut la Première Guerre mondiale a été décrit dans notre poésie, nos romans, et nos tableaux. Certains de nos plus grands artistes sortirent de ce conflit capables de créer de la beauté à partir de l'enfer qu'ils avaient vu. F.H. Varley, membre éminent du Groupe des Sept, était l'un de ces artistes. Écrivant en 1918, il dit :

> Vous au Canada . . . ne pouvez aucunement réaliser ce qu'est la guerre. Il faut la voir et la vivre. Vous devez voir les déserts stériles qu'elle a faits d'un pays auparavant fertile . . . voir les tombes renversées, voir les morts dans les champs, mutilés de façon grotesque—sans tête, sans jambe, sans estomac, un corps parfait et un visage passif et un crâne brisé, vide—voir vos propres compatriotes, non identifiés, lancés dans une charrette, à peine recouverts de leurs manteaux, des garçons creusant une tombe dans un terrain de boue jaunâtre et visqueuse et de flaques d'eau verdâtre sous un ciel en larmes. Vous devez avoir entendu les obus stridents et voir tomber leurs éclats autour de vous, sifflant près de vous—vous devez en avoir vu les résultats, avoir vu des dizaines et des dizaines de chevaux, déchiquetés, gisant à découvert—dans la rue, et des soldats qui marchent à travers ces scènes ne voyant plus rien de tout cela. Jusqu'à ce que vous ayez vécu cela . . . vous ne pouvez savoir.

C'est une chose terrifiante pour nous, êtres humains, de penser que nous pouvons mourir sans que personne ne le sache et ne puisse inscrire sur une pierre tombale d'où nous venions, quand nous sommes nés et quand précisément nous sommes morts. En rendant hommage aujourd'hui à ce soldat inconnu, par cette cérémonie funéraire et cet enterrement, nous acceptons de vivre avec le fait même de l'anonymat et disons que parce que nous ne le connaissons pas et ne savons pas ce qu'il aurait pu devenir, il est devenu plus qu'une dépouille, plus qu'une seule tombe. Il s'est transformé en idéal, en symbole de tout sacrifice. Il est tous les soldats de toutes nos guerres.

Nos vétérans, qui sont avec nous aujourd'hui, savent ce que c'est que d'avoir été au combat et d'avoir vu leurs amis fauchés dans leur jeunesse. Voilà pourquoi le souvenir est si nécessaire et cependant si pénible. Il est nécessaire parce que nous ne devons pas oublier, et il est pénible parce que l'on n'oublie jamais la douleur.

Et le sentiment de la perte, ce que la famille de ce soldat a dû ressentir, est exprimé par Jacques Brault, le poète québécois qui perdit son frère en Sicile au cours de la Deuxième Guerre et qui écrivit le poème *Suite fraternelle* :

> Je me souviens de toi Gilles mon frère oublié dans la terre de Sicile . . .
> Maintenant je sais que tu es mort avec une petite bête froide dans la gorge
> avec une sale peur aux tripes j'entends toujours tes vingt ans qui plient dans les

herbes crissantes de juillet. . .
Je n'ai qu'un nom à la bouche et c'est ton nom Gilles
Tu n'es pas mort en vain Gilles et tu persistes en nos saisons remueuses
Et nous aussi nous persistons comme le rire des vagues au fond de chaque anse pleureuse. . .
Il fait lumière dans ta mort Gilles il fait lumière dans ma fraternelle souvenance. . .
L'herbe pousse sur ta tombe Gilles et le sable remue
Et la mer n'est pas loin qui répond au ressac de ta mort
Tu vis en nous et plus sûrement qu'en toi seul
Là où tu es nous serons tu nous ouvres le chemin.

Quand on entend un nom comme Sicile, c'est un écho de tous les pays lointains où sont morts nos jeunes gens. Quand on parle de la Normandie, de Vimy, de Hong Kong, nous savons que notre engagement fatal en terres étrangères, paradoxalement, a fait notre pays et l'avenir de notre société. Ces jeunes gens et soldats ont racheté l'avenir pour nous. Et pour ça, ils se sont mérité notre gratitude éternelle.

Quels que soient les rêves que nous ayons, ils étaient partagés dans une certaine mesure par cet homme dont nous ignorons seulement le nom mais que tous les Canadiens reconnaissent, dans leur coeur, par toutes les vertus que nous respectons—le dévouement, l'honneur, le courage et l'engagement.

Nous pouvons maintenant comprendre ce qui a été écrit en 1916 par le major Talbot Papineau, petit-fils de Louis-Joseph Papineau, qui fut tué deux ans plus tard : "Leur sacrifice sera-t-il en vain ou ne cimentera-t-il pas les fondations d'une vraie nation canadienne, une nation canadienne indépendante de pensée, indépendante d'action, indépendante même dans son organisation politique—mais unie en esprit, partageant les mêmes buts humanitaires et de hautes visées internationales."

Au vingtième siècle, ce n'est pas dans un but d'unité nationale que les Canadiens ont combattu dans des guerres, cependant le pays qui en est ressorti avait été façonné dans la forge du sacrifice. Nous ne l'oublierons pas.

Ce soldat inconnu n'a pas été capable de vivre les longues années qui auraient dû être siennes pour continuer à contribuer à son pays. Mais en se donnant entièrement à son devoir, à son engagement, à son amour et à son honneur, il est devenu une partie de nous pour toujours. Et nous, nous sommes aussi une partie de lui.

This address was delivered by Her Excellency on May 28, 2000 at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.
Ce discours a été présenté par Son Excellence le 28 mai 2000 au Monument commémoratif de guerre du Canada.

Jonathan F. Vance

The Soldier as Novelist
Literature, History, and the Great War

We have become accustomed to disagreements over the nature of collective memory, and in few places have these disputes been so bitter as in the record of past wars. In January 1995, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington reconsidered elaborate plans for an exhibit discussing the necessity and morality of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki after veterans' groups protested that it did a disservice to the memory of the war. This incident probably seemed tame to Canadians, who witnessed a prolonged and frequently acrimonious battle involving veterans, historians, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and documentary filmmakers Terence and Brian McKenna over the interpretation of certain events of the Second World War depicted in the McKennas' 1992 television production *The Valour and the Horror.*

This was not the first time, however, that Canadian veterans have led a spirited and very public campaign to protect their past. In the 1920s and 1930s, veterans of the Great War went to considerable lengths to ensure that their war retained a prominent and proper place in the nation's collective memory. In particular, they were determined to protect the image of their comrades, living and dead, from threats posed by a genre of literature which began to appear in the late 1920s. The veterans' case, however, was complicated by the fact that the authors of this competing memory were also ex-soldiers. In this sense, the struggle differed from modern examples in one very important respect: in the interwar years, the bitterest battles were not between veterans and non-veterans (or people with no personal knowledge of the events under dispute), but between ex-soldiers, all of

whom had first-hand experience of life at the front. The ensuing struggle between two contradictory strands of memory saw one group of veterans stake out their role, not simply as defenders of their comrades' image, but as the sole proprietors of historical truth.

Such struggles characterize the construction of a community's perception of its past; most often, a variety of interest groups, usually differentiated by class, gender, ethnicity, or political orientation, champion different versions of the past as a way to advance specific goals in the present and future. The Canadian veterans who took up their pens to defend the image of their comrades, however, were a very heterogeneous group. They were not linked by any economic or social factors, so it is impossible to describe them as members of a particular class. Nor were they a highly politicized body, like other groups (such as the *Stahlhelm* in Germany) which sought to fashion a certain image of the Great War soldier for political reasons. On the contrary, those veterans who became the staunchest defenders of the average soldier had little in common beyond their service at the front. It was a common past, rather than anything in the present, which motivated them.

This is not to say that all veterans remembered the war in exactly the same way. The private in the ranks did not experience the same war as his divisional commander, so the two could not possibly construct the same memory. Nevertheless, both versions were built on the same assumption: that the war possessed certain positive features which offered some compensation for its horrors. The most important of these was the comradeship of soldiers. The notion of comradeship was central to the veterans' memory of the war, and the deep and enduring bond between ex-soldiers was the dominant element of veteran culture in the 1920s and 1930s (Mosse 79; Vance 126-34). As one prominent veteran leader said, soldiers were forever bound "by ties that cannot be broken but are written in blood, ties that we formed in days of trial that cannot be broken now by anything else, ties that are sacred to those who have gone and to those who still live" (*Proceedings of the 4th Convention* 102). Respect for these ties dominated the activities of veterans, who celebrated comradeship as an "equalizing treasure," to use Will Bird's phrase, that compensated for the horrors they had endured at the front (343). Comradeship was not only shared by the living, however. The communion between the survivor of the war and the fallen soldier endured, the bonds between them only strengthened by death. The survivors were determined to ensure that the fallen were not forgotten, and gradually adopted the role of custodians of the memory of their dead comrades (Leed

212). Because the fallen could not speak for themselves, the survivors had to speak for them, to ensure that their memory was not impugned or their reputation tarnished.

They were drawn to battle in 1928, by a burst of publishing activity that has since become known as the war book boom. Over the next few years, there appeared the works which have become classics of Great War literature: in 1928, Edmund Blunden's *Undertones of War*, Arnold Zweig's *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, R.C. Sherriff's *Journey's End*; in 1929, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*, Robert Graves's *Good-bye to All That*; and in 1930, Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, Henry Tomlinson's *All Our Yesterdays*, and Henry Williamson's *A Patriot's Progress*, to name but a few.

The boom encompassed a variety of responses, from the bucolic musings of Blunden to the stridency of Aldington to the horror of Remarque. Some were clearly fictional, others obviously autobiographical, but all were lumped together into the canon of anti-war literature, which contemporary observers and later scholars, most notably Paul Fussell (whose brilliant 1975 study *The Great War and Modern Memory* re-energized the debate), characterized by its negativity. The characters are victims, trapped in a war they do not understand and dominated by forces they cannot control. Their suffering is at once monumental and insignificant. The war strips them of everything, including the dignity to suffer as individuals: instead of identity, the war gives them anonymity. They lack even the consoling hope that good will emerge from their agony, and must exist in the horrific circumstances of the trenches until death or madness releases them. Any who survive can look forward only to a life of bitterness, regret, and painful memories.

Veterans around the world reacted to the anti-war books in various ways. Many of them approved of the vision they conveyed, for it fed their disillusionment with the postwar world (Eksteins 361). However, others reacted negatively, seeing the anti-war memory as a perversion of their experience. Britain's major newspapers were deluged with complaints from enraged veterans, and Douglas Jerrold, who had served with the Royal Naval Division at Gallipoli and in France, published a stinging pamphlet entitled *The Lie About the War* which attacked them for their pretensions to historical accuracy. In New Zealand, film versions of *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Journey's End* were banned, and there was widespread sympathy for veterans, who viewed such works as a "foul libel" on their comrades. In Australia, the Returned Soldiers' League advocated censoring war books

which were deemed to defame Australian soldiers (M. Sharpe 10; Gerster 118). In the United States, the poet Archibald MacLeish (a former infantry officer whose brother had been killed in action with the Royal Flying Corps) railed against the canon for lacking totality and balance. Life at the front did mean discomfort, agony, and death, but it also meant heroism, friendship, and humour. To emphasize the former at the expense of the latter was to distort the reality of the war (Cooperman 189).

MacLeish's response identified what was at the heart of the veterans' campaign to defend the memory of their comrades. They judged any account, be it Canadian, British, or German, on the degree to which it captured the balance of the war experience as they remembered it. When Reverend Ephram McKegney, wounded in 1918 while serving as chaplain to a Canadian infantry battalion, reminded his listeners at a 1928 Armistice Day service that to recall the terrible life at the front was also to recall the wonderful spirit of fellowship that prevailed there, he was merely expressing what many veterans had accepted as the only criterion for evaluating any memory of the war ("C.N.R. Shopmen"). Those versions which gave equal emphasis to the harrowing artillery bombardments and the rollicking evenings drinking *vin blanc* were acceptable; those which dwelt only on the horrors were invalid.

This simple formula was implicit in the judgement that Canadian veterans passed on any personal account of the war, autobiographical (like Graves's) or fictional (like Remarque's). *Shrieks and Crashes*, a memoir published in 1929 by historian and ex-artilleryman W.B. Kerr, is a case in point. Kerr is no Remarque, and the soldiers he describes are nowhere near as bleak as those in *All Quiet*. Indeed, he took pains to point out that he was not writing to "shock readers by descriptions of horrors of a length and intensity disproportionate to the actual place these filled in the minds of soldiers" (Foreword). Yet Major J.F. Cummins, who served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) throughout the war, criticized Kerr for not moving far enough away from the anti-war school and being overly "sombre and serious" instead of giving "a reflection of the joyous hours off duty in the villages and towns behind the guns" (262). The same criterion was applied to another memoir, James Pedley's *Only This: A War Retrospect*, a fine book that captures the totality of the war experience in unusually realistic tones. But Pedley, too, missed the mark, at least in the eyes of some veterans. He had not committed Kerr's sin of being too gloomy, but rather had stepped beyond good, clean fun into an inappropriate bawdiness. Kerr him-

self lamented Pedley's lack of imagination which led him "to see so much of the flesh, and miss so much of the spirit, of the Canadian Corps" (Kerr, "Historical Literature"420), while Major Hamilton Warren, formerly of the 38th Battalion, thought that Pedley "showed wretched taste in the brutal frankness and perhaps prejudice" with which he handled his subject. Major Cummins also found *Only This* a bit too fleshly, and questioned the author's judgement in relating "the intimate wartime details of carousals, flirtations, and courts martial" (250).

Peregrine Acland was another soldier-novelist who fell into this trap. Acland had sailed to Europe in 1914 as a lieutenant with the 15th Battalion, serving at the front until October 1916, when he was badly wounded and invalided home. In 1929 he published *All Else Is Folly*, the semi-autobiographical tale of an eastern Canadian university student and his ruination by war. Despite a number of ringing celebrity endorsements, critical commentary was mixed. The New York *Herald Tribune* and *Evening Post* and the *Times Literary Supplement* praised the battle scenes, but felt that the love scenes were ineptly handled. The *New York Times*, however, lauded it for "showing that the men who fought . . . were occasionally able to find some hilarity in their calling" (*Book Review Digest*, 1929). For some Canadian veterans, there was a little too much hilarity. Colonel Cy Peck, the Victoria Cross winner who had commanded the 16th Battalion at the front for over two years, also praised the book's descriptions of the battlefields but lambasted Acland for having his protagonist Falcon consort with prostitutes (the subtitle was, after all, "A Tale of War and Passion"). This, felt Peck, put the author "on a level with the filth-purveyors of other nations" (7).

But Peck did not stop with Peregrine Acland, and launched a general broadside in the pages of *The Brazier*, the newsletter of the 16th Battalion Association. After considering the modern war book as a genre, Peck was discouraged by what he found: they were shot through with "morbidity and hopelessness," and said nothing about the sterling qualities exhibited by the troops in France. He insisted that their authors were "ten minute warriors" who had only a superficial knowledge of conditions at the front, and for that reason dismissed virtually every work that is now recognized as a classic of the Great War. Sherriff's *Journey's End* was a libellous slander for including a scene in which an officer has to be driven into action at gunpoint. Graves's *Good-bye to All That*, which claimed that Canadian soldiers occasionally murdered prisoners, was "the product of an unstable and degenerate mind"; interestingly, Graves himself later referred to his own

book as "a reckless autobiography . . . written with small consideration for anyone's feelings" (Graves and Hodge 217). *All Quiet on the Western Front* was worse still. Canadian soldiers fought just as hard as the characters created by Remarque, claimed Peck, "but it did not lower their spirits or throw them into a state of agonizing gruesomeness." Mocking the book as something that was loved by the "smart set" who talk about its naughtiness and "think themselves quite the wickedest things that ever were," he found nothing whatsoever redeeming in it. It was "printed putridness," he snorted.

The most revealing comments on anti-war literature, however, came not from former officers but from two rankers. F.W. Bagnall, a native of Hazel Grove, Prince Edward Island, had enlisted in September 1914, rose to the rank of sergeant, and was wounded and invalided home before the end of the war. In a bitter and confused memoir which he published privately in 1933, he lashed out at the "continual calumnies and a succession of lies [*sic*]" contained in films about the war (he was likely referring to the screen version of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, released in 1930) (54). Bagnall felt aggrieved that he had fought "doggedly against every form of discomfort living in ditches, only to be held up to the eyes of even your own people as belonging to a group who were as pictured on the screen horribly depraved" (70). This point, if expressed rather clumsily, was central to the veterans' argument. For Bagnall, it was not a matter of interpretation. The anti-war memory was not just a different perception of events; it was simply a series of malicious falsehoods that constituted a personal attack on the individual soldier. Each time *All Quiet on the Western Front* was sold or its film version screened, it was a libel upon Bagnall, and upon every Canadian veteran. There was no question of competing but equally valid memories; there was a right memory, and anything which did not conform to it was vicious, hurtful, and false.

Will R. Bird, who was decorated for gallantry as a member of the 42nd Battalion, felt the same frustration as Bagnall. Now known primarily as a folklorist, Bird had a thriving career in the interwar period as the unofficial bard of the CEF. He published five books and hundreds of short stories, articles, and poems about his wartime experiences, and his work shares some similarities with Pedley's. He does not gloss over the horrors of war, nor does he suggest that his comrades were saints in khaki. He describes the abject terror of enduring an artillery bombardment and the bitterness of seeing officers dine from china and starched tablecloths while the soldiers ate cold, greasy stew from battered tins, yet he also recalls hilarious evenings spent in local *estaminets* and the idealism of soldiers who emerged from the inferno

with spirit and soul intact. The immense popularity of Bird's works among veterans suggests that he came closest to capturing the proper balance.

Like Bagnall, Bird had no time for anti-war books, which he claimed were "putrid with so-called 'realism.'" Such books, Bird wrote in his memoir *And We Go On*, portrayed the soldier

> as a coarse-minded, profane creature, seeking only the solace of loose women or the courage of strong liquor. Vulgar language and indelicacy of incident are often their substitute for lack of knowledge, and their distorted pictures of battle action are especially repugnant. On the whole, such literature, offered to our avid youth, is an irrevocable insult to those gallant men who lie in French and Belgian graves. (5)

His own book strove for a more balanced picture. It showed that "the private in the trenches had other thoughts than of the flesh, had often finer vision and strength of soul than those who would fit him to their sordid, sensation-seeking fiction" (5).

In asserting that vulgarity was a substitute for knowledge, Bird made an explicit claim for the veracity of his own memory: because he had seen action himself, his memory of the trenches was accurate. When conflicting memories emerged, there was only one possible explanation: their authors had not experienced life in the trenches, so their memory must be fabricated. Bird also introduced the notion that there was only one memory of the war that could honour the dead. His book, because it was true, was a fitting tribute to Canada's fallen. The memory contained in anti-war novels, because it was fabricated, was akin to spitting on their graves. If that was not enough, this memory was fabricated for commercial reasons; its authors were "sensation-seekers" willing to defile the name of the dead for fame and fortune, an accusation that may have had some merit (Bance). In contrast, Bird's memory was the truth, and truth, not profit, must be the real goal of any writer.

The various threads of the veterans' critique of anti-war literature came together in the response to the novel *Generals Die in Bed*, written by an obscure Jewish American novelist named Charles Yale Harrison. The novel is widely regarded as the finest Canadian example of the genre, and is often cited as an authentic and evocative description of the trench experience (Novak 60-70). Yet when it first appeared in 1930, it immediately became a lightning rod that drew Canadian veterans into a bitter debate over the relationship between literature and history.

Since the book's first publication, some confusion has surrounded the background of its author, confusion that has been perpetuated by recent

publicity materials. A native of Philadelphia, Harrison emigrated to Canada before the beginning of the war; the biographical sketch that has long accompanied the novel claimed that he joined the staff of a Montreal newspaper, but on his enlistment papers, he gave his occupation as student. In January 1917, Harrison volunteered for the 244th Battalion, proceeding overseas in March. He was posted to the 14th Battalion in France in December 1917. Reviews have also noted that Harrison was decorated for gallantry; he was not, although he did have a few brushes with military police over minor infractions before being wounded at Amiens in August 1918 and returning to Montreal. Harrison spent only a short time in Canada after the war, before moving to New York City in the early 1920s. He then began a manuscript which he entitled *Generals Die in Bed.* Extracts from it were serialized in various magazines as early as 1928, but the entire manuscript was rejected when Harrison first offered it to New York publishers. It was eventually accepted by Williams and Norgate, a small English publisher, which released it on 13 May 1930. The American edition, published by William Morrow, appeared on 12 June 1930.

The novel begins in a Montreal barrack room, where the narrator and his fellow recruits are recuperating from a bender before embarking for Britain. The scene then shifts immediately to the trenches, where the characters undergo a succession of ordeals, each more brutalizing than the last—an artillery bombardment, a trench raid, and finally the major offensive in which the narrator is wounded, and thereby escapes from the trenches. Along the way, the narrator watches his pals die in horrific circumstances, joins in a looting spree in the deserted city of Arras, and bayonets a German soldier, only to discover that he cannot dislodge the blade from his victim's chest. Through it all, Harrison writes in uncompromising prose—sharp, staccato sentences, visceral descriptors, and powerful imagery.

But these were the characteristics of much of the anti-war canon, and some critics believed that Harrison said nothing that had not already been said by more capable authors. The *New Statesman* called *Generals Die in Bed* "a poison memory which the author had to expel from his system," while *Outlook* decided that it suffered from "constant literary explosiveness" (*Book Review Digest*, 1931). Henry Williamson, who had himself contributed a better book to the canon, called it a "hotch-potch . . . which out-farted the curtain pole to such an extent that the *Daily Mail* in a leading article called for its withdrawal"; Williamson admitted that he did not quite understand his own phraseology, which he had borrowed from elsewhere (qtd. in Onions, 50). The book,

however, was guaranteed a rougher ride in Canada. Because it alleged that members of the 14th Battalion had pillaged Arras and often murdered prisoners, *Generals Die in Bed* was bound to raise the ire of Canadian veterans.

Many of them took Bird's lead and denounced Harrison's divergent memory as complete fabrication, while other ex-soldiers took up Bagnall's argument that the book's falsehoods constituted a kind of libel. Veterans' groups deluged politicians with complaints and demanded that the government ban the book on account of its "many libellous statements" about Canadian soldiers; distribution of the book in Canada was indeed delayed after the Minister of National Revenue, W.D. Euler, agreed to launch an enquiry into allegations that it slandered Canadian soldiers. Sir Archibald Macdonell, a former divisional commander, became almost apoplectic with rage when he read it. "I hope to live long enough to have the opportunity of (in good trench language) shoving my fist into that s-- of a b-- Harrison's tummy until his guts hang out of his mouth!!!" Macdonell fumed to Sir Arthur Currie, the former commander of the Canadian Corps.[1]

Currie's initial reaction was a little calmer. Shortly before the book appeared in Canada, he had won a libel judgement against an Ontario newspaper, an action he had pursued in part because he believed that allegations about his conduct of operations around Mons in November 1918 reflected badly upon the men who had served under him in the Canadian Corps. The trial took a toll on his health, yet Currie considered it worthwhile because it put to rest decade-old insinuations that had cast a cloud over the CEF's achievements. When Harrison's book appeared and threatened to tarnish the reputations he had struggled to defend, he must have been much distressed. However, Currie usually declined to respond to allegations contained in novels. Earlier, the editor of the *Presbyterian Witness* had requested an article refuting the charges made in Graves's *Good-bye to All That*, but Currie replied that "the reputation of the Canadian soldier stands too high for me to rush into print to defend them, not from charges, but from certain insinuations made in a novel." When *Generals Die in Bed* burst on the scene, Currie refused a similar invitation from a Toronto newspaper, observing that Harrison "most probably wrote the book for the sole purpose of making money and therefore has provided sensational chapters, knowing that that is what appeals to the public, who prefer always to hear the evil rather than the good" (Letter to Oliver).

Currie's reply was evidently written before he had actually read *Generals Die in Bed*. Having done so, the general could scarcely contain his anger. It

was "a mass of filth, lies and appeals to everything base and mean and nasty," he raged to Macdonell. "A more scurrilous thing was never published. . . . It appeals to the worst appetite that can be found. . . . The book is badly titled, has a weak style, no worth while matter, is full of vile and misrepresentation, and cannot have any lasting influence." While Currie was perhaps not the soundest authority on literary style, he certainly had a right to comment on the title, and was likely thinking of two old friends and fellow commanders who had not died in bed: Major-General Malcolm Mercer, killed in action at Mount Sorrel in June 1916 while leading the 3rd Division; and Major-General Louis Lipsett, killed in action in September 1918 shortly after leaving the 3rd Division. This may explain the personal edge to Currie's bitter comments on *Generals Die in Bed.* "There is not a single line in it worth reading, nor a single incident worthy of record," he wrote. "I have never read, nor do I hope ever to read, a meaner, nastier and more foul book" (qtd. in R. Sharpe 76).

Why did Canadian veterans, from the lowly ranker to his Corps Commander, react so strongly against *Generals Die in Bed*, and against all those books which comprised the canon of anti-war literature, even those which made no reference to Canada? It seems unlikely that they united to defend establishment values or the social hierarchy against threats posed by these books. It would be difficult to find any social, political, or economic factors that could have drawn together such diverse individuals as the bitter ex-sergeant F.W. Bagnall, the small-town cleric Ephram McKegney, and the revered old soldier Sir Arthur Currie. Nevertheless, these veterans, regardless of their social status or economic situation, criticized the anti-war canon in strikingly similar terms.

In the first place, they invariably dismissed the books as falsifications of history: because anti-war books failed to recount the good times along with the bad, their vision of the war experience was untrue. The fact that their authors had, in general, as much experience in the trenches as their strongest critics was irrelevant; because it was divergent, their memory could only be fabricated. In this regard, Harrison's book, which so riled Canadian veterans, can serve as a useful case study. Ex-soldiers alleged that much of the book was complete fabrication. To what degree were they right? Did the incidents that Harrison described so vividly spring from his own experience, or were they invented, perhaps inspired (as alleged by some European critics who dismissed Harrison's work as derivative) by other war novels he had read?

Fortunately, Harrison's service record and the war diaries of the 244th and 14th Battalions allow us to answer these questions by comparing the historical record to the events described by the narrator. Clearly, portions of the book do correspond with what Harrison experienced. The general description of the 244th Battalion's departure from Montreal rings true, given the unit's history. It was not an especially successful battalion, and the officers may well have had difficulty rounding up the men for embarkation; when it left Montreal, it was only about sixty per cent of its authorized strength. And, while the novel's chronology does not match Harrison's (the narrator reaches the trenches in September 1917, but Harrison did not enter the lines until 15 December 1917), it is certain that he did experience a number of the events he describes, including the trench raid, the bombardment, and the major offensive. All of these occurred while Harrison was with the 14th Battalion, and his descriptions have a vividness that is ultimately convincing, even if we admit that Harrison actually spent very little time (forty-three days) in the front lines.

However, a number of other elements are clearly invented. Although the relevant chapter is plausible enough, Harrison never enjoyed leave to London from the trenches; he simply did not put in enough service in the lines to merit leave. It is also worth noting that, while he used the real names of men from his unit in the novel, he changed their identities, probably to open up dramatic possibilities by filling his fictional platoon with a broader range of personalities. Furthermore, there is no evidence to support two of the most contentious elements of the book: the description of the looting of Arras by Canadian troops, and the accusation that the hospital ship *Llandovery Castle*, torpedoed in June 1918 with a full complement of medical personnel on board, was carrying military cargo in contravention of international law. These elements of the novel, it must be admitted, are completely fabricated. Finally, the narrator's wound that puts him out of action is rather more serious than the wound which knocked Harrison out of the war. As the narrator describes it, "My right foot feels numb. I look at it; it is spurting a ruby fountain . . . an artery must be cut" (259-60). Harrison did take a bullet in the foot at Amiens in August 1918, but his medical records characterize it as merely a minor flesh wound; "slight" and "superficial" are the adjectives used.

But so what? This exercise merely confirms that Harrison wrote like a novelist, combining his own experience with the products of his imagination to produce a dramatic narrative; indeed, condemning novels like

Generals Die in Bed for not adhering to historical fact seems to be missing the point. But within the contemporary debate as it was structured by veterans on both sides, this was precisely the point. On the one hand, the novelists and their publishers claimed that these works were historically accurate. They purported to tell "the truth about the war," something the press generally took at face value. The reviewer for the *New York Times*, for example, was non-committal about the enduring literary merit of *Generals Die in Bed*, but was certain that it would live on as "a burning, breathing historical document" (Woodman 55). Indeed, when the novel first appeared in the paper's "Latest Books Received" section, it was listed under History and Biography, not Fiction ("Latest"). The book's most recent publisher has continued this trend: its website offers suggestions for using the novel in history classes as historical document ("Teachers Guides").

Yet the war novelists did not see themselves as constrained by the conventions of history, feeling at liberty to exercise, in the words of one modern critic, "fiction's teleological right to exclude ordinary everyday elements which are redundant to its theme" (Onions 64-66). Joyous nights in Belgian *estaminets* undoubtedly occurred but were irrelevant to a novel dedicated, as Harrison's was, to the "bewildered youth" of all armies. So, he felt warranted in omitting them. For many veterans, such omissions were unacceptable. Because this genre of literature pretended to be history, they felt quite justified in judging it as such. The literary merit of the books became irrelevant; they were simply bad history. Furthermore, suggestions in the press that "people prefer to take their histories of the war in the form of fiction" made the veterans' choice appear all the more sensible (McAree). Since novelists were going to claim their works were history and since readers were going to use fiction as history, veterans felt justified in criticizing fiction as history.

The other common thread in the veterans' critique was the assertion that the anti-war books were libellous. They offended Canadian veterans for the same reason that they impressed later critics: because they universalized the experience of the trenches. Harrison's Broadbent and Remarque's Paul Bäumer might have served in any army, for they represented the suffering of millions of soldiers from all nations, including Canada. This, of course, was precisely the objection. As Bagnall had argued, universalization was in fact defamation: these books tarred Canadian soldiers with the sins of others by claiming that, like all soldiers, the men of the CEF had been brutalized and dehumanized by war. The anti-war vision suggested that the war stripped

soldiers of their identity, transforming them into pawns whose life, suffering, and death were of little consequence to anyone. Many veterans found this vision unpalatable. Instead of rational, purposeful human beings, it made them dupes of forces they could not hope to understand, much less control. They did not want to be identified as anonymous victims sacrificed in a pointless slaughter, nor did they want to share guilt by association in crimes committed by their semi-fictional counterparts.

Moreover, the anti-war books cast doubt on the very thing that many soldiers valued most highly from their wartime odyssey: the gift of comradeship. Especially as the interwar years passed, when the material rewards for service were few and society seemed to have little concern for the values that the war had ostensibly been fought to defend, the soldier could look upon the comradeship of the trenches as a reward in itself. However, by averring that the soldier took nothing of value from his trench experience, the anti-war books threatened to deny that one bit of comfort that remained. Instead of characterizing veterans as a band of brothers whose comradeship and courage triumphed over war and death, Harrison's narrator observed sourly that "*camaraderie—esprit de corps*—good fellowship—these are the words for journalists to use, not for us. Here in the line they do not exist" (91). Instead of recognizing the "equalizing treasure" of friendship, to use Bird's phrase (343), the anti-war books spoke of "a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war" (Remarque, dedication). In this vision, there could be no happy evenings spent in Belgian *estaminets*, no days passed lounging in the sun as they rested in a rear-area billet, none of those memories which dominated the culture of the veteran movement in the interwar era. For denying everything that they celebrated, many ex-soldiers considered the anti-war vision to be beyond the pale.

In May 1930, at the height of the storm over *Generals Die in Bed*, Charles Yale Harrison was asked to comment on the backlash against his book. When the Toronto *Daily Star* located Harrison, he was working for the *Bronx Home News* in New York City, "as a newspaperman, not a journalist," he said revealingly. The "youthful author" denied that he had slandered Canadian soldiers, insisting that to do so "would be to smear at myself." On the contrary, he wanted it noted that the Canadian Corps was the finest fighting unit in the field: "Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, Ypres, the Somme, Cambrai and Mons speak for themselves." As for the allegations that Canadian troops had looted Arras, Harrison stood by his story, but added a

significant caveat: "realizing the circumstances under which the town was looted, I did not consider that this in any way reflects upon the heroism and courage of the Canadian troops" ("Denies New War Book").

In this interview, Harrison implicitly conceded what his harshest critics had been arguing all along: that there was a balance missing from his book, and by extension from anti-war literature generally. No one, least of all a veteran, denied that the soldier at the front had endured horrors which surpassed the imagination. But, they insisted, the war had not been without positive features; the success of the Canadian Corps in battle was one, the heroism and courage of Canadian soldiers was another. Although his novel contains no hint of these compensating factors, Harrison recognized them in this short interview, using phrases that would never have been uttered by the characters he created.

Harrison's admission did little to quell the outrage, but he and the other authors who wrote in the same genre had the last laugh. Were they alive today, Will Bird, Cy Peck, and Arthur Currie would be dismayed by the literary landscape of the Great War. Bird's *And We Go On*, widely regarded by veterans as the most authentic of Great War memoirs, virtually disappeared after it was first published in 1930. Clarke Irwin released a much less interesting version, entitled *Ghosts Have Warm Hands*, in 1968, but the original remains all but unobtainable. The anti-war books, on the other hand, have held sway for more than seventy years. *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Good-bye to All That* are enshrined as modern classics, and *Generals Die in Bed* has become a staple of undergraduate literature, and indeed history, courses. More notably, it has recently been released in a new edition for teenagers, and has been favourably reviewed as a powerful, evocative, and informative work for young readers.[2] Debates over the veracity of these books now seem quaint and outdated, rendered irrelevant by the recognition of their literary qualities. And yet the story of the Great War novel is a cautionary tale, reminding us that the relationship between literature, history, and memory is far more complicated than it often appears.

An earlier version of this paper was presented to the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at the University of British Columbia. The author would like to thank Richard Holt for access to his research on Harrison's service career, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for financial support.

NOTES

1 I have engaged in a more detailed discussion of the reaction of ex-soldiers to Harrison's work in *Death So Noble* (193-96).

2 The Annick Press website (www.annickpress.com) quotes from various reviews praising *Generals Die in Bed.*

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Steven Price

Images

The photographs. Wet mutilated heads
of Chinese raiders seeping cabbage-like
in a ditch, bodies dumped in river-weeds.
A girl's gouged-out breasts, her grisly tight

agonized grin as blades gored her. Filling
long nights leafing attic shelves I'd stare
at the fleshly fine-edged craft of killing—
fiery pain in the likeness of prayer—

for only what was sinister felt also sacred.
What was my father's God if not of this?
Engravings, too, of gibbet-strung tortured
Jews, of witches carved until confessed;

like anyone, I lived in fear, believing still
in dreams: evil seemed ever undone in truth
or illusion alike; there was no finished evil.
We had only faith to harden us here on earth.

Judy Brown

"How the World Burns"
Adults Writing War for Children

Writing about war for children? The challenges and responsibilities of such a project raise questions that resist easy answers. First come the particular issues of audience, content, and style attached generically to writing for children. Which children to address? What kind of story to tell? Which words, images, illustrations, and tone to represent the subject matter and to engage readers? Then come the challenges specific to writing about warfare, that adult activity with such profound effects upon children. Surely the simplicity of plot, style, and character assumed to be inherent in writing for children—not to mention the pressure to produce what Dominick LaCapra refers to as "a harmonizing narrative that provide[s] the reader or viewer with an unwarranted sense of spiritual uplift" (14)—is incompatible with the tangled complexity of warfare. In the September 2000 issue of *The Lion and the Unicorn* dedicated to the topic of violence and children's literature, this troubling paradox is articulated in the question, "Will honest representation of the human capacity for evil overwhelm the young mind in despair?" (qtd. in Goodenough vi). One answer is provided by Maurice Sendak: "It is a sad comedy: the children knowing and pretending they don't know to protect us from knowing they know" (n.p.).

In Canada, the struggle to write children into stories of war has been represented best, for me, in three works for adults. Margaret Atwood's poem, "You Begin," features an adult, increasingly conflicted as she guides a young child through a simple drawing lesson that becomes surprisingly complicated for the guide if not for the child:

> This is the world, which is fuller
> and more difficult to learn than I have said.
> You are right to smudge it that way

with the red and then
the orange: the world burns. (248)

The fiction of Timothy Findley, so attentive to the fact of war, and so preoccupied as he himself said, with those "allowed no *voices*," to whom "[w]e don't *listen*," and who "are so often . . . *excluded*" (Atwood, "Tiff and the Animals" 159), focuses often on the child caught in wartime, and no more powerfully than in the scene of a child's desolation from *The Wars*, recorded by twelve-year-old Juliet d'Orsey in her 1916 diary:

> I feel a dreadful loss. I know things now I didn't want to know . . . Just about noon. I started to cry. . . . I don't know why. And I sat and sat and cried. Just cried. I didn't make a sound. [My doll] Amanda seemed to be the only friend I had and I held her very tight. I'd been so mean. I'd left her on the window sill for weeks. Her loneliness was just unbearable. Me. She was lonely for me and I'd deserted her. I don't know why. Her hands were coming apart because I hadn't cared enough to sew her up. But now she was warm and safe and all I had. Just me and she and that was all. I don't know why. I don't know why. (178-79)

Jack Hodgins's *Broken Ground*, in its focus on World War I veterans and their families struggling to resume their lives in the Vancouver Island soldiers' settlement of Portuguese Creek, captures the dilemma of Matthew Pearson, a teacher who believes that his classroom lessons have caused his students to enlist too quickly, to suffer unduly, and to die without dignity. In a 1919 letter to his wife Maude, Pearson records his guilt and testifies to the teacher's block that will keep him out of the classroom upon his return from the battlefields of France:

> You will already have guessed from earlier letters that I've little interest in returning to the classroom. At the moment it seems inconceivable that I might stand and read Tennyson to boys who would remind me daily of the lads I saw killed so recently—some of them while in my care. And to girls who would remind me of sweethearts left to spinsterhood. (210) [1]

Sendak, Atwood, Findley, Hodgins: this perhaps unlikely quartet underline the challenges of writing *about* children caught in times of war. Writing *for* children about war presents its own challenges.

I first learned about war reading my Canadian history textbook in an elementary school classroom; today I teach books about war in a university course in children's literature. From this perspective, it seems to me that history textbooks and reference books for children have struggled with limited success to present war to young audiences. The narratives these books construct are adult-centred; children do not often—if ever—see themselves in these accounts. Clearly, there is a need for fictional treatments of war in

which child characters are allowed to emerge from the margins and to demonstrate the varieties of children's experiences of and responses to war.

Writing War for Children during Wartime

In his study of the history of British children's literature, Peter Hunt has observed that, during the two world wars of the twentieth century, children received bits of war news not through "mainstream children's literature" (*Children's* 197) but rather through comic books and the popular press. "'[R]espectable' writers for children were silent," he writes, "and only several generations later was the subject treated—and then only peripherally" (*Introduction* 104). Observers of the history of Canadian children's literature seem to find the silence more pervasive in the face of the chronic French-English conflict than in the matter of the world wars. But in a discussion of Canada's historical fiction, Sheila Egoff and Judith Saltman affirm that "youthful protagonists of much recent Canadian fiction are caught briefly in the net of history, become entangled in the mesh of the adult world, and like their counterparts in modern realistic fiction, cut themselves free to begin their lives anew" (119).

Historians of education who have turned their attention to the experiences of Canada's children during times of war sugggest that Canadian children received their information not through books so much as through scattered images, sounds, and events. They describe classrooms decorated with symbols of British patriotism; they note children's involvement in tending Victory Gardens, saving war stamps, singing patriotic songs, dropping and covering for air raid drills. Adults recalling their childhood days in World War II remember watching newsreels and listening to CBC Radio broadcasts "convey[ing] a message that war [was] exciting, dramatic, and only for the courageous" (Montgomery, "War" 162); those living on the West Coast in the 1940s still remember RCMP officers coming into their classrooms to usher their Japanese Canadian classmates to their eventual internment. During both world wars, Emilie Montgomery observes, "[c]hildren tried to comprehend adults' fear, and pains[;] they tried to understand a world of killing and chaos. The war infiltrated their daily lives in ways we may consider small and insignificant, but those changes would alter their childhoods" (174).

Non-fiction for Children and Accounts of War

Children who have not lived through war at home or abroad but who are working to understand the adult propensity for warfare might, we expect,

seek help from writers of non-fiction—from the writers of their history textbooks and from reference books for children. And here they would encounter a heritage of reluctance to teach history to children younger than age eleven. In *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape Our Understanding,* Kieran Egan observes that

> [h]istory has been emptied out of the early curriculum in response to the progressivist doctrine that we must begin exploring the world with what the child already knows and experiences, and we must expand understanding gradually from their everyday environments. (41)

The result, Egan concludes, is that "young children [are] largely ignorant of history, because it is assumed that they cannot understand it on the one hand and on the other that their attention and activity should be engaged in dealing with and expanding from their everyday experience" (41). If, as Jerry Diakiw argues, "our identities, our attitude to people of different races, our sense of self and therefore probably our sense of a national identity or lack of it [are] largely fixed by the end of elementary school" (44), then the reluctance to teach history to the very young may have had the most profound of unintended consequences.

And then, even when the study of history is introduced to children in the middle years of their public schooling, it is seen to be conveyed unevenly and ineffectively. In *Who Killed Canadian History*?—the title suggests its author's chagrin at the state of writing about Canada's past—Jack Granatstein argues that "the young should get history as story; the older students should begin to analyse what happened and why. Without such aims, our history becomes all but meaningless" (49).

Historically, one problem with leaving the writing of war—one of "the big stories of Canada" (Diakiw 41)—to the authors of textbooks for children was that they tended to rush past it or to leave it out altogether. Such was my own experience in the 1960s with *My First History of Canada.* Published in 1958 and used in English-language elementary schools in several provinces in the 1960s, it characterized the country's history as "an adventure story" and said not a word about war in its "Foreword for Girls and Boys." Instead, author Donalda Dickie made only oblique references to the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, the Loyalist flight from the American Revolution, and the Riel Rebellions in chapter headings, and wrote tersely of them and of the nation-building world wars of 1914 and 1939. *My First History of Canada* seems aimed at producing an upbeat and therefore sanitized story, written down to its audience:[2]

> In this book you will read that the people at the beginning of our history had never heard of our country, and did not know where it was. You will read how those people found Canada.You will read how other people journeyed from Canada's east coast all the way to her west coast. Later, you will find out how Canadians learned to govern themselves and how they have learned and are still learning to use Canada's many riches, such as her farm land, her forests, and her minerals. (Dickie v)

Or, consider the 1952 textbook, *My Country's Story: An Elementary Canadian History*, and its representation for somewhat older child readers of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham through a "great man" focus on Generals Montcalm and Wolfe. Co-authors Donalda Dickie, Helen Palk, and E.C. Woodley present the Marquis de Montcalm not only as an exemplary military man, but also as a loving father of ten children. He, it seems, would have been able to save the colony of New France from British conquest had he not had to contend with the resistance of Governor Vaudreuil, whom the co-authors, in a startling *ad hominem* moment, describe as "stupid" (178). The defeat of the French side is seen exclusively in terms of the mortal wounding of Montcalm. Readers learn not at all about the causes of the war, the casualties suffered by regular troops, or the effects experienced by civilians.

Wolfe is introduced anglocentrically as "the youngest of *our* great generals" (Dickie 177, emphasis added). Young readers learn of his love for his mother, his height, his rheumatism, his red hair, his "receding chin" (177). The authors spend considerable time describing his uniform. Wolfe's death, memorialized in Benjamin West's famous painting,[3] is represented in this text with pathos:

> Wolfe, like his great enemy Montcalm, fell that day. Two soldiers carried him to the rear of the lines.
>
> 'They run! They run! Egad, they give way every where!' shouted an officer near.
>
> 'Who run?' asked Wolfe, rousing himself.
>
> 'The French, sir!' replied the officer, straining his eyes across the plain.
>
> 'Then I die content!" said Wolfe, and almost as he spoke, he died. (180)

That things have changed in the writing of war history for the current generation of children is evident in the widely read 2000 edition of *The Story of Canada*, co-authored by Janet Lunn and Christopher Moore, and richly illustrated not only with archival images but also with the drawings of Alan Daniel. The book's opening note—"We hope you find something of yourself in the tales we have told—and go on to discover more stories of Canada for yourself" (n.p.)—constructs active young readers looking to

history as a reflection of their own heritage and as a beginning point for research of their own.

In this history for the new millennium, the Seven Years' War is not treated as the clash of the two titans, Montcalm and Wolfe, nor is it telescoped into an account of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Instead, it is contextualized in a chapter entitled "Habitants and Voyageurs," and juxtaposed with a discussion of the British deportation of the Acadians. It steers away from the preoccupation with so-called great men to consider the effects of the war on non-commissioned soldiers and on the women and children left to bring in the harvests. Wolfe is described as "send[ing] his soldiers out to burn and plunder along the [St. Lawrence] river" (74). The deaths of Wolfe and Montcalm are treated in a single sentence at the end of a fourteen-paragraph entry. West's painting of Wolfe's death is nowhere to be found, while the image of an unnamed artist's rendition of the battlefield death of Montcalm is undercut with an ironic caption: "General Montcalm, the defender of Quebec, actually died in bed the day after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, but the artist has created a more dramatic scene" (75).

Chapter 9 of Lunn and Moore's book, entitled "Stormy Times," provides extended and amply illustrated accounts of Canada's involvement in the world wars of the twentieth century, conflicts treated only briefly in the Canadian history books published in the 1950s. In the mid-century books, the wars are presented as stepping stones in Canada's progress towards constitutional independence from Britain. Lunn and Moore's narrative of World War I, in contrast, focuses on trench warfare, the experience of the Newfoundland Regiment at Beaumont-Hamel, the role of women in maintaining the nation's wartime economy, the Halifax explosion, and the divisiveness of the Conscription Crisis. The requisite reference to Dr. John McCrae and the writing of "In Flanders Fields" emphasizes (perhaps in response to the criticisms of it by writers such as Paul Fussell) how the poem has come to represent "millions of deaths" rather than "the glory of victory" (225) for the current generation of its readers.

The section on World War II, entitled "War Again," foregrounds the disaster at Dieppe and "dangerous memories . . . of suffering inflicted" (qtd. in Diakiw 47): the internment and relocation of Japanese Canadians, the bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Holocaust. It notes that Jewish refugees seeking safe haven in Canada from the Nazis were turned away in the years before the war; it acknowledges (although

briefly) one of the effects of this war on children in a photograph and caption representing the many British children who came to stay in Canada during the Blitz.

A book like Lunn and Moore's signals a sea change in one kind of historical narrative for children. It suggests that the days and attitudes revealed in that scene in *Anne of Green Gables* in which Miss Stacy chastises Anne for her sneak-reading of the chariot races in *Ben-Hur*—when she should be studying her Canadian history—are perhaps gone.

Children's Fiction about War

But what of other children's books about war—those destined less for use in the classroom or in the social studies research project and more for the child's own private reading time and space? Such books reflect several trends, generic and historical. The generic trend has to do with the steady growth over several decades in the categories of children's literature. A visit to the children's division of any public library or bookstore—or indeed to one of the bookshops devoted exclusively to children's books—reveals that the field is filled with classes and sub-classes: non-fiction and reference books, picture books, novels, short stories, poetry collections, folk and fairy tales, animal stories, fantasies, young adult narratives, biographies, geographies, the old classics, the series, the new releases, and so on.

The historical trends have to do with changing perceptions and practices of warfare.The world wars of the twentieth century made civilians and their communities targets in unprecedented ways. Barbara Ehrenreich observes that civilian fatalities of the first war were 15 percent of the total; by the end of the second war just three decades later, they had escalated to 65 percent of the total (qtd. in Norris 17). She goes on to comment that "[o]ne feature of the 'transformed' war of the nuclear age is that it is less likely to be the exclusive province of males or even of adults" (qtd. in Norris 17-18). Graça Machel's *The Impact of War on Children: A Review of Progress since the 1996 United Nations Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* catalogues the ways in which contemporary adult wars have made millions of children their targets. The report deals with child soldiers, child refugees, children killed and mutilated by landmines; it suggests the ways in which war denies children the right to education and to psychological and physical health. Machel's preface quotes a Nicaraguan child as observing, "[a]dults go to war, but they don't realise what damage they are doing to children" (ix).

Contemporary writers for children have not ignored this damage. As Kate

Agnew and Geoff Fox observe in their book, *Children at War: From the First World War to the Gulf*:

> in recent novels and picture books, . . . young readers are invariably urged to examine the nature of violence and suffering, persecution and endurance, hatred and loyalty, selfishness and sacrifice. They are asked to share the writers' condemnation of war and the repugnant beliefs which lead to conflict, and to feel compassion for the anguish imposed upon the innocent many by the powerful few. (53)

In teaching children's literature to young adults and in asking them to examine assumptions about the ways in which child readers receive ideas about war, I have found myself turning to several contemporary Canadian novels—each one representing a different Canadian war, but all of them child-centred and featuring "protagonists . . . presented with complex choices, difficult decisions which test their moral strength and loyalty to the limit" (Agnew 135). First among these works are two novels dealing with the experiences of child soldiers: *George Johnson's War* and *Charlie Wilcox*.

In *George Johnson's War*, Maureen Garvie and Mary Beaty have written "an imagined story about . . . real people" (237). With their twenty-first century sensibilities, Garvie and Beaty go back to the time of the American Revolution to examine the contributions of the two sons of Molly Brant—Peter and George—to the Loyalist cause. They trace Molly's wartime journeys with her children and her negotiations on behalf of the Iroquois with their British allies, but they foreground the experience of the child soldier and first-person narrator, George. At first, George represents the view that war is a powerful and sometimes irresistible attraction. Psychologist Lawrence LeShan has described this attraction:

> [U]nder almost every form of economic and political organization, regardless of different family structures, different child-rearing practices and other social norms, people fight wars on a fairly regular basis. . . . War sharpens experience, heightens perception, and makes one more and more aware of one's own existence. At the same time, war allows us to become part of something larger and more intense. The Way of the One and the Way of the Many intensify each other. (53, 55)

George's war fever begins when he is a small boy determined to follow his older brother Peter into a life of adventure and battle for the Loyalist cause. He chafes under his mother's and sisters' protection. At age ten, he tells his sister that he is old enough to join up to "carry a drum or be a fifer" (144). Sent away by his mother at age eleven to carry on his education (for '[w]ithout learning," as she says, "you're at the mercy of those who take our

land and our cornfields and leave only promises" [141]), he is miserable. And one day, as he sits in a Montreal classroom enduring his schoolmaster's recitation of platitudes from *Rider's Almanack,* he thinks, "I'm old enough now. Last week I turned thirteen. . . . These days, they take what they can get, I hear—young, old, deaf, wall-eyed, and peg-legged. But unless I do something, the war'll be over before I get my chance" (153). And then, in petitioning Captain Tice, commander of the Native forces at Fort Niagara to persuade his mother to allow him to enlist, George makes this pledge: "Take me on. I'm ready to go, sir. I'm ready to fight until I die" (183). These fragments of dialogue offer to young readers some answer to the inevitable question: Why in the world would anyone *volunteer* to fight and perhaps to die in war? George's answer is plain: for the chance to fight in the family tradition, for the opportunity to prove wrong those who call him "half-breed," for the possibility of routing the enemies who have stolen his people's land and driven them into an itinerant existence.

But *George Johnson's War* interrogates more than it validates the idea of war as "an emphasis on military glory, as well as male kinship and tutelage" (MacGillivray and Lynes 11). It is more than a narrative of war fever; it is also a study of the child soldier's traumatic passage from innocent exuberance to bitter experience. From disappointment over his drab uniform, to disgust over the food, to utter exhaustion resulting from the endless marching, to horror at the sight of a burned-out Onandaga village, war is not what George Johnson dreamed it would be. The authors create for George a scene in which he is called upon to rethink altogether the meaning of the word "enemy"—a scene standard in anti-war narratives. When he first fires his gun against what he believes is a blue-coated rebel enemy, he "look[s] only once. He's dead, his throat torn away by [the] shot" (211). And then, moments later, he looks into the face of his antagonist and says to himself, "I've shot an Indian in a blue coat" (211). Margot Norris maintains that "all wars are ironic" (80), and in scenes such as this one, *George Johnson's War* offers child readers irony in abundance. There is irony, too, in George's discovery late in his military service that his brother Peter has long been dead and that no one has informed him; in George's attempt to embrace a Mohawk warrior identity and in his near-desertion of the King's army for the Indian Trail; and in his ultimate reconciliation with the mother he believes has deceived him.

But the final scene of this novel is not quite the harmonized closing with that "sense of spiritual uplift" described by LaCapra. Haunted by visions of

his dead brother and a dead friend, and tormented by the wish that he could tell his mother what he knows about the disappearance of her people and her way of life from the Mohawk Valley, George ends his narrative with these subdued words:

> It's us who have to find a way to get on, with the dancing, with the war, with our lives. It's us who have to let them [the dead] go. Let them rest easy, under the snow. (232)

Like *George Johnson's War,* Sharon McKay's *Charlie Wilcox,* published in 2000, focuses on the child soldier and follows his movement from innocence to experience as a result of immersion in the crucible of bloody battle. McKay describes the story as one in which "fact and fiction are companions" (215), for while Charlie Wilcox was a real-life figure, he never went to war. The third-person narrator is more conventional and more adult than is George Johnson; the war story told is of the bitter experiences of the Newfoundland Regiment at Beaumont-Hamel in the July 1916 Battle of the Somme.

The cover illustration by Julia Bell depicts Charlie not as an adolescent but as a freckle-faced, blue-eyed boy. He is, in other words, a child. The product of a sheltered life in the port town of Brigus, he is startled to see, on a 1915 visit to St. John's, the newspaper headline, "War Escalates in Europe" (36). "Never you mind. It has nothing to do with us" (36), says his mother, who at that moment is intent on seeking medical treatment for her son's club foot and who, like Molly Brant, is determined to see her son educated and empowered in a way that she and the Newfoundlanders of her generation have not been. She plans to keep her child from giving his life to the sea, and the idea that he would go to war at age fourteen is something that never occurs to her until it happens.

Where George Johnson's involvement in the American Revolution is intentional and involves a challenge to his mother's authority over his future, Charlie's in World War I is accidental. He runs away from an aunt with whom he has been sent to stay while continuing his education; he stows away on a ship he thinks is destined for the ice fields and the seal hunt, but it is actually carrying Newfoundlanders to the Front. Still, whether Charlie's enlistment is accidental or not, McKay, like Garvie and Beaty, characterizes the boy at war as one struggling to use the experience to fix his identity.

George is a thirteen-year-old scout who kills a blue-coated Indian; Charlie becomes a stretcher bearer who comes to recognize the naïveté of soldiers certain they are part of a "little adventure" (125) and looking forward

to "the thrill of events to come" (128). He experiences the miseries of life in the trenches, familiar to most adult readers but news to many younger ones. He is also a witness to the disaster that was Beaumont-Hamel, and through him, McKay is able to show child readers the significance of what has come to be known in the iconography of Newfoundland as the Danger Tree:

> a beleaguered, bald, and dead collection of sticks that hung by its roots over a shell hole. It refused, or had forgotten, to fall down. It was the only marking left in an otherwise barren landscape. The Brits, the Irish, and the Newfoundlanders would use it to get their bearings.There they would collect, and there the Germans would mow them down. (183) [4]

Charlie sees eight hundred Newfoundland soldiers with targets on their backs go over the top on the first of July 1916; he learns by the second of July that only sixty-eight of the regiment have survived physically unscathed.

Like George Johnson, Charlie Wilcox survives; like George, he returns home transformed. He does not kill, but he is not entirely successful in saving lives, as is evident in a poignant scene in which he comes upon the body of his friend Michael. Looking into his dead face, Charlie "[falls] to his knees and wrap[s] his arms around him, like Michael's own mother might have" (193). The battlefield and triage scenes in the novel are graphic and even unsparing; the end is more gentle—more harmonized, as LaCapra might say—for McKay allows Charlie, in the moment of his return to Newfoundland, a smile and a sense of peace that Garvie and Beaty don't allow George Johnson:

> Charlie smiled . . . and gazed around. He felt the rock-hard ground [of Brigus] beneath his feet. He looked into the faces of those he'd known all his life. He was home. (213)

Books such as *George Johnson's War* and *Charlie Wilcox* begin conventionally by exploring war as an opportunity for a boy's (and by extension a country's) coming of age. They demonstrate to today's young readers something they must often wonder about, and that is why anyone so close to them in age would seek out the fighting life. And then, in their refusal to turn away from the scenes of misery and carnage or to sanitize the proceedings, both novels interrogate the enterprise of war in ways calculated to give young readers pause.

To this pair of novels, I add two books that show young readers that war matters today—and has mattered in the past—not just to boys who have yet to shave, but also to girls. Janet Lunn, like Garvie and Beaty, takes the

American Revolution as her subject in *The Hollow Tree* (described by Raymond Jones and Jon Stott as "among the finest books written for Canadian children" [284]). She examines through the experience of Phoebe Olcott how the bitter divisions between Patriots and Loyalists irreparably split communities and divided families in the Thirteen Colonies. Fifteen-year-old Phoebe's experience of war is not the kind of warrior's initiation that George Johnson undergoes. She comes of age in contending with the differences between her Rebel father and her Loyalist cousin, in losing the former to death in battle and the latter to vigilantes who hang him for a spy. In a season of atrocities, she is a witness, and the scene of her hanged cousin Gideon is as graphic in its way as any one of the scenes witnessed by Charlie Wilcox:

> Under the green oak tree in the centre of The Green, with its crude "Liberty Tree" label, she could see a dark mass of people in the early light. . . . A stout rope had been slung over a branch about eight feet from the ground. Gideon's lifeless body was hanging from the rope. On his shirt a note was pinned. It read: "Death to all Traitors and Spies." (39)

Phoebe's story is that of the orphan refugee, and her trial consists of travelling in disguise as a Mohawk girl, assuming responsibility for children younger than herself along the way, and settling down to a married and domestic life in Upper Canada at the story's end. In this novel, Phoebe ends her cross-border wanderings by choosing Canada, "where she ha[s] a deep sense of belonging" (260). She concludes her story with conviction in her words, "We will all be well here. There will be peace in this country" (260).

This book demonstrates what Mavis Reimer and Anne Rusnak have described as a pattern distinctive and prominent in award-winning Canadian children's books: "in this pattern, the child characters move away from home into an 'away' setting, and eventually choose to make the 'away' home" (21). In making this choice, it is clear, the child achieves agency, for "what appears at first to be a choice to become vulnerable is represented as an opportunity to exercise power. . . . the power to shape the place . . . the young character . . . [has] chosen as home" (Reimer 23).

A novel like *The Hollow Tree*, or Lunn's time-shift treatment of Canada during the American Civil War in *The Root Cellar*, positions the girl protagonist not as a combatant but certainly as an agent in, and an eyewitness to, war in a way that a more conventional girl character in wartime—Lucy Maud Montgomery's Rilla Blythe, for example—is not.

Yet another angle on the experience of war—that of the young child as

displaced person—is represented in books such as Kit Pearson's *Children of War* trilogy. and Joy Kogawa's *Naomi's Road.* Pearson, who has spoken passionately about children as "victims of adult war," and who has expressed her preference for writing books in which "children are almost like a separate tribe, acting on their own, making moral decisions on their own, and not wanting to have much to do with adults" (Flick 21), recounts the experiences of those thousands of British children sent by their parents to live in Canada during the Blitz. She traces with psychological insight the feelings of anger, abandonment, misery, and eventual acceptance such children experienced.

Kogawa's book takes the narrative risk of telling the World War II story of the internment of Japanese Canadians in the voice and the language of the very young Naomi Nakane. As in the case of *George Johnson's* War, the first-person choice does not diminish the power of the story; it intensifies it. The predatory Old Man Gower of Kogawa's account for adults, *Obasan,* does not appear here, nor does the story end with direct reference to the bombing of Nagasaki as *Obasan* does. Instead, the "little story . . . told by a Canadian child called Naomi Nakane" (n.p.) explains what Kogawa, in a prefatory letter addressed to "Dear Children," calls the "hard to understand" fact "that Japanese Canadians were treated as enemies at home, even though we were good Canadians" (n.p.). The story foregrounds the unkindness of children to Naomi and her brother Stephen, and then it offers a measure of hope in allowing Naomi something she isn't allowed in *Obasan*—a friendship across the racial divide with a white girl named Mitzi. The Naomi of this book loses her Vancouver home, her mother, her father, her sense of safety and self-worth, but the story ends with at least the cryptic hint from the family minister that something can be done by those who suffer. "The world is full of signs[,]" the minister says, "[w]e have to know how to read them" (82). Naomi thinks that the grown-ups left in her life are "going to keep talking in those riddles that adults like" (82), but she resolves in her last scene to get to work, for she says, "I have a lot of codes to work out. It's going to take me all day" (82). There is something hopeful in her determined, purposeful tone—a hopefulness (or a toughness, perhaps) that Kogawa remembers in her own childhood experience of the internment in this way: "As I made myself do one thing after another which was harder and harder, that forced effort created calluses over my soul, calluses over the trepidation. It's sort of like free-falling. You fall and you find you land, and lo and behold, you're not dead, so you get up again" (Donohue 40).

"Those Riddles That Adults Like"

Why war happens time and again must seem to children one of the crueler riddles perpetrated by the adults who govern and teach and raise them. In *Hana's Suitcase,* Karen Levine's remarkable story of young Japanese children seeking to understand the Holocaust by reconstructing the life of a young victim of Auschwitz, Levine notes that "the children are full of questions" (3). Making available to young readers strong narratives about war will engage them in thinking critically and seriously about one of humankind's oldest and grimmest pastimes. Why this project matters is, I think, best articulated by British essayist Francis Spufford, who argues that the books we read as children are among the most important we read in all our lives:

> for the words we take into ourselves help shape us. They help form the questions we think are worth asking; they shift around the boundaries of the sayable inside us, and the related borders of what's acceptable; their potent images, calling on more in us than the responses we will ourselves to have, dart new bridges into being between our conscious and unconscious minds, between what we know we know, and the knowledge we cannot examine by thinking. They build and stretch and build again the chambers of our imagination. (21-22)

The children are indeed full of questions, and they deserve the best answers we are capable of giving them.

NOTES

1 That Tennyson's verse celebrating empire was integrated into British Columbia classrooms is supported by a 1940 Vancouver School Board report referred to by Neil Sutherland in a study of elementary schooling in Vancouver from the 1920s to the 1940s. Sutherland records this caption to a picture of the Union Jack hung in school classrooms:

> One Life One Fleet
> One Flag One Throne
> Tennyson. (105)

2 The idea that adult writers are mistaken in condescending to child readers is articulated best, I think, by E.B. White:

> Anyone who writes down to children is simply wasting his time. You have to write up, not down. Children are demanding. They are the most attentive, curious, eager, observant, sensitive, quick, and generally congenial readers on earth. They accept, almost without question, anything you present them with, as long as it is presented honestly, fearlessly, and clearly. (242)

3 This fascination with the great generals of the Seven Years' War is referred to by Timothy Findley in *The Wars.* A photograph of Robert Ross in uniform is captioned by the anonymous narrator's reference to Benjamin West's famous painting, *The Death of General Wolfe*:

> Death is romantic—got from silent images. I lived—was young—and died. . . .The Death of General Wolfe. Someone will hold my hand and I won't suffer pain because I've suffered that already and survived. In paintings—and in photographs—there's never any blood. At most, the hero sighs his way to death while linen handkerchiefs are held against his wounds. (48-49)

G.A. Henty also played a part in promoting the cult of personality surrounding General Wolfe with his 1887 adventure tale, *With Wolfe in Canada.* Findley notes Henty's influence on Canadian boys who volunteer for service in the First World War. Aboard the *S.S. Massanabie* headed from Canada to Europe, Captain Ord is described as taking to his bed in order to drink brandy from a silver cup and read the works of Henty:

> "What on earth are you reading that stuff for?" Clifford [Purchas] asked him; "God—I haven't seen those books since I was twelve," he added. Ord said hoarsely that since he was going to do a boy's work he must read "the stuff of which boys are made" and smiled. (59-60)

4 David Macfarlane's 1991 *The Danger Tree: Memory, War, and the Search for a Family's Past* describes this tree and its significance in some detail.

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Steven Heighton

Simple

Back in a moment with more coverage of America's New War!
—CNN, 09/14/01

This is simple as simple comes. He refills
your wine glass before you can argue.
There are no "New Wars," only episodes
of that same crude, ancestral fever.
But every love's a new thing—feels it—knotted,
frail collaboration. Fill his glass
with those deeper lees.
The foghorn, rusting of rain on park heroes,
low vespers of a glacial river all
give news enough for now. Refill his
mouth with the warm red wine
of your tongue, this is simple
as simple comes.

Theodore Goossen

Writing the Pacific War in the Twenty-First Century

Dennis Bock, Rui Umezawa, and Kerri Sakamoto

The Unwritten War

The Pacific War began in 1931, with Japan's invasion of Manchuria, and ended in August of 1945, when Japan surrendered to the American-led Allies just days after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is less familiar to most Canadians than the European theatre of World War II because far fewer Canadian troops fought in the Pacific; indeed, after the battle for Hong Kong in December of 1941, contacts were limited to those between prisoners of war and their captors.[1] Moreover, the Pacific battlefields were scattered across a vast and unfamiliar expanse of land and sea. The few contemporary Canadian novels that described it were shaped by their authors' cruel experience of incarceration in Japanese POW camps.[2]

In the context of this relative silence and distance, the recent publication of three Canadian novels about the Pacific War—Dennis Bock's *The Ash Garden* (2001), Rui Umezawa's *The Truth about Death and Dying* (2002), and Kerri Sakamoto's *One Hundred Million Hearts* (2003)—is striking. While the Pacific War has not been entirely neglected—not only ex-POWs but also Japanese Canadian writers have dealt with it—never has it been treated on this scale, or with so much attention to the Japanese side. This approach raises certain questions: how, for example, do these Canadian authors bridge the geographic, temporal, and cultural gulf that divides them from their subject matter? Are they able to craft Japanese characters who are not stereotypes? Finally, why should Canadian novelists suddenly be displaying an interest in the Pacific War nearly sixty years after the conflict ended?

Before addressing these questions, I want to explain my own background, for it has shaped my approach to the novels under discussion. I am a specialist in twentieth-century Japanese literature; I have lived a quarter of my life in Japan since my first stint there in 1968. Recently, my research has touched on the resurgence of war literature in Japan, especially the case of Haruki Murakami, Japan's most popular writer both at home and abroad, who, like me, was born several years after the Pacific War ended. One question that naturally comes to mind, therefore, is whether there might be some connection between the Japanese and the Canadian situations. Another experience I have drawn from is a research project initiated in 1988 by the late Kinya (Ken) Tsuruta of the University of British Columbia, which brought together Japanese, Canadian, and American scholars to examine the ways Japanese and non-Japanese (French, British, Chinese, etc.) have portrayed each other.[3] Our collective research demonstrated how rare it was to find a "foreign" character *not* based on racial and cultural stereotypes.[4] The tidal pull of Western Orientalism and Japanese Occidentalism seemed almost inescapable.

The Ash Garden: "Facing" the Pacific War

Dennis Bock's *The Ash Garden* (2001) tries to swim against this tide. It examines the bombing of Hiroshima and its aftermath from the perspectives of three people: Anton Böll, a German scientist and one of the fathers of the Bomb; his wife Sophie, an Austrian whom Böll met in a Quebec refugee camp during the war; and Emiko, a victim of the Bomb who moved permanently to the United States in the 1950s when she and two dozen other teenage "maidens" were brought from Japan for plastic surgery, preceded by an appearance on a popular TV show. [5]

The Ash Garden is an intricate novel, albeit occasionally marred, as Richard Lourie has noted, by the very neatness of its allegorical structure.[6] Yet Böll and Sophie, far from being limited by their highly symbolic roles as A-Bomb scientist and Holocaust survivor respectively, come across as believable people whose marriage has been drained of joy by their contact with the Bomb. They are, one might say, its invisible victims. Emiko, by contrast, is the most visible victim one could imagine, an Elephant-Man-like figure until her lengthy round of surgeries is completed, and afterwards, an inexpressive mask. On the one hand, this history of disfigurement establishes her as the antithesis of the stereotypical Japanese woman, the beautiful geisha with the mysterious smile. But has Bock merely exchanged one

surface for another, an allegorical foil for a stereotypic cipher? Does Emiko, in short, have a face—an identity—of her own, which can help us to understand the Pacific War in human terms?

Identity, of course, is inscribed within a cultural context. Yet Japanese culture is hardly Bock's strong suit, as we can tell from the very first line, in which Emiko describes Hiroshima as *"the grassy floodplain that had been my people's home and misery for centuries"* (3; italics in original). "Misery"? For anyone familiar with the Japanese love of native place, this word does not ring true. Nor is it conceivable that Emiko's grandfather would lean down to kiss her and her brother goodbye when he leaves the hospital ward where they are being treated.[7] In short, from the outset it is apparent that, when it comes to Japanese culture, Bock is in over his head. To make up for this deficiency, Bock adopts a three-pronged narrative strategy: he places almost complete emphasis on Emiko's surface, i.e., her damaged face; he establishes her initially as a small child; and, finally, he has her tell her own story, in contrast to the third-person narration used for Böll and Sophie.

Emiko's face is a metaphor for many things. It is a technical "triumph": science replaces what science (in the form of the Bomb) has taken away. Like postwar Japan, it is rebuilt from the ashes with American help, outwardly normal-looking but lacking a full and natural range of expression. Emiko's face is also Hiroshima, the face of victimhood. On the surface, Hiroshima today looks like any other Japanese metropolis, but its inhabitants still bear the scars of August 6, 1945, both within their own country (where "marriage detectives" still check to ensure that a prospective son- or daughter-in-law has no A-bomb survivors [*hibakusha*] in the immediate family) and to a lesser degree in the rest of the world.[8] Bock presents Emiko as having overcome the terrible suffering of her youth. Compared to Böll and Sophie, she is at home in her adopted land and less tormented by the past; she even speaks better English than they do. But it is not clear if she has ever ventured outside the mask of her reconstructed face to touch anyone or to be touched. Böll and Sophie at least have each other, but Emiko seems to have no intimate relationships. Even the documentary films she makes, insofar as Bock describes them, seem less evocative than the sculpted gardens created by Sophie. Emiko records the world like a detached eye, as if in revenge for the way that it has recorded her and her disfigurement.

Bock tries to fill out Emiko's character by establishing her as a small child in the opening sections of *The Ash Garden*. In the italicized prologue that begins the novel, we see her at six years of age innocently playing beside a

river with her younger brother. They see a passing plane drop something "like a bloated body with dark skin." Then, a few seconds later, her brother turns away from the apparition:

> *The glint of a smooth stone had stolen away [my brother's] attention. It glistened at his knees in the brilliant morning sun, and suddenly it began to glow and the stone rose up from its mud pocket, which in an instant turned hard-baked and grey, and then I could not breathe and my mouth became a desert and the air jumped alive with objects that never had flown before.* (6)

We are thus introduced to Emiko moments before her life—and the world at large—is transformed by the Bomb.[9] In the scenes that follow, we see her fighting for survival in the hospital ward and mourning the death of her brother, whose hospital bed was beside hers. Bock hardly needs to delineate Emiko's character at this juncture. It is enough for us to feel her suffering as a child of the Nuclear Age. This section is weakest when Bock tries to ascribe specifically "Japanese" attitudes—about respecting the Emperor, sacrificing for the nation, and, more generally, facing life with what might be termed a Buddhist sense of resignation—to what is, after all, a six-year-old child. Emiko's character seems more credible the less information we are given.

This minimalist portrayal would be less convincing were it written in the third person, a mode which requires, if not omniscience, at least a sure grasp of context. In the first person, however, the limitations of Bock's characterization are not so obvious. Emiko tells us only what she chooses to reveal. If, compared to the other two main protagonists, she seems to have little inner life, we can ascribe that to her reticence or to the imprint of traumatic events a half-century old. As for her memories of those long-ago events, we can assume that, as a child, she did not register them in the self-conscious or analytical way an adult might. In short, Emiko's incompleteness—her deracinated, two-dimensional personality—can be understood as a natural consequence of the defining event of her life. In *The Ash Garden*, the contours of Emiko's identity, like the features of her face and of Hiroshima itself, have been erased, then re-inscribed by the overwhelming force of the Bomb.

The Truth about Death and Dying: Our Town at War

The Pacific War may have been distant to most Canadians, but for those of Japanese ancestry, it had immediate and far-reaching consequences. Even those whose parents immigrated to Canada after the war, and who were thus spared the trauma of internment, had their own hard memories to deal with, for the war years and their aftermath caused unimaginable suffering

in Japan.[10] It is no surprise, therefore, that the war plays an especially significant role in Japanese Canadian literature. Yet references to the Pacific War in Japanese Canadian literature tend to be fairly brief, despite their often crucial role. Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981) does not deal directly with the Pacific War until its climactic scene when Naomi and her brother are read a letter from their grandmother, graphically describing their mother's sad fate after the A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki (258-63). The letter causes her "children" (although both are adults by this time) sorrow and grief, but it also frees them from the silence that has ruled their lives. This association of the war with "the hidden truth" also characterizes Hiromi Goto's *A Chorus of Mushrooms,* where the brief but powerful sections dealing with the grandmother's past—her childhood in colonial Manchuria, her family's escape from the continent, the final conflagration that awaited them in Japan—allow the narrator (and the reader) to begin to understand the grandmother's eccentric behaviour. Even in works like Terry Watada's *Daruma Days,* where the war in the Pacific is virtually ignored, we can feel it lurking in the background, all the more disquieting for being invisible.[11]

Rui Umezawa's *The Truth about Death and Dying* and Kerri Sakamoto's *One Hundred Million Hearts* drag the Pacific War out into the light. Umezawa, like Goto, was born in Japan but came to North America as a small child; his father, like the father in *The Truth about Death and Dying,* taught physics at a university in Wisconsin before moving to Alberta. Kerri Sakamoto is a third-generation descendant of the first wave of Japanese immigrants, the Issei, who arrived in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (She is thus a Sansei, in contrast to Kogawa who is Nisei or second-generation. Umezawa, in this parlance, is considered a "new" Nisei: i.e., a child of postwar immigrants.) These positions inform their treatment of the war and of life in Japan.

If, in *The Ash Garden,* the Pacific War is an epic drama, dominated by the vast scale of the Bomb and the moral dilemmas it unleashed, Umezawa's *The Truth* presents the conflict in its most concrete and local form, as a force which perverts and then crushes life in a small Japanese town. Umezawa uses his familiarity with Japanese society to bring this community to life with great skill: its residents are as quirky—and as interconnected—as we might find in a similar settlement anywhere. The father of Shoji, the teenaged hero of the wartime section of the novel, for example, is a man of strong opinions who does not know when to keep his mouth shut, and who likes to parade around in the nude. He has been exiled to this out-of-the-

way spot for having pointed out the incompetence of a senior physician; now, with the war in full swing, he rails against the propaganda people are being fed, and the waste of young men being sent to die in distant battles. Opposed to him is Tamura, the leader of the local *kempeitai*, the dreaded military police. Unlike the other villagers, Tamura is presented not as a distinct individual but as a living symbol of the demonic wartime system:

> Who was this man? What gave him pleasure? What dreams did he dream? What was his favorite food? . . . Tamura was the personification of all the evils of the Pacific War—of Japanese imperialism, of fascism, of prejudice, of stupidity. His was the face that was ubiquitous during the war but to which no one would stake claim afterwards. He appeared out of nowhere and would disappear into thin air. (268-69)

Might Umezawa be suggesting that responsibility for the war can be laid at the feet of a few war criminals like Tamura who wreaked havoc on an innocent population and then vanished "into thin air"? Hardly. The ostensibly good young men of the village were also capable of evil. Umezawa makes this point by developing a figure in the Milwaukee/Toronto portion of the novel who is a survivor of a Japanese POW camp. This character is one of the least effective in *The Truth*, yet he fulfills a necessary function, for he provides the means through which Japanese war atrocities—the wanton gang rapes and murders, the casual brutalities of the POW camps, and so forth—can be incorporated. He provides an external viewpoint that shifts the action from Japan, where people suffered terribly, to abroad, where the Japanese were the victimizers.[12]

Balancing these two perspectives—the two sides of wartime Japan, as it were—is one of the challenges of contemporary writing on the Pacific War, whether in Japan or Canada. Umezawa's strategy is to ridicule both the men who planned the war and the masses who meekly accepted it:

> Someone in Japan once said making war with the most powerful nation in the world was a good idea, and everyone else pretended this made perfect sense. Someone else said Japan should scare the Americans by flying its own planes into their battleships, and everyone agreed again. If things went wrong, people cut their stomachs open. All these exquisitely demented ideas were forever unquestioned. (198)

Umezawa shows how this wartime dementia affected ordinary citizens. The villagers happily see off their newly enlisted sons as if they were "sending the local softball team off to a regional tournament," (12) while schoolyard bullies dreamily contemplate the day when they will be "blown into tiny

pieces in a glorious fireball" (13). As Shoji muses after his father's death, "It wasn't the war. It was insanity. Insanity had started the war and kept it going. And insanity had killed [my father], in more ways than one" (64). Indeed, it is the father's own act of "madness"—he calls the Emperor an "inbred fool" and a "bastard"—that leads to his violent end. In his final moments, he reflects, "Was madness saying just what was needed, or was it refraining from saying anything at all?" (270). In the face of mass insanity, the only sane response, it seems, is to keep one's mouth shut.

Nevertheless Shoji's father's final act of opposition is heroic. After the war, Japanese intellectuals were criticized because they had not spoken out. Why did so many "convert" *(tenkō)* from socialism to patriotic nationalism under pressure from the authorities?[13] Some critics saw the answer in the incomplete adjustment of the "Japanese psyche" to modernity. Japanese are too dependent on their social circle, went the conventional argument, too conformist.[14] They need to develop stronger egos and become more "individualistic" like Americans. Umezawa shows some sympathy for this point of view: at one point, for example, he muses that postwar Japanese workers who lay down their lives for their jobs are like samurai in service to a feudal lord, or, possibly, soldiers in the old Imperial Army. Yet his portrait of the village, with its non-conformists, its renegades and wastrels, its light-fingered maids and ribald old ladies, militates against such an essentialist construction of "the Japanese."

One Hundred Million Hearts: The War and the Nation

In the opening lines of Kerri Sakamoto's *One Hundred Million Hearts*, Miyo, a Canadian Sansei, says: "During the war my father learned to shoot a rifle, lunge with his bayonet and march the perimeter of Okayama Second Middle School, knees high and arms swinging. He had been born in Vancouver but sent to Japan for schooling, then to a farther away place he called Manchukuo"(1). This opening immediately establishes *Hearts* as a novel which dares to examine "problem cases" omitted in previous Japanese Canadian narratives, in particular the Nisei who found themselves in Japan when hostilities began.[15] Most were very young and had been sent there, like Miyo's father, for schooling: since racial prejudice severely restricted opportunities in mainstream Canada, Japanese language skills were essential to get ahead in the one place where decent work could be found—Japantown. Yet the reception these Nisei students got in Japan—a country most had never seen—could be as cold as what they had experienced in Canada. Caught

between two nations, with a war looming on the horizon, some of these stranded young people threw their support behind the Japanese war effort.

To focus on this group during the time of the Redress Movement (successfully concluded in 1988), when Japanese Canadians and their supporters were struggling to obtain official apology and compensation, would have been regarded as counterproductive. Not a single act of sabotage or treason had been committed in Canada by a Japanese Canadian; the expropriation of property and the dispersal of the community to internment camps had been both unjust and strategically unnecessary.[16] But at the time of the Redress Movement, maintaining this position (reflected in the title of Ken Adachi's history of the Japanese Canadians, *The Enemy That Never Was* [1976]), required that experiences and individuals who might compromise the "official narrative" had to be excluded. Sakamoto's first novel, *The Electrical Field* (1998), bent that narrative by creating characters so damaged by the internment camp experience that it was almost impossible to sympathize with them. With *Hearts,* however, she breaks it wide open. For Nisei like Miyo's father and the others around him did not just subsist in Japan after the war broke out; they fought for the Imperial cause, in a few rare cases even committing war crimes themselves.[17]

While over half of the action in *The Ash Garden* and *The Truth About Death and Dying* takes place in the West, *One Hundred Million Hearts* is set almost entirely in Japan. When Miyo's father passes away, she learns that after her mother's death he had a second family that he kept a secret from her, and that she has a younger half-sister, Hana, in Japan. As a result, Miyo, who is in her thirties, travels there for the first time to meet Hana and learn more about her father's concealed past. Hana is convinced that their father was a "bad man," but her mother Setsuko (a Canadian Nisei who "returned" to Japan at war's end) sees him as a tragic figure whose noble desire to die for the Emperor as a kamikaze pilot was thwarted by the end of the war. Indeed, his dying words to Miyo, "Endure the unendurable," are those used by Emperor Hirohito in his radio address to the Japanese people announcing the surrender.[18]

Hearts is filled with the symbols of Japan's wartime ideology: cherry blossoms, thousand-stitch amulets, martial songs, the kamikaze themselves. The most important symbol, however, is Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, where the spirits of the nation's fallen soldiers are enshrined as gods *(kami).*[19] Setsuko hopes that the shrine will relax its rules to permit her late husband (Miyo and Hana's father) to be enshrined there. Hana, on the other hand, despises the ideology that sacrificed so many young men and bitterly resents her

father for having deserted her. Nevertheless, she has befriended the clutch of old women who dance for their fallen lovers beneath the cherry blossoms at Yasukuni each spring, possibly because their suffering mirrors her own. Caught between the contesting positions of her stepmother and half-sister, Miyo must struggle to make some sense out of her father's secret past.

Ironically, the only place Miyo's father did fit in was Manchuria (Manchukuo), a Japanese colony from 1932 to 1945. An old friend of his reflects on what *akogare no Manshū* or "yearned-for Manchuria" meant to Nikkei (i.e., persons of Japanese origin living abroad):

> It was paradise. Where else would you see a white man carrying a yellow skibby's bags, or the skibby telling him what floor he wanted in a hotel elevator? And they were all nikkei—no matter where you came from, where you were born, you were just as good as Japanese from Japan. World-class citizens with streetcars to ride, roomy, reserved for Japanese only. You were a man one time in your life. Back home, *yellow skibby* someone once called him on the street. It was forever one ugly name or another, even in the neighbourhood around Powell Street. Yellow skibby stuck, no escaping it. (139)

Miyo cannot imagine this level of racial hatred, nor does she know much about the "neighbourhood around Powell Street"—i.e., Vancouver's Japanese community—which was decimated in 1942 when its inhabitants were shipped off to the camps.[20] He had told her almost nothing about his life—he had never even spoken Japanese in front of her—in order to protect her from what he had undergone. To discover who he really was, she must learn more about the world he inhabited. She must, in short, develop a historical consciousness.

At one level, Miyo's search for the past represents the emancipatory struggles of a number of forcibly "infantilized" entities—women, the physically challenged, Japanese Canadians, and, most strikingly, the Japanese nation itself. Much as the prewar Japanese were taught to rely on their Emperor, Miyo, as the only child of a single parent, learned to depend exclusively on her father. He in turn responded by encouraging her to lean on him, thereby locking the two of them in a stultifying mutual dependency. Finally, when her father faltered, she established a relationship with a white man and shifted her dependency to him (much as Japan turned to depend on America after the war), at which point she became able to regard her father as a normal human being rather than an all-providing deity. By using Hirohito's most famous words—"endure the unendurable"—in his final admonition to her, Miyo's father overtly identifies himself with the fallen "god" in whose name he had once fought, while at the same time

pushing his daughter to stand on her own two feet. In this manner, Sakamoto places Miyo's personal struggle for emotional and physical independence squarely alongside the struggle of the Japanese people to overcome paternalistic authority and achieve political maturity in the modern era.[21]

Unlike most Japanese evocations of the Pacific War—not to mention *The Truth about Death and Dying* and *The Ash Garden*—*Hearts* contains no scenes of carnage, no exploding bombs or maimed bodies.[22] Until the final sections of the novel, the war's brutality is conveyed indirectly, through art and snatches of memory. Hana obsessively superimposes small photos of kamikaze pilots and tiny bundles of yarn over a wall-sized picture of her father's face and then over a picture of the emperor. Wartime atrocities emerge from the mist, are briefly confessed, then disappear again. Old women dance beneath the cherry blossoms for lovers now too young to be their children. Like Hana's art, *Hearts* presents the Pacific War in montage form as a succession of shifting images set against an ideologically charged historical backdrop.

Writing the Pacific War in Contemporary Canada and Japan

How has Sakamoto, a Sansei who has spent relatively little time in Japan, managed to write so convincingly about the country and its wartime legacy? The answer, I think, is twofold. First, like Bock, she approaches the problem of characterization strategically, focusing on characters with whom she feels the most affinity: in her case, "marginal" individuals who stand, sometimes uncomfortably, between Canada and Japan. In fact, the only culturally unambiguous characters in *Hearts* are Miyo's and Hana's boyfriends, both of whom are easily forgettable. The rest of the cast is more mixed and far more interesting: Nisei with close ties to Japan like the girls' father, his wife Setsuko, and his "buddy" from his Manchuria days; International (i.e., English-language) school products like Hana and her circle, whose education and background set them apart from Japanese society;[23] and, finally, Miyo herself, a faltering, self-conscious loner in Canada who discovers her true strength in Japan. The second reason why Sakamoto is able to evoke Japan so well is that she has worked long and hard to familiarize herself with Japanese culture, seeking out the research materials and expert sources she needed to fill in whatever she lacked in direct experience.

Sakamoto mentions some of her most important sources in the acknowledgements at the end of *Hearts*, a gesture one can also find in contemporary Japanese novels about the Pacific War. Haruki Murakami, for example, includes a short list of works consulted at the end of his best-selling *The*

Wind-Up Bird Chronicle. Both reading lists represent the best of North American and Japanese scholarship: Alvin Coox's massive study of the battle of Nomonhan, for example, was a crucial source for Haruki's research, while Sakamoto has drawn substantially from recent historical works in English (especially John Dower's *Embracing Defeat*) that incorporate the work of Japanese scholars. (Bock is indebted to Dower's book as well.) This convergence of scholarly research makes a wealth of new information available to novelists—from Canada, Japan, or elsewhere—who seek to describe, not just battles and atrocities, but the tenor of life in Japan and its colonies before, during, and immediately after the Pacific War.

The mere availability of historical research, however, cannot fully explain why Canadian and Japanese novelists born after the end of the Pacific War are now taking it up in their work. Some years ago, I had the opportunity to talk with Haruki Murakami shortly before he completed *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle.* We found ourselves talking about our fathers and the war. His had fought in China, mine in Europe. Neither, we felt, had been particularly forthcoming about what they had experienced, or about how it had changed them. Soon they would be taking their stories to the grave. Had they told those stories to us, might we have looked at our fathers differently? In Japan's case especially, what have been the broader social and psychological costs of the secrecy surrounding the war? Later, I reflected that I had been too harsh on my father. Was it not up to the child, after all, to fill in imaginatively what the parent could not express—to develop, as it were, his or her own powers of what has been termed "postmemory"? Perhaps many works of literature could be subtitled "Stories my parent(s) never told me."

Still, of the three Canadian writers discussed here only Umezawa, who began writing what turned into *The Truth* immediately after the death of his own father, may be seen to have conjured up an actual parent's "untold stories" as a starting point for fiction.[24] Bock and Sakamoto, by contrast, deal with the image of the father (or, in Bock's case, perhaps the grandfather) as a more overtly symbolic figure. Yet they too are involved in a process of retrieval, imaginatively bringing to life the experiences of those who lived through the war and now are passing from the scene. There may be some who feel that, in contrast to the European theatre of war, the war in the Pacific is less relevant to Canadians because fewer fought and died there. In fact, however, several million Asian Canadians—not to mention many others with personal ties to that part of the globe—carry the legacy of the Pacific War in some form or other. Moreover, all of us are in a deep sense children of the A-Bomb, and thus linked to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Whatever our origins may be, therefore, we benefit from the opportunity these three novels provide to envision more clearly what the Pacific War meant in human terms, and how it shaped the world we confront today.

NOTES

1 For a description of these contacts, see Roy, *Mutual Hostages.*

2 Dagmar Novak's study of Canadian war novels discusses only two works about the Pacific War: William Allister's *A Handful of Rice* (1961), and James Jackson's *To the Edge of Morning* (1964).

3 Selected proceedings of the initial conference were published in English as *The Walls Within: Images of Westerners in Japan and Images of the Japanese Abroad.* The project also led to two books in Japanese: *Uchinaru kabe* (The Walls Within, TBS Britannica, 1990), which added many new articles to the original proceedings, and *Nihon bungaku ni okeru "tasha"* (*The "Other" in Japanese Literature,* Shinyosha, 1994).

4 This has changed recently as more and more young Canadians have written about their experiences travelling and/or teaching English in Japan in fictional form. See, for example, Sarah Sheard's *Almost Japanese,* Steven Heighton's *Flight Paths of the Emperor,* and Peter Oliva's *The City of Yes* for attempts to represent Japan in non-Orientalist terms. Other examples can be found in *Descant* 89/26.2 which includes a selection of Canadian writing on Japan.

5 See Barker.

6 Lourie notes that Sophie's name seems to cite the horrors of the death camps (cf. *Sophie's Choice*). Böll's name may be an ironic reference to the post-war German writer Heinrich Böll, regarded by many as the moral conscience of his age, who railed against the folly of the war and the crimes committed in its name.

7 It may seem essentialist to declare what is and is not normative in Japanese culture. But the deep attachment and love for "native place" (which, for example, underpins probably the greatest "Hiroshima novel" ever written, Masuji Ibuse's *Black Rain* [1968]) is so basic that its rejection by a Japanese character must be supported by other (personal or historical) factors to be plausible. Similarly, the custom of public, non-sexual kissing, rare even today, would be alien to a Japanese person born, as Emiko's father was, in the nineteenth century.

8 The purpose here, of course, is to protect future generations from genetic damage. Other things these detectives search for include insanity, inherited disease or disability, and ancestors who are non-Japanese or *burakumin* (literally "people of the hamlets," former outcasts once known by the discriminatory term *eta).*

9 This narrative strategy mirrors that used by John Hersey in his classic *Hiroshima,* published a year after the bombing, which profiles six survivors of the Hiroshima blast.

10 The extent of the suffering before and after the surrender is well captured in chapter three of Dower's *War Without Mercy,* "*Kyodatsu:* Exhaustion and Despair." The most moving fictional treatment is Akiyuki Nosaka's short story, "A Grave of Fireflies," based on the author's experience of watching his sister starve to death.

11 Ironically, the one exception occurs in the next-to-last story, "The Moment of Truth," in which the white policeman "Fitz" thinks back to his war years in the South Pacific. Otherwise, the war is reconstituted, as it were, in the brutality of the work camps under the dictatorial control of Etsuji Morii, who comes across as a homeland version of a Japanese fascist thug.

12 Umezawa thus avoids the Japanese tendency to shift all responsibility for the war, and the manner in which it was carried out, to the power elite. As Lisa Yoneyama, citing Yamaguchi Yasushi, writes: "Marxists and other progressive critics relegated the responsibility of the ordinary people to the ruling elites and thus spared the former from a full investigation into their participation in national projects. The post-war Enlightenment paradigm has to a large extent endorsed blaming the activities of wartime leaders and their supporters alone for prewar and wartime disasters" (*Hiroshima Traces* 10-11). Such a construction has encouraged many Japanese to see themselves purely in the role of victim.

13 See Arima's *The Failure of Freedom* and Keene's *Dawn to the West*, especially chapters 22 and 23.

14 See Yoneyama (10).

15 For a brief account of this group (the *kika* Nisei) and the difficulties they experienced in Japan, see Adachi (174-78). According to the 1944 Department of Labour Report cited by Adachi, 1,500 Canadian-born Nisei were residing in Japan in 1941, the majority of whom were young children.

16 See Kogawa (273) and, for the American case, *Farewell to Manzanar* (xiii).

17 See, for example, the case of the Kamloops Kid, one Kanao Inouye, a BC-born man charged with twenty-seven counts of overt cruelty at a war crimes tribunal in Hong Kong, and finally executed there in 1947 for treason (Roy et al. 73).

18 The classical diction of the Japanese phrase that Sakamoto quotes in the text (185)—*tae-gataki o tae, shinobigataki o shinobi*—would not have been easily understood by Miyo. It is not clear if it is her father or Setsuko who translates it into English for her.

19 For a concise description of Yasukuni, see Buruma (219-25). Another excellent source is "An Ordinary Woman," the second chapter of Norma Field's *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*. In this chapter, Field recounts the story of a widow determined not to have her husband enshrined at Yasukuni; her stand caused an uproar in Japan. Even today, visits of national leaders to Yasukuni, which were resumed in the late 1980s by the then Prime Minister Nakasone, are front-page news.

20 Although remnants of Powell Street's past still exist, the community that once flourished there is no more. As Midge Ayukawa has written about the wartime expulsion, "The Japanese community (on the West Coast) was destroyed, and the Issei . . . who had controlled the former communities were too old to start again and had lost their power bases" (139).

21 This has been a central and ongoing theme in Japanese political and historical thought since the postwar years. See, for example, Maruyama; Koschmann.

22 Japanese war literature is vast and diverse, but most works include at least some scenes of devastation and slaughter. See, for example, the novels by Ibuse, Ooka, Murakami, and Okuizumi. For a discussion of Japanese A-Bomb literature and the victim/victimizer issue in post-war Japan, see Treat.

23 My daughters, both of whom have attended Japanese schools, confirm that these "bicultural" children often call themselves "Third Culture Kids."

24 Taken from Umezawa's welcoming speech at a book launch for his novel held at the Leo Kamen Gallery, Toronto, October 2002.

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Marilyn Iwama

Potluck

. . . today's crisis is one of unconscious feeling of ultranationalism in Japan. A very big feeling . . .
—Ōe Kenzaburō (Nobel Laureate, 1994)

What's going to happen to Ōe Kenzaburō now,
with grandsons of the war crying *banzai*
again, calling justice masochism?

Did you hear the news?
They're saying Nanking is a lie.

They're saying
the women wanted comfort,
moving up.

In someone's idea of a world, maybe.
A world free of mirrors
like the one Ōe hoards in his pocket
against the possibility
a feeble general might be having second thoughts,
might dare his reflection. Remember

our last getting-to-know-you potluck?
How determined we were to gather
nations in our kitchen?
Remember our guest shouting
girl you don't know anything they don't teach you
anything your grandfathers destroyed our country raped
our grandmothers . . .

Remember how you and the girl sat across the table,
sharing the spittle of the woman's words?

How she went on.

Until all that remained was to cradle the girl
in the nursery, crooning
all the pretty little horses as if
I might mother the war away.

The tears in the girl's eyes.
Her obedient body.

Amy Tector

A Righteous War?
L. M. Montgomery's Depiction of the First World War in *Rilla of Ingleside*

On March 11, 1919, Lucy Maud Montgomery wrote in her journal: "I began work on my tenth novel today. It is to be another 'Anne' story—and I fervently hope the last—dealing with her sons and daughters during the years of war. That will end Anne—and properly. For she belongs in the green untroubled pastures and still waters of the world before the war" (2: 390). Montgomery did not particularly want to write another Anne story, but the public and her publishers were insatiable. Written in the immediate aftermath of a war that had changed the nation and affected Montgomery deeply, *Rilla of Ingleside* is the first novel she wrote purposefully to advance a specific point of view. She explains her aims in a 1921 letter to her friend Ephraim Weber: "It is really a 'story for girls'—the heroine being a young girl who lives her girlhood in the years of the great war and I wrote it as a tribute to the girlhood of Canada. So it's my only 'novel with a purpose'" (29). Montgomery wanted to show the effects of the war on Canadians, but she was limited by the constraints of the Anne books. She could not veer too far from the setting, character, or tone of the series without disappointing, and perhaps alienating, her fans and publishers. *Rilla* reflects Montgomery's struggle to chronicle the impact of the First World War within the expected parameters of the Anne series.

Early critics underestimated the constraints that Montgomery struggled against. In 1976, long before the current flowering of interest in Montgomery's work, Margery Fee and Ruth Cawker summed up the novel's attitude to war in one trivializing sentence: "*Rilla* degenerates into a chauvinistic tract for Canadian support of Great Britain in World War One" (76). In recent years,

critics such as Owen Dudley Edwards, Elizabeth Waterston, Mary Rubio, and Elizabeth Epperly have disputed this dismissal of *Rilla*. They have argued that, far from being "a chauvinistic tract," the novel contains subversive elements that challenged contemporary attitudes to the war.

Edwards, for example, sees *Rilla* as a rich source of material on attitudes of the day: "Montgomery's keen observation, social perceptions, community cartography, delicious irony, catalysis in comedy, infectious pathos make her works admirably serviceable to the historian with the sense to use her" ("Intention" 126). One historian who has used *Rilla* is Jonathan Vance, who argues in *Death So Noble* that *Rilla* portrays an "entirely traditional view of the war's impact on a small Canadian town" (237). Vance maintains that the novel is complicit in the myth construction that comforted a society unable to face the futility of the Great War. Attributing *Rilla*'s popularity (27,000 copies of the book sold in the interwar years) to its cozy message about the war, he claims that while, "[a]s a piece of literature it is not Montgomery's best" (176), Canadians bought the novel because they craved its outlook, filled as it was with "stock characters" and an idealization of war (175). His argument echoes Fee and Cawker's assessment that *Rilla* is an unsophisticated reflection of wartime propaganda and myth.

Certainly Montgomery shows a troubling enthusiasm for the war, especially considering the novel was written after the conflict ended. But to focus only on this aspect of *Rilla* ignores the complexity of the novel and the astonishing scope of issues tackled within this "story for girls." In the course of the novel Montgomery explores sacrifice, wartime idealism, feminism, the development of a Canadian literature, and the emergence of a Canadian identity.

As her March 11, 1919 journal entry indicated, Montgomery viewed the world as "green and untroubled" before the conflict. She thus frames World War I as the disruptor of the natural order. When Anne Shirley arrived in Avonlea in 1908, her adventures at the Green Gables farm represented a pastoral escape for most readers. Twelve years later, the mud of Flanders and the scarred landscape of no man's land were grim realities that Montgomery could not gloss over. Rather than plunge her readers into the world of gas attacks, trench foot, and bombardments, Montgomery sets *Rilla* in the midst of familiar bucolic harmony. She demonstrates the destructiveness of war by graphically illustrating what it does to this harmony.

From the opening line of the novel—"It was a warm, golden-cloudy, lovable afternoon" (9)—Montgomery immerses readers in an extraordinarily

enjoyable environment. The time at Ingleside prior to the war is idyllic, as Montgomery strives to convey the sense of an Edwardian Summer before the conflict tears the world apart. The title of the first chapter, "Glen 'Notes' and Other Matters," emphasizes the commonplace hominess of Ingleside. The children from *Rainbow Valley* days have nothing more urgent on their minds than with whom they will "sweetheart." Chapters called "Dew of Morning" and "Moonlight Mirth" place the characters' actions within a beneficent natural world. When Rilla, the fifteen-year-old heroine, first appears, she is swinging dreamily in a hammock; she remarks that the weather lately has been "perfect in every way" (25). Ingleside is full of "golden pools of sunshine and plots of alluring shadows" (21). Nothing, not even a shadow, is negative in prewar Glen St. Mary.

The violence of the war manifests itself in *Rilla* through letters home from the front, and it is explicitly depicted through natural imagery. Montgomery's readers, used to the "glistening glades" of the Anne books, are jolted, just as her characters are, by the boys' letters. Jem, Rilla's oldest brother, writes to their father:

> Rats everywhere—no fire—a drizzling rain coming down—rather dismal. . . . We have been under fire since the last week of February. One boy—he was a Nova Scotian—was killed right beside me yesterday. A shell burst near us and when the mess cleared away he was lying dead. . . . We're in an absolutely different world. (126)

Uncomfortable, unsafe, and violent: the environment of war is unlike anything Montgomery's characters have experienced before. Montgomery uses the language of dislocation and nightmare to describe the actual space of war. Jerry Meredith, Rilla's childhood neighbour, writes home describing no man's land: "Dead men were all around me, lying on the horrible grey, slimy fields" (134). The dreadfulness of this scene lies as much in the "grey, slimy fields" as in the bodies of the dead.

The boys go to fight, not only for ideas of Canada and Empire, but also for the physical space of home. Jem writes to his father:

> When I saw what had been done here to homes and gardens and people—well, dad, I seemed to see a gang of Huns marching through Rainbow Valley and the Glen, and the garden at Ingleside. There were gardens over here—beautiful gardens with the beauty of centuries—and where are they now? Mangled, desecrated things! (127)

Part of the horror of the war for Jem is its destruction of order. A garden is a manifestation of the human ability to civilize nature. War teaches Jem that

humanity also has the capability to create chaos. He understands this new insight in religious terms and views what is happening to the land as a "desecration."

Rilla's brother Walter, who is characterized as an aesthete, does not fear the pain of war as much as he fears its ugly destructiveness, especially when juxtaposed against Ingleside:

> War was a hellish, horrible, hideous thing—too horrible and hideous to happen. . . . The mere thought of it was hideous, and made Walter unhappy in its threat to the beauty of life. He would not think of it. . . . How beautiful the old Glen was, in its August ripeness, with its chains of bowery old homesteads, tilled meadows and quiet gardens. (31)

War frightens Walter because he cannot stand the possibility of being disconnected from nature: "To be blind—never to see the beauty of the world again—moonlight on Four Winds—the stars twinkling through the fir trees—mist on the gulf" (61). His final letter home juxtaposes the beauty of Ingleside with the ugliness of war: "Always home has seemed so far away—so hopelessly far away from this hideous welter of filth and blood" (239). Walter's entire conception of war rests on his appreciation of pastoral beauty.

Even Rilla, protected in her cozy world, senses the discontinuity between Ingleside's charm and the carnage on the fields of France: "How can spring come and be beautiful in such horror?" asks Rilla in her diary (128). Indeed, nature distances those who stay at home from their loved ones on the front: "When the sun shines and the fluffy yellow catkins are coming out on the willow trees down by the brook, and the garden is beginning to be beautiful I can't realize that such dreadful things are happening in Flanders" (128). Rilla's agony at discovering Walter's enlistment is illustrated by her suddenly altered attitude to nature: "The frogs were singing in the marshes, the dim, ensilvered fields of home lay all around them. The spring night was lovely and appealing. Rilla felt that its beauty was an insult to her pain. She would hate moonlight forever" (150). Until this point, it would be unthinkable for a heroine in the Anne series to declare a hatred for moonlight. Rilla's statement is revolutionary, akin to having Anne announce her desire to pack her bags and move to a walk-up in downtown Toronto. By juxtaposing the pastoral safety of Ingleside with the chaos of war, Montgomery is able to give readers the sense of dislocation and terror that the war evoked, without alienating them from the story.

While she admits to the brutality of the conflict, Montgomery does not overtly question the reasons for the war. Vance discusses the difficulties for

those who may have wished to analyze the meaning of the conflict: "In the first place, any attempt to question the war or its aftermath raised the hackles of people who saw such questioning, not in the spirit of intellectual enquiry but as an attack on the fallen and their sacrifice" (264). Montgomery had no desire to question the value of the soldiers' deaths. In a letter to Ephraim Weber in 1916, she chastises her friend for even raising the possibility that the war was not a noble endeavour:

> Surely, surely, you cannot so have missed the very meaning of this war—that it is a death-grapple between freedom and tyranny, between modern and medieaval [*sic*] ideals . . . between the principles of democracy and militarism. I believe that it is the most righteous war that England ever waged and worthy of every drop of Canadian blood. (5)

Montgomery's passionate defence of what Vance terms the "sanctity of the fallen" (263) precludes any assessment of whether or not the conflict really was the "death-grapple" she describes.

Walter is the emblem of masculine sacrifice in *Rilla.* Montgomery positions him as the saintly soldier visionary as early as *Rainbow Valley*, the novel that preceded *Rilla.* As Edwards and Litster make clear, Walter's schoolyard scrap in *Rainbow Valley* with the bully Dan Reese prefigures the battles Canadian boys will have to fight in Europe (37-38). Walter is the first one to see the mystical Piper, luring the children away at the end of *Rainbow Valley.* In *Rilla* Walter, unlike Jem, understands precisely what he is getting into when he heads off to war: "I see myself thrusting a bayonet through another man. . . . I see myself lying alone torn and mangled, burning with thirst on a cold, wet field" (106). Yet Walter still chooses to fight. Montgomery idealizes Walter as the ultimate citizen soldier, fully aware of the consequences of his actions, but still prepared to defend the Empire. When he finally meets death, in the form of the Piper piping him to his end, Walter is not afraid because he has faith in the value of his sacrifice:

> I've helped to make Canada safe for the poets of the future—for the workers of the future, ay and the dreamers too . . . the future, not of Canada only, but of the world—when the red rain of Langemarck and Verdun shall have brought forth a golden harvest—not in a year or two, as some foolishly think, but a generation later, when the seed sown shall have time to germinate and grow. (240-41)

Walter's words are bitterly ironic to later readers because the seed sown by the First World War came to fruition in the second. Nonetheless, Montgomery believes that sacrifices like Walter's are valuable, and she places his death at the centre of the story.

Montgomery was aware that her stance on the war angered some people. Indeed, she takes a rather tart tone in her journal with a reader who criticized the novel for its war-mongering: "Can't the poor moron realize the difference between offensive and defensive war. I wrote *Rilla* not to 'glorify war' but to glorify the courage and patriotism and self-sacrifice it evoked" (3: 387). While her journal and letters never express doubt about the value of the 60,000 Canadian war deaths, Montgomery's fiction is more ambivalent. Several elements in *Rilla* suggest that Montgomery did indeed question the war and its purposes.

One such element is "The Piper," a poem that Walter writes about the war. Edwards cites it as the most subversive element in the text. Reading it in the context of Robert Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamlin," Edwards interprets Walter's poem as an indictment of the corrupt civilization that thoughtlessly sacrificed a generation of young men. He claims that Walter was "a boy lured to his death by a lying piper" ("Intention" 135). Because we never see Walter's poem, we are left to imagine its content based on a few clues. The theme of "keeping the faith" is deliberately reminiscent of John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields," but the poem's title conjures up Browning's malevolent Piper. Indeed, the references to an enthralling Piper in *Rilla* and in the earlier *Rainbow Valley* strengthen the link between the unseen poem and Browning's work. By withholding Walter's poem, Montgomery allows it to be used in two ways: as a patriotic homage to the Fallen, but also as a subtle critique of the way in which they were robbed of their lives.

Edwards also cites young Bruce Meredith's murder of his kitten, Stripey, as an example of Montgomery's willingness to question the value of the slaughter of so many young men. Bruce kills his cat as a deliberate offering to God: "I thought if I sacrificed Stripey, God would send Jem back. So I drowned him—and oh mother, it was *awful* hard" (323). Edwards claims that through Bruce's action, Montgomery portrays war as "the Carthaginian Moloch, to whom children were sacrificed for military gain" ("Intention" 134). On some level, Montgomery acknowledges the possibility that the sacrifice of a generation of Canadian men may have been futile.

Montgomery's view of the war's purpose presents a similar combination of overt approval and indirect questioning. Montgomery defended wartime values in a 1922 letter to Weber: "I *can not* understand your attitude to the Great War. When Germany outraged Belgium and swooped down on France would you have had England sit still without lifting a finger? Would you have enjoyed the eventual result of a Germany-ridden world?" (39;

emphasis in original). Walter's reservations about joining up do not come from doubt about whether it is a just fight, but from his fear that war will be painful and ugly. Montgomery reinforces the idea that the Germans, led by the war-mongering Kaiser, deliberately left Belgium to starve (108). Her support of the official version of the war is disturbing to the modern reader, but, as Peter Buitenhuis points out, Montgomery's pro-war viewpoint fit squarely into the thinking of her day. Buitenhuis writes of many popular Canadian novelists of the time, including Montgomery:

> They maintained that the war, in spite of everything, was necessary and morally justifiable. These novelists were in effect writing a new version of the old story of the new world coming in to redress the balance of the old and bringing a vision of a better future rising from the ashes of a strife-torn Europe. (155)

Mr. Meredith, Glen St. Mary's wise pastor, articulates the idea of the war as a fresh start: "We are witnessing the birth-pangs of a new era—but it will be born a feeble, wailing life like everything else. I am not one of those who expect a new heaven and a new earth as the immediate result of this war" (209). Mr. Meredith's expectations reflect the national spirit of optimism at war's end, although in markedly cautious tones.

Like her vision of soldier sacrifice, Montgomery's attitude toward the war's purpose is more nuanced than first appearances would suggest. The only pacifist in the novel is the ridiculous Whiskers-on-the-moon. He is also the book's villain and comedic element.[1] Yet when he addresses the prayer-meeting, he sounds reasoned and sane: "He prayed that the unholy war might cease—that the deluded armies being driven to slaughter on the western front might have their eyes opened to their iniquity and repent—that the poor young men present in khaki who had been hounded into a path of murder and militarism could yet be rescued" (218). His speech is given further legitimacy by the fact that it is delivered at the prayer-meeting.

Montgomery also explores some of the troubling undercurrents of the militarist cause. The congregation's reaction to the peace prayer exposes the violence beneath Glen St. Mary's placid surface. Norman Douglas assaults Whiskers-on-the-moon. Douglas is a big man, and the attack reminds at least one observer of "a huge mastiff [shaking] an overgrown puppy" (220). Douglas, with the tacit approval of the congregation, verbally abuses Whiskers, calling him a "pestilential parasite," "Hunnish scum," and "indecent reptile" (219). When the physical and verbal intimidation is over, Douglas boasts, "I reckon you won't be troubled with any more pacifist prayers" (220). Whiskers-on-the-moon also has his windows smashed and

his crop almost ruined for expressing his opinions about the war. Although she endorses the reasons for war, Montgomery, through the persecution of Whiskers, suggests the narrowness of public opinion concerning pacifists.

Rilla's reaction to Walter's enlistment is another indirect critique of the militarist cause. Walter is Rilla's most beloved sibling. By the time he joins up, she has read of the misery of war in the newspapers and the boys' letters home. Rilla knows the conflict will not be over quickly, and that it could easily result in death for any soldier going to the front. Despite this knowledge, she is secretly comforted when her brother joins up: "Amid all of her pain she was conscious of an odd feeling of relief in some hidden part of her soul, where a little dull, unacknowledged soreness had been lurking all winter. No one—no one could ever call Walter a slacker now" (152). Her reaction is an implicit criticism of the way war has perverted values, for Rilla willingly sacrifices her beloved Walter to the Piper's call.

One aspect of *Rilla* shows no ambivalence: its treatment of the female role in war work. Despite her interest in chronicling the conflict, Montgomery's novel is not a story of combat. The heart of the story lies at Ingleside. *Rilla* begins with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and ends with the soldiers' return, encompassing the entire sweep of the war from the female perspective. Montgomery was pleased with a letter she received from a Mr. Douglas on November 24, 1921, and she copied it into her journal, evidently feeling that he understood precisely what she was trying to do:

> You have written a very wonderful book—a book that will live, I think, when most of the ephemeral literature of the time will be forgotten. You have visualized the soul of the Canadian people in the war; you have given a true picture of what we went through during five long years of agony . . . the storm and stress of home life during those anxious days have never received audible expression, except in your wonderful book. (3: 27)

Montgomery's determination to express the "soul of the Canadian people" makes *Rilla* a valuable record of the events and attitudes of the day, especially concerning the heroic role of women in wartime. As the sensitive Walter remarks: "It must be a horrible thing to be a mother in this war—the mothers and sisters and wives and sweethearts have the hardest time" (158). Rilla echoes this sentiment when she says to Anne, after Walter's enlistment: "Our sacrifice is greater than his . . . our boys give only of themselves, we give them" (153). Montgomery poignantly demonstrates the courage of motherhood when Shirley asks Anne if he may go to war. She spends a terrible night thinking about the loss of Joyce, Walter's death, her fears for Jem,

and her sadness at her girls' vanished youth. She thinks: "surely she had given enough" (257). Nonetheless, the next morning she tells her youngest son to go. Even Susan, the dowdy, unromantic maid, becomes an emblem of female heroism: "She was one of the women—courageous, unquailing, patient, heroic—who made victory possible" (306).

Montgomery's portrayal of home-front sacrifice empowers her female characters, for she makes it clear that women have a definite role to play in victory. Initially, Rilla has a very poor view of what she can accomplish: "[Kenneth's] thoughts were full of this Great Game which was to be played out on blood-stained fields with empires for stakes—a Game in which womankind would have no part. Women, thought Rilla miserably, just had to sit at home and cry" (48). There seems to be no space for women to fight in this war. When Walter confesses that he does not want to go, he feels useless and exclaims: "I—I should have been a girl" (61). The tomboyish Faith expresses bitter regret that she is not a boy, so that she could take part in the conflict (54). Slowly, however, it becomes apparent that women do have a role to play. Not only is their support of the menfolk valued, but the prosaic fact of women's work is recognized. Donna Coates notes that several home-front novels by women used this setting to make certain feminist points: "It could be argued that Canadian writers are war profiteers, seizing the chaos occasioned by war to vanquish women's subordinate status" (68). The women in *Rilla* certainly profit from these new freedoms. Rilla takes on the responsibility of raising an orphaned war baby. Walter acknowledges the heroism in her actions: "It took more courage for you to tackle five pounds of new infant, Rilla-my-Rilla, than it would take for Jem to face a mile of Germans" (89). Eventually, even Faith, the girl devastated that she could not fight, finds a way to participate when she sails across the Atlantic to join the Voluntary Aid Detachment (261). Despite Rilla's doubts, women can contribute more than tears to the war effort. As Elizabeth Epperly notes, "by the end of the novel we find that the apparently passive, apparently secondary role the women take is essential for the war effort and, equally importantly, to the continuation of a life of values and vision after the war" (114). Female work is the central fact of the novel.

Rilla is in part a female *Bildungsroman.* Early in the book Anne says of her youngest daughter: "She has no serious ideas at all—her sole aspiration seems to be to have a good time" (16). Rilla desperately wants to be thought grown-up, but it is obvious that she is not. She responds to her teacher Gertrude's dream of impending war in a shallow manner: "I hope it doesn't

mean there's a storm coming up from the east to spoil the party" (30). Initially, like Faith, Rilla wishes she were a boy so she could participate in the conflict (57). According to Kornfeld and Jackson, this "dissatisfaction with a society that offers so few options for women" is a characteristic of the female *Bildungsroman* (145). Gradually, Rilla sheds her selfish vanity and manages to contribute to the war effort. By the end of the novel she has skilfully managed the Junior Red Cross, raised a war baby, risen above Irene's pettiness, organized a wedding, and worked at a tedious job in a store. In her finest hour, even after she learns that Walter has enlisted, Rilla continues on with the Red Cross concert and does her part: "She places public duty before private feelings and fulfills her responsibilities" (Wiggins 74). Rilla matures into a responsible and confident woman who can take her place as a useful member of her community. Rilla learns that she does not have to be a boy to effect change.

Montgomery's portrayal of the maid Susan complements the story of Rilla's maturation. According to Kornfeld and Jackson, an unmarried woman has a specific function in a female *Bildungsroman*: "Not bitter, disillusioned or unfulfilled, spinsters play an important role in the lives of the heroines and their communities. The vital and interesting role of the spinster in these novels indicates to the reader that a single woman can have a fulfilling life" (145). Susan achieves this fulfillment directly through her role in home-front activities. At the beginning of the book Susan sees herself as a drudge. She hates any mention of her age, "Not from vanity, but from a haunting dread that people might come to think her too old to work" (14). She initially reads the *Daily Enterprise* solely for the "Glen Notes." Montgomery makes a point of her ignorance when Susan demands: "Who is this Archduke man who has been murdered?" (19). When Rilla reads that the war would last three years, Susan says, "I'm not acquainted with Lord Kitchener, but I daresay he makes mistakes as often as other people. Your father says it will be over in a few months and I have as much faith in his opinion as I have in Lord Anybody's" (57). Yet by the end of the novel, Susan regularly defies patriarchy by challenging Gilbert, the head of the Blythe household, on war matters. She becomes discerning in her judgments and disparages the experts: "As for the military critics they do not know one blessed thing about it. . . . They have been mistaken times out of number" (297). Susan has surprised herself with her public speaking abilities, learned to care about suffrage, worked in the fields to bring in a crop, and even rejected a marriage proposal. Her new confidence is evident in her response to Cousin

Sophia's prediction that the Germans will soon overrun Canada: "The Huns shall never set foot in P.E.I. as long as I can handle a pitchfork" (297). The gratification that Susan earlier took in her place in the community and in her domestic capabilities has been transformed into pride in her country and the war effort. Mentally, she leaves the insular world of Glen St. Mary for the wider one of international affairs. Early on in the text Susan had asked herself "what an honest, hard-working Presbyterian old maid of Glen St. Mary has to do with a war thousands of miles away" (64). By novel's end she has the answer: her duty is to fight on the home front and work for victory. As the boys return home, she announces that she is going on a "honeymoon." She has accepted her life as a spinster and realizes that there is no shame in her unmarried state. Now, thanks to her war work, Susan is no longer a household drudge, but a dignified woman with a right to a rest.

For both Rilla and Susan, the war brings about positive growth and change. As Mary Rubio explains: "[They] represent the new order which includes women. . . . Patriarchy and its ramifications in class structure are defeated by the young and older women's discovering their own power of speech and action" (11). Montgomery views women's war work as empowering, and she believes the conflict has created a positive shift in gender relations.

Not only did *Rilla* allow Montgomery to explore her feminist leanings; it also allowed her to expound her conception of Canadian literature and nationhood. Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly have argued that Montgomery played an important role in forming Canadian identity, at home and abroad:

> What has not been adequately recognized, however, is Montgomery's impact on the shaping of a distinctly Canadian culture. This lack of acknowledgement may be all the more surprising given the volubility of Montgomery's most popular characters and their uncanny ability to change their worlds through the power of the word. (3)

Rilla is Montgomery's most conscious exploration of Canadian culture. Edwards marvels at her chronicle and asks: "Did she realize how far she was recording Canada's self-discovery as a nation?" ("Intention" 131). I think Montgomery was very aware of what she was creating. In the novel she deliberately records the upheavals of Canada's birthing process into nationhood. In August 1919 Montgomery notes her discovery of a newspaper clipping from 1910 in which an editor had asked her to comment on the state of Canadian literature:

> I do not think our literature is an expression of our national life as a whole. I think this is because we have only very recently . . . had any real national life. Canada

> is only just finding herself. She has not yet fused her varying elements in a harmonious whole. Perhaps she will not do so until they are welded together by some great crisis of storm and stress. This is when a real national literature will be born. (2: 339)

It is noteworthy that Montgomery found the old clipping in the midst of writing *Rilla* because she incorporated its ideas into the novel. Significantly, the nation in which *Rilla* is set is first mentioned in the context of Walter's writing. Miss Oliver says: "I believe Walter will be a great poet, too . . . perhaps the first really great poet Canada has ever had" (24). Even more importantly, once the war begins, Walter finds himself incapable of writing until he enlists (151). He cannot create a real poem until he too has undergone the baptism by fire that forges Canada and Canadian literature. Walter arrives at his status as national poet because of the poem he composes at the front which, like McCrae's "In Flanders Fields," earns its author international acclaim.

Montgomery also records Canada's emergence as a nation. In the beginning of *Rilla*, she presents a view that accords with Sarah Corse's description of prewar Canadian nationalism: "To the extent that Canadian nationalism existed and was even prominent in the nineteenth century it was a nationalism defined as much by its imperial context and connection as by its Canadian-ness" (50). Montgomery illustrates English Canada's loyalty to the Empire in a prewar conversation between Walter and Jem: "Suppose England does fight?" asks Walter. "Why we'll have to turn in and help her. We couldn't let the old grey mother of the northern sea fight it out alone, could we? We're the cubs—we've got to pitch in tooth and claw if it comes to a family row" (30). But for Canadians such as the Blythe family, the turmoil and loss of the war years diminish the old imperial connection, replacing it with a new sense of national pride. In *Rilla*, Montgomery mentions four important battles where Canadians acquitted themselves with distinction: Ypres, Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, and the Somme. She writes of Ypres: "Our Canadian boys have done splendidly" (128). Writing in 1919 in *The Pictorial History of the Great War*, S.J. Duncan-Clark claimed that Canada had contributed something unique to the war effort: "Canadian snipers, silent men from the bush or the prairies with many a notch on the butts of their rifles, taught the Hun the value of cover" (17). Duncan-Clark's description suggests that Canadians did not simply participate in the war, but rather contributed specifically colonial values of individuality and ruggedness that aided in the allied victory. Montgomery also acknowledges the increasing international importance and recognition that Canada achieves

through its war effort. When Miss Oliver believes that Canadians have voted for a Liberal, anti-conscription government, she says, "Canada is disgraced in the eyes of the world" (283). Suddenly, Canada's actions matter on an international level. By the end of the novel, the war is no longer about saving the "old grey mother"; it has become a mission to honour those who have died and to prevent another conflict from occurring. Rilla says, "Walter died for Canada—I must live for her. This is what he asked me to do" (286).

Montgomery mirrors Canada's budding maturity in her heroine's growth (Edwards, "Intention" 131). Rilla goes through agony when Walter enlists: "Rilla did not sleep that night. . . . The body grows slowly and steadily but the soul grows by leaps and bounds. It may come to its full stature in an hour. From that night Rilla Blythe's soul was the soul of a woman in its capacity for suffering, for strength, for endurance" (152). Despite the losses of the war, Rilla emerges with self-knowledge and a sense of purpose: "I expected these past four years would be the most delightful years of my life and they have been years of war—years of fear and grief and worry—but I humbly hope, of a little growth in strength and character as well" (319). At an earlier point in the novel, Rilla talks with Walter about the end of the war. She says that they will not be as happy as they used to be, and Walter replies, "No, not in the same way. . . . But it will be a better happiness, a happiness we've earned" (158). Like Canada, which cannot become a nation until it has suffered "storm and stress," Rilla cannot become a woman until she has earned her maturity through the ordeal of war.

The romantic coupling at the end of the story symbolizes the new possibilities for the nation. Kenneth Ford, the returning soldier, has suffered greatly. When he arrives at Rilla's doorstep, she does not recognize him: "He looked so much older . . . that scar—the lines about his eyes and lips" (340). But Rilla too has changed. Kenneth thinks, "[I] left a school girl, and . . . [have] found a woman" (340). Their physical alteration reflects the emotional and mental toll of the war. The sacrifices that the Blythe family, and by extension all of Canada, have made are too great to ensure a traditional romantic ending. Rilla's innocence ended with the death of Walter. Kenneth is no longer a fresh-faced boy, but a scarred and battle-hardened soldier. The couple represents the new breed of war-tempered individuals for whom an earned happiness is possible.

The novel's final word—"Yeth"—has engendered some debate among critics. Mary Rubio has argued that the return of Rilla's lisp in the last line of the novel is regressive and a prophetic sign of women's loss of rights after

the war (11). Edwards views it as an "affirmation of love, creativity and harvest" ("Intention" 135). Rilla's lisp is indeed a regression, but this is not negative. Instead, it is a nostalgic hearkening back to the babyhood that Rilla—and Canada—have left behind. The "yeth" reminds readers just how far the heroine and the nation have come in their journeys to maturity.

Rilla of Ingleside is much more than a propagandist tract or an example of hegemonic discourse. Through her juxtaposition of the pastoral with the nightmare of no man's land, Montgomery shows, in the only way she can, the filth and terror of the conflict. It is true that she valorizes soldier sacrifice throughout the book, but, as Edwards has argued, there is an implicit awareness of the futility of those deaths. Montgomery endorses the propaganda of her time, but her narrative offers some spaces for resistance to the militarist message. Montgomery's real agenda is to value the work on the home front. Through Rilla and Susan, Montgomery clearly indicates the possibilities the war has brought for women. Montgomery does not yearn for those "green untroubled pastures before the war" because she can see the positive outcome of the war, at least in cultural terms, with the emergence of a new sense of Canadian identity and literature from its ashes. In conclusion, Montgomery's depiction of the First World War is a complex assessment of the impact of this "total war" on the Canadian population. Montgomery's only overt war novel is a brave examination of Canadian home-front attitudes to sacrifice, propaganda, gender equality, Canadian literature and nationhood. More than mere tract, *Rilla of Ingleside* offers rich insights into Canadian society at a pivotal point in its history.

NOTES

1 These include his dehumanizing nickname (which refers to his round red face), his ignominious escape when he believes Susan will drench him in boiling dye, and his male-chauvinist attitudes. See Edwards, "Intention" 133.

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Andrea Dancer

Border Crossing

1

from the backseat
you are the child
looking out

over the mustard fields, over orchards
with fallen apples, over shuttered and cobbled
towns that spring up and pull past well stooped
washerwomen, ragtag children racing dogs
everything chiseled against the wind

you are the road, the road, rolling

2

you are the child
looking out

at the toy house, the soldier who jumps up
strides over to the driver's side, leans
his cap into the backseat, bird beak
bobbing, searching, searching you out

the black and white striped
barrier rises, redressing the road

you are the road, the only road, rolling
over a landscape shaved bare

3

in no-mans-land
your father points

out the fence, endless like barbed
wings stretching on either side
alongside watchtowers marksmen
your father tells of bundles, men
with women with children with bundles
tells of a sweeping light, a crack, a fall

you can see them then
hear their rustling
their voices welling up
out of the dark

you hate the road then, the road
that did not swallow them up, up
out of that deadlocked land

4

on the day the road runs out
you know you can no longer lie
like a lozenge on the tongue of someone
else's time. you hate the road but then
you know the lay of that no-man's-land

you pile children, toys, clothing, pillows
into the car you shut the door knowing
when he finds out, he'll buy a gun.

Laurie McNeill

Performing Genres
Peggy Abkhazi's *A Curious Cage* and Diaries of War

"If you ever do read these letters," Peggy Abkhazi notes in her published diary, "long before you get this far, you will realize that monotony is the keynote of our existence here. No direct brutality, so far no bayoneting and torture and raping and such accompaniments one had imagined as part and parcel of internment by an oriental nation, but just monotony, discomfort, dirt and overcrowding" (105-6). Held in a civilian internment camp in Shanghai by the Japanese, Peggy Pemberton-Carter, later better known as Princess Peggy Abkhazi of Victoria, British Columbia, kept a regular record for over two years chronicling her extraordinary experiences. But as her comment above demonstrates, Abkhazi was aware when she readied her diary for publication how her narrative must disappoint, describing a time marked above all by boredom instead of heroics, "discomfort" instead of real pain. Both she and her text are notable for the ability to overcome tedium with a good story and to summon an audience to listen to it. But as a record of life in war, Abkhazi's diary, published in 1981 as *A Curious Cage*, offers little to readers looking for drama or suspense, or for an eyewitness account of military action. Her narrative reflects not only her own experience as a civilian internee but also the genre in which she recorded that experience. Writing originally in the diary form, Abkhazi could only narrate what she was experiencing in the moment. She therefore could not shape her story to include pattern or purpose; writing without the benefit of hindsight, she could not know what kinds of events would matter for a narrative of "history," both public and personal. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, *A Curious Cage*, like the events it narrates, has received

little academic or popular attention. Like many other South Pacific internment accounts, it was out of print for several years, and few North Americans seem aware that thousands of Allied civilians in China and the South Pacific spent years behind barbed wire (Cogan 1-2). The reissuing of *A Curious Cage* in 2002 invites reconsideration of this text and the kind of narrative of war that it creates. Abkhazi's diary highlights the problematic role of personal narratives in public history, and the differing values accorded to particular kinds of writers, genres, and experiences as versions of history. I will examine some of the reasons why a text such as Abkhazi's and the history it narrates have been overlooked for so long.

Additionally, *A Curious Cage* merits attention because of its complex textual history, which indicates that Abkhazi used the diary for different purposes and to address different audiences when she first wrote it than when she published it almost four decades later. The extant manuscript diary from February 1943 to December 1943, held in the University of Victoria archives, demonstrates the scope and nature of her own editing and revisions.[1] In preparing the manuscript diaries for publication, Abkhazi made substantial changes, rearranging and combining material, and inserting new passages. She also worked with historian S.W. Jackman, who helped "edit the journal into a workable draft and add[ed] an introduction" (Gordon 209). Most significantly, Abkhazi invented an epistolary framework for the diary, writing an introductory passage for the published diary in which she describes her journal as a letter to her friends Roderick and Muriel McKenzie, and inserting references to "these letters" (105) and "this wandering letter" (58) throughout the diary. She also added introductory phrases to suggest that she always wrote for a specific audience: for instance, a collection of character sketches in the original diary becomes, in the published edition, "a series of lightening portraits—to make you laugh" (63). Another entry now begins, "I am writing to you quite far into the night" (82). Instead of the potentially multiple addressees of the original diary, the "you" of the published edition becomes the McKenzies and, by extension, the British, upper-class, colonial community. Such changes signal Abkhazi's negotiation of genres, audiences, and textual identities, and demonstrate her remarkable knack for public self-performance.

"Pauper-Prisoner-Princess": Peggy Abkhazi

A British citizen born in China, Peggy Pemberton-Carter came to Victoria in 1945, joining the McKenzies, whom she had known in Shanghai before

the war. She bought property and made plans to build a home, and soon after she reunited with and married an old friend and correspondent, Nicholas Abkhazi, a Georgian prince. She thus became Princess Abkhazi and quickly established herself among the upper classes in this most British of colonial cities. Abkhazi fully embraced her new royal identity, insisting that strangers and acquaintances use her official title when addressing her, and making her new home and garden into the self-proclaimed "Principality of Abkhazia" (Gordon 12). Her outstanding garden has become her claim to local and international fame, her "beautiful if somewhat unintended legacy" (Gordon 14); after her death in 1994, this garden became the centre of a battle between developers and conservationists. In February 2000, the garden was purchased by The Land Conservancy of British Columbia and is open today as the Abkhazi Garden, which is sentimentally marketed as "The Garden That Love Built" ("Abkhazi Garden"). Abkhazi's self-construction as both local princess and outstanding gardener was wholly accepted by Victoria's citizens, who literally bought into Abkhazi's mythology, the fairy tale that her publishers describe as that of the "pauper to prisoner to princess."

In 2002, no doubt in response to the publicity the conservation campaign had raised, Sono Nis Press re-issued *A Curious Cage*, adding an eight-page biographical sketch by Katherine Gordon as an afterword; the press published Gordon's full-length biography, *A Curious Life*, the same year. With the opening of the garden and the publication of these two texts, Abkhazi's place in the history of Victoria was firmly established. Though the jacket of her biography highlights Abkhazi's time as a civilian internee, the book allots only one of twenty chapters to this period; it is but one element in the story of a woman known and valued far more for her title and her garden than for her time as a prisoner of the Japanese. Unlike other civilian internee diarists and memoirists such as Desmond Power, Natalie Crouter, or Fern Miles, Abkhazi went on to enjoy "fame" for reasons other than her internee past and reinvented herself for a new public. Thus, when Akbhazi decided to publish the diary in 1981,[2] she had an existing public identity, and interest in her "private" writings was piqued by her stature as a local celebrity. Her refashioning of her original working diary for a reading public acknowledges this local as well as historical interest and represents one of a series of self-performances Abkhazi put on. As a friend told her biographer, Peggy Abkhazi was "her own best invention" (Gordon 15), a uniquely Canadian version of local royalty. Abkhazi's public identity extended the self-construction that she undertook in her diary during

internment, when her prewar existence—community, wealth, and sense of who she was—had been stripped away. The diary, in both its original and revised forms, demonstrates this writer's agility with fashioning narratives and performing selves.

Despite Abkhazi's local fame, *A Curious Cage* found a limited audience in 1981 and was criticized for its "privileged," "sheltered," and "naïve" perspective (Gordon 209). Partly this limited perspective results from the circumstances of the text's original production behind enemy lines, a situation that necessarily restricted what the diarist could know and, more importantly, what she was able to narrate. Though rumours persisted in many internment camps that personal writings of any kind were forbidden, with penalties ranging from torture to execution, Abkhazi felt that "once she was interned any purely private diary that she kept would not be regarded as dangerous" (Jackman, "Introduction" 17). She notes, however, that when a group of internees were repatriated in September 1943, their luggage was subject to "not less than three fine toothcomb examinations" and "[n]othing written or printed was allowed to be taken" (102). Since Abkhazi did run the risk of her notebook being read by her captors should they confiscate it, she remains quite circumspect in her comments about the Japanese, who stay for the most part offstage, the disembodied agents of "slaps and hits galore" (128). She refrains from all but the most muted criticisms of her captors and fellow prisoners; consequently she crafts a rather Pollyannaish narrative of internment. In fact, the original diary includes passages that are sympathetic and even admiring of the camp commandant Hiyashi, passages that have been left out of the published edition. Free of rage against the Japanese, though not of racial stereotypes about the "oriental nation" (105), Abkhazi's diary upsets expectations of prisoners as actively resistant and of the Japanese as brutal captors.

Abkhazi is similarly silent about her outside helpers, T.S. (Ye Duan-Sheng), and servants Li and Ah Ching, hiding their identities behind the passive voice until the final entries when the war is over. In addition to protecting these people should the Japanese, or worse yet, the *kempeitai* (their brutal military police) read her diary, her silence about these individuals and the life-saving roles they played for her may reflect the privileged colonial perspective that critics of her diary have denounced. Despite her own transformation during internment into "coolie"—yet another performance—she maintains silence about her Chinese compatriots, or she represents them only as "untiring" (147) and "faithful" (152) servants and inferiors. This

colonial blindness may explain her total failure to record in her 1941-42 journal any instances of the brutality of the Japanese to Chinese citizens that took place daily in the streets of Shanghai, or, after she is interned, to acknowledge except by passing reference the suffering of the Chinese outside the gates of the camp, to which the internees were witnesses. Though she remarks on a rare occasion that the camp could hear "the yells and screams of the Chinese in the neighbouring village, no doubt being given the works" (127) following the escape of three internees, she mentions this suffering only in relation to the internees' own series of punishments, none of which included "the works." She makes no comment here, either, on the fact that the internees' actions have resulted in torture for the villagers. In neither the original nor the published version does she demonstrate any shame or discomfort about the position enjoyed by colonial whites in China, even during internment, indicating that she imagines a very particular audience for her diary who also hold this world view.

Her sense of social and perhaps racial superiority certainly accounts for her ongoing self-reflexive commentary on how internment has changed her own and her fellow internees' behaviour. She records watching a new family move into the camp; seeing herself and the other internees through their eyes, she remarks, less than three weeks into her internment, "how far we have fallen" (66). In this same vein, she notes her new-found skill at camp-induced "Low Cunning," confessing, "I am horrified at my proficiency in the art" (73). Expanding her observations to the camp in general, she describes a conversation amongst internees: "We were talking about the decadence of our table manners and general deportment, and in how short a time the veneer of a lifetime peels off. So for fun I examined my own behaviour objectively" (76). Among the "horrifying" behaviours she lists are "an extraordinarily efficient 'boarding house reach'" and her use of her "bare knees" in place of a napkin (76-77). She concludes her self-examination by wondering "whether these ghastly habits will trip one up, during a fit of absentmindedness, after one returns to civilization" (77). Imagining an audience of readers who are, like her, British, white, and wealthy, Abkhazi measures her internment activity against their standards, which are, or used to be, her own. Recording these improprieties in her journal, she can confess and reshape them, making them funny and therefore inconsequential, not serious breaches in her identity. Aware later that the published diary represents herself and the largely British camp to an audience made up in large part of readers from "the colonies" (as represented by the McKenzies),

Abkhazi works to show how she upholds these community values even when, given her unusual circumstances, she cannot live up to them. In demonstrating how far she has fallen from her old life and standards, Abkhazi reinscribes the class and racial prejudice on which her values are founded. Such entries illustrate that Abkhazi's diary, both in its original and refashioned forms, captures personal and public history in process, narrating both a changing society and an individual whose sense of self (and/in place) is in flux between prewar and postwar identities.

The Internee Experience

Abkhazi was one of over 185,000 civilian Allied nationals interned by the Japanese in the Pacific during World War II (See *ABCIFER*). Civilian internment camps in China and other parts of the Pacific theatre were not extermination camps.[3] These sites acted as "holding pens" intended to keep colonial whites away from the native populations the Japanese wanted to enlist as full-fledged members of the "Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere" (Bloom, "Escaping" 104). Because the internees were civilian and not military prisoners, they were not subject to *bushidō*, the Japanese "military code of honour," and "their imprisonment was not considered a disgrace" (Van Velden 248). Consequently, internees in China were rarely subject to torture or abuse, though they did suffer from malnourishment, illness, exposure, and loss of livelihood. "The commandants of the civilian internment camps," Frances Cogan argues, "as far as anyone can tell, apparently intended for the internees to live—though not well, of course, and primarily by their own means, with minimal help from the Japanese" (111).

For several months after the occupation of Shanghai, the Japanese upheld Extra-territorial rights, but by 1942 they had begun to intern Allied civilians; eventually, 9,350 men, women, and children were imprisoned across China (Waterford 145). In February 1943 Abkhazi was ordered to report to the "Civilian Assembly Centre" at Lunghua Middle School, where she remained with approximately 1,800 other "Enemy Subjects" for the next "two years, five months, and five days" (Abkhazi 152) until the camp was liberated in August 1945. Lunghua was one of four internment camps in the Shanghai area, and was considered to be one of the better sites in the "Co-Prosperity Sphere" (Power 183-86). (This camp acquired some level of renown in J.G. Ballard's novel *Empire of the Sun*, later made into a film by Steven Spielberg; Canadian Desmond Power has also written of his time in the camp in his memoir *Little Foreign Devil.*) Prisoners were allowed parcels

from outside once a month containing vital food and other necessities, though they were able to send and receive local mail only sporadically. They had a relatively generous allotment for personal space (Abkhazi's "bunk" measured 3 m by 1.2 m, compared to the minuscule 50 cm by 1.8 m allotted to women in the "First Barracks Camp" in Sumatra [Colijn 118]). They could receive newspapers, set up schools, and put on musical revues and other forms of entertainment, though all of these privileges could be, and often were, revoked as a form of punishment. Hiyashi, the camp commandant for most of the war, was generally considered moderate (Jackman 20). Food and water supplies, however, were barely adequate, and on several occasions the camp approached "starvation diet" (Abkhazi 129). The internees' ramshackle housing offered little protection from the environment, particularly during the harsh winters of 1943 and 1944, two of the coldest on record. Although Abkhazi declared in her first month of incarceration that internment would be a "liberal education in the humanities" (65), and at the end of the war she still felt it had been a "unique experience in a lifetime— . . . something I am not sorry to have lived through" (153), the camp was still an extraordinary ordeal.

From its opening entries, Abkhazi's war diary restricts its narration to the personal world of the diarist, inscribing her own direct experiences of war and its consequences for civilians. It is strictly her version of life in internment camp, limited to what she herself undergoes.[4] She articulates this focus from her first "war" entry on December 8, 1941, when she records that "The war started for *me* when I heard the furious sound of planes rushing over the house at 6:50 a.m." (23, emphasis added). Until the war affects her personally, until the public intrudes on the private, for her the war has not yet begun. Even in the face of the cataclysmic events unfolding around her, Abkhazi concentrates only on her own first-hand encounters with the conflict. This focus on the diarist and the fact that the "action" of the war happens largely off-stage or in the margins of this text complicate a reading of *A Curious Cage* as a "war diary." Though caught in the middle of the conflict, in a camp behind enemy lines, Abkhazi and her fellow prisoners have little real idea what is taking place outside the barbed wire. They have a clandestine wireless—miraculously a staple in almost every civilian camp—but for most of the war, the internees cannot verify the accounts they receive. Until the Allies begin aerial attacks in their region in 1945, the prisoners are not eyewitnesses to the military battles and instead anxiously exchange and record the latest rumours. The internee diary narrative of war,

then, offers quite a different perspective from that contained in a combatant's record. Limited not only to the kinds of knowledge of war that a civilian internee could obtain but also to what he or she chooses to record at the time, the internment diary creates a very particular record of military conflict. The diaries of the civilian internees, personal records of a historic time, create what Esther Captain argues is a "new type of war-literature" (2), testimonies of an experience of war that is untraditional, but that the writers see as intrinsically valuable and in need of recording.

Incarcerated in an internment camp behind enemy lines, Abkhazi does of course experience elements of the war first-hand, but when things are really bad in the camp (or really boring), she simply does not write. By September 1943, her sixth month as an internee, Abkhazi skips a month between entries, then does not record again until late November. She comments on this gap, noting, "It is hard to explain the long gap . . . Part of the reason is just plain idleness (mental only) . . . There is also a feeling of futility" (105). More daunting reasons cause further silences. In April, 1944, she begins, "I haven't written . . . for over two months. The bitter coldness, making it difficult to hold a pencil even in mittened hands, has been largely responsible, and the endless monotony holds one in its grip for weeks on end" (115). The winter of 1944 similarly defies description, causing a four-month hiatus. Picking up again on March 21, 1945, Abkhazi writes, "The grim and so much dreaded prospect of our second winter here more than fulfilled itself. My mind is just a blur as to what really happened from the end of November until now; a frozen, stupefying blanket numbed all my faculties" (134). Her apologetic explanations, a self-reflexive commentary on her narrative that many diarists produce, indicate her sense of responsibility and obligation to her reader(s) and to her text.

Abkhazi's periodic silences, which increase in frequency and length over her tenure in the camp, indicate the physical and mental difficulties of keeping a diary under such circumstances. Elizabeth Hampsten reminds readers of diaries that silences are possibly more significant than what the diarist chooses to record. She suggests that to read diaries "knowingly" requires "a special inventive patience. We must interpret what is not written as well as what is" (4). Just as Abkhazi chooses not to write, for reasons of personal safety or cultural prejudice, about the Asians around her, she also chooses not to include the most painful periods of internment. Not writing them down could allow Abkhazi to imagine that they had never happened; without written record, these incidents fade into the "blur" of her numbed

memory, a key survival tactic for a prisoner who has no idea when her incarceration may end. Such events also do not fit in with the generally positive tone of Abkhazi's record, in which she strives to maintain her dignity and optimism. Significantly, although Abkhazi adds material to flesh out other entries in the published edition, she does not fill in these particular blanks. Having chosen not to depict her captors and their behaviour or to narrate the periods of the most suffering, she can make camp life into a series of humorous sketches in which she stars as the plucky if unwilling heroine, a practice of selective self-construction so evident in her later public performance as princess.[5]

For a diarist keeping a clandestine diary in an enemy prison camp, what is said and not said produces a particular kind of war narrative. The daily struggle to survive on rapidly decreasing and inferior food with fewer mental, physical, and material resources constitutes a different kind of fight on a different sort of battlefield, one that internment diaries can portray in vivid, daily detail. The record of conflict they create is specifically a woman's, and a civilian's, record of war; they are "war diaries" that take into account the fact that participants in the war are not always combatants. The value of a text like *A Curious Cage* lies not only in its portrait of an individual under duress but also in its interpretation of "the human significance of war rather than its military meaning" (Bloom "Women's War Stories" 67-68). Read in this capacity, Abkhazi's text is a legitimate war diary, even though it may not be recognized as such, given this text's inherently different (non-military, non-combatant, woman) narrator. With the catapulting of the private citizen onto the larger stage of public history—both through the actions of the war and through the decision to publish a "private" journal—the diary expands its functions beyond recording the personal life story to serving as a personal narrative of historical events.

Conflicts of "History": Public Records of Personal Experiences

While diaries have served the purposes of "history" long before they were accepted as "literature," their capacity to do so has been limited because of their "subjective" nature. The diaries of ordinary women in particular have long been overlooked by academics, dismissed as artless, domestic, and quotidian. But diaries, and especially women's diaries, are some of the only records, official or personal, that exist about civilian (or military, for that matter) internment under the Japanese. Waterford remarks that "notes and diaries written during incarceration" are among the principal sources of

information on the POW and civilian internee experience in the Pacific (ix), particularly since the Japanese often destroyed official documents about the camps (1). Personal narratives, then, have an essential role to play in calling attention to a war experience that has been undervalued and underrepresented. Diaries like *A Curious Cage* written by female civilians (figures not commonly included in military or official histories) have a particular contribution to make to the recovery of this aspect of the Pacific War.

But why have these stories been so long forgotten? One reason is that the events Abkhazi's diary and others like it chronicle took place on the Pacific front, which was and has continued to be secondary to the European theatre of war, in part due to the Churchill-Roosevelt "Germany first" agreement (Keegan 297-313, Morton 11-41). In addition, war historians have given relatively little attention even to military prisoners of the Japanese, relegating their stories to "peripheral mentions," or including them only as a "kind of appendix" (Daws 25). This absence of official record suggests some guilt about internment: civilians, largely women, children, and the elderly, should have been protected from such an ordeal. Indeed, the total failure to anticipate the Japanese campaigns and consequently to protect Allied civilians in the Far East has been the subject of much controversy since the first days of the invasions (Cogan 25-32; Warner 16-47). Another complicating factor is the postcolonial perspective that European and American civilians should not have been in these countries in the first place. As Frances Cogan notes, "It would be easy to see what happened to these 'comfortable' [colonials] as a kind of morality play judgment on those with too many of life's resources suddenly forced to cope with life the way the 'other half' lived—especially their servants" (17). For military POWs, who suffered in the extreme and died by the thousands, surrender and captivity signalled defeat by the enemy; their experience lacked the grandeur and heroics of military action and sacrifice. Perhaps *bushidō*, the Japanese belief that to surrender to one's enemy is dishonorable (Waterford 38), runs underneath Western military thinking as well, making narratives of enemy imprisonment somehow shameful. Whatever the reasons, official chronicles of World War II have marginalized the history both of POWs and of civilian internees.

Without public awareness of or official attention to these stories, the experiences they attempt to represent are vanishing. No monuments mark the camps of either civilian internees or POWs, and many of these sites have been reclaimed by the jungle or built over. The Changi Camp in Singapore, for example, where civilians and, subsequently, POWs were housed, is now

an international airport (Daws 391). Photographs do not exist of most civilian camps, leaving sketches done by internees as some of the only visual records. Personal narratives therefore serve an essential purpose, providing intimate, first-hand accounts of life under the enemy. However, while personal experience is foundational for autobiographical authority, it has not traditionally been so for history texts or military chronicles. Historian Frances Cogan, for example, writing in 2000, still feels it necessary to qualify her use of first-person narratives in a work of history. Including first-person accounts in a discussion of "problematic" sources (321), Cogan remarks: "Such narratives are literary booby-traps unless the historian using them remains constantly aware that the author very well may have an agenda and that even 'facts' can be skewed or contradicted" (325). Diaries, perhaps the most personal of first-person narratives, though "vibrantly alive, immediate and detailed," still "intrinsically have other limitations," in part because they "lack perspective" (325). Affirming history as "objective," and "truth" as non-ideological, Cogan contributes to the culture of suspicion that surrounds autobiographies and diaries as records of both personal experience and public history.

Because internment diaries narrate a civilian rather than military experience of war, with an attendant focus on women and children, they challenge attempts to classify (and market) these stories. Internment narratives illustrate the problem of categorization that civilian internees posed to governments and militaries during the war, and to historians, archivists, and publishers ever since. Civilian internees were not combatants, although they were very much involved in the war; they were not prisoners, despite being locked up. Their status as enemy nationals was not a category that even international agreements had anticipated. The Geneva Convention of 1929 (which Japan had signed but not ratified before the outbreak of the war) makes only one recommendation about civilian internees, noting that "they shall be treated as military POWs" (Waterford 48, n.6). After the war, US government records sometimes classified civilian internees as "honorary P.O.W.s" (Cogan 108-9), but the experiences of internees in most Japanese camps cannot be compared with the horrors of imprisonment for the military.

As records of internment camp, a space and time that is itself difficult to define using traditional concepts of military conflict, first-hand accounts like Abkhazi's therefore occupy a not entirely legitimate space in the narratives of war. For one, can they really be called "war diaries," since typically their subjects were physically removed from the sphere of action? At issue I suppose

is who can speak authoritatively: as a woman civilian, Abkhazi has no authority on war or the military other than her personal experiences, and because of her internee and non-combatant status, readers may dismiss even these personal observations. Since internment diaries do not fit neatly into received categories—private journal, chronicle of war, prison narratives—scholars and popular readers tend to overlook them. With little knowledge of the events these texts describe, and few other texts to compare them with, critics and readers consequently import expectations from other genres and accounts, not always felicitously. As historical narrative, then, civilian internment diaries, like the civilian internees themselves, have fallen between the cracks.

Peggy Abkhazi's diary in particular has this ambiguous status, since it complicates categories not only of experience (civilian/military, public/personal) but also of genre, both in its original and published forms. Given the atypical setting of the internment camp, the diary needed to perform a variety of social actions for internee diarists, some of which exceeded the normal boundaries of the genre. Such "genre-bending" gives insight into the unusual circumstances of these texts' creation and the cultural and historical moment of their production. In its narration of events and a cultural space that are foreign, unsettling, and "potentially embarrassing" to the narrator (Hassam 37), the internment diary overlaps with the travel diary, a mode that allows diarists to transform experience through the act of writing, making the strange familiar. Abkhazi's original diary draws on this tradition in its detailed descriptions of camp life, and in Abkhazi's self-positioning as detached observer of her fellow campers, a narrative stance that allows her to shed, briefly, the subject position of "internee," and to imagine herself as an outsider. By adopting the letter-diary format, the published diary further aligns itself with the travel diary tradition. As both Helen Buss and Andrew Hassam describe, many diaries of travel or immigration combine the letter and the diary out of necessity; without regular or reliable mail service, writers began letters that became diaries, which may or may not have been subsequently sent to the original addressee. Since internees could not send mail and rarely if ever received it, the practice of turning letters that could not be posted into daily records was common (for example, Natalie Crouter and Elizabeth Vaughan, both civilian internees in the Philippines, also begin their diaries this way). Letter-diaries allowed internees, who often had carried on lengthy overseas correspondence with friends and family back "home," to continue this practice for themselves,

providing an imagined audience for their unsettled identity and a much-needed element of continuity with their prewar lives.

Unlike a travel diarist, however, the internee does not know when—or if—her "trip" will end. Consequently, the "teleological narrative structure" that a journey typically provides (Hassam 42) falls apart once the novelty of internment gives way to the realization that internment is not a journey but a seemingly endless stopover between the past and the future. This period of stasis, rich though it is in potential for personal growth (cf. Abkhazi's sense of internment as "education in the humanities"), makes for narratives that quite literally do not go anywhere. These texts can be monotonous for both writer and reader, particularly if the audience comes to the text with narrative expectations derived from other texts such as war diaries that border on the same terrain but in fact inscribe a different experience.

Internment diaries represent internees' desires to record what they are experiencing for an outsider, whether it is the intended recipient of a letter that could not be sent, or other, less specific imagined addressees projected by the diarists, who need to believe someone outside the camp will hear their story. Unable to alert the outside world to their plight, prisoners feared—justifiably, it has turned out—that their experiences would be forgotten or disregarded. In Waterford's survey of Western internee literature, he finds that the fear of not being believed is recurrent. "Many of the books, diaries, and accounts," he writes, "carry some kind of statement such as, 'Please, believe me, this is all true!'" (3). Daily or regular accounts of life in internment camp can provide the level of detail to substantiate the internee's claims, but, as Abkhazi's own words illustrate, the kind of experience they construct has often been deemed insufficiently awful to "count." Since diaries cannot interpret events through hindsight or evaluate their import in retrospect, they create historical narratives that do not necessarily meet expectations. Instead of following typical narrative trajectories, with a clear climax and resolution introduced by suspense and foreshadowing, internment diaries are often interrupted, meandering, and unexpectedly boring. Even announcements of the end of the war, though celebratory, come across as strangely flat, partly because they are totally unexpected (internees such as Abkhazi had little idea that the Allied victory was so near), and partly because the diarists were too hungry and exhausted to put their feelings into words. Internment diaries reflect the reality of internment: they are repetitive, shapeless, and unpredictable.

Not only narrative but also generic expectations—what people expect from the diary genre and from women's diaries in particular—have troubled the

response to *A Curious Cage*, (and to other internee diaries such as Sheila Allan's *Diary of a Girl in Changi*, Crouter's *Forbidden Diary*, and Vaughan's *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Vaughan*). *A Curious Cage* is the diary of a private citizen placed in circumstances that she perceived worthy of record and of interest to readers beyond herself; the extraordinary events of her internment suggested to her a public value for her private text. This diary is in some aspects private, in the sense of a personal, as well as intimate, recording of thoughts she would not want to share with fellow internees, let alone a worldwide audience. But it is also public in its inclusion of "general interest" news and observations and in Abkhazi's adoption of a "public persona" (Hassam 39) in her refashioned text. By drawing even in the original manuscript such a detailed picture of individual life in civilian internment camp, Abkhazi, like Anne Frank with her map of the Secret Annex, actively engages a non-internee reader, giving information she imagines will be most interesting and illustrative for "history." While her text includes personal and private material, it also addresses a public readership, presenting itself as a chronicle of war. Her decision to publish her diary and the lukewarm reception it received indicate the conflicted and conflicting nature of a wartime diary. Significantly, many of the civilian internees who kept diaries and later published records of their experiences elected to use their diaries as the basis for retrospective accounts rather than publish them in their original form (e.g. Keith, Miles, Sams). Given this tradition of generic prejudice, the lack of popular and critical attention accorded *A Curious Cage* and other civilian internee diaries is less than surprising.

Diarists themselves, along with their editors and commentators, acknowledge the perplexing nature of their texts. Frequently apologizing for what their diaries do not do, they seek to define the value of their personal narratives in the broader context of public history, yet seem able only to offer negative definitions. Sheila Allan, who spent three years interned in Changi internment camp in Singapore, begins the introduction to her diary by explaining, "It is not a war story—it isn't meant to be—only a record of the experiences and reactions of one who went through those hazardous days of 1941-5" (7). In the afterword to *A Curious Cage*, Abkhazi's biographer Katherine Gordon similarly anticipates and deflects criticism, pointing out that the diary "is not an academic treatise, examining political and social issues of the Second World War, nor, as 'A Shanghai Journal' (part of the original title) might suggest, does it reveal a great deal about Shanghai during that period." Instead, she continues, Abkhazi's record "tells a purely per-

sonal story" (159). Instead of celebrating these "record[s] of the experiences and reactions" of individuals who survived these ordeals, both writers feel the need to apologize for presenting personal narratives that may not measure up to reader expectations.

In that vein, Abkhazi's editor S.W. Jackman makes a point of stating up front—"It must be emphasized from the beginning"—that the diarist was not subject to any physical brutality (18). Abkhazi herself addresses the gap between fact and fiction by adding the lines about monotony with which I began this paper. With public knowledge about Japanese camps generally limited to the ordeals of military POWs, as characterized by movies like *Bridge on the River Kwai*, or based on the versions of civilian experiences Hollywood offers in typically sensationalized fashion in *Empire of the Sun* and *Paradise Road*, diaries like *A Curious Cage* cannot help but disappoint. Former internee Margaret Sams, who turned her diary into the retrospective account *Forbidden Family*, recalls how after she returned to the US she learned to keep quiet about her internee past, not because it was shameful but because it wasn't. Her editor notes that "all the civilians wanted to know was whether or not Margaret had been raped. When she said she hadn't they didn't want to hear anymore" (312). Perhaps this curiosity on the part of Sams's interlocutors had something to do with expectations of brutality on the part of the Japanese, based again on soldiers' ordeals in the POW camps. Perhaps it also has something to do with what women's roles are supposed to be behind enemy lines: though asking Sams about rape seems an appalling invasion of her privacy, it is not a surprising question, given public awareness of the so-called "Comfort Women." But the fact that Sams's negative answer stopped all interest in her experience is troubling and significant for women's narratives of war.

Abkhazi's diary stands, then, at the intersection of the civilian and the military, the literary and the historical, the public and the private. As the diary of an unmarried white woman who had lived a life of luxury while enjoying "Extra-territorial Rights," it is inscribed by colonial, class, and gender discourses. A diary transformed in publication into a letter-journal, this text highlights as well generic functions and the social actions that the diary genre serves in both personal and public forms. Abkhazi's journal and those of her peers consciously make history, recording an experience with both personal—to their future selves and to their families—and public import. In the process, they raise some particular questions about the role and value of personal experience in public history. *A Curious Cage* negotiates the

boundaries of the individual story and the historical record. That this negotiation has in some sense failed—since such texts have largely been ignored—brings us once more to the question of whose stories, and what kinds of stories, count in particular contexts.

NOTES

I would like to thank a number of individuals who commented on earlier versions of this paper, in particular the anonymous readers for Canadian Literature *who made valuable suggestions.*

1 The University of Victoria archives also contain the typescripts for the 1941-42 and 1944-45 diaries, but not the originals. My efforts to track down these manuscripts have to date been unsuccessful.

2 Gordon suggests that Abkhazi's decision to publish the diary, a project she had considered since 1973, was motivated in part by the princess's increasingly dire financial situation (209). Abkhazi was delighted to receive royalties, which represented the first money she had ever earned through her own efforts (Gordon 211).

3 Frances Cogan notes that conditions such as those described by Abkhazi in China were not, unfortunately, the norm for the entire Pacific theatre. In the civilian internment camps in Sumatra, Malaya, and Java, where the prisoners were largely Australian, British, and Dutch, "treatment and conditions were brutal enough to resemble those of the POWs. . . . The further South the camp was, the worse the conditions" (Cogan 110). See, for example, Colijn's *Song of Survival*, Jeffries's *White Coolies*, and Warner's *Women Beyond the Wire* for personal narratives from some of these camps.

4 Of course, in choosing later to publish the diary, Abkhazi gives her text public purposes as well. But at the time of writing she does not indicate that she has any thought of publication, unlike other internee diarists including Natalie Crouter and Elizabeth Vaughan, who both comment on their diaries' potential value as published books.

5 Silences in such a text—and such a situation—could also indicate trauma, experiences that literally cannot be narrated because they exceed the limits of language to describe them. However, based on Abkhazi's own representation of internment, as well as on historical records and other personal narratives from Lunghua, such a reason seems unlikely for this diarist.

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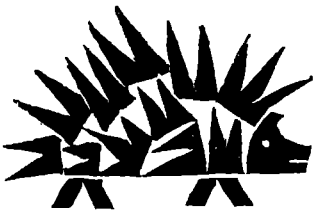

D.S. Martin

The Mission House (Lunar New Year 1948)

Shangjao, Kiangsi, China

When I saw Shangjao for the first time the mission house was clearly visible
over the city wall & Spirit Mountain to the north stood out in the afternoon sun
my train clacking to the end of the line

Lost trains echo through the compound's central courtyard
confused among the porticos as though looking for the tracks
to Nanchang destroyed by war

Drums now pick up the rhythm as we watch from the window of our room
We were wakened the other night here by a creeping rat seeking winter stores
Now the fiery serpent crosses the tracks creeping like the plague

Down below lies the bomb that damaged the corner of the house
As we watch from the window of our room the lantern parade winds down
  toward the city
Drums beating beating beating from all directions at once

Forthcoming book reviews are available at the *Canadian Literature* web site: http://www.canlit.ca

Carol Shields 1935-2003

Regulated Anger

Carol Shields

Jane Austen. Viking Penguin $28.99

Unless. Random House Canada $35.95

Reviewed by Coral Ann Howells

Reading these two books side by side is like listening in to a conversation between a biographer and a novelist, who in this case are one and the same person. Carol Shields, who commented in *The Stone Diaries* that "the recounting of a life is a cheat, of course," here on the one hand recounts the life of Jane Austen and on the other the contemporary life of her fictive character Reta Winters. Winters is also a woman writer, and *Unless* deals not only with her life, but with the lives of her three daughters, her mother-in-law, a French feminist whose work she translates, and her female friends. In both *Unless* and *Jane Austen,* the voice is unmistakably the same, and so are the author's preoccupations: the subject matter of fiction (the phrase "A novel is a story about the destiny of a child" occurs in both books) and a persistent moral anger at women's "throttled lives" (a phrase in the biography that is dramatized in the novel's first-person narrative). These are the most angry books Shields wrote, though it is a regulated anger and not a "regulated hatred" (as D.W. Harding once described Austen's satirical stance). Shields's feminist politics are always regulated by good manners, the "politics of the glance," as she says of Austen's heroines, or the politics of feminine goodness, that "baffling contradiction" which she explores in *Unless,* embodied in Reta's eldest daughter Norah, sitting silently on a street corner in Toronto wearing "GOODNESS" as a cardboard sign round her neck.

Jane Austen, which won the 2002 Charles Taylor Prize for non-fiction, is a novelist's biography of another novelist, the same kind of tribute to women's writing that Austen offered in *Northanger Abbey,* and it often reads like an Austen novel, being arranged around key clusters like mothers, daughters and sisters, female friendships, love and marriage. Yes, it is a literary biography which explores connections between Austen's life and work while recognizing the gaps in anybody's life story, as Shields has previously done in *The Stone Diaries* and *Larry's Party.* "Austen's intractable silences throw long shadows on her apparent chattiness." Although Shields does not reveal any new facts about Austen's life—she works from the published novels and letters, including the juvenilia and the late unfinished novels, and from the extensive body of Austen scholarship which she acknowledges in her afterword—she offers a speculative account, focusing on Austen's "creative arc." Shields traces the dynamics of Austen's writing life, including her nine-year silence between early (unpublished) versions of *Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice,* and *Northanger Abbey* written in her early twenties, and *Mansfield Park, Emma,* and *Persuasion.* (I would have appreciated a chronological table, and the

lack of one is an irritating defect of this Penguin Lives series.) The period between 1812 and her death in 1818 (possibly from breast cancer) saw Austen's second creative outburst and the publication of her novels, beginning with *Sense and Sensibility* in 1813. This was also her short period of fame and the breakdown of her anonymity.

All this reminds us of Virginia Woolf's remark, "Anon is usually a woman," while directing our attention to the discussion of female destinies—Austen's own and those of her heroines. Shields highlights these connections in a wonderful passage near the end: "Elizabeth Bennet shared part of Austen's own rebelliousness; Emma Woodhouse embodied some of her sense of mischief; Fanny of *Mansfield Park* might be thought of as Jane Austen attempting the role of dutiful goodness. . . . But Anne Elliott, more than any of these heroines, combines Austen's sense of loss and loneliness, her regrets, her intelligence, and in the end, her willingness to lead a disappointed life."

This apparently comprehensive account leaves out one crucial feature, however: "The reader of Austen's novels comes again and again to the reality of a ferocious and persistent moral anger. It is a manageable anger, and artfully concealed by the mechanism of an arch, incontrovertible amiability." When that anger is not manageable and becomes a "harsh cry of rebellion and outrage," the novel has to be abandoned, as happened with *The Watsons*, although signs of her rage are evident in some of Austen's letters. That highlighted topic brings us very close here to the biographer's affinity with her subject, which allows Shields to write her eerily close notation of a woman writer's psychology, "redirecting our sensibilities" as readers of both Austen's fiction and her own.

Austen never dared to use a novel title like *Unless*, although there is always a sense of crisis and contingency: What if Elizabeth Bennet had not met Mr. Darcy in his gardens at Pemberley, for example? Shields does dare to emphasize the artifice of coincidence through the connective tissue of adverbs and conjunctions, just as she dares (for once) to express her anger at women's condition. Reta Winters writes: "I need to speak further about this problem of women, how they are dismissed and excluded from the most primary of entitlements." Reta has decided to give up on feminine charm: "I have no plans to be charming on a regular basis. . . . Nor will I ever again be pointlessly, endlessly polite." Instead she will blurt out what she really thinks: "Blurting is a form of bravery. I'm just catching on to that fact. Arriving late, as always."

But what has caused Reta to change her mind? And what has happened to Shields? I suspect that *Unless* represents a dislocation of Shields's own pain and shock at the diagnosis of her breast cancer. There are many clues here, disguised in the punning title of Reta's novel *My Thyme Is Up*, coded into Reta's reproach to the male writer affronted by a mastectomy bra. However, Shields remains discreet, like Reta: "Far more interesting, at least to a fiction writer going through a bad time, is the imaginative life projected on to others." Reta's favourite plot of Happy Families has been shattered by Norah's mysterious behaviour, and through her attempts to solve this enigma her passionate anger finds its focus.

The tone of feminist protest is clear as Reta thinks back through her mothers (including her mother-in-law and her literary mothers), and the lives of her friends and her daughters: "*But we've come so far*; that's the thinking. So far compared with fifty or a hundred years ago. Well no, we've arrived at the new millennium and we haven't 'arrived' at all." Though much of her blurting is silent, Reta actively engages in the gender debate with her American publisher Arthur Springer, who wants her second novel to be refocused on its hero; Reta resists "Because she's a woman."

That phrase is a kind of storm centre, marking the moment of a crucial phone call through which the plot is resolved into one version of a happy ending. Like Austen, Shields combines moral seriousness with comic drama in a solution that balances the complex rhythms of this novel. *Unless* is strongly retrospective and evaluative, although it is also engaged with the "precious and precarious" issues of ordinary domestic life and with wider issues of feminist politics. Through it all runs the energizing narrative self-consciousness of a woman writer for whom writing means survival: "This matters, the remaking of an untenable world through the nib of a pen; it matters so much I can't stop doing it."

Internment Memoirs

Peggy Abkhazi (nee Pemberton)
A Curious Cage: Life in a Japanese Internment Camp, 1943-1945. Sono Nis $19.95

Tom Sando
Wild Daisies in the Sand: Life in a Canadian Internment Camp. NeWest $19.95

Reviewed by Patricia E. Roy

The internment of civilians, one of the many unfortunate by-products of war, has produced an extensive literature. Two recent contributions are the memoirs of Peggy Pemberton and Tom Sando. Both were born in the countries in which they were incarcerated, China and Canada respectively; spent their childhoods in their respective parental homelands, England and Japan; and returned to their native lands as young adults. After the war, Pemberton went to friends in Victoria, renewed contact with Prince Abkhazi whom she had known in Europe, married him and settled in Victoria where they became famous for their garden. Sando, following his father's decision, stayed in Canada after the war and worked in construction.

The Pacific War profoundly affected both memoirists. Pemberton, whose inherited wealth had let her live a very comfortable life in pre-war Shanghai, survived by pig farming until Japanese authorities sent her to the Lunghua Civil Assembly Centre in the spring of 1943. An involuntary internee, she was unable to leave until the war ended. Her political situation was obvious; her comments are on daily routine. The lack of any unifying feeling apart from "the obsession of eating and the fervent desire to get away from communal life as soon as possible" led to bickering over petty irritations among interned expatriates of many nations and backgrounds, but Pemberton maintained her spirit by seeing humour in many situations.

Sando was an internee by choice. In April 1942, the Canadian government ordered all able-bodied male Japanese of military age to report for assignment to inland road building camps. With his brother, also a fisherman, Sando reported, but other men persuaded them to resist and join a "fight for our human rights" as Canadian citizens. Sando could have left the Angler Internment Camp in northern Ontario at any time by co-operating with the government but, "determined to stand behind" his beliefs, remained until the camp closed in the spring of 1946. Essentially a political prisoner, Sando has much to say about arguments within the camp between those whose primary loyalty was to Japan and those, mainly Nisei (Canadian-born Japanese) who, despite their circumstances, considered themselves Canadians. Yet, the Nisei disagreed over leaving camp, mainly for the sake of their families, or continuing their protest. When some left, Sando regretted losing good friends with whom he had formed a sense of brotherhood. His own feelings were mixed. "Betrayed by motherland Canada and abandoned by fatherland Japan," he celebrated the birthday of the emperor of Japan but insisted on standing up for his rights "as a true Canadian Nisei."

Pemberton and Sando shared many concerns despite their different jailors. Both comment on the lack of privacy beyond one's bunk bed, but Pemberton, possibly because she was a woman, mentions this more frequently. Food, or rather its shortage, and the pleasures of occasional treats through Red Cross and other gift parcels are constant themes. So too are extremes of weather: the humid summer heat and penetrating cold of an early winter in Shanghai and the long cold winters of northern Ontario. Neither reports real brutality: to Pemberton it was "just monotony, discomfort, dirt and overcrowding"; Sando's guards treated inmates "with a casual lenience" as long as no superiors were around. Both internees keenly appreciated what they could enjoy out of doors be it the varying shades of green wheat fields and forests in view of Lunghua or the tiny wild daisies "that bloomed so valiantly beyond the high wire fences" at Angler. Both complained of the limited communications with the outside world that fuelled rumour mills; Sando received regular letters from family and friends, whereas mail arrived in Shanghai as long as two years after it was posted.

Internees were responsible for certain camp chores but Sando had time to read; study English, Japanese and bookkeeping; do wood carving; write haiku (some of which are included in the text); and engage in military-style physical training and judo. He emerged from camp "a richer man" knowing that he was "strong." Chores at Lunghua were more onerous. Although Pemberton had some choice jobs such as that of water dipper, which gave her extra rations of water, the work day was long and she had little energy for other activities, possibly because of the anemia caused by an unbalanced diet. Nevertheless, for a time she taught French to school-age internees.

By sketching Pemberton's life, her editor, S.W. Jackman, and her biographer, Katherine Gordon, round out the story and explain how she secretly wrote her memoirs as a continuous letter to be sent to overseas friends after the war. Apart from Sando's few references to his prewar life, the only biographical information is a short paragraph and a cover blurb indicating that the memoir is based on a journal kept at the time. A title page reference to J.P. Desgagne suggests an editor may have assisted in translating the journal from Japanese to eloquent English. Black and white art work enhances both books: copies of water colours of Lunghua by Deirdre Fee, an otherwise unidentified artist, and sketches by Sando's brother.

Two days after her release, Pemberton mused that the experience was "something I am not sorry to have lived through, but which I am mortally glad to be finished with" with "the humorous element [already] emerging more clearly than the rest." Though Sando was bitter about being "punished for my wilful stand against my own native country," his determination to make that stand and his wisdom in using his time of incarceration to improve himself made his experience bearable. These welcome contributions to this genre of war literature are very readable studies in the survival of the human spirit.

New Canadian Mysteries

T.F. Banks
The Thief-Taker: Memoirs of a Bow Street Runner. Delacorte P $32.95

John Brady
A Carra King. MacArthur $21.95

Ann Diamond
Dead White Males. DC Books n.p.

Peter Sellers
Whistling Past the Graveyard. Mosaic P $18.95

Reviewed by Elizabeth Hodgson

It would be hard to find a more eclectic group of works than these, all categorized as "mysteries," which is a good sign for Canadian aficionados of fictional death;

whatever you're looking for, you can find a home-grown version.

Under "fantasy," see Peter Sellers. Sellers, the editor of the *Cold Blood* anthologies, has created in *Whistling Past the Graveyard* a mini-anthology of his own stories, some previously published and some new. The short-story genre has of course illustrious gothic roots (Poe, Jackson, *et al.*), and Sellers exploits the genre's use of atmosphere and shocking plot devices in his own collection of macabre tales. The most engaging of these is perhaps "Advertising Hell," with its cleverly constructed modern take on the original Faustian bargain. "Dead Meet," with its deftly drawn rivalry, also has a pleasantly economical dry wit. "Dents" participates in the revenge-of-the-oppressed theme so predominant in horror fiction, while several stories invoke the woman-as-sexual-predator topos with just enough amused disinterest to avoid endorsing that particular cultural fantasy. While I find this mode of fiction fairly limited, Sellers certainly knows the language of his medium and handles it with considerable verve.

Under "fantasy," don't see Ann Diamond—that is, unless you're already a fan of her work. *Dead White Males* is the BC writer's third novel, and it stars David Dennings, hairdresser and private detective with a sink and blowdryer sitting alongside his Raymond Chandler desk. *Dead White Males* is a paean to postmodernism, with its elaborate pastiche of texts, narrators, hallucinatory fragments, dream visions and echoic episodes, with characters ranging from a Haitian soothsayer and a mermaid to a talking cat and a possibly dead lab technician. While such a work could be carnivalesque, like Garcìa Marquez's magic realism, or dystopian, like Atwood's fiction, it has trouble hanging together long enough to create the sustained mood or mode of either of these styles. There are, nonetheless, some very powerful moments in the work: Diamond's picture of academic hippies in decline is all too apt, as is her depiction of the domestic nightmares that can follow from being stupidly nice to the wrong people.

Under "historical mystery," see T.F. Banks. *The Thief-Taker*, Banks's first work in the genre, inhabits the world of Regency London and the Bow Street Runners, the constables of London before there was a regular police force. Henry Morton, who enforces the law by day and dallies with a star of the London stage by night, is the protagonist. His search for the murderer of Halbert Glendinning, a respectable gentleman found dead in a most disreputable place, involves him a complicated tangle of aristocratic violence, corruption, and sexual rivalry. The hazardous position of the Bow Street runners as law-enforcement entrepreneurs proves a challenge (and sometimes a danger) to Morton's conscience and to his person. The novel gradually builds a satisfyingly realistic glimpse of the layers of humanity in the London of the early nineteenth century: the politics of thievery, the codes of honour, the fault-lines between official femininity and what women could really do, the hypocrisies and psychologies of mobs and clubs and cliques. The hints that Lord Byron himself is lurking in the background of the plot are of a piece with its suggestive energy. Banks promises a continuing series, which is a good sign.

For hard-boiled detective fiction, definitely see *A Carra King*, by John Brady. Brady's hefty novel is the sixth in his series starring Matt Minogue, a detective with the Dublin police force. Brady's determinedly authentic Dublin-speak takes some getting used to, as does his terse, laconic style, but the novel is definitely worth the effort. *A Carra King* is intelligent, sophisticated in its plotting and prose, intensely atmospheric and detailed, and packed with characters whose individuality and humanity are richly satisfying. If a novel is a work of fiction which brings a world to life, *A Carra King* definitely deserves to be considered a novel first and "detective fiction" second.

Ceremony of Innocence

Nick Bantock

The Artful Dodger: Images and Reflections. Raincoast $55

The Gryphon: In Which the Extraordinary Correspondence of Griffin and Sabine Is Rediscovered. Raincoast $24.95

Reviewed by Adrienne Kertzer

Nick Bantock has sold over three million copies of the *Griffin and Sabine* trilogy. Information about his success appears on the dust jackets of his new books, *The Artful Dodger* and *The Gryphon*. But why tell readers this? Anyone likely to pick up either of these books is already a fan. As a reader who comes to Bantock's work a decade after the *Griffin and Sabine* books first appeared, I know that whatever sheer delight greeted their initial publication, I unavoidably see them differently. Recognizing that they are indeed innovative, witty, and intricately beautiful books, I nonetheless am fascinated by their evident popular appeal. It is this "extraordinary" story of publishing success that intrigues me, more than the story about synchronicity and the collective unconscious that Bantock offers as an interpretation of his life and his work.

The Artful Dodger is an autobiography cum coffee table book in which Bantock reveals far more about his artistic development than his personal life. *The Gryphon*, according to Bantock's website, is part one of a new trilogy, but, like *The Artful Dodger*, requires prior knowledge of the correspondence of Griffin and Sabine. As in the earlier trilogy, quotations from W.B. Yeats's "The Second Coming" frame *The Gryphon*, but anyone seeking to understand Bantock's appeal might be better served by examining nickbantock.com than by studying Yeats's poetry. At the website, the reader seeking further information about any of Bantock's books is taken directly to amazon.com. The most recent addition to Bantock's site announces that some of his art is now available for purchase.

Surely the website is a necessary context for understanding Bantock's appeal. Bantock asserts that his *Griffin and Sabine* books provide the pleasure of receiving handwritten letters and the illicit pleasure of reading other people's mail: "One of the key pleasures of receiving a letter is the act of holding and entering an envelope—a sort of cross between Christmas and sex." Several centuries after the epistolary novel began to explore the tantalizing relationship between reading letters and fantasizing sex, Bantock gives readers envelopes and artwork too. In *The Gryphon*, one envelope contains the heroine's image of how she would like to be seen by her distant lover: "Exotic, bejeweled, my hair and body gleaming with aromatic oils." This image embodies familiar Orientalist symbols of nostalgic, impossible yearning; given the realities of how most people correspond today (i.e., via email), the very notion of opening an envelope has a certain nostalgic and exotic quality too.

When readers turn to Bantock's work, they can indulge in the pleasure of imagining that they are reading Griffin and Sabine's correspondence, even as Griffin and Sabine are reading the readers' letters. In this imaginary world, only two people matter; history disappears except as a subject of study. *The Gryphon*'s main characters, Matthew, an archaeologist in Egypt, and Isabella, a graduate student studying archaic zoology in Paris, are drawn into the intrigue of Griffin and Sabine's lives, and become representative of Bantock's intrigued readers. Matthew and Isabella try to make sense of the letters just as Bantock's readers do. When such readers also turn to *The Artful Dodger* for Bantock's explanation of his work, Bantock continues to give them a fantasy world in which characters are always on their own, looking for balance and their hearts' fulfilment, and

the only possible threat is the one posed by the mysterious Victor Frolatti. In such books, readers learn that their personal stories too have "a much broader significance" and that W.B. Yeats's "The Second Coming" is the "anthem to our age."

Bantock's romances resemble the stories adolescents explore in computer-generated fantasy worlds; they also evoke the ease with which computers allow readers to roam the world and collect images/objects. Describing *The Museum at Purgatory* (an illustrated novel by Bantock that came after the first Griffin and Sabine trilogy), Bantock says that the museum is for those who "need to gather themselves and their collections." There is no divinity; the dead judge themselves, and "consider their contribution to the collective unconscious." As "the Artful Dodger, the rogue scavenger who borrows the shining things before they're lost," Bantock gives his readers both fantasies of love and ownership, and pleasure in all the shining things, a modern-day equivalent of the Victorian museum, lushly filled with all of the beauty of the world. The same pleasure resides in his utopian Capolan, "a good-natured homeless state." How wonderful to imagine a world in which territorial identity no longer matters.

Bantock's comic account in *The Artful Dodger* of the random series of events that led to his success is more persuasive than his post-success theorizing about the deeper meaning to be attributed to the accidents of his life. Despite his fondness for puns, he admits to a suspicion of words, and a conviction that "we have almost lost 'the image' as a direct means of thought." But when he claims that adult alienation is partly explained by this separation from the images of dreams, I cannot help but think of other, less poetic reasons for contemporary alienation. When Bantock's readers turn to his website to purchase paraphernalia that includes a *Griffin and Sabine* address book, notecards, postcard box, and writing box, all meant to inspire them to mimic the "captivating correspondence" of Bantock's protagonists, are they really responding to the deep philosophy of his work and signalling a change in the way that they live? When some of them order the CD-ROM, *Ceremony of Innocence*, in which Isabella Rossellini reads the part of Sabine, does the quotation from Yeats help them in balancing their divided selves? Do they write their handwritten letters before or after they turn on their computers?

Film Monsters

William Beard
The Artist as Monster: The Cinema of David Cronenberg. U of Toronto P $50.00 cloth

Wyndham Wise
Take One's Essential Guide to Canadian Film. U of Toronto P $60.00 cloth, $23.95 paper

Reviewed by Monique Tschofen

David Cronenberg has long been the *enfant terrible* of Canadian cinema. Regardless of his subject (and in the thirty-odd years since his first feature-length film *Stereo*, Cronenberg has dealt with a wide range of topics), his work is consistently challenging, though often in perplexing, maddening, and disgusting ways. At 469 pages, William Beard's *The Artist as Monster* offers the most thorough and balanced account of David Cronenberg ever published. Rather than use the films to sort through, test, and justify larger theoretical issues pertaining to genre or gender, as does a great deal of the current scholarship on Cronenberg, Beard offers sensitive close readings of the films themselves. As he explains in the preface, this is "almost entirely interpretation and commentary, detailed exegesis of texts." Though he does not wrestle overtly with the prevailing theses about Cronenberg's vision, Beard's engagement with other scholars is sharp and pointed. Returning, for example, to Barbara Creed's theory of the "monstrous

feminine," Beard shows precisely where the films themselves demand a more complex and nuanced response.

Overall, Beard's argument is most intriguing. Critics have generally seen in Cronenberg's films something "particularly symptomatic of the age, an idiosyncratic but acute reflection of contemporary perspectives and anxieties." Beard's novel suggestion is that at the core of every single one of Cronenberg's films is a sensibility that is not postmodernist but rather "modernist informed by the conditions of a postmodern age." Beneath the superficial wrappings of B-grade horror and fantasy, claims Beard, Cronenberg conceals moral and ethical struggles, although inflected more towards the private and personal than towards the sociopolitical. His films relentlessly explore a double-bind identified sometimes on the level of the diegesis, sometimes "float[ing] clear of the narrative and go[ing] directly from the film's controlling centre to the voyeuristic viewer," in which the high costs of transgression are demonstrated. And transgression for Cronenberg, argues Beard, typically coalesces in some crucial way around male heterosexual sadistic desire. In film after film, Beard painstakingly reveals, a predatory male is encouraged, then shamed, and finally punished for sadistic fantasies. Rendered an "ethical monster in his own eyes and a biological monster as a physical metaphorization of his condition," the monster-male "falls into profound, suicidal melancholy." Beard shows how this pattern is used by Cronenberg to make arguments about the nature of the self in general, but also more specifically about the nature of the transgressive artist, no longer envisioned as a Byronic hero but rather as a derelict or an addict, too powerful and at the same time too weak.

For the director, Beard claims, "transgressive art is . . . merely a regurgitative return to the site of evil." The films indulge sick appetites but are sickened by them. According to Beard, Cronenberg's work thus posits a clear relationship between private transgressive appetites and the spectacular public production and reproduction of this appetite and the "domain of violence it opens up." The implications of Beard's observations for feminist, psychoanalytic, postmodernist, and Marxist commentators on the corpus are great.

Eminently readable and intellectually (as well as emotionally) engaging, *The Artist as Monster* is organized chronologically with a chapter devoted to each feature film, beginning with *Stereo* and concluding with *Crash*. Each chapter is written so that it can stand alone, beginning with a detailed plot synopsis, followed by a discussion of how the particular film repeats and further develops Cronenberg's core obsessions and resolves larger aesthetic decisions relating to structure and mise-en-scène. The highlights of the text are Beard's innovative treatment of genre (see for example the discussions of melodrama in the chapters on *The Brood* and *Dead Ringers* as well as of pornography in the chapter on *Rabid*) and his work on the literary origins of some of the films. His chapter on *Naked Lunch* is exemplary not only in its treatment of adaptation but also in its clarification of two difficult texts.

Initially an issue of *Take One* published in 1996 in celebration of the hundredth anniversary of film in Canada, Wyndham Wise's *Essential Guide to Canadian Film* has been expanded to include over 700 entries. This reference work continues in the tradition of two earlier (and unfortunately out of print) guides to Canadian film: Eleanor Beatty's *Handbook of Canadian Film* (1973, 2nd ed. 1977) and Peter Morris's *The Film Companion* (1984). Wise's *Essential Guide* strives to render the "essential." What this means is that the volume strives to represent both English- and French-language cinema from coast to coast. With brief entries on films, filmmakers, actors, direc-

tors (all organized alphabetically), the guide covers the basics of our national cinema, from its origins to the present day, in a fully accessible format.

In addition to a rather light foreword by Patricia Rozema, the *Essential Guide* has two more substantial appendices. The first appendix, "Chronology of Canadian Film and Television," offers a useful time-line beginning in 1894 with the world's first kinetoscope parlour in New York City and culminating in 2000 with the launch of Heritage Minister Sheila Copps's $100 million dollar feature-film fund, and various corporate mergers. I find the inclusion of television and other media in this timeline to be entirely appropriate and wonder why the entries in the main body of the text mostly neglect television (and indeed video) except as it pertains to the careers of stars such as Pamela Anderson. This said, the brief entries in the chronology offer valuable information on the evolving technologies pertaining to moving pictures, on the studios, theatres, trade publications, and on the changing laws that have affected the movie business, in addition to information on the major directors and producers, and of course, some of the film titles. The second appendix offers a chronological list of awards including the Canadian Film Awards (omitting television citations and sponsored film awards), the Genie Awards, Les Prix Jutra, and the Academy Awards presented to Canadians (but not of the Canadian nominees).

Wise gives the canon adequate coverage, but despite Rozema's observations in the foreword that "who we pick as stars speaks volumes about us," and that Canada is a nation that "carries a conviction deep within itself that we are most ourselves when we try to be new, to be different from what has gone before," *Take One's Essential Guide* foregoes the opportunity to step into new territory. With regards to First Nations cinema, for instance, Alanis Obomsawin is included, but Paul Apak Angilirq and Zacharias Kunuk are not. With regards to experimental cinema and video, Bruce Elder and Michael Snow are included, but Kay Armatage and Sara Diamond are not. Although the editor promises to rectify some of the omissions in future editions, Wise's text, by relying on an established canon, does little to promote emergent cinema, or minor but promising directors and actors, and this too "speaks volumes."

A comparison of Wise's text with Peter Morris's earlier *Film Companion*, however, reveals other and, I believe, more significant limitations of the *Essential Guide*. At the end of most entries, Morris provides a brief list of relevant references in the academic and popular press, and offers, in addition, an invaluable bibliography. Wise's text has no such thing. Although the editor notes that there is "always a problem" regarding the availability of Canadian films, he does not include a list of archives, libraries, and distributors where he found the films. As a consequence, Wise's text will be of limited use to researchers and students alike. It might well deserve a place on the coffee table of those interested in Canadian film, but in my opinion, it does not supersede Peter Morris's text.

Curious Knowledge

Barbara M. Benedict
Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry. U of Chicago P US $25

Michael A. Salmon, Peter Marren, and Basil Harley, eds.
The Aurelian Legacy: British Butterflies and their Collectors. U of California P US $35

Colin Blakemore and Sheila Jennett, eds.
The Oxford Companion to the Body. Oxford UP £39.50

Reviewed by Rachel Poliquin

Last year I had the opportunity to speak with the director of ethnographic exhibits from a noted European museum, who had

recently put on display almost everything from the museum's archive of North American Indian artifacts collected by Europeans from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. After discussing the politics behind the exhibit's conception and creation, the director commented dryly that the only items to remain in the vaults were scalps. I asked why, expecting a historical critique of colonial illusions or a discussion of contemporary relations between First Nations' peoples and anthropological displays. He answered that the museum aimed to educate and had no interest in satisfying curiosity mongers and gawkers. The idle fascination and curiosity that scalps evoked, it seemed, led school children astray and impeded edification.

And indeed, throughout time curiosity has been berated as the dilettantish dabbling of ridiculous powdered gentlemen or it has been tainted by religious condemnation of impious and vain scrutiny into things beyond human comprehension; curious people have been denounced for their unconcealed ambition, intellectual transgressions, and social affronts. Mythical women and men such as Eve and Pandora, Faust and Frankenstein were bitten by the bug and paid dearly for their unbridled appetites. In *Curiosity* Barbara M. Benedict explores the contempt for and reinterpretation of curiosity from an intellectual to a visual lust during the Restoration and eighteenth century, stimulated by the rise of empiricism and promoted by the mushrooming circulation of journals, wonder narratives, and advertising. Benedict approaches the virtuosi of the Royal Society, who are typically lauded as the fathers of modern science, from the unique angle of popular satires such as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which undermined elite curiosity as fraudulent and depicted investigators as victims of their own monstrous ambition, thereby becoming curiosities themselves devoid of virtue and integrity. *Curiosity* is not, however, a history of science but an analysis of "literary representations of the way curious people, including scientists, authors, performers, and readers, were engaged in practicing and producing curiosity itself." The very accessibility and democratic appeal of empirical inquiry facilitated early periodicals and advertising gleefully to mimic scientific language and skilfully to display curious novelties such as monsters, wondrous remedies, and parsnips shaped like human hands as commodities. At once the fragmenting, objectifying gaze of empiricism and the profane peeping of scandal rags and popular press, curiosity, Benedict claims, became *the* mode for manifesting identity in the public arena and the essence of fashionable modernity. Benedict's sprightly prose, eclectic sources, and keen perspective make *Curiosity* both a subversive and intriguing study.

If curiosity and erudition were deemed inimical by the eighteenth-century popular press, the two are undeniably entwined in nineteenth-century entomology, lavishly detailed by the captivating *The Aurelian Legacy*. Self-described as an anatomy of passionate collecting, *Aurelian Legacy* is as witty and erudite as the lepidopterists themselves and as comprehensive as their collections. Besides brief biographies of 101 butterfly collectors and some species of historical interest, *Aurelian Legacy* contains chapters on conservation, a history of butterfly collecting in Britain, and weapons of the chase. We meet Albert Brydges Farn (1841-1921), who not only had the finest private collection of British butterflies and moths in the country but was also a legendary shot and billiard player, once outlasting his challenger by playing for twenty-four hours straight. There is the extraordinary Lionel Walter Rothschild, second Baron Rothschild of Tring (1868-1937), who amassed a marvellous zoo ranging from starfish to gorillas, including two million set butterflies and moths; kangaroos,

ostriches, and cassowaries roamed freely across his lands; he rode his Giant Tortoises with the aid of a lettuce dangling from a stick, and drove his zebras in harness through Piccadilly to Buckingham Palace. We also meet Margaret Elizabeth Fountaine (1862-1940), perhaps the most travelled British lepidopterist, who trekked through Europe, Africa, the Middle East, India and the Far East, the New World and the Antipodes with her faithful Syrian amant and guide, Khalil Neimy, before he succumbed to fever; as a solo traveller, she met a remarkable number of bandits including the Corsican brigand, Jacques Bellacoscia, who entertained her in his hide-out in 1893. Any reader will agree with the lament, in the preface, for the present disdain for collecting and eccentric inquiry. *Aurelian Legacy* enthusiastically conveys the spirit of amusement, scholarship, and good fellowship pervading butterfly societies, delighting in the lively post-rambling banquets and the perfect amity between curiosity, arduous dedication, and discovery.

We need not fear that eccentricity is deceased and curiosity permanently divorced from edification when publications like *The Oxford Companion to the Body* are in circulation, which saucily and in a very un-encyclopaedic manner announces its project "inevitably precluded total uniformity of style and presentation" and "makes no apology" for its alphabetical fragmentation of topics. Rather, the editors hope that "the resulting contiguity of sometimes surprising neighbours on the pages may delight the casual reader as much as the chronic browser." True to its word, *The Oxford Companion* is a fascinatingly argus-eyed inspection of both physiology and the art of the human body from cultural, mythological, religious, historical, and artistic perspectives. Readers not bent on dry erudition will indeed delight in the latent narratives suggested by such neighbours as *Space Travel, Spasticity,* and *Spectacles, Harelip, Harem,* and *Hangover,* and *Vampire, Vanity,* and *Varicose Veins.* The empirically minded will learn that an infant's brain increases in weight from about 750g to 1100g during the first year of its life or that heat speeds the onset of rigor mortis; those with a cultural interest will discover the aristocratic history of gout, that the Regency's vogue of high collars was due to the Prince's embarrassment with his unsightly goitre, and that the mother of Henry IV of France listened to sweet music during her pregnancy to mould her baby's temperament. There are also the downright snigger-worth entries such as *Farting,* which entertains readers with the vital knowledge that "vegetarians fart more than meat-eaters, but their farts are less smelly." The vast majority of the more than 350 historians, psychologists, life scientists, anthropologists, writers, and theologians are from Britain, which shapes this massive text in two distinct ways. As Britain is the centre of medical history, there is a strong historical emphasis in the entries. Galen and Hippocrates are consulted on diverse subjects such as *Baldness, Blood Circulation,* and *Hormone Replacement Therapy;* Shakespeare, Plato, Flaubert, and the Marquis de Sade are just a few of the authors, philosophers, and playwrights who fraternize with cutting-edge science. And, not surprisingly, the concentration of British contributors has resulted in certain Anglocentricisms: *Funeral Practices* is divided into "British Customs" and "Cultural Variation," and *Diet* focuses on western practices as do such entries as *Disease, Kiss, Healthy Foods* and *Heart, Broken.* Nevertheless, insightful anthropological research is well represented; *Islamic Medicine* and *Hinduism and the Body* merit separate entries, as do many other cultural variations of dress, religion, medicine, and domestic rituals. The multidimensionality of this tome is an editorial feat, and the various handling of entries is as interesting

as the information conveyed. Perhaps the most eccentric angle is exhibited by the 150 illustrations and twenty full-page colour photographs, which, with the exception of the purely diagrammatical, appear to be selected with the sole aim of piquing curiosity or visually delighting readers. *Lungs* is whimsically illustrated by a sixteenth-century woodcut as is *Cerebral Ventricles*; the index concludes with an eerie image of Apollo space suits in storage that would have made Edward Kienholz proud; the astonishing article on the *Hottentot Apron* (if you don't know what it is, I'm too squeamish to tell) is enriched with two admirably lurid pencil sketches. And who are those pensive middle eastern men depicting *Photography*, blandly captioned as "Group of three men"? Fortunately, the illuminating cultural history found in *Scalping* is not supplemented by an image: I wouldn't want to be caught gawking with idle curiosity.

Victorian Violations

Karen J. Blair, ed.
Women in Pacific Northwest History. Rev. ed.
U of Washington P US $22.50

Martine Desjardins
Fairy Ring. Talonbooks $14.95

Reviewed by Jill MacLachlan

In recent years, the Victorian period has been the focus of artistic and popular interest. However, as the sales of fish-net stockings, Toulouse-Lautrec prints, and a new version of the decadent drink of choice, Absinthe, escalate in the wake of the release of the film *Moulin Rouge*, it seems clear that the versions of nineteenth-century history and culture currently having the most currency are those that aestheticize, glamourize, and commodify the Victorians. Two books—*Women in Pacific Northwest History*, a revised edition of an anthology first published in 1988, and Desjardins's novel *Fairy Ring*—attempt to trouble this very sort of stylization by exploring the complex and often violent facets of gender, class, race, and sexual ideologies, particularly in North America, during the Age of Victoria.

Unlike many texts seeking merely to insert and to foreground the histories of women or of once neglected minority groups into pre-existing patriarchal canons, *Women in Pacific Northwest History* elucidates how, in the words of Susan Armitage, "attention to gender relationships offers historians a new and powerful way to understand power relationships within a given society."

These gendered "histories" are located within a specific geographical region, the American Pacific Northwest, although one essay by Sylvia Van Kirk explores the role of native women in the fur trade in Western Canada. This spatial focus enables the text not only to "span a much wider spectrum of history [and cultures], from late-eighteenth-century traders to the modern Chicana experience" and to explore with an impressive thoroughness and depth areas such as "New Directions for Research," "Politics and Law," "Work," "Race and Ethnicity," and "The Arts," but also to connect local histories and cultures with larger dominant historical-cultural issues, debates, and ideologies.

This collection is eclectic and its scope is broad, with essays ranging from David Peterson del Mar's "Portland and the Whipping Post Law" to Mary Bywater Cross's "Quilts in the Lives of Women Who Migrated to the Northwest, 1850-1990," but the contributions fit together quite well. It is richly comprehensive without being definitive.

As a work of fiction, *Fairy Ring* might be considered the antithesis of *Women In Pacific Northwest History*. Yet, while Desjardins's vision of life in nineteenth-century Nova Scotia is highly interpretive, it is also grounded in meticulously researched historical evidence, as well as

Freudian and feminist psychoanalysis, particularly *l'écriture féminine*, as derived from Cixous and Irigaray.

Fairy Ring centres on the personal histories of Clara Weiss, a learned young woman who has found herself saved from spinsterhood but trapped in a loveless marriage to Dr. Edmond Weiss, a cold but learned gentleman scientist specializing in the study of mycology and crystallography; and Captain Ian Ryder, the leader of an Arctic expedition, who has sublet his house at Blackpool, Nova Scotia to the newlywed Clara and Edmond while he is away. The story is fragmentary; the actions, thoughts, feelings, and interrelationships of the characters are slowly and only partially gleaned by the reader from Clara's diary entries, Captain Ryder's logbook, and letters between characters, such as Clara's aunt Hortense, and her stylish debutante sister Irene. Although the reader is given a sense of intimacy with the characters through such seemingly personal writings, a cold distance also emerges. Like the icebergs Captain Ryder must dodge during his expedition, Desjardins's characters loom large, but they hide more than they show.

The style, part confessional, part scientific logbook, is highly effective and appropriate, considering that, as the back cover points out, the text is set in 1895, "the year Freud published his ground-breaking essay on hysteria." We become both analyst and patient when we read Clara's accounts of her troubling dreams, rife with sexual imagery, after she is forced by her husband to undergo a series of rather traumatic sleep and refrigeration treatments at the hands of Dr. W. Clavel, an apparent specialist in hysteria, when she refuses to perform her "wifely duties." The "cures" prescribed for Clara produce rather than treat her supposedly inherent "feminine diseases," although Clara is also able to use invalidism in order to shirk her "duties."

Through her sensitive portrayal of one woman's triumph over incursions into her mind and body at the hands of various patriarchal institutions, Desjardins thus resists both the objectifying thrust of Victorian empirical representation, and more recent tendencies to view the Victorian past with a nostalgic, rather than critical, eye.

Like Life Itself

Joan Bodger
The Crack in the Teacup: The Life of an Old Woman Steeped in Stories. McClelland $34.99

The Forest Family. Tundra $18.99

Peter Sis
A Small Tall Tale from the Far Far North. Groundwood $7.95

Jan Andrews
Out of the Everywhere: New Tales for Canada. Groundwood $24.95

Reviewed by Judy Brown

Books, for all their inanimateness, have lives of their own. This is particularly true of books waiting to be reviewed. Put one such volume on a reviewer's desk, and it will seize her attention and become, for a time, perhaps the only text in her universe. Put a quartet of such books before that same reviewer and not only will they vie for her attention as distinct, individual works, but they will also begin to position themselves in relation to or in opposition to one another.

The books reviewed here make an eclectic quartet. They include one book for adults—the autobiography of an old woman "steeped in stories"—and three books for children: one a family story by said autobiographer, another a picture book about Arctic exploration, and the third a richly illustrated collection of "new tales for Canada," originating in lands far away but "reset," as their teller says, in our own Canadian landscape.

Resisting comparisons based on claims of

a single common readership, setting, or theme, these books do have three things in common: first, their covers command attention; second, they have much to do with relationships between adults and children; third, they remind us of the tenacious hold of storytelling on writers' and readers' lives. They reconfirm what Roland Barthes wrote about narrative—that "it is simply there, like life itself"—and what Peter Brooks observed: "our very definition as human beings is very much bound up with the stories we tell."

The dust jacket of *The Crack in the Teacup: The Life of an Old Woman Steeped in Stories* features Eugene Fisk's portrait of a vitally old Joan Bodger. Clad in bright pinks, reds, and greens, she dominates the image; she gazes ahead with unblinking determination, poised to rise from her seat and get going with whatever she has left to do. No orthopedic shoes, subdued hues, or careful coiffure for this singular woman. Position this cover beside the one for Bodger's "beloved" 1965 "classic," *How the Heather Looks: A Joyous Journey to the British Sources of Children's Books*, and you have a visual lesson in what a difference a lifetime (or four decades of it) can make. The earlier cover features Mark Lang's pencil drawing of Bodger in silhouette—back to the viewer, holding the hand of a small child, dressed in the conventional June Cleaver mode of the late 1950s. Here the author is one fraction of a traditional nuclear family sharing a memorable summer vacation with husband John, nine-year-old son Ian, and two-year-old daughter Lucy. During that "joyous journey" of the mid-twentieth century, John and Joan were partners in parenting and caught up in their quest to prove that "most places in children's literature are real." In that narrative, Ian and Lucy are several times described by their mother as "chattering happily." The book was most often described by reviewers as "charming," and, in her afterword to the 1999 McClelland & Stewart edition, Bodger noted that *How the Heather Looks* is "the book most often stolen by retiring children's librarians."

Where the persona in that first book is charming and insistently ladylike, the Bodger of *The Crack in the Teacup* is complicated, disturbing, womanly. She reports that in the years following the "joyous journey," John Bodger lost a succession of academic jobs; he lapsed into mental illness and was occasionally hospitalized. Joan herself pursued work as a children's book reviewer, a librarian, and a day care/nursery school program director. She trained to become a Gestalt therapist; she threw herself into the social activism of the free speech, anti-war, and civil rights movements that arose in the US during the late sixties and early seventies. One way or another, she lost her children—Lucy to a brain tumour when she was just seven years old, and Ian to drug addiction, mental illness, and homelessness as he drifted into the street life of San Francisco, panhandling and selling his blood to keep himself alive.

Divorced from John, Bodger went on to marry Canadian Alan Mercer and moved with not a trace of culture shock from New York to Toronto in the 1970s. Then after Mercer's death from cancer in 1985, she remained in Canada and established herself as a non-medical Gestalt therapist, a roving professional storyteller, a co-founder of Toronto's School for Storytellers. The autobiographical narrative Bodger creates out of the accumulation of "traumas and tragedies" of her life is no grim or sentimental document. Her voice is that of a survivor convinced she is writing "the story of her life as truthfully as [she] can." For this woman, the word "old" is not an epithet; it is an emblem of survival, for she sees herself as embodying the paradox of one of the traditional stories she weaves into the book: "although great harm has

come to [her] no harm has come to [her]." What makes this writing compelling is its energy, its range, its commitment to revealing what Bodger calls "her private, personal myth."

Two qualities make Joan Bodger's life story worth reading. First is her remarkable lack of rancour or bitterness in her account of her life and times so far. She does not judge or vilify: she records the problems and frustrations of others with sympathy, tenderness, acceptance. She reports with puzzlement on editorials and letters to the editor alleging that she is "a Communist pornographer." She reserves but a few lines for expressions of disappointment—in Betty Friedan (who dismissed her request for help and advice with the comment that she had no time to talk to "every suburban housewife who called her"), in her older sister, and in the doctor who once suggested that her daughter Lucy's illness might be due in part to the fact that her mother did not spend enough time being a stay-at-home parent.

Generous to others, Bodger is unapologetic in representing herself at the various ages and stages of her life so far. She takes pride in her accomplishments; she is self-deprecating; she is frank in recording the history and the slow progress of her sense of her own sexuality. She shows herself again and again making professional decisions that distance her from her family and friends, and she does not wallow in the standard tiresome rhetoric about guilt over the choice between the private hearth and the public spotlight.

What gives coherence and distinctiveness to Bodger's narrative is her power as a public storyteller. The poem appended to the book's last chapter ends with the words, "and everything is / Story, / Story, / Story." And from the three-year-old's first memory to the dramatic final scene in which the old woman and a friend are almost blown sky high by a whale as they paddle in Puget Sound ("What a way to go," she writes), Bodger positions her selves as characters in the various folk and fairy tales in which she has steeped herself in a lifetime of reading, study, and public storytelling performances.

The cover of Bodger's third book for children, *The Forest Family*, suggests that the story within is one of an indivisible, happy, nuclear family out for a walk in a sun-dappled wood. The bear in the background is distant and no threat; the gnome in the midground is fast asleep beneath a tree; the father is strong and sure. He and his wife hold hands and stride forward—each one with a small and smiling daughter in tow. Mark Lang's cover and the illustrations he has embedded in Bodger's text do what good illustrations of children's books should do: they add new and different dimensions to the story in print. In fact, Bodger's text is one in which an initially happy family (living in a place and a time unspecified) is fractured by the father's decision to go away and fight in his king's war. The war breaks the father's spirit and severs his commitment to his spouse and daughters; Bodger's preoccupation is then with telling the story of how the woman, Sylvania, grieves, goes on with her life, teaches her daughters Daisy and Rose the ways of her female ancestors, and launches a quest in which she and her daughters seek to bring back home the prodigal spouse and father.

What makes Bodger's story appealing and revealing is not that it acts out (in a fictional wish fulfillment) dreams she might once have had to rescue her own prodigal husband and son. Rather, it does on a modest scale and with energy and ingenuity what Salman Rushdie did with his sea of intertextual tributes in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, the book he wrote for his son Zafar during the most dangerous days of his *fatwa*. Rushdie's novel brims with references to *The Arabian Nights*, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, *Alice's Adventures in*

Wonderland, and the sea of stories is a necessary antidote to cynics and tyrants who would silence free speech. Bodger's narrative takes every opportunity to feature ancient stories as antidotes to the family in crisis, and storytelling episodes throughout the main narrative enrich the simple tale of a father lost to war and a mother teaching her daughters to go on with living no matter what. In *The Forest Family*, everything is "Story, / Story, / Story," and Bodger is skillful in making convincing the telling of stories biblical, mythical, and legendary. The Forest Family co-exists in the pages of Bodger's slim volume with the biblical Ruth and Naomi, the mythical Pan, the legendary Green Knight, Sir Gawain, and the Lady Ragnall, the temperamental bear of the Grimms' "Bearskin" tale.

The cover of Peter Sis's picture book for children, *A Small Tall Tale from the Far Far North*, features a water-bound Jan Welzl, a young man "who went to the Far North looking for adventure . . . [with] a curiosity about life, courage, decency, and a love of nature." Alone in his kayak, the man in the cover illustration is watched from the water by a large walrus with a dubious look on his face and from the ice in the background by a curious polar bear. The book is Sis's tribute in words and especially in pictures to a young adventurer who hailed from his Czechoslovakian homeland; it offers as well Sis's tribute to the people of the North, who saved Welzl's life and taught him the ways of survival. The illustrations here are outstanding. Rich in detail, witty and challenging in content, they serve as complement and counterpoint to the spare text.

Fourth in this quartet of books for their covers is Jan Andrews's collection, *Out of Everywhere: New Tales for Canada*. Simon Ng, the book's illustrator, is a remarkable talent. His work here is reminiscent of the powerful, memorable illustrations he created for Paul Yee's 1989 book, *Tales from Gold Mountain: Stories of the Chinese in the New World*. The cover features two children—newcomers to Canada—pictured in a verdant and Pacific Canada. Their backs to the viewer, they look around at oceans and orchards, mountains and cities. Interestingly, the children, representative of the readers for whom Andrews has collected these tales, are not dwarfed by these landscapes.

Jan Andrews, like Joan Bodger a public storyteller, has gathered in this book tales intended to support the dedication she has written "to the young listener who kept saying, 'Tell us more stories from here.'" Drawn from traditions European, Asian, South American, and Middle Eastern, and woven into Canadian settings, the tales contribute their answers to the question Andrews asked her own mother when she was a child: "Where did I come from?" "Out of the everywhere into here," her mother would answer. Most memorable in the collection are "The Fly" (a story of the Vietnamese boat people received as refugees in Canada), "The Pincoya's Child" (a traditional Chilean story of a child of the sea raised by a kindly old woman), and "Sayed's Boots" (the story of a newcomer from the Muslim world who brings with him to Canada "his terrible fear of never having enough").

One of those long unexamined commandments of reading is that one should never judge a book by its cover. "Never" is sometimes a dangerous word. And in the case of this quartet of books, the reader's commandment is meant to be broken. It would be a shame (if not a sin) *not* to judge these books—at least in part—by their covers.

Engendering China

Susan Brownell and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, eds.
Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities. U of California P US $24.95

Frances Carpenter
Tales of a Chinese Grandmother. Tuttle US $11.95

Reviewed by Lily Cho

In May 1999 three US bombs fell on the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during NATO's strikes against former Yugoslavia. Twenty people suffered injuries and three people were killed: a young married couple and a middle-aged woman. The eruption of anti-American sentiment across China in the form of demonstrations, letters to newspapers, internet postings and big character posters was surprising in its vehemence. Mourning that was focused on the symbolism of the victimized Chinese women killed by US aggression was very much in evidence throughout this period. Susan Brownell and Jeffrey Wasserstrom close their afterword with a consideration of this deeply gendered moment of national mourning that overtook China after the bombing, noting that the image of the father of one of the female victims weeping over her bloodstained body dominated the television and newspaper reports of the event. Moreover, while the primary subjects of mourning were the women victims, the primary mourners were men. Placing their analysis within the context of Chinese nationalism and the historically rigid gender roles dictated from the Qing period and still practised today, Brownell and Wasserstrom argue that gender must take a central role in any consideration of Chinese history: "The anti-NATO demonstrations were but the most recent expression of a long tradition of Chinese nationalism in which gender has occupied a central place, symbolically and practically, helping to galvanize people to take to the streets and shaping what they do and say once mobilized."

Taking this centrality of gender as their starting point, the essays in *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities* cover a wide range of topics, including cross-dressing in the Qing Dynasty, gendered literary traditions in China, prostitution in Shanghai, medical images of women in seventeenth-century China, and Chinese bandits. The eclecticism of the collection is overcome by the editors' primary argument, that the history of gender in China has fundamentally shaped Chinese history. Brownell and Wasserstrom ask, "what if, instead of using history to explain gender, [a book] used gender to explain history?" Although the book attempts to be an interdisciplinary text, it is still largely dominated by historical and anthropological concerns. The inclusion of the work of Lydia Liu on a women's literary tradition in China and Wendy Larson's essay on male connoisseurship in modern Chinese literature stand out as the only essays in the collection not written primarily from an anthropological or historical perspective.

As its title suggests, the book is divided into sections dealing with femininities and masculinities on various topics (such as marriage, literature, rebels, and ethnicity) and follows a roughly chronological order beginning with the Qing Dynasty and ending with the contemporary period. Brownell and Wasserstrom suggest that the pairings of masculine and feminine concerns reflect an understanding that "whenever a shift occurs in understandings of femininity, understandings of masculinity are likely to be changed to some degree as well." Although the organization, particularly the gender divisions, may seem to reify existing categories of difference, I found the structure of the book actually worked to trouble these divisions. Emily Honig's striking chapter on female violence amongst Red Guards during the height of the Cultural Revolution not only calls

attention to the way in which the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution provided a space for the reinvention of femininity, but also to the fact that this reinvention was masculine. Contrary to the Red Guard edict that sought to liberate women through a prescribed asexuality in garb and action, Honig points out that this asexuality was actually intensely masculine.

The final two chapters take up the problem of internal Orientalism, as Louisa Schien puts it. Schien and Ralph Litzinger both address the oppressive treatment of ethnic minority peoples in China. Although both closing chapters are an important opening for the exploration of the problematic of "China" as a recent socio-political construction, the collection does not forcefully question the coherence of the Chineseness of Chinese gender studies. However, this is a minor limitation, given the wealth of important work here situating gender at the centre of modern Chinese studies.

The re-publication of Frances Carpenter's *Tales* forcefully suggests the urgency of continuing critical work on gender in China. *Tales* is a reprint of the original text of the 1937 edition. The publisher, Tuttle, catalogues it as a children's book. Indeed, it is still currently placed on recommended reading for a number of elementary school curricula. Although websites such as Amazon.com and the publisher describe the text as an ideal children's book offering a window into Chinese culture through folktales, Carpenter's *Tales* is a rich example of a text that is not only classically Orientalist, but also deeply gendered in its Orientalism. The tales are told through the voice of a grandmother figure. The sections framing the tales contain references to foot binding, domestic details, and rituals, giving the reader a glimpse into a forgotten Chinese interior world of keyhole-gated gardens, multitudinous servants, and family courts. In this sense, Carpenter's book is a typical primary text of Orientalist desire to make knowable Chinese culture in a "timeless" narrative. The book's popularity (this edition is in its eleventh reprinting) suggests that it has had a significant impact on English-language readers for several decades.

Thomas Laqueur notes in his foreword to *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities* that "no political or economic or social history is possible without a cultural history: a history of the meanings of things, actions, events, movements, gestures, clothes and accomplishments, among much else." No cultural history is possible without texts such as *Tales* that contain within them traces of the social and political history of their own construction.

Knowing Your Albatross

Lawrence Buell
Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond. Belknap Harvard US $35

James McKusick
Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology. St. Martin's US $49.95

Reviewed by Christoph Irmscher

One of the most chilling moments in Herman Melville's terrifying novel *Moby-Dick* comes shortly before the end, when first mate Starbuck, now a despairing witness to the final spasms of Ahab's rage, exclaims, "Moby Dick seeks thee not." Is this, then, what Ahab's obsession comes down to—a deplorable error of judgment, the gross miscalculation that the nonhuman world follows the same laws that we do? Ahab's death, quick, soundless, undignified, would certainly confirm such a reading. In a book that memorably invites us to see like a whale, only to drive home the impossibility of doing just that, the essence of the animal's being remains inaccessible to any description in human terms.

Lawrence Buell's masterful new book has significantly challenged my understanding

of Melville's novel and of much else in American nature writing. Buell's previous work, *The Environmental Imagination* (1995), created an entirely new field of literary study, variously called "ecocentrism" or "ecocriticism." Scholars of the ecocritical persuasion are guided by an ethical concern for the sanctity of nature and by the concomitant desire to question the human point of view as the primary lens through which to view the nonhuman world. But, as Buell now writes, "humans cannot live by ecocentrism alone." Like it or not, our views of the world are driven by legitimate anthropocentric interests, such as health, social justice, and human rights. In fact, the current environmental crisis affects all landscapes, cultural as well as natural. Our shared "ecological unconscious," which determines our daily interactions with the world, not only defies the separation of the country from the city but, in more practical literary terms, also collapses artificial boundaries between urban fiction and nature writing, between, say, Upton Sinclair and John Muir.

What Buell strives for is a loosening of our attitudes towards being in this world, a rediscovery of the grace of place that he finds present, for example, in the works of Walt Whitman, the subject of Buell's third chapter ("The Flâneur's Progress"). As a journalist, Whitman campaigned for cleaner water and uncontaminated milk in Brooklyn, and if little of this is reflected in his creative work, poems like "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" still convey a powerful sense of living in reciprocity with others and in enjoyment of one's material environment. I'll never be able to read this poem again without appreciating Whitman's insistence that the handrail on which we lean while idly surveying the river be appropriately firm. Buell begins his book with reflections on "toxic discourse," a vision of fatal interconnectedness evoked by writers such as Rachel Carson, Terry Tempest Williams, and A.R. Ammons, and he ends it, as Eliot did his *Waste Land*, with a paean to water, to rivers like Whitman's which link and unify "natural" and "built" environments.

Throughout *Writing for an Endangered World*, Buell not only gestures at the comprehensiveness of his new approach, he also performs it in readings that range from John Gay to Charles Dickens to John Edgar Wideman, from Walt Whitman to Frederick Law Olmsted, from Darwin's *Descent of Man* to Barbara Gowdy's novel about elephants, *The White Bone*. Buell takes obvious pleasure in his unorthodox pairings: urban reformer Jane Addams appears alongside naturalist John Muir, Kentuckian farmer-poet Wendell Berry teams up with black Chicago poet Gwendolyn Brooks, and wildlife management expert and naturalist Aldo Leopold is made to comment on William Faulkner. So many unexpected insights emerge from the luminous details that he has assembled—as when the death of Coleridge's albatross begins to shed light on the killing of the endangered panther at the hands of a native woman in Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan's novel, *Power*—that his book itself becomes an example of what Buell calls "inhabitance": an expression of a writer's continuing delight in his environment, both past and present, real and fabricated, natural and textual.

James McKusick's *Green Writing* is driven by a similar theoretical ambition as Buell's, namely the desire to move beyond the facile nature-culture opposition and establish a firmer ground for current debates about the environment. More specifically, McKusick wants to expose the erasure of the English Romantics, "the first full-fledged ecological writers in the Western literary tradition," in American environmentalist writing. To that end, McKusick, in the first half of his book, offers astute readings of Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth,

Mary Shelley, and John Clare. In a moving analysis of Clare's sonnet "Sand Martin," for example, McKusick demonstrates how the bird's displacement (it makes its home in the wall of an abandoned quarry), though described in species-appropriate terms, nevertheless also mirrors the outcast poet's own sense of alienation from human society. In fact, the crossing of boundaries—between self and other, civilization and nature, English and American literature—might well be considered the central metaphor of *Green Writing*. In one of the most impressive sections of the book, McKusick reads Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as a parable of environmental transgression. Cut off from any sympathetic feeling for his inhospitable environment, the selfish sailor uses human technology, a cross-bow, to kill the bird that could have been his companion in the Antarctic wilderness, with the well-known disastrous consequences, rendered in the form of an environmental mini-holocaust. It is only after he has learned to appreciate the otherness of nature—significantly, in the drastic form of the water-snakes' "glossy" beauty—that the spell is lifted from him and he is allowed to be human again. The linguistic diversity of the poem in its original version from 1798, with its many archaic words, matches its central theme: the exploration and preservation of a contact zone (or "ecotone," as biologists would call it) between civilization and wilderness, in which humans encounter, understand, and admire the diversity of the world and thus rediscover themselves.

The chapters in the second part of *Green Writing* are more specifically devoted to American nature writers: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and Mary Austin. McKusick finds traces of the Ancient Mariner's experience in Thoreau's *Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, where Thoreau feels remorse for killing a pigeon which he then roasts for his dinner. (Was he also remembering, I wonder, Charles Darwin's absent-minded munching on the flesh of a yet-undescribed South American ostrich, mentioned in the *Voyage of the Beagle*?) Even more explicitly, John Muir's story about a wild dog, *Stickeen*, seems to have been inspired in part by a passage from Coleridge's poem about the "sweet jargonings" of nature, heavily annotated in Muir's own edition of the text. Even Mary Austin's response to the American West in *The Land of Journey's Ending*, in which she meditates on the environmental consequences of the destruction of wild creatures, follows the terms of the debate sketched out by her English predecessor. Throughout this admirable book, McKusick's tireless probing for connections yields rich results.

What Is the Answer?

Austin Clarke

The Question. McClelland & Stewart $22.99

Reviewed by George Elliott Clarke

Between his birth in 1934 in Barbados and his departure from the island colony (now nation) for Toronto in 1955, Austin Chesterfield "Tom" Clarke could not have interpreted the phrase "the question" with any naïveté. There was "the colonial question," "the Negro question," "the woman question"; there was even the question of his legitimacy. (Clarke addresses this matter candidly in his early essay, "Harrison College and Me.") Intriguingly, Shakespeare's *Othello* projects these political issues onto the love between the great Moorish—"black"—General Othello, Military Governor of the Venetian colony of Cyprus, and Desdemona, the white daughter of a Venetian senator. No wonder, then, that Clarke's eighth novel, *The Question*, opens with an epigraph from the play. No wonder, too, that it pursues an *Othello*-esque plot. Here a black Immigration and Refugee Board judge

ponders the legitimacy of the refugee claimants whose fates he must decide, queries the legitimacy of his own emigration to—and ascendancy within—Canada, and, playing his own Iago, questions the legitimacy of his marriage to his second wife, a white, upper-class woman whose *seemingly* adulterous friendship with another woman, Reens, sends the judge into a truly *black* and green-eyed rage at the novel's climax.

But Shakespeare's *Othello* is not the only play that informs this text. There is also African Canadian playwright Djanet Sears's Governor General's Award-winning work, *Harlem Duet* (1997), which proposes that Othello abandoned his black wife to pursue "Mona." Similarly, Clarke's judge jettisons his brown Filipino immigrant wife to wed an "aristocratic" and "Canadian"—i.e., *white*—woman. But whereas Sears's Othello is murdered—poisoned—by his ex, Clarke's judge dreams of drowning his wife in their bathtub, and then, after trashing their apartment, wanders off to contemplate suicide, but decides against it. His rage spent, the judge metamorphoses from Othello to Hamlet.

Clarke's novel could have been titled "The White Woman Question." (Indeed, the pale, or whitened, half-face of a woman dominates the black background of the book cover.) Versed in the psychological cum political theories of decolonization *philosophe* Frantz Fanon, whose *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) insists that black men who court white women yearn to achieve a vicarious whiteness, Clarke presents a protagonist who both fulfills and is frustrated by this destiny. As well, in his career of nearly forty years (his first novel appeared in 1964), Clarke has always used the Caucasian female to symbolize Canada (see the white skin and red cold sores of the actress in "Canadian Experience"), or wanna-be status (see Susan Cole in "In an Elevator"), or seductive—sadistic?—sexuality (see Linda Mason in "Not So Young, But Oh So Professional"). In contrast, for Clarke, the sexuality of black women is maternal, nurturing. Thus, in *The Question*, the judge recalls his Bajan mother with half-incestuous emotion and remembers his first wife, Room, with quasi-filial affection, but expresses lust, fear, and loathing toward his white wife. Although this woman had once had an apparently incestuous relationship with her uncle, it is the judge who feels most uneasy within his skin, his race, his class and, even, his sense of "manhood." His private terrors regarding his "illegitimacy" as a poor-born, black immigrant married to a white daughter of the Canadian Establishment lead him to destroy their apartment and, along with it, perhaps, his marriage and his position.

The novel's theme is serious, but Clarke is a scatological comic. So, a dog defecates daily on the *New York Times*, but its "excrement on the floor tells me that the dog is sending a message. If only this dog could talk!" A refugee claimant reports that she escaped torture by "slipping through a toilet." More importantly, Clarke is a brilliantly poetic writer whose sentences gleam with images: "And I think . . . about women buried alive in water, with flowers strewn on the water of their graves. Ophelia and the murdered wives of Roman senators." (What a loss Robert Weaver caused Canadian literature when he advised Clarke to give up poetry!) He is also capable of profundity: "There is no patience great enough to quell the desire for eating green fruit or new love, even though it will be ripened in the morning. And then devoured without notice." Surely, Clarke is one of our finest Anglo-Canadian novelists, and the greatest novelist of the black immigrant experience in Canada (though Dany Laferrière is his rival in French). Justly was *The Question* nominated for the 2000 Governor General's Award for Fiction.

And yet, despite the supple revamping of

Othello, despite the scintillating English, despite the hilarious passages, despite the witty metaphors and incisive similes, *The Question* is curiously irresolute—an expense of art in a waste of politics. Its conclusion leaves much to the reader's imagination, but such an ending, in this case, leaves much to be desired. Too many questions go unanswered . . . questionably. . . .

Gay Men and Femininity

John M. Clum
Something for the Boys: Musical Theater and Gay Culture. Palgrave US $17.95

Stephen Maddison
Fags, Hags and Queer Sisters: Gender Dissent and Heterosocial Bonds in Gay Culture. St Martin's $21.95

Reviewed by Stephen Guy-Bray

The blurb on the back cover of John M. Clum's new book begins with the question "Why do gay men love musical theater?" As a gay man who loathes musicals, I thought this was a bad sign, but I realize you can't judge a book by its cover. Although Clum himself is more cautious on this point than his publishers, he still tries to make a case for musicals as typically gay. He begins the book by anticipating the objection that the show queen is a pre-Stonewall phenomenon. In order to do this, he contrasts the love of musicals common among gay men of his generation with what he sees as a fondness among younger gay men for line-dancing. This opposition is clearly a false dilemma, and in any case both musicals and line-dancing are prime examples of the expense of spirit in a waste of shame—although not, unfortunately, lust in action.

More seriously, Clum's version of Scylla and Charybdis reveals the limitations of his thinking about gay identity and its relation to culture. Clum rarely considers the political aspects of the musicals he discusses; when he does, he is generally dismissive. For example, he says of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* that its "racial stereotypes . . . are far from politically correct." As so often, the claim that something is not politically correct actually means that it is offensively racist. He is also not good on politics more generally. Here's a specimen of his attempts to provide a historical context for his book: "Cut to May 1970, the day after the National Guard did some killing on the campus of Kent State University. A few weeks before, I had separated amicably from my wife of three years." If his separation was really as amicable as he claims, why was the National Guard called out?

For me, the most interesting aspect of *Something for the Boys* is Clum's discussion of how gay men in viciously repressive times were able to claim musical theatre as a queer site, not so much by lusting after chorus boys or putting themselves into the narratives (although these aspects do figure in his book) as by identifying with the female protagonists. I wish this discussion had been more extensive and systematic. Clum's fellow show queens (who are, after all, the book's target audience) will probably love the whole book, crammed as it is with gossip about composers, librettists, and performers, discussions of productions and recordings, and anecdotes from a lifetime devoted largely to attending performances of musicals in the States and England. Theatre historians will also find the book valuable, particularly for its treatment of the changes in musical theatre performance practice over the last sixty years or so.

Clum frequently returns to his theory that gay men today have lost what he would call the fabulousness of the gay men of his generation. Fabulousness is similarly an issue with Stephen Maddison, whose *Fags, Hags and Queer Sisters* looks at the connection between women and gay men as it is depicted in popular culture. Although these books are very different, they are both quite personal in tone (often divertingly so) and

they both exalt camp to a central place in gay male culture. Both Clum and Maddison, but particularly the latter, see what they consider to be the prevalent rejection of camp as a sign of dullness. This is the common solipsistic error of assuming that if people don't share your sense of humour they must not have a sense of humour at all. In the case of these authors, the error is particularly unfortunate as it puts both of these authors in the position of trying to enforce uniformity among gays while decrying uniformity generally. Must one like musicals or other expressions of a camp sensibility in order to be a good gay? Clum and Maddison say yes.

In his introduction, Maddison defends his use of the word "fag" by saying that gay men's "desire for respectability is an assimilationist trap, and I reject it. I am not a decent homosexual, I'm a flaming fag." This is rather an old-fashioned view. In North American popular culture, the drag queen and the flaming fag have been assimilated by popular culture and have come to stand for gay men as a whole: a flaming fag is a decent homosexual. In a society like ours, anything can be assimilated and nothing is inherently transgressive. This may seem like cavilling, but I think the point that our sense of what is transgressive requires constant adjustment is fundamental to cultural studies, and the absence of this adjustment compromises some of Maddison's effectiveness.

Despite these problems (and despite persistent problems with syntax and proofreading), Maddison's book is a very interesting study of a range of texts–chiefly *A Streetcar Named Desire, Roseanne,* the films of Almodóvar, and Jarman's *Edward II.* His discussions are always perceptive and interesting, and he makes excellent use of critical comments on these texts and of interviews with writers and performers. As is often the case in cultural studies, however, the analyses would have benefited from a more thorough consideration of the different genres of these works. For example, the discussion of *Edward II* would have been much stronger if Maddison had looked at Marlowe's play in order to see precisely what Jarman is doing.

Like Clum, Maddison places great importance on gay male identification with women. In his discussion of Almodóvar, for instance, he speaks of "our (gay male) pleasure in masochistically identifying with Pepa's romantic pain." But is this pleasure masochistic or sadistic? Both writers speak of identification (their own and that of others) with a number of female performers and fictional characters, usually larger-than-life figures with a good deal of pain, not all of it romantic. Is gay male pleasure in this pain masochism or sadism? How does gay male identification with Blanche DuBois or Judy Garland or any of the other usual suspects affect their relations with the women they know? What do women think of all this? I would have liked more awareness of the complexity of this issue, but this is a book that will be useful to cultural students of all sorts.

A Game of Ghosts

Alan Cumyn
The Sojourn. McClelland and Stewart. $34.99

Mary Swan
The Deep. Porcupine's Quill. $16.95

Reviewed by Jonathan F. Vance

In a 1926 poem addressed to a fellow ex-soldier, Siegfried Sassoon reflected on the nature of memory: "We call it back in visual fragments, you and I, / Who seem, ourselves, like relics casually preserved." He called the exercise a "game of ghosts," and it is a game that Alan Cumyn and Mary Swan engage in, with powerful effect.

Both writers take as their theme the profound impact of the First World War upon individuals and relationships, but the simi-

larities end there. *The Sojourn* is a fine war novel in the classic mould, one that fits comfortably with Frederick Manning's *Her Privates We*, Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*, and the other great novels of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The protagonist, Ramsay Crome (who has elements of Manning's Bourne, Sassoon's George Sherston, and even Arnold Zweig's Werner Bertin), could have been an officer but preferred service in the ranks out of a belief that officers should have some military experience. He encounters his fair share of horrors at the front, but the real test comes when he is granted leave to London, and is transplanted for a week into normal civilian society. It is a theme that many writers—from Charles Yale Harrison to Erich Maria Remarque to Sassoon himself—have played upon, and we know from letters and diaries that leave was a profoundly disorienting experience for many soldiers; they could not wait to get away from the trenches and into the big city, but found life there so jarring and disconcerting that they soon longed to return to the world they knew at the front. The experience certainly disturbs Crome, thanks to his encounters with all of the stereotypes we would expect him to meet: Henry Boulton, effete, chinless, and safely ensconced in a reserved occupation; Uncle Manfred, bullishly supporting the war because it doesn't affect him personally; the Reverend Fowler, who speaks gleefully of Crome's next opportunity to bayonet a Hun; and the effusively patriotic Mrs. Ogylvie, whose four sons are fighting the war armed with paper, pencil, and letter opener.

But ultimately, Crome realizes that London is all a dream. He had suspected as much on his first morning in London, when he was overwhelmed by the incongruity of his situation and concluded that the blister from an ill-fitting boot was "the only thing that feels true." The longer he spends in London, the more he realizes how out of place he is; his inescapable reality exists at the front. He must return there, despite the best efforts of his family, to face what fate has in store for him.

In *The Deep*, an arresting novella about twin sisters who enlist as nursing aides, Mary Swan takes a very different approach from Cumyn's, and one that is much more like the game of ghosts that Sassoon played. *The Sojourn* is quite conventional, both structurally and in its strong narrative line. Every episode within that narrative is rendered with great clarity—the imagery is stark and direct, the prose rich and powerful. *The Deep*, on the other hand, unfolds as a series of vignettes whose connection and even sequencing only become clear slowly and dimly. It is the kind of perception one associates with a dream, coming to you through multiple perspectives and voices, in flashes of revelation, and in glimpses that are unfocused or indistinct. Swan's lovely phrase "wandering ill at ease through the world of foggy air" is written to describe her main characters, but it also sums up beautifully the experience of the reader. The twins' governess refers to memory pictures, and that is how we experience the book—as a photograph album that has come apart and must be pieced back together slowly and painstakingly. The process is, for the reader, a fascinating journey.

The novella's form matches its theme, which revolves around the tenuousness of human relationships and the realization that mere trifles have profound impact on our lives. The characters are all too aware of the difficulty of human interaction; the father of the twins and Anne, their headmistress, feel great empathy for one another, but they can't quite reach each other in any meaningful way. Their inability to connect haunts them, and both ultimately realize that a triviality—a word here, a look there—could have brought them together and changed the courses of their lives. No one is more aware of this fact

than the twins' friend, Hugh, a soldier who agonizes over the death of an old friend, all the time wondering if a cough or a breath of wind could have altered the course of the bullet and saved his life.

At root, *The Deep* and *The Sojourn* both take up the modernist interpretation of the Great War as a fundamental rupture in the lives of individuals and nations. Swan contrasts the silence of the old world with the clatter of the new, and affirms that none of the lives she describes will ever be the same after the experience of war. For Ramsay Crome, it is not so much the front as a week's respite from the front that alters him irrevocably. Sassoon remarks to his anonymous comrade that "Remembering, we forget / Much that was monstrous, much that clogged our souls with clay." As these fine books suggest, it was not always possible for people to forget the experiences that clogged their souls.

Collateral Damage

Deborah Ellis

Parvana's Journey. Groundwood $7.95

Reviewed by Judy Brown

"To children we force to be braver than they have to be." With these words that are dedicated to children and that implicate adults, Deborah Ellis launches *Parvana's Journey*, the second of her children's novels set in present-day Afghanistan. This is a book about the day-to-day bravery of children in a land ravaged by adults. It is a story ironically unsuited for grown-ups who, if they read it with care, will find it harrowing, haunting, disturbing in what it says about war-making—the worst of adult crimes against children. On every page of this small book is this subtext: adult wars, whatever rationale we devise for them, are making collateral damage of the world's children.

Adults were everywhere in *The Breadwinner*, Ellis's first novel. Set in the time of the Taliban regime, it records the efforts of a younger and feistier Parvana to support her family by masquerading and working as a boy in Kabul's marketplace, boneyard, soccer stadium. This girl had a place to call home, a purpose, a group of people who knew of and cared about her. She had reason to hope.

But what a difference a year makes. In *Parvana's Journey*, the Afghan people's diaspora is underway, and Parvana is caught in it as she wanders her country in search of what may be left of her family. The grown-ups have disappeared, died, retreated to their mountain caves. Or they fly the skies above in their surveillance planes and bombers. The Taliban are shadowy—routed and on the run. In the opening chapter, Parvana's father, with whom she has been walking cross-country to reach the rest of her family somewhere in the north, lies dead in an unmarked grave outside a nameless village. His daughter, with neither map nor compass to her name, will never be able to locate his resting place again. And until they meet accidentally in a crowded and chaotic refugee camp on the border with Pakistan in the final moments of the narrative, the whereabouts and fates of Parvana's mother and siblings are unknown.

Without parents, teachers, or guardians of any sort, without food, clean water, warm clothing, Parvana and three other children—Asif, a disabled and abused cave-dweller; Hassan, a wailing baby whom Parvana names when she finds him beside the body of his dead mother; and Leila, a sprightly little girl (convinced of her own invincibility) who scavenges minefields in search of food and booty—come together in desperation and form a temporary family. This is what it means and feels like to be a refugee, Ellis shows us. The children are starving much of the time; they're afraid and angry all of the time; they struggle to resist the absolute despair or exhaustion afflicting the few adults they do encounter (Leila's catatonic grandmother; a nameless

woman keening inconsolably on a hillside; the helpless aid worker in the refugee camp). Only two members of this brave quartet survive the events of the novel. Two die—in bitter and graphic circumstances.

Forced to be braver than they should have to be, this quartet copes as characters in children's books often do, by creating a fantasy world—an arcadia Parvana and Leila refer to not as Wonderland or Neverland or Oz, but the Green Valley. It is a place of plenty and of peace: full of food and magically uncontaminated water, where "[a]ll the children . . . have both arms and legs. . . . No one is blind, and no one is unhappy." In the Valley, children are safe from bombers with their anonymous pilots and deadly payloads dropped indiscriminately (as it seems to them) on the targets below. Parvana also persists throughout in writing letters to her absent friend Shauzia (her companion who was setting out to make her way to France when she and Parvana parted company in *The Breadwinner*). These letters, in which Parvana maintains her belief that Shauzia and she will meet someday at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, offer moments of terrible, futile hope, and are some of the most painful passages for adult readers venturing into the pages of this children's novel.

As adults reading about war, we are conditioned to look for geopolitical details, for heroes to admire, for enemies to blame, and most of all for outcomes. We take comfort in finding factions to praise and blame. Deborah Ellis denies adult readers this kind of grim gratification. For her child characters, all is chaos, and there is no comfort to be found in the facts, the maps, the logistics, the punditry.

Ellis shows in scene after scene what it feels like to be alone, to be powerless, to be caught in the crossfire, exploded in the minefields, rained on by bombs in the night. Who planted the landmine that blew off Asif's leg? Who's to blame? We are not allowed to know. Who drops the bombs that imperil all the children? The rumour is that American planes are responsible, but those in the story never know. Nor does knowing the national identity of the warriors matter. This is what it feels like to be turned from human child into collateral damage, to be robbed of every one of the rights set out in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Parvana's Journey is a book for older children serious about understanding the world they will inherit. But adults should read *Parvana's Journey* too—before the war in Iraq of 2003 makes the 2002 war in Afghanistan a dimly remembered set of blurred images in our overcrowded historical memories. We should read it to see in Ellis's images of children—starving, blighted, wounded, dying, surviving—how *we* are *forcing* children to be braver than they should have to be. We should wonder why. It's the least we can do.

War, Memory, and History

Jean R. Freedman
Whistling in the Dark: Memory and Culture in Wartime London. UP of Kentucky US $29.95

Ian Hugh Maclean Miller
Our Glory and Our Grief: Torontonians and the Great War. U of Toronto P $45

Reviewed by Peter Buitenhuis

A number of recent books about the Great War have concentrated on the role that memory plays in the creation of myth and history, and historians have been busy revising and re-revising the historiography of the war. Jean Freedman has applied these recent theories of memory and war to a re-creation of the London Blitz as recorded both by current accounts of the bombing and by interviews with those who lived through it, who are now mostly in their seventies and eighties. Ian Miller, on the other hand, with a nod to the revisionists, then goes on to rely exclusively and exhaustively on contemporary sources to write the history

of how Toronto civilians and the military who came back from the front—mostly the disabled—behaved between 1914 and 1918.

As Freedman points out, oral history accounts of the Blitz are few in number, and she has used the rich resources of old Londoners' memories effectively. She has also made use of the disciplines of folklore, ethnomusicology, literature, and cultural studies to enrich her text. The result is a finely balanced narrative that broadens and complicates but does not essentially change the long-time view that people, on the whole, behaved well during that testing time. As one of her interviewees stated, after commenting that it was important not to romanticize the war, "There was a sense of purpose. We had to win the war. There was no question about that. Whatever our political views, if any. Whatever our religious views, if any. . . ."

Freedman has chapters on "Ideology and Wartime London," "Speech in Wartime London," Narratives of Wartime London," "Music and Wartime London," and "Memories of Wartime London." In the chapter on ideology, she explains how class differences were suppressed in the common endeavour of the war. In the chapter on wartime speech, she casts her net wide to examine the different forms of rhetoric. She is particularly good in discussing the BBC program that almost everyone in Britain listened to: the comedian Tommy Handley's ITMA, which combined both great entertainment and great propaganda.

The chapter on music in wartime London is particularly interesting. "Listen to Britain," one of the many documentaries made by the Crown Film Unit under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, presented the sounds and music of wartime Britain, including not only military and popular music but also classical music played by the enormously popular Myra Hess in her lunch-time concerts at the National Gallery. Even after the gallery was damaged by a bomb, the concerts continued. Vera Lynn, of course, became a national institution. All in all, music made an incalculably powerful contribution to home morale as well as to that of the troops overseas.

In Freedman's last chapter on memories of wartime London, she discusses the role played by memory in the reconstruction of the past, and from there she moves to a discussion of the whole question of sources. She points out how, traditionally, historians have privileged written sources over oral ones. Historians of wartime Britain have often treated memory "as an unnecessary distraction, even a distortion, a kind of blinkered false consciousness." On the other hand, memory in oral history is subject to distortion and reconstruction, particularly as the years go by. "It is the scholar's job," Freedman writes, "to determine the accuracy of any source used. Eyewitness accounts and narrated memories are invaluable sources of information for the scholar, so long as we are aware of the problems inherent in both—indeed in all—methodologies."

This is precisely the problem in Miller's book on Torontonians in the Great War. It is true that he used no oral sources— indeed if any exist—but he does treat the printed sources that he exhaustively used with little awareness of their limitations. He asserts that during the years 1914-1918, "Torontonians knew and understood the nature of the war. Their determination to see it through was strengthened by the stories of German atrocities in the invasion of Belgium." He also accepts without question Martin Stephen's 1996 attempt to resurrect General Douglas Haig's shattered reputation, in which he claimed that "he made the best of an awful situation." Miller asserts that "Torontonians took the trouble to inform themselves of the dilemma facing Haig, and accepted the necessity of sacrificing large numbers of men for the common good." Haig's strategy of attrition wasted men, just as later he wasted the surprise effect of the tanks.

The trouble is that the sources of information about the war were contaminated by the British Wellington House propaganda office, later the Ministry of Information. Home audiences heard little about the real conditions of trench warfare. There was not only a strict censorship, and the spin put on the war by famous writers, but also the silence of the returning soldiers themselves, who could not stand to tell the truth to their loved ones or the press.

Miller criticizes Jeffrey Keshen's book *Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War* by claiming that in the case of Toronto it was quite different, since "Toronto's war effort was sustained by honest information and dedication." This is absurd. Toronto got the same misinformation as every other city in Britain and the Empire. Many young men who read the casualty lists at the time saw the writing on the wall, as Miller's own account of the steady drop of volunteers indicates. This led to the Conscription Act of 1917.

Given the limitations of Miller's methods, *Our Glory and Grief* is a thorough study of press and archival sources. The amount of work involved is astonishing. But, as Freedman observes, it's the scholar's job to determine the accuracy of his source, and in this case, what lay behind the sources—the resources of the state to deceive its civilian populations.

Acts of War

David French
Soldier's Heart. Talonbooks $15.95

Stephen Massicotte
Mary's Wedding. Playwrights Canada P $22.95

Kevin Kerr
Unity (1918). Talonbooks $16.95

Reviewed by Virginia Cooke

> Bloody victory
> Bloody glory
> There is no teary-eyed homecoming story
> This is our only home
> Oh, Canada!
>
> *Unity (1918)*

Canadian plays about the world wars tend to be set in retrospect (*Billy Bishop*) or at home (*Waiting for the Parade, Quiet in the Land*). These three plays are no exception. They gauge the collateral damage of World War I in Canada—the devastation to the communities, individuals, and families.

Unity (1918), developed as part of Touchstone Theatre's Playwright-in-Residence program, is the first published play of Kevin Kerr, who with The Electric Company has previously created such works as *Brilliant* and *The Wake*. First produced in March 2001, *Unity* won the 2002 Governor General's award. The characters in Kerr's macabre tale of death talk about the war, but the chief enemy here is the influenza epidemic which ravaged the world in 1918. Carried home from Europe by returning soldiers, the flu killed as many Canadians as had the fighting. The town of Unity, Saskatchewan, forms the setting for this twelve-character play, and the title is laced with irony. Fear and ignorance grip and divide the town, as conveyed through the gossip of the two telephone/telegraph operators, Rose and Doris. The structure of the work, set out in thirty-three separate sub-titled scenes, defies unity. Somehow, though, it all works to produce a simultaneously panoramic and claustrophobic effect. Of the three plays, this is the most rewarding.

Having seen the Touchstone production helped this reviewer immensely, since the play does present challenges for the reader. Kerr employs the Caryl Churchill effect of overlapping dialogue, marked with asterisks, dashes, and ellipses. Some continuity between the abruptly shifting scenes is provided by twenty-one-year-old Beatrice Wilde, whose diary frames the play and tracks events as she and her friend Mary await the return of their soldier boyfriends.

Her exuberant younger sister, Sissy, has determined that the apocalyptic events signal the end of the world. The oddest character by far is Sunna. At only fifteen, she has assumed the undertaking business of her deceased uncle. Solitary, detached, and meticulous at her work, Sunna is like some archetypal figure of fate as she receives the ever-increasing number of bodies. Never does Kerr show a trace of sentimentality.

He does offer a bizarre sense of humour. When Hart, Sunna's cousin, returns sightless from the war, he steps off the train platform and falls flat on his face, commenting only that Unity is "not quite as flat as I was told it would be." Stan offers to guide him to the mortuary, when Stan accidentally upsets the wheelbarrow in which he is pushing his wife's body. Other scenes of equally black comedy include a Victory Day dance during which all couples are ordered to remain one yard apart to avoid spreading the flu.

In the end, however, we care greatly for these characters. Kerr conveys a strong sense of compassion, giving us tender moments: Sunna's reflections on the symmetry of the human body ("Like triangles or circles, there's a pattern. I look for patterns. Clues to keep me going"); Sissy's horror when Michael is put dying on the train out of town; Beatrice's generous kiss bestowed on the dying (and infectious) Hart. These moments allow a bitter hope to emerge within the community, despite the war-torn, diseased world.

Unlike *Unity*, which gazes unflinchingly at death, *Mary's Wedding* looks sentimentally at the war's victims. Stephen Massicotte is a relatively new playwright. He has produced successful Fringe plays, but this is his first full-length, published play. *Mary's Wedding* tells a familiar story of young love interrupted by World War I, as young Charlie leaves Alberta for France with dreams of applying his skilled horsemanship in the cavalry. He is predictably killed in France, and predictably inspired by Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade." In the sentimental ending, Charlie and Mary express feelings that border on cliché. However, especially in performance, this play escapes both cliché and predictability through its structure and language.

Mary and Charlie meet by chance when they both take shelter in a barn during a thunderstorm. Within two pages, Charlie is setting sail for England, reading, along with Mary, his own letters to her about the battle at Ypres. Then Massicotte returns to the period of their courtship. Time and place are fractured and interwoven with the logic of a dream. As Charlie notes in the prologue: "So, tomorrow is Mary's Wedding, tonight is just a dream. . . . It begins at the end and ends at the beginning."

The play's preface contains a historical note concerning Lieutenant Gordon Muriel Flowerdew, posthumously "awarded the Victoria Cross for leading the 'C' squadron, the Lord Strathcona's Horse Regiment, in the charge at Moreuil Wood on the 30th of March, 1918." Massicotte imagines that Charlie was among the "C" company. What works splendidly in the live production of *Mary's Wedding*, but may escape the reader's notice, is the blending of Mary and Flowerdew ("Flowers"). When we meet Flowerdew, Mary suddenly tells the audience, "And in that dream, I am the sergeant." The reader must then continually remember that Mary speaks both parts. Sergeant Flowers advises Charlie, "Don't think about her too much. Or . . . you'll see her in everyone—everywhere you look." We then witness Charlie see Mary in Lt. Flowers, and the youthful, nurturing, protective qualities of these two characters blend.

The language of *Mary's Wedding* captures the breathless innocence of the lovers. Mary's description of her first ride with Charlie is echoed much later, as Charlie and Flowers charge toward waiting German

machine guns at Moreuil Wood. Throughout, one is struck with the heartbreaking innocence of all three of these Canadian victims of war. Toward the end, the language does subside into the stuff of soap opera. Still, for a play which originated as a two-hander slated for the Edmonton Fringe festival, it signals great promise for Massicotte's future work.

David French is the veteran playwright of this trio. *Soldier's Heart* unearths unbearable memories of World War I, but in contrast to the other two works, it is structurally straightforward, realistic, and linear. *Soldier's Heart* revives the Mercer family, subjects of *Leaving Home, Of the Fields, Lately, 1949,* and *Saltwater Moon.* Set on a railway platform in Bay Roberts, Newfoundland in 1926 (two years prior to *Saltwater Moon*), the play presents Jacob Mercer at sixteen, poised to leave home after his father, Esau, has threatened him with a knife. Jacob knows that his father's drinking and bouts of violence stem from shell shock or "soldier's heart." This day, June 30, is particularly tense because July 1 is the anniversary of the death of Esau's brother Will on the battlefield in France. The train's delay allows Jacob time to interact with his father (who arrives at the station to persuade his son to return home) and with Bert, Esau's closest friend and fellow survivor of Gallipoli and the Battle of the Somme. Jacob cajoles his father to recount the tale of the naive Canadian lads who were "led like lambs to the slaughter" at the Battle of the Somme, and finally the horrific tale of Esau's implication in Will's death.

In *Saltwater Moon,* information about the war formed a compelling backdrop, but here the situation seems contrived, and the dialogue often strained as Jacob coaxes the story from Esau:

> JACOB: Tell me about Gallipoli, Father. . . . I know it's a peninsula in Turkey. Bert showed it to me on a map.
>
> ESAU: Bert has too much time on his hands.
>
> JACOB: The campaign there was Winston Churchill's idea. He lost his job over it, didn't he?

French's aim seems both clear and admirable: the movement toward confession, forgiveness and healing, and the reconciliation of father and son. But he misfires.

I have not seen French's play; however, production reviews by Richard Ouzounian in the *Toronto Star* and Kate Taylor in the *Globe and Mail* gave no indication that the Tarragon Theatre performance transcended the limitations of the script. Theatre veteran that French is, his play wears its soldier's heart on its sleeve instead of embedding it in the drama.

Sparrow Nation

William Goetzmann
When the Eagle Screamed: The Romantic Horizon in American Expansionism, 1800-1860.
U of Oklahoma P US $14.95

Barry Alan Joyce
The Shaping of American Ethnography: The Wilkes Exploring Expedition. U of Nebraska P US $40.00

Paul Russell Cutright and Michael J. Brodhead
Elliott Coues: Naturalist and Frontier Historian.
U of Illinois P US $24.95

Reviewed by Christoph Irmscher

These three books, two of them reprints, one brand-new, have a common subject, the seemingly uncontrollable urge of the newly established United States to spread out over the continent, from sea to shining sea, and, where possible, even beyond, into the unsuspecting rest of the world. For historian William Goetzmann, who takes pride in his political incorrectness, nineteenth-century Americans have been unjustly vilified. Their ambition to extend

and secure the boundaries of the country to the south in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, and to the west across the Pacific came not so much from a mad lust for land as it did from the need to compete with the European powers that were old hands at the imperialist game. In a revealing moment, Goetzmann claims that if Americans had not been so impressed "by the greater experience of these nations," they might have escaped the fate of being "tarred with the same brush" of imperialism that blackened England and France with guilt. Wouldn't it be pretty to think so?

In *When the Eagle Screamed*, first published in 1966, Goetzmann doesn't mince words: to him, the "Indians" attacking one of Astor's ships in 1811 were "coastal savages"; President Polk deserves praise for quieting the "Mexican menace"; Cuba was a "coy temptress" bewitching the Americans as well as the British; finally, Commander Perry deserves our thanks for helping the benighted Japanese emerge from the "dark ages of feudalism." Goetzmann pays little attention to the chinks in the American armour. His views would seem merely dated today, like a message in a bottle found decades later, were it not for the new preface in this new edition, where he reiterates his belief that it is high time to lay the myth of "poor Mexico" to rest and make its inhabitants cherish "a nation that has been trying to help them for most of the latter half of the twentieth century."

When the Eagle Screamed is a political pamphlet, then, tossed off to rectify the "distortions" of neo-Whig historians, hardly a piece of original historical research. Most of Goetzmann's footnotes refer not to sources but to the contributions of his patient predecessors. That said, his stubborn redescription of nineteenth-century expansionism as a process of continual diplomatic backroom-bartering, haggling, and frantic treaty-making did make me reconsider some of my own simplistic assumptions about American imperialism. One of Goetzmann's favorite words is "brinksmanship." In fact, the real heroes of the book are not the adventurers like William Walker, who seized Nicaragua and ran it like his own personal fiefdom for several dismal years, but cautious diplomats like Nicholas Trist, the chief clerk of the State Department under Polk, who worked out the treaty of Guadeloupe-Hidalgo and thus brought the Mexican War to an end. Interestingly, this rather sober view of American expansionism as the result of intense, if sometimes misguided, diplomatic efforts undermines Goetzmann's own chief claim in this book, namely that nineteenth-century American imperialism was the work of innocent, romantic dreamers "to whom nothing was impossible."

Like Goetzmann, Barry Alan Joyce does not want to be "politically correct." In the introduction to *Shaping American Ethnography*, he takes issue with current anthropological experts and their desire to "trivialize and dismiss the work of their predecessors." His book retells an important chapter in the history of American expansionism, the story of the United States Exploring Expedition, which set sail from Norfolk Navy Yard in 1838. Led by Captain Charles Wilkes, they spent nearly four years at sea, mostly in the Pacific, surveying 280 islands and part of the coast of Antarctica, and carrying the message of American power and entitlement to surprised "savages" abroad. Even more so than Lewis and Clark's men, the members of this expedition were encouraged to write down their experiences. Joyce spent years combing through the massive archive of letters, journals, and official records they left behind. But the main focus of his "anthropology of anthropology" is on the contributions by the expedition's zoologist,

Charles Pickering, and by linguist and ethnologist Horatio Hale, who had just graduated from Harvard the year before joining Wilkes. Joyce is well aware that homespun images of "savagery," notably prejudices against Native Americans and African Americans, inexorably shaped the ways white Americans reacted towards the "exotic" people they encountered. But he also shows how such conceptual safeguards faltered when the expedition reached the Fiji Islands. Culturally sophisticated and less prone to admiration of white ways than other natives Wilkes's men had encountered, the Fijians became the ultimate "savages," unpredictable beasts whose cunning made them "all the more to be feared."

Joyce's narrative is rich in moments of dizzying cultural contradiction which occurred during the expedition, such as when the explorers staged improvised minstrel shows for the amusement and instruction of an audience composed of incredulous Pacific Islanders. Here supposedly "civilized" American whites in blackface entertained bona fide "savages" with a mockery of African American culture—a spectacle of wildness contained and conquered. It is not surprising that Horatio Hale, while dutifully compiling linguistic data and classifying his natives according to their "tamability," saw nothing that would have changed his prejudices. He revised his views only later in life, when he passed the anthropological torch on to Franz Boas. By contrast, the encounter with the Fijians persuaded his colleague Pickering to throw out all previous notions of racial hierarchy. Casting a jaundiced eye on the white members of the expedition, Pickering suddenly recognized them for what they were, "a race of plunderers." Significantly, his later book, *The Races of Man* (1848), locates the central origin of humankind (which Pickering did not regard as zoologically distinct from other productions of nature) in Africa.

Joyce tells a good story, and he tells it well. Inevitably, there are some minor distortions, as for example in his characterization of naturalist Titian Ramsay Peale, whom he misrepresents as a gun-toting, grave-robbing ignoramus. But Titian (whose father, incidentally, was not Franklin Peale but the portrait painter, naturalist, and museum owner Charles Willson Peale) was an artist of considerable talent. His sketches and paintings supplemented those of the expedition's official artist, Alfred Agate, some of whose watercolours are reproduced in Joyce's book. In addition, Titian was an experienced explorer and taxidermist, whose credentials included the Long expedition to the Rocky Mountains (1819-1820) and a trip to South America, where he went to collect birds for Charles Bonaparte.

Paul Russell Cutright and Michael Brodhead's biography features the most prominent naturalist Elliott Coues, who started out as a specimen collector in the tradition of the Peales and then became a veritable fact machine, grinding up a large part of the American fauna into heavy tomes of dense taxonomic detail and cheerful advice for other aspiring naturalists. Who would have thought that a work like Coues's *Key to North American Birds* would become a commercial success? The first printing of the second edition was exhausted only one year after it came out. So entranced are his biographers by their subject's taxonomic achievements that they even weighed one of his books (ten pounds, four ounces). But Coues was also a Darwinian, deeply convinced of the provisional nature of traditional concepts of species and therefore an ardent proponent of the advantages of trinomialism, which allowed for the inclusion of subspecies in the taxonomic system. Like his birds, Coues was a difficult man to pin down: a taxonomist who dabbled in poetry; an empiricist who yearned for the transforming power of the imagination and developed an interest

in spiritualism (to the point of becoming a convert, for several years, to Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society); a field naturalist who shuddered when nature presented itself in its full rawness. Generally, he seems to have preferred the company of animals, alive or stuffed, to that of human beings, and the Mexicans ("worthless") fared even less well with him than they would later on in Goetzmann's book. At least they didn't harm the local bird population, particularly the house finches, which were the "only pleasing feature" in the dirty settlements of Los Piños, New Mexico, visited by a reluctant Coues in 1864.

Cutright and Brodhead's book, first published in 1981 and now reissued as a paperback, is pervaded by a sense of awe for Coues's productivity. Quantity was indeed their author's game: an army surgeon for the first part of his professional life, Coues roamed the territory made newly available by Goetzmann's diplomats and used his frontier assignments to gather material ("everything that came in my way") for the Smithsonian in Washington, totalling a staggering 2,383 specimens by the end of his career. But in spite of the Audubonian fervour that pervades Coues's work, I'm not sure how comfortable he really was in the great outdoors. A case in point is his reaction to the Grand Canyon. Coues's colleague, the explorer John Wesley Powell, after noting how its colours changed with the ascending and descending sun and how light and shadow came and went with the passing clouds, was satisfied that the sublimity of the Grand Canyon could not be equaled "on the hither side of Paradise." But Coues, stopping by in 1881, found the same view "decidedly disappointing," adding that there was "nothing specially inspiring in blank walls of rock." For him, nature was a vast clearing-house of specimens just waiting to be grabbed by the naturalist's greedy hand. Whenever he looked up from his notepad, living beings almost magically transformed themselves into publishable text: "We're all proof readers of Nature's book," he explains, choosing a particularly apt metaphor. Insert a comma here or there, "according to our day's beliefs," but don't alter the manuscript itself. Asked by Cutright and Brodhead about the value of Coues's ornithological drawings, the modern bird artist George M. Sutton wondered if his predecessor had ever made an effort to see for himself what a living bird's eye looked like. Coues was in favour of possession, not contemplation. "All birds are common somewhere at some season," he exclaimed in his *Key to North American Birds*, "the point is, have collectors been there at the time?" The frontispiece of the *Key* features an anatomical view of a dead pigeon, its belly ripped open to display the inner organs. For the dedicated bird collector, a good day's work, said Coues, meant "fifty birds shot, their skins preserved, and observations recorded." Not that wanton slaughter of birds was acceptable. "Bird-life is too beautiful a thing to destroy to no purpose . . . unless the tribute is hallowed by worthiness of motive."

Coues backed this claim up, somewhat incautiously, by referring to God's interest in the most insignificant of birds: "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without His notice." But the house sparrow was, in fact, the one bird species Coues wished off the face of the earth, or at least the American part of it. *Passer domesticus*—the alternative names Coues offers us in his *Key* are "parasite," "tramp," and "hoodlum"—had been introduced to the United States in the 1850s, because it was thought that the bird would rid ailing city trees of cankerworms. (House sparrows are seed-eaters and feed mainly on the ground!) Unexpectedly sturdy, terrifyingly adaptable, and ferociously fecund, the unsightly avian immigrant from Europe, unsuitable for its intended

task, soon overran "the entire country," in what seems like an ironic counterpoint to American expansionism in the world at large. "Its habits," wrote a despairing Coues, "need not be noted, as they are already better known to everyone than those of any native bird whatsoever." Having denounced the ornithological friends of the sparrow as "weak-minded" idiots, Coues finally had to concede defeat: "You may do what you please, shoot or poison as many as you can, more will come to the funeral." The disreputable little bird had proved too much even for the expansive Dr. Coues. By the end of the century, the eagle's scream had been drowned out by the chirping of millions of urban sparrows.

Dystopia and Literature

Erika Gottlieb
Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial. McGill-Queen's UP n.p.

Frederick Philip Grove
Consider Her Ways. Bakka $19.95

Reviewed by Grzegorz Danowski

Dystopian Fiction East and West is an important publication in the field of cultural studies. The author analyzes about thirty literary works written in the former Soviet Union between 1920 and 1991 and in Eastern Europe between 1948 and 1989. The texts chosen for analysis depict and evaluate life in a number of totalitarian states that existed in Central and Eastern Europe between the October revolution and the collapse of the Soviet Union and its political universe. Gottlieb's extremely comprehensive critical anthology acquaints the North American reader with many literary works as yet undiscovered in Canada and the United States. Since she provides important historical and cultural background for each text, her study is an excellent reference work.

Yet Gottlieb goes far beyond a simple summary of a selection of texts. She manages to relate all of them to the central concept of dystopia, "the dictatorship of hell on earth," where individuals are sentenced to damnation "by an unjust society, a degraded mob ruled by a power-crazed elite." But how relevant are these authors to the Canadian or American experience? Gottlieb anticipates such questions, and not only places Central and Eastern European dystopian fiction alongside such Western classics of the genre as *Brave New World* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but also relates the modern portrayal of hell on earth to that offered in Dante's *Divine Comedy* and other older texts. Thus Gottlieb discusses a recognized canon of dystopian fiction.

Gottlieb shows that the concept of an ideal state and a failure to implement it have been part and parcel of human existence for centuries. There has always been a dystopia to match every utopia, and the European fiction Gottieb discusses is part of the same utopian/dystopian discourse that produced Huxley, Orwell, Bradbury, Vonnegut, and Atwood. All dystopian fiction is satirical, and uses parable, allegory, and the grotesque. Dystopian states stress the individual's loyalty to the state and rely for their success on censorship and on what Gottlieb calls "the ritual of the trial."

Gottlieb does stress one essential difference between East and West. While Western literature has always described imaginary dystopias in order to warn of the dangers inherent in a non-democratic, totalitarian state, Central and Eastern European authors were able to reflect on a real experience of dystopia, "the worst of all possible worlds."

Consider Her Ways, originally published in 1947 and recently re-issued by Bakka, "examines the idea of a utopian society through the story of [a] group of ants and their interaction with North American culture." Indeed, Grove's novel describes a journey of exploration undertaken by

South American ants, a journey that culminates in a series of contacts between ants and humans. The Bakka edition encourages us to see the book in terms of "the parallels and contrasts between the pastoral ways of the ants and the North American life of excess." While the ways of Grove's ants certainly are pastoral, *Consider Her Ways* is not constructed around a straightforward juxtaposition of a utopia (the world of ants) and a dystopia (the human world). In fact, the ant kingdom has a number of features usually found in totalitarian states. The queen wields absolute power over its subjects, and loyalty to the state precedes all other kinds of loyalty. As soon as an individual attempts to challenge the state's decisions, the ritual of the trial discussed by Gottlieb is initiated. These decisions are usually made in the name of might and not right; opposition is ruthlessly eliminated.

Consider Her Ways provides an interesting reflection on things utopian and dystopian. Although it is classified as science fiction, it can be approached from other angles. For example, the dominant role that females play in the ant world makes Grove's novel interesting material for feminist research. Witty and philosophical, *Consider Her Ways* is also a good story.

Why He Writes

Jack Granatstein
Canada's Army: Waging War and Keeping the Peace. U of Toronto P $50

Reviewed by Graham Broad

As the generation that fought World War II passes into memory, our reverence for them may for a time dispossess us of the ability to write military history with the required equanimity, and Canadian military history sometimes spills over with romantic confabulations about the past—cases of what the late Charles Stacey called the golden haze of history combining with the fog of war to reduce visibility to zero. I approached *Canada's Army* assuming that any such book by a dogmatically conservative historian would be reverential and romantic. But at this point in his career, Granatstein seems incapable of much sentimentality, and, unlike the late Stephen Ambrose (whose transparent guilt for not having suffered alongside the veterans he wrote about oozes through every page), he seems genuinely grateful to have been the product of "demographic good luck"—born too late for Canada's last real war. Consequently he hands down a more judicious assessment of our military heritage that goes something like this: Canadians do no wrong when they choose to go to war and do no good when they choose to keep the peace.

Inevitably *Canada's Army* will be read mainly out of interest for its chapters on the world wars, and about half of the book deals with those ten years. But Granatstein has been over this ground so many times that he approaches it in the way that an old married couple approaches the act of sex: the motions are so well rehearsed that nothing surprising ever happens. Which is not to say that this is not good stuff, only that it all seems to have been done before, and the sense of ordinariness is enhanced by the fact that Granatstein is at times out of touch with contemporary scholarship on the wider war. He writes, for instance, that Germany had a 50/50 chance of winning the war at the end of 1941, when most historians have concluded that at best they could have held on long enough to see Berlin disappear under a mushroom cloud in August of 1945.

It is when the author reconnoitres less familiar terrain that *Canada's Army* has some spark, and, deep in the thickets of nineteenth-century history, readers who did not skip to World War I will discover the best that the book has to offer. More familiar, however, are the chapters that deal with the postwar army, the Korean War, and the

advent of peacekeeping, an activity Granatstein dismisses as the hubris of a nation that believes it has a moral duty in the world (and heaven forbid any nation should believe that).

And then we come to The Point. The conclusion finds Granatstein very much on autopilot, rehashing an argument that will be familiar to anyone who has read his many columns in the *National Post:* for the benefit of anyone who has not noticed, *Canada's Army,* Granatstein explains, has been a sustained argument for Canada to invest more money in its armed forces. The implicit corollary to this argument is that Canadians would be willing to make this investment if only they knew their nation's history. But the problem of endemic underfunding is not just Canada's, Granatstein argues. Such has been the pall and decay of the post-Cold War years that Britain's army is now toothless and the French are declawed and the Germans, irony of ironies, are inferior to the Poles. Even the Americans are starved on a billion dollars a day. Nobody spends enough for Granatstein.

Canada's Army cannot, therefore, be evaluated just as history because it is an expressly political book with an expressly political purpose. Wars involving Canada are inevitable, Granatstein says (and he either assumes that they will be just wars or he does not care if they are not), and a professional army is therefore equivalent to a national insurance policy. For Granatstein, history offers us not lessons but commandments. There is always another Hitler ready to strike when we are weak, and we must decide whether to be Churchill or whether to be Chamberlain. No doubt Granatstein is correct in arguing that the army's capabilities have eroded as successive governments have slashed defence budgets, but in order to match the US's per capita military expenditure Canada would have to increase defence spending fivefold. Needless to say, Granatstein leaves unanswered the question of where an additional six or seven (let alone fifty-two) billion dollars a year is going to come from. I suggest he run for Parliament on a platform proposing an annual fifteen-hundred-dollar defence levy on every Canadian. And see if he gets further than he could throw this large and rather middling book.

Of Wars and the Border

John Hagan
Northern Passage: American Vietnam War Resisters in Canada. Harvard UP US $27.95

Frank Kusch
All American Boys: Draft Dodgers in Canada from the Vietnam War. Praeger US $62.00

Francis M. Carroll
A Good and Wise Measure: The Search for the Canadian-American Boundary, 1783-1842. U of Toronto P $75.00 cloth, $29.95 paper

Reviewed by Joseph Jones

The year 2001 saw the publication of two academic studies of Vietnam War deserters and draft resisters in Canada, not to mention book-length memoirs by deserters Dick Perrin and Jack Todd. The studies fall within a genre that combines varying amounts of biography, history, and social science.

John Hagan writes from the perspective of a draft-age American who immigrated to Canada in the Vietnam War era, while Frank Kusch writes as an American who is a decade younger. Based largely on the first-hand experiences of others, the books set forth contrasting theses. Part of what the authors perceive is read from the differences in their sample populations, and part of what they perceive is read into the subject itself. *Northern Passage* starts from the author's specialization in sociology, criminology, and law and deals with political-process theory as a means of understanding "law resistance, social movements, and the life course." A study of the civil rights movement provides methodological inspiration

and a standard for comparison. Emigration to Canada is viewed as a rational response to political opportunity, and a turning point for individuals in terms of vocation, worldview, and social and political activism. This approach counters a prevalent view by presenting exile as an effective form of resistance to the Vietnam War.

Hagan's research is based mainly on one hundred interviews from a sample population, archival materials with related interviewing, and census data. This body of primary source material ensures that his work will have ongoing interest. Thirty of the one hundred interviewees were women. To his credit, Hagan has gone further than any other researcher in elaborating their role, both as individuals and as a definable group.

Of the previous monographs on the subject, only Renée Kasinsky's *Refugees from Militarism: Draft-Age Americans in Canada* (1976) receives more than a passing mention. No account is taken of relevant theses, notably Sharon Rudy Plaxton's 1995 Queen's Ph.D. on the Ford and Carter amnesties and Patricia Mackie's 1998 Concordia M.A. on socio-political aspects of Canadian immigration policy. The nature of the interview sample raises questions about representativeness. The focus is Toronto only, and the most productive chain of referral starts from a major activist. Despite substantial attention given this matter, a conclusion that the sample is "not atypical" remains unconvincing.

Distinct topics and source material make up the six chapters. What unity there is derives from thematic continuities, a broad chronological progression, and the interview form. Regarded as history, the book offers outstanding accounts of shifting Canadian government immigration policy and the exile-led campaign for amnesty.

Other treatments of history need to be approached with caution. The story of Mark Satin and the establishment of the Toronto Anti-Draft Programme derives mainly from a few biased sources. The chapter on Toronto's American ghetto relies heavily on one oral history collection, focuses on Baldwin Street hippie enterprise, and neglects organizations like Red, White and Black; the Hall; and Black Refugee Organization (BRO). A distinctive statistical profile for 1970 immigrants leads to a repeated and too-simple correlation with the War Measures Act. Presenting the Canadian government's 1973 Adjustment of Status Program as an "amnesty" proves more confusing than helpful.

One comment in the closing chapter "Choosing Canada" reveals that almost a quarter of the sample "lived for a time in the United States since originally coming to Canada," and some undefined portion even now live in the United States. In a recent journal article Hagan has highlighted aspects of resister ambivalence and provided data not found in the book. Contradictory tendencies deserve more explicit analysis, even though exposition has given them voice.

After a quarter of a century, simple terminology still signals divergent viewpoints. John Hagan's "war resisters" differ strikingly from Frank Kusch's "draft dodgers." Originating in a 1998 history master's thesis at Ohio University, Kusch's *All American Boys* embodies substantial revision. Extensive interview material collected from 1995 to 1998 from twenty-four draft dodgers still in Canada constitutes the core of the study. The nature of the sample interviewed receives almost no consideration: "Sixty percent . . . grew up in the Southern United States." (Any additional comment on the rather haphazard interview sample used in Kusch's thesis has been deleted in his book.)

A central proposition is that draft dodgers in Canada are disaffected individuals who left the United States with no intention of returning. These individuals are characterized throughout as the products of "disrupted or troubled home lives": loners, alienated, introspective, not joiners, disconnected,

detached, disaffected. A repeated claim that they failed to investigate their options seems self-contradictory, since emigration to Canada was itself a less prevalent and accessible option.

A second perspective reveals a remarkable ambivalence. The draft dodgers are seen as "quintessential Americans" in their individualism, nonconformity, focus, career orientation, self-reliance, and independence. Hence the main title of the book. The concluding chapter recognizes the current "prosperous, rewarding, and happy lives [of draft dodgers as] physicians, lawyers, writers, psychologists, university professors, scientists, and business owners."

Views expressed in this work should be considered with caution. Examples include: "Expatriates passed up on the many options open to them to avoid the draft," and "The expatriates' transition from America to Canada did not lead to significant upheaval in their lives."

Canada presented a welcome alternative to tens of thousands of Americans during the Vietnam War. The border that defines Canada emerged in the aftermath of an earlier war, and has a story whose complexity befits Canada's relationship to the United States. Francis Carroll provides a history of the sixty-year dispute over the Canada-United States boundary from the Atlantic Ocean to the Lake of the Woods, from the 1783 Treaty of Paris that concluded the Revolutionary War to the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842. The particularly contentious New Brunswick-Maine border stands at the centre of the account.

In three parts the book sets out what is seen as an "epic story" of "exploration and adventure." Part One considers the work of four boundary commissions resulting from the Treaty of Ghent that concluded the War of 1812. Part Two deals with a muddled middle period featuring a never-implemented 1831 arbitration of the king of the Netherlands and subsequent frontier skirmishes. Part Three outlines the circumstances of the early 1840s and the achievement of an enduring compromise.

About a third of the 486 pages consists of notes, sources, and index. A great amount of detail is included and synthesized, and the result may serve more as a reference work than a narrative. Some information might better have been organized as tables, chronologies, and biographies. Sixteen maps provide great help in comprehending the situation and issues, but even more attention to such visual elaboration is warranted.

The clearly organized narrative is dense with reference to factors affecting survey attempts: salaries, oaths, illness, weather, season, topography, supplies, transportation, instruments, methodology, personality, politics. In some measure reading through this density reproduces the experience of searching for boundaries. Interest can extend beyond the evident topic to related matters such as the history of arbitration in dispute resolution, the role of Native peoples, the question of states' rights, and the issue of slavery.

Contemporary Sensibilities

Aurian Haller
A Dream of Sulphur. McGill-Queen's UP $14.95

Hannah Main-van der Kamp
With Averted Vision. The St. Thomas Poetry Series $9.50

George Elliott Clarke
Blue. Polestar $19.95

S. P. Zitner
The Asparagus Feast. McGill-Queen's UP $14.95

Reviewed by Eric Trethewey

The four books under review here represent a broad range of contemporary poetic styles and sensibilities.

The poems in Aurian Haller's *A Dream of Sulphur* are mostly accessible free-verse meditations on the past and on daily experience. W. H. Auden once remarked that

good free verse was more difficult to write than formal verse—an observation a student of mine once restated by comparing the former to driving in a shopping mall parking lot and the latter to driving on a divided highway. Haller's free verse manages to succeed much of the time in these poems, though occasionally they seem to lack the intensification conferred by some formal principle. What begins as a poem sometimes appears to modulate into prose ("Island Elegy"). Frequently, Haller adopts the practice of breaking lines after articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. It is an easy—all too easy—way to achieve enjambment, but such a line read aloud almost always sounds artificial.

There is a strong narrative element in Haller's poems. Many present experiences that are probably autobiographical, rooted in a rural or semi-rural childhood. The many poems about situations involving physical labour add grit and gristle to the book. I'm partial to them, calling up as they do memories of my own rural working-class roots and long days on the job:

> When you're sub-contracted
> you take meals how you work—
> one trade at a time, a pyramid of
> bit-parts fixed together with
> construction glue, nails, lag-bolts;
> each begrudging the owner his
> God's-eye view. ("The Crew")

In this interesting figure, the sub-contracted workers are bit players in a larger production held together by their construction materials. There is also the sardonic nod toward the workman's traditional attitude toward the boss man's authority. And a few lines later, the workman's attitude is captured again in the laconic description of speculation lots as "million dollar squares of dirt."

Haller knows the world of work, its exhaustions and dangers. In "To the Plateau" he writes, "On site, we don't dream, brain dumb as / machine fingers drilled to the job . . . ." In "Gasoline," the subject does what we have seen many working men do, sometimes with impunity, sometimes not: "You looked so unconcerned, gassing up your chainsaw / with the cherry end of your cigarette kittenstring-teasing / from your lower lip . . . ." There are many appealing poems in *A Dream of Sulphur* in addition to those I have already mentioned: "Perimeter," "The Stanley," "ARC," "Things We Know," and others.

I am drawn to the sensibility expressed in *A Dream of Sulphur*, and by the figurative fecundity of Haller's imagination. What is not appealing is a general sloppiness manifest in non-standard and thus misleading punctuation, clichés ("Wintery Plain"), misspellings ("Sihks"), dangling modifiers, and garbled sentences, perhaps because inadvertently something has been left out. Pound famously declared that poetry ought to be at least as well-written as prose. Although he didn't always live up to his own dictum, I think it acknowledges an important principle nonetheless. This book would have benefited greatly from some scrupulous editing.

In Hannah Main-van der Kamp's *With Averted Vision* one finds a sensibility very different from Aurian Haller's. The style is more formal though the form is still free verse. If, as Simone Weil observed, true attention is prayer, then these poems are prayers of a sort, focused as they are on the things of this world: birds, flowers, trees, animals, the progression of the seasons.

The attention I am pointing to here is not the focus required for intellectual investigation but rather a Zen quality permitting a holistic absorption in the world. The central "character" in the poems is soul (small "s") who is to be distinguished from spirit, a minor character. The difference between the two is depicted in "Soul Is Not an Early Bird":

> At daybreak, the spirit pelts from
> darkness to light,
> gobbles time, wants to get

the show on the road, but the soul,

soul savours Zen morning light,
rolls over, grunts, lingers a little
but is not lax
in rejoicing.

In another poem, spirit takes body for a run while soul goes for a walk in nature, pondering her love for sparrows.

The poems in *With Averted Vision* are ordered in accordance with the solar and ecclesiastical year. They begin in the fall, progress through Advent, Christmas, Easter and back to autumn again. As what I have said so far about the book should make clear, it is informed by a religious sensibility. However, it is anything but solemn. The poems sparkle with wit. In "Soul Aspires To Walk on Water" soul has an argument with herself trying to screw up courage to walk on a log boom across the Fraser River. In "Christmas Eve Soul" starlings yammering in a fir tree are personified as last-minute shoppers who are "trying to be satisfied customers": birds are a frequent source of metaphor throughout this collection.

With Averted Vision is an enjoyable book. The poems are all carefully crafted forays over very old ground which nevertheless succeed in making it all new. The language is sonically dense, figuratively rich, and admirably clear in conveying meaning. Sometimes the rhythms are choppy, perhaps because of the number of deliberate fragments, a tendency to repeat syntactical patterns (subject/verb/object or complement) and the poet's decision to drop many articles. But these are minor "noddings." This book is a good one.

George Elliott Clarke's *Blue* is the most cosmopolitan of the books here under review. Clarke mentions Pound as one of his sources of inspiration; perhaps he is even a model. Literary, philosophical, and musical allusions proliferate; quotations from several languages and dialects appear frequently; references to texts and events sometimes verge on the arcane or the private; and there is sometimes a note of self-satisfied knowingness in the possession of arcana. There is also anger on the battleground of race. For all his grasp of an intellectual and artistic tradition, Clarke thinks of himself as a "Caliban" ("Negation") who means "to take apart *Poetry* like a heart." "Negation," the first poem in the book, is a declaration of war. It's not always clear, however, whether the war is of a political, ethical nature or whether Clarke is waging war on traditional poetics, an aesthetic war. Perhaps it is both. Part of the difficulty of reading the issue is that the poet's voice is elusive. Sometimes it is clearly identified as that of an anonymous letter writer ("Africadian Petition [1783]"). But in another poem, "Calculated Offensive," carrying the Poundian epigraph *à la manière de Baraka*, we find a very different voice:

Put Europe to the torch:
All of Michelangelo's dripping, syphilitic saints,
all of Sappho's insipid, anorexic virgins.

Use the *Oxford English Dictionary*
and the *Petit Robert* for kindling.

This is certainly an ideological rant but is the voice Clarke's or is it intended as a parody of Baraka? The fact that the first line of the poem says "To hell with Pound!" (who is one of Clarke's putative masters) suggests the latter.

Clarke's imagination is an active volcano that will not be restrained, his sensibility primarily dramatic. However, he is not playing a role for which someone else has written the text. He is the text, and the text is constantly changing to suit different potentialities of a personality in turbulent flux. Thus, frequently, the voice is outrageous, over-the-top as I suspect it is meant to be.

In "Elegy for Mona States (1958-1999)" the verbal pyrotechnics are finally subordinated to the account of the subject and their relationship. It is a moving poem.

Blue is a polyphonic *jouissance*—a Fat Tuesday of words. Wordplay is everywhere in the book in various forms. Wordsworth's "I'd rather be / A pagan suckled in a creed outworn . . . " becomes Clarke's "I am, I think / a pagan suckered in a creed stillborn." The reader encounters puns and palindromes, anaphora and chiasmus, creative cursing and jokey riffs on homophones or near homophones. Wild celebrations of lust and booze alternate with outbursts of anger. These poems evoke a strong response.

There is an enormous difference between the style and sensibilities of George Elliott Clarke and those of S. P. Zitner, between Clarke's boisterous extravagance and Zitner's self-effacing, more formal understatement. Indeed, I suspect that poems like Zitner's are of the type that Clarke seems repeatedly to criticize in *Blue*.

Some of Zitner's poems in *The Asparagus Feast* are an expression of the dominant contemporary mode, as suggested by his publication in *Poetry*, long a weathervane of aesthetic taste. Some of his poems have rhyme and meter. (At least two of the poems are written in heroic couplets.) Even the free verse poems have a formal restraint, many of them being arranged in stanzas.

He is a poet of the quotidian rather than of existential extremity, but he makes what is ordinary quicken in the imagination and take on the resonance and depth of love and longing and regret: a false fire alarm, a necktie, a meal, rain. He articulates his credo in "Aubade": "How rare the moment is grave or passionate or noble— / for which, with gratitude, I wake again / to an ordinary morning." Zitner achieves his effects through striking images and figurative virtuosity. The poems contain surprising and original metaphors. Belongings packed for moving are "a quarter-century in boxes" ("The Blue Vase"). Sliced tomatoes are "a tender pile-up of toy wagon wheels / draped over one another, delicious looking save for the hard white hub of one" ("Tomatoes"). Old clothes in a thrift shop are "a populous emptiness / of lives remembered in small wrinkles" ("Thrift Shop"). The lines deploy subtle wealth of sound—assonance, consonance, alliteration, and unobtrusive allusions to texts ancient and modern.

The Asparagus Feast is an admirable, deeply satisfying book. The voice is consistently eloquent and elegiac with the wisdom of learning and long experience. One poem, "Cafeteria," registers the loss of someone dear elliptically by means of the situation all of us have experienced—seeing a familiar face or form and believing for an instant it is one we have known:

> Rising, she vanishes in someone else's profile,
> in the coarse bravura of someone else's mouth.
> Flesh offers only illusions of the nonpareil.
> Anywhere leads away. We shall not meet.

It is not too much to say that most of these poems are elegies, moving elegies, some explicitly for people known by the poet, others implicitly for what is always lost in words about the world we, moment by moment, are always losing.

Witness Borne

Maggie Helwig
Where She Was Standing. ECW $19.95

Audrey Thomas
The Path of Totality: New and Selected Stories. Viking $29.99

Reviewed by Susan Gingell

In "Notes Towards a Poem That Can Never Be Written," Margaret Atwood bluntly proclaims that "Witness is what you must bear," evoking both the burden of witnessing and the obligation to speak about the suffering of people working for freedom in oppressive regimes. If Maggie Helwig's first novel, *Where She Was Standing*, is a fictional form of witness-bearing in precisely

such circumstances in 1990s East Timor, Audrey Thomas's collection of two new and twenty selected stories represents a storyteller's lifetime of testifying to the generally less urgent contexts of mostly Euro-Canadian, principally women's lives in the last half of the twentieth century. Those contexts include the Montreal Massacre ("Bear Country") and, because of Thomas's own time in Ghana, the challenges of post-independence West Africa ("Two in the Bush," "Joseph and His Brother" and "Ice"), as well as the violence in a psychiatric ward ("Salon des Refusés"), but her more typical focus is on painfully reconfiguring familial situations.

Helwig's title, *Where She Was Standing*, points to both the importance and the danger of physical presence in bearing witness, referring in the first instance to the vantage point of a Canadian documentary filmmaker, Lisa James, as she surreptitiously records a massacre in East Timor and then goes missing. The repeatedly deferred unfolding of what happened to Lisa makes the novel a compelling read, though I found myself equally anxious about the fate of an Indonesian professor who becomes involved with the East Timorese resistance to Indonesian occupation and is horrifically tortured.

Helwig's carefully researched book offers a convincing fictionalized portrait of this terrible chapter in East Timorese history, now mercifully closed, and skilfully evokes the terror and the courage of peasants, clerics, and professionals, insiders and outsiders, people of both sexes and a range of ages who struggled to restore the country's autonomy and worked to get out the story of what was happening in the occupied nation.

Helwig is as interested, however, in how the trauma of people on the scene spreads to those who are either forced or who choose to bear witness to the violations of humanity perpetrated thousands of miles away. The impact of Lisa's disappearance on her separated parents and her boyfriend, Cal, are deftly delineated, while Helwig makes the London-based Rights Project worker, Rachel, a major focus for her examination of communicated trauma. From where Rachel is standing, at the eye of the storm of gross human-rights violations that she tracks, and whose impact she and her colleagues seek desperately and with some effect to limit, the last part of the twentieth century is a horror story of multiple strands—the disappeared of Argentina, the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, the torture chambers of any number of repressive regimes, all of which are symbolically reconstituted in Rachel's nightmares.

Helwig is trenchant in exposing the violence within the developed and the developing worlds, for the effects of Rachel's work on her are counterpointed by those of her lover, Edward, a physician. After his regular clinic hours, he works among the residents of London's cardboard city. This underclass of the abused and rejected dull their pain with drugs that often kill them, sell their bodies to survive and, in a muted echo of the terror of the East Timorese, are fearful of any person connected with institutions of any kind, even when, like Edward, their motives for making contact are fuelled by altruism. Near the end of the novel, Edward is shot by an anti-abortionist whom he has refused to take seriously, perhaps because he does not do abortions. Helwig makes Edward's critical injury an occasion for reconciliation between Rachel and her sometime lover, in the one unconvincing, because insufficiently motivated, bit of plot. Helwig is far more persuasive when she writes the end of Hassan's narrative. Dumped in the country from the back of an army truck after months of being savaged, he is approached by Udin, a peasant conscious of the danger to himself and his fellow villagers in what he is doing by

offering help to "this wrecked figure in the dust." By closing her novel with Udin "kneeling at the feet of the damaged world," Helwig's final witness is to the profound humanity that is also a truth of contemporary existence.

By comparison with Helwig's narrative, Thomas's short stories lack much in the way of plot, her forte being the sketching of the subtleties and intricacies of human character and relationships, including those with the natural world and the cosmos. The importance of the latter relationship is announced in the cover image and title of the infelicitously named book and recurs in images of sun, moon and tides, and the event of eclipse. Arranged thematically rather than chronologically, the stories are tales of female experience of life and of the power and fascination of words. Indeed, Thomas's first published story, "If One Green Bottle" (1965), appears near the end of the book and renders in emotionally intense and sometimes wryly humorous, sometimes wrenching but finally exhausting fragments the quintessentially female experience of protracted labour, here resulting in stillbirth. Thomas has greater success with the more conventional narrative of the woman in "Volunteers," who, when she sees a young boy with Down's Syndrome dance "as a bear might dance, lumbering, awkward, heavy-footed, but on [his] foolish face . . . a look of pure delight," is grief- and guilt-stricken for having aborted a fetus she knew would grow into a disabled child.

The collection opens with the story of a marriage ("Roots") that threatens to smash into smithereens, like the teapot that was the husband's first gift to his wife, because the wife has grown tired of her husband's frivolity and in exasperation has spoken unforgivable words to him. The comic exactitude of Thomas's description of the wife's perception of the prominent-eared husband—"Because of who he was (a radio sound technician and a lover of words) she always saw his ears as some sort of catcher's mitt, plucking out of the air whatever new and exciting word was hurled his way"—may arouse high expectations of what is to follow in the rest of the book, but Thomas's own self-conscious etymologizing and wordplay finally left me feeling more like the wife after longer cohabiting: "Nine years ago she had thought it [her husband's obsession with words] charming; now it drove her nuts." The marriage of "Roots" is saved precisely because the wife, recognizing the power of pottery-shard words to wound her husband deeply, repents; other marital or intimate relationships range from trying to shattered, but Thomas closes her book with "Breaking the Ice," an account of a new relationship beginning for a divorced woman and man, and their daughters, who willy-nilly are also plunged into relationship: "Please like him, said the mother's heart to the child's, I like him. I like him a lot."

How well Thomas can write is revealed in moments like these, when Thomas has her characters let down their guard to reveal emotions that have a force suggestive of lived authorial experience. Another memorable moment comes at the end of "Crossing the Rubicon," as a woman parts from her one-time lover: "And she doesn't look back. In my story that is. She doesn't look back in my story." Thomas's achievement as a short story writer is of a lesser order than that of Mavis Gallant or Alice Munro, or even that of Margaret Laurence, whose African stories seem so much richer than Thomas's; few of the stories in *The Path of Totality* seem to me wholly satisfying. Thus, the exceptions stand out, most notably the brilliantly written, gothically tinged "Miss Foote," a story of a spunky world-travelling spinster who finds death in the form of a young punk barring her intrepid path.

N.A.D., Trez Beans

Michael Howard
The First World War. Oxford UP US $17.95

Mark S. Micale and Paul Lerner, eds.
Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870-1930. Cambridge UP $60.00

Reviewed by David Ritchie

There are clearly times when a subject demands difficult or new phrasing, and inelegance naturally results. *Traumatic Pasts*, a new anthology subtitled "History, Psychiatry and Trauma in the Modern Age," is sprinkled with a few "embeds" here, a "cross-cultural approach" there, a "privilege his methods" over yonder. This is all quite normal today. But in this book there is occasional real awkwardness. It is by and large a good book that should be valued for bringing together much scholarship on its chosen subject. But the reader is faced with sentences such as this: "The four main streams of medical thinking about trauma canvassed in these pages . . . influenced and fertilized one another." Canvassing streams is probably a bad idea in the first place, but if a stream is going only to influence another stream, then surely it should stop somewhere short of fertilizing behaviour?

Having a tin ear when considering this particular subject matter is unusually unfortunate. To Edwardian Britons brought up on music hall patter, English was a playground. In the First World War, soldiers who said "trez beans," from the French "très bien," meant that something was very good. When they wanted a comrade to shut up, soldiers said, "Napoo Parlez Vous." A quick look at Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang* will reveal exactly how inventive such soldiers were.

The term "shell shock" had a ring to it. If the phenomenon appalled soldiers, the term itself appealed. Military and medical authorities knew this, and did their best during the war to smother shell shock with heavy terminology—neurasthenia, nervous debility, tachycardia with facial palsy, N.A.D. (no appreciable disease), N.Y.D. Nervous (not yet diagnosed, nervous)—that required "expert" interpretation. By contrast, the French generally knew shell shock as "La Maladie Incurable," or "hystérie de guerre," which probably limited their linguistic play.

Micale and Lerner rightly say, "Only in Britain did the shell-shock story generate a rich literary tradition that became absorbed into the national cultural canon." But they apparently don't hear the linguistic clues that might explain why the French ended up with André Breton's surrealist flock and the British managed to make so much of Siegfried Sassoon and shell shock.

Readers may be struck by the eloquence of some of the patients. "What can I tell you," says a soldier writing to his mother from the lunatic asylum in Padua in January 1917 (quoted in Bruna Bianchi's essay, "Psychiatrists, Soldiers and Officers in Italy During the Great War"), "My days are always equally sad, equally eternal, whereas I wish they would fly so that I could feel myself moving closer to nothing, the only place where I will find peace."

The work calls into question "the idea of a single, uniform, trans-historically valid concept of psychological trauma by demonstrating its cultural and social contingence through a series of historical case studies." It's quite true that Railway Spine and Hysteria and Shell Shock and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder were indeed not "all the same thing"; their meanings and value in terms of compensation and treatment were and still are being negotiated. It is therefore all the more odd that the editors settled on a medical term "trauma" to use in the title. To use the term "trauma" is to take sides. I would have liked less

"demonstrating contingence" and more careful listening.

The First World War, by Michael Howard, Professor emeritus of both Oxford and Yale, condenses current First World War scholarship into one hundred and fifty-four very small pages. Not a word is wasted. Every thought is well expressed.

In this instance the old critical jibe may be turned around, for inside this little book is a great big book struggling to get out. I cite but one example of Howard's ability to compress. Every schoolboy knows that the Germans' campaign in the West followed something called the Schlieffen Plan. Those same mythical schoolboys also know that the Schlieffen Plan was excellently conceived, and that its ultimate failure was due to a failure of nerve or understanding on the part of the general who was called upon to implement the plan, Helmuth von Moltke. Well, every schoolboy is wrong. In his best-selling studies, *A History of Warfare* and *The First World War,* John Keegan explained the handing down of German military understanding from Clausewitz to Moltke the elder, to Schlieffen, to Helmuth von Moltke (Moltke the elder's nephew).

The modification of the Schlieffen Plan by Helmuth von Moltke is a complex tale, involving the sort of problem you might encounter in a math class: if an army of x divisions can be brought to the frontier by a new railway system, how many parallel roads will you need to deliver these same forces in a crushing blow on the French left? Keegan says there simply wasn't enough road capacity to do what Schlieffen planned. Howard's neat version of all this is, "After the war, Moltke was accused of having ruined Schlieffen's concept, but later research has shown Schlieffen's recommendations to have been logistically impossible."

If the book has a weakness, it is that the route from a lengthier tale to this condensed version is not well mapped; there are no notes. The single page at the end of the book on "Further Reading" suggests good places to start, but references to John Keegan, for example, unfortunately are altogether napoo.

Accountable Readings

Helen Hoy

How Should I Read These?: Native Women Writers in Canada. U of Toronto P $24.95

Reviewed by Penny van Toorn

Where indigenous literary cultures are blossoming out of the wreckage caused by colonialism, there is something obscene and disturbing about Roland Barthes's metaphor of the death of the author. In residually colonial contexts, where indigenous authors are struggling to make themselves heard, well-meaning white readers and critics often violate Native author-ity by accident rather than by design. "How should I read these?" is therefore a crucial question, politically, culturally, and ethically.

Helen Hoy's book poses this question in relation to seven canonical Native women's texts: Jeannette Armstrong's *Slash,* Maria Campbell and Linda Griffiths' *Book of Jessica,* Ruby Slipperjack's *Honour the Sun,* Beatrice Culleton's *In Search of April Raintree,* Beverly Hungry Wolf's *The Ways of My Grandmothers,* Lee Maracle's *Ravensong,* and Eden Robinson's *Traplines.* Hoy's readings of all these texts are sensitive to the ways they are reading her. Her main object of study is not the texts themselves, but rather the *relations between* Native texts and non-Native readers, especially in white-dominated academic institutions. Hoy maintains an exploratory, interrogative mood throughout. Each answer to the title's question leads into a new tangle of dilemmas, which she teases out using every instrument at her disposal—textual analysis, scholarly research, and anecdotes about her personal and professional experience as a white female teacher, researcher, and partner

of Cherokee-Greek writer Thomas King. Hoy has taken the necessary risk of investing herself as a whole person in this project.

Hoy has something new to say about each of the seven texts, and about her own and others' critical approaches to them. She reads Armstrong, Slipperjack, and Hungry Wolf partly in terms of traditional Native ways of knowing and narrating, but she also worries that this approach projects cultural stereotypes onto texts and authors. In all her readings, Hoy examines her own practices critically. For example, after foregrounding Culleton's focus on the discursive basis of truth-effects and identity categories, she questions the politics of constructionism, and asks whether her reading locks Culleton into a European poststructuralist cage, or whether Native cultures have always been conscious of the ways words make the world.

Hoy is acutely aware of the pitfalls of cross-cultural reading: "All my chapters address difficulties arising from the possible inappropriateness of the cultural and aesthetic understandings that I bring to my readings." One of her interpretive strategies is to look to the texts themselves for instructions on how they should be read. She rightly rejects the idea that these works embody a pure, inscrutable otherness. The texts bear a "Native" label but refuse to be imprisoned by it, and cannot be contained in glass cases like so many anthropological relics of supposedly pristine, closed, changeless cultures. Hoy holds herself accountable to the authors and their communities, but is not paralyzed by the likelihood that some of her cultural assumptions and interpretive tools may be inappropriate. The texts have, through the very fact of their publication, been sent out into a socially and culturally heterogeneous world. And it is precisely *because* they are transcultural acts of communication that they offer coded instructions on how to participate correctly in the social process of meaning-making. One of the tasks Hoy sets herself is to foreground and explicate these coded "reading instructions" and to explore their implications in cross-cultural reading and teaching contexts.

Hoy keeps her introductory promise that she is "tracing a process, rehearsing areas of contention, proffering analysis that is then often of itself challenged, modified, or displaced, and ending with partial and provisional answers that invite further challenge." Hoy's accounts of (predominantly white) classroom discussions of specific Native texts confront politically dangerous questions such as whether the texts are really "any good" or are included in courses because of affirmative action in curriculum design. Bristling with anecdotes, quotations, and endnotes that reflect the development of Hoy's thinking over time, her text is marked by the history of its own becoming. Hoy likens her exploratory and expository method to a journey along a series of switchbacks on a mountain trail, a movement in space that lets readers see the same object from above and below, and from opposing directions. Rejecting any pretence of olympian scholarly detachment, Hoy grounds her thinking anecdotally in specific moments of social and textual engagement. The "I" in *How Should I Read These?* is by no means an immutable, independent monolith, and Hoy is interested in how she appears as an object of others' scrutiny.

She has also found a versatile, unpretentious voice that can shift from a scholarly "lit.crit." mode into other tones and registers. She often theorizes through story, and there are many good ones in this book. I especially liked the one about the 1996 Haisla sports day at Kitimaat Village where, trapped between two different codes of respectful behaviour, Hoy did the wrong right thing in winning the hundred-yard dash for women over thirty-five. Reflecting on her desire "to enter into the spirit of the day 'comfortably,' without having to come

into conflict with my own values" she was disconcerted by the "intractable . . . difference between another (admirable) ethic and my own."

Negotiating intractable difference—not just once, but repeatedly over time—is what *How Should I Read These?* is all about. Yet difference is necessary to dialogue, and Hoy invokes the idea of dialogue to imply that no reading is final, and no theoretical approach is universally valid. She brings a range of Native American, postcolonial, Black British and African American theorists into dialogue with female and male Canadian First Nations and Métis writers and critics. Within each chapter, subsections are introduced by pairs of opposed theoretical quotations. One such pair haunts Hoy's entire book: "Anything we do is a violation"; "To know is not always to violate." Hoy frankly acknowledges her own fallibility, her privilege, and her complicity in the maintenance of unequal power structures. Yet she proceeds optimistically, confident that white mis-readings cannot "kill" Native author-ity, and conscious that if Native authors and critics judge her to have mis-read the authors, they will tell her so, and hold her to account.

Internment in Canada

Franca Iacovetta, Robert Perin, and Angelo Principe, eds.
Enemies Within: Italians and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad. U of Toronto P $29.95

Lubomyr Luciuk
In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence: Canada's First Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920. Kashtan P n.p.

Reviewed by Minko Sotiron

The internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II has always been a stain on Canada's image as a tolerant nation. For decades after the war, the Japanese internees and their descendants struggled to win social and financial redress. Their well-publicized and successful campaign resulted in other groups of internees coming forth with their experiences. It also put a spotlight on Canadian civil liberties practice during both world wars, and the record is not a pretty one.

The story of Canada's internment practices is not well known. For example, World War II was not the first time that Canada interned an ethnic group of its inhabitants and that other ethnic groups were detained. Nor were the Japanese the only group targeted. Ukrainians were rounded up during Canada's first internment operation in World War I. Italians and Germans were also detained during World War II.

Lubomyr Luciuk's *In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence: Canada's First Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* describes the ironic situation of Ukrainian Canadians being detained as enemy aliens simply because their province of Ruthenia was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire—ironic, because most Ukrainians were nationalists who opposed the rule of the empire. Also, many had fled to avoid military service.

This history, however, remains to be told more completely since at best Luciuk's work could be considered a first step. A historian's job is to gather, sift, analyze, and explain historical information. This Luciuk does not do. His book is difficult to understand because of the content's poor presentation. Of its 170 pages, about 20 contain description and analysis. The remainder of the narrative (about 50 pages) is a hodgepodge of unintroduced documents in the form of reproduced typewritten reports, newspaper article excerpts, and highlighted comments from people whose relationship to the story is often not clear. The last 120 pages are endnotes and unorganized appendices.

This is not the case, however, with *Enemies Within: Italians and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad.* The articles collected

here provide a comprehensive examination of the internee experience by focusing not only on Italians, but also on larger social implications. Divided into sections, the articles deal with historical memory, other internee groups, and specific case studies. *Enemies Within* builds on the groundbreaking research presented in the 1988 collection, *On Guard for Thee: Ethnicity and the Canadian State, 1939-1945*, edited by Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan, and Lubomyr Luciuk.

Unlike that work, however, *Enemies Within* includes contributions by scholars who do not always share the same perspective. Some contributions also challenge the blanket and common indictment of government policy as a "war on minorities" by suggesting the reality of internment was far more complicated. Finally, the book provides more attention to social and gender history than does *On Guard for Thee*.

To be sure, there were official government abuses in interning innocent Italians, as Luigi Bruti Liberati and Enrico Carlson Cumbo show in their respective articles. However, the work's authors are not afraid to question collective wisdom. For example, Angelo Principe criticizes Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's blanket apology for Italian-Canadian internment during World War II as being too "hastily embraced" in 1990. Given Benito Mussolini's aggressive courting of Italians abroad, there was some legitimacy in the Canadian government interning Fascist Italians, as Luigi Pennachio shows in examining the exportation of fascism to Toronto's Little Italy. In the same vein, Roberto Perin questions the Italian community's whitewash of the Fascist activities of cultural icon Mario Dulani.

Enemies Within provides a needed comparative look at the experiences of other internee groups. One of the oddest was the internment of Austrian and German Jews who were released from Nazi concentration camps on condition that they emigrate. As explained by Paula J. Draper, the British government asked Canada to take them in as "dangerous enemy aliens," only to discover that they were innocent refugees. British attempts to redress the situation were stymied by Frederick Blair, the anti-Semitic director of Canada's Immigration Branch, who insisted on imprisoning them because of a suspected Jewish plot to circumvent restrictive Canadian immigration policies. The worst part of their ordeal was that the Jewish internees were detained in camps containing Nazi prisoners of war.

Although the Canadian official practice of internment was often unjust and racist, it is helpful to note that this country was not alone in such practices. R.J. Bosworth, Lucio Sponza, and Rose D. Scherini describe the internment of Italians in, respectively, Australia, Britain, and the US. No country looks good.

Home and Away

Paulette Jiles
Enemy Women. Harper Collins $32

Joan Barfoot
Critical Injuries. Key Porter $22.95

Reviewed by Robert Finley

Readers familiar with Paulette Jiles's previous books, including her memoir *North Spirit: Travels among the Cree and Ojibway Nations*, and her 1984 Governor General's Award-winning collection of poetry, *Celestial Navigation*, will not be surprised to discover that *Enemy Women*, her first novel, tells the story of a journey. Missouri, one of the most intriguing of Civil War States, part Federal, part Rebel, part a world unto itself, forms the background for the travels and travails of eighteen-year-old Miss Adair Colley. Arrested and then imprisoned in Union St. Louis, Adair falls in love with the federal major in charge of her case, escapes with his help, and then

travels the long and dangerous "trace" south the whole length of the state to find her home, her life, and her love utterly transformed.

The book finds its subject in a particular niche of Civil War history, the rarely discussed fact of the imprisonment of women as, to coin a contemporary phrase, "illegal enemy combatants." Its heroine, caught up in this system, and then travelling across country, bears witness to an important aspect of the war: the Civil War, like so many contemporary conflicts, was often a local war, and Adair's perambulations give testimony to the dreadful intimacy between victims and their neighbours turned persecutors, many of whom are known on a first-name basis, as well as to the startling transformations of a landscape in which she finds, alternately, a familiar pastoral and a land laid waste.

It is in her descriptions of this landscape, both its beauty and horror, that Jiles's writing shines. Her descriptive abilities, carried over from her poetry, are the book's strongest point, and she is equally at home in setting out with lyric sensuousness the quality of light on a blade of oat grass, or the visceral battlefield horrors of war.

A less successful import from the poetry, however, is Jiles's sense of how to move the story along. Along Adair's road home, the serendipitous appearance of hats (for disguise), horses (for transport), old acquaintances (for maps), and tall dark strangers (for love) gives the story the quality of a fable, and, like a fable, the story proceeds more by plot devices than by plot, and more by magical interventions than by the necessities associated with character. The characters themselves—the feisty Adair, her noble Union major, the nasty prison matron, the prison bully — are types to the degree that their suffering or joy, stoicism or criminality remain oddly remote for the reader even while Jiles excels at describing their surroundings. There is a sense that even the central characters, Adair and her lover, move rather awkwardly through the pages, drawing on cliché gestures, the biting of knuckles, the rubbing of brows. Not that there is anything wrong with fable, or with the useful character types of fable, but they jar here in a narrative whose purpose is at least partly that of a historical correction.

Jiles is a writer who loves place and loves material. She responds to the Missouri landscape, from which she also hails, with tenderness and delight, and Civil War Missouri, with all its wellsprings and tributaries of correspondence, memoir, and war record is a vast source of material. But the narrative containment she has devised and the characters themselves may finally be inadequate to her subject.

Joan Barfoot, on the other hand, knows exactly what she is doing in *Critical Injuries,* her extraordinary ninth novel. Here is a master of her form marshalling its full resources to her purpose and leaving herself room for formal innovation and play as well. *Critical Injuries* begins with a single, instantaneous act of violence; arbitrary, nearly accidental, total and irreversible, it is as loud and brief as the single discharge of a shotgun in the enclosed space of a small town convenience store, and it thrusts two people who would otherwise appear to have little in common into catastrophically intersecting lives.

It is also an act which precipitates an intriguing set of problems for the novelist. At the moment in which her story begins, and for most of its three hundred and some pages, Barfoot's two main characters are, essentially, paralyzed—one, literally, her world circumscribed by the horizon of a hospital room ceiling, a bullet fragment lodged in her spine, and the other, pinned on his back in a field by two police dogs, then cuffed and incarcerated. Both Isla, a middle-aged mother and advertising executive, successful, and, in her second marriage, finally happy, and young Roddy, desperately

bored and thwarted by his small town existence, find themselves forced into a state of helpless inaction, with no volition, no choices, only the opportunity to reflect and to try to make sense of the astonishing changes that have come upon them with such swiftness.

From this difficult premise, Barfoot reaches both backward and forward, deep into their lives and experiences. She does so with both erudition and compassion: the book details its many worlds with real sureness and vividness, including Roddy's inner life as a young offender and Isla's harrowing loss of physical sensation from spinal cord injury. In alternating (and interestingly parallel) chapters, Barfoot gradually draws together the lives of her two protagonists and brings them impossibly, and yet inevitably, toward a second meeting and the beginning of redemption.

This is a novel of forgiveness, not easy, or facile, or ideologically founded forgiveness—but the real human capacity born only of a willingness and a will to understand. It is a novel about coming into consciousness of a larger community that includes all of the lives that touch our own—those that we find helpful and reassuring, and also those that are destructive, wanton, and sometimes cruel. In the character of Isla, in whom this will to understand is manifested in a breathtaking density of thought on all manner of subjects, we are given one of those rare and beautiful gifts of fiction: a character who is wise, compelling, and whole, whose voice is not the author's own, but a voice the author knows so perfectly that it inevitably speaks true, and, with wit, strength, anger, and compassionate reserve, bespeaks love.

Lessons of War

Denis Judd and Keith Surridge
The Boer War. John Murray £25

David J. Bercuson
Blood on the Hills: The Canadian Army in the Korean War. U of Toronto P $29.95.

Reviewed by Chris Leach

Nothing tests a nation's preparedness for war better than war itself. This truism is notably apparent in Denis Judd and Keith Surridge's *The Boer War* and David J. Bercuson's *Blood on the Hills: The Canadian Army in the Korean War.* Both Britain and Canada marched to war in 1899 and 1950 either arrogant or ignorant—or both—and their ill-prepared armies were forced to learn hard lessons about the new ways of armed conflict.

There is no shortage of narrative histories of the 1899-1902 Boer War, and Judd and Surridge's *The Boer War* travels some quite familiar ground. The authors have written an effective military history, but this is not a work of tactical analysis. Although the brief battle descriptions are accurate, detailed orders of battle, weapons technology, and tactical and operational methods are either embedded in the broader narrative or are omitted. Given the significance of the war to these military matters, the omissions are a shame, but the real strength of the book lies in challenging persistent assumptions particularly about the economic, social, and political dimensions of the war. For example, while the discovery of gold in the Boer republics has made the origins of the war seem a simple matter of business elite string-pulling, Judd and Surridge assert that business interests were not universally opposed to the existing political structures in the republics or in favour of war to bring them down. The Boer War had much more to do with Britain asserting its imperial prestige through expansion than with economic

interests, which some of the contemporary anti-Semitic, anti-war, pro-Boer set often linked to Jewish capitalist conspiracies. Judd and Surridge also note the ethnic and cultural nuances of the belligerents that affected the causes and course of the war and the peace that followed. Most significantly, the Boer War was not simply a war of imperialist Cape and Natal Britons versus Afrikaners of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Ethnic divisions throughout the entire region were much more subtle and complex as were the sentiments and allegiances awash in the conflict. Racial divisions were also blurred: in spite of the quite explicit desire to keep the war a "white man's war," non-whites were enlisted to work and fight on both sides. While the Boer War left the British in constitutional control and with a military experience to learn from, Judd and Surridge appropriately assert that the Afrikaners were far from a defeated people and culture. Indeed, the war served as a final stage of British-Afrikaner reconciliation with the Afrikaners later rising to prominence in the unified state. However, as the authors note, it was a reconciliation that failed to include non-whites, anticipated apartheid, and forced South African history along a self-destructive path.

Judd and Surridge weave their narrative together very well and succeed in bringing fresh interpretations into this very familiar story. The bibliography is quite extensive and includes other recent secondary sources, but generally only primary sources are cited in the endnotes. Photos and maps are included, but the maps are too few and add little to the battle narratives where they would be most useful.

In contrast to *The Boer War*, Bercuson's *Blood on the Hills* is unswervingly a military history complete with numerous photos and operational and tactical maps. Bercuson explicitly offers a sharp criticism of the political and military leadership of postwar Canada as they faced the prospect of a war in Korea after the Communist north invaded the south in 1950. The experience of World War II still shaped the priorities of an anti-militarist Canadian government and influenced the doctrines of an Anglophile military wedded to preparing for mass total war with its small cadre force. Of course, war had become the more technologically sophisticated and politicized limited warfare of the Cold War era; a training cadre was inappropriate for responding to rapidly developing crises that demanded well-trained combat-ready formations. Bercuson exposes Canada's lack of preparations by describing the improvised manner in which the Canadian Army Special Force for Korea was amassed, equipped, trained and despatched to Korea. Bercuson suggests that the soldiers who went to Korea represented "the first breed of Canada's post war military"—stoic servants of the state for which the author has the highest regard. Nevertheless, upon arrival in Korea in late 1950, the Canadian volunteers found themselves in a hostile topography and climate, inappropriately equipped, facing an enemy whose methods bore little resemblance to the methods used by the Germans in Italy, an irrelevant comparison so often used for training. The Canadians had to learn quickly, and Bercuson describes the evolution of Canadian combat effectiveness from one "hill" battle to another, from failures to remarkable tactical successes achieved with individual valour and sacrifice. Bercuson adopts a narrative style heavily laden with anecdotes and embellishment that scholarly readers might find distracting from his analytical purpose. However, although his combat narratives might at times seem novel-like, they are gripping, well documented, and serve the readers' understanding well. Unfortunately, Bercuson's narrative and assessment are so highly focused on the Canadian experience that the broader political and military context is sometimes

vague. For example, while the Canadian combat performance is closely scrutinized, that of allies is not presented in enough detail in order to draw effective evaluative comparisons. One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the way the author dissects the experience of war in Korea for the Canadian soldier. From the confused mayhem of combat and the sometimes hazardous pleasures of leave in Tokyo, to the boredom of everything in between, Bercuson depicts the "face of battle" in a way that reflects his understanding of soldiering. While the effect of this is often entertaining and always edifying, Bercuson's purpose is certainly historical and cautionary. Korea was worth fighting for, but Bercuson is equally emphatic that the 516 Canadian soldiers who died there should serve as a reminder that war—or peace-keeping—has to be prepared for with a military well equipped, trained, and nationally supported. Both Canada and Britain needed to learn that lesson.

Toying with Our Selves

Pat Kirkham, ed.
The Gendered Object. Manchester UP $22.95

Dan Fleming
Powerplay: Toys as Popular Culture. Manchester UP $34.95

Reviewed by Jill MacLachlan

These two innovative books share a concern with the ideological effects of everyday objects. If one forgets the old adage "never judge a book by its cover" for a moment, a glance at the suitably campy and colourful covers of the texts (both of which prominently display what Teresa de Lauretis might call that "technology of gender" par excellence, Barbie) provides insight into the vastly different approaches, styles, and conclusions which each brings to its subject.

The Gendered Object is a collection of essays that focus on the ways in which everything from perfume to bicycles to guns and Strawberry Shortcake dolls is marketed not only to sell the products themselves, but to produce and circulate (while claiming merely to reflect) problematic notions of masculinity and femininity. On the cover, a busty blonde plastic Barbie doll with excessively teased hair becomes an even more distorted and grotesque example of plastic femininity by the close range at which the photograph has been taken. A shirtless Ken doll appears to have sidled up next to her, and is eyeing Barbie (anxiously and yet, his painted-on arched eyebrow suggests, also with an air of erotic interest?) as she looks blankly ahead. The little tableau provides an apt opening example of the point that, despite their divergent theoretical approaches and objects of study, the contributors to *The Gendered Object* are making: consumers need to become aware not only of their own objectification, but of the ways in which stereotypical constructions of gender are sold (as inherent, as fixed, as natural) through manufactured goods. Gender, we are reminded in this collection, is as "non-essential" as the shoes, ties, and clothes which commodity culture tells us we need in order to "be" or "become" socially and sexually desirable men and women in the public eye. Resistance does not appear to be futile: for example, Nicholas Oddy shows in his essay "Bicycles" how political movements such as first-wave feminism altered the manufacturing and marketing of bikes during the late nineteenth century.

Virtually every essay in *The Gendered Object* is, like the book's cover, critically focused. What the essays lack in terms of length, they make up in breadth. Kate Luck's "Trousers: Feminism in Nineteenth-Century America," for example, provides a fascinating and accessibly written "snapshot" of the history of women wearing pants, starting with the Bloomer craze in America in the 1850s. All the essays include

detailed footnotes and would make perfect jumping-off points for scholars and students from a range of disciplines, such as Design or Women's Studies, who wish to conduct further research into the subject.

In *Powerplay*, toys are the objects of close examination. The jumble of toys on the cover reflects the author's design: to demonstrate through a set of enjoyable "readings" of various toys such as G.I. Joe and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, that toys are in fact a culture. Toys are carefully marketed to operate in conjunction with movies, video games, and, less frequently, written texts. Fleming's cross-disciplinary approach in *Powerplay* has undoubtedly made the book richer and more comprehensive; however, it may also be the reason I found both the style and structure of the book as muddled as a toybox and, at moments, as dizzying as a merry-go-round. This book compromises lucidity and cohesion in order to fill discursive gaps. The relationships between toys and childhood development or toys and gender acculturation are complex ones, but Fleming makes it more difficult for himself and, ultimately, the reader by oversimplifying his arguments or by constantly switching the register of his writing in order to make it accessible to readers who are also parents. For example, Chapter One opens with a rather awkward segue into the concept of "Identity": "Identity, though, is not easy to write about . . . . In an extreme essentialist vocabulary people are their identities, there is no wriggling around inside identities, no hopping in and out, no weird out-of-body experiences that allow people to step outside their identities and take a long, quizzical look at them. We're stuck with them because there is no difference between us and them." By contrast, *Powerplay* is at its strongest when Fleming speaks about the history of toys, and the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the mass production of toys as central to two new "cultures": the "cult of the child" as defined by the "culture of play."

The Gendered Object, despite its broad range of contributors, coalesces into a readable, accessible, but still eclectic whole. *Powerplay* offers a great deal of potential and a new way of looking at toys, but it is unable to absorb the discourses of psychology, economics, and history as effectively or as smoothly as does *The Gendered Object* under the deft editorship of Pat Kirkham.

"Half-caste" in China

Michael David Kwan

Things That Must Not Be Forgotten: A Childhood in Wartime China. Macfarlane Walter & Ross $22.99

Reviewed by Jennifer W. Jay

A Hong Kong social worker who emigrated to Vancouver in 1963, the late Michael David Kwan (1934-2001) launched a productive second career as an English teacher, translator, and writer only in the last decade of his life. His screenplay about Chinese railroad workers, *The Undaunted*, won the 1999 Praxis award, and the memoir under review, *Things That Must Not Be Forgotten*, garnered the Kiriyama Pacific Rim Book Prize for non-fiction, as well as a nomination for the Charles Taylor Prize for literary non-fiction. Both the background and the title of the memoir were provided by the Chinese journal that Kwan's father kept in 1945-46, but Kwan was motivated to write about his childhood only after he returned to China in 1987, four decades after his departure. In connecting his past in China to half a lifetime in Canada, the voice of the memoir is one of a mature, calm reflection on a child's experiences.

Born to a twenty-year-old Swiss mother and a middle-aged Chinese railway administrator who already had two teenage sons, David spent the first twelve years of his life in the Eurasian expatriate communities in

Beijing and Qingdao. From his first memory at the age of two until leaving China in 1947, David's childhood was privileged by affluence and sheltered from the turbulence of the Sino-Japanese War and the ensuing civil conflict. But although this boyhood was normal in its share of mischief, slimy creatures, a dog, and a treehouse, it could not escape the torment of a "half-caste" identity and the sadness left by the absence of his biological mother.

David was brought up in the Eurasian "magic circle" of the Legation Quarters where his British stepmother and his father entertained world leaders and prominent businessmen, and where he found himself without playmates his age and painfully segregated by his mixed-blood heritage. In this colonial, "caste-bound expatriate community," Chinese, foreigners or westerners, and mixed blood Eurasians measured each other against the social scale. In the lowest category were Eurasians like David, with a Chinese father and a western mother, who were pejoratively labelled "half-castes." Chinese and western classmates, teachers, and strangers mocked David's brown hair and high nose and called him a "half-caste brat," "little 'aff-caste," "a foreigner, a stinking half-caste," "foreign nose," "foreign ghost," and "ungrateful half-breed." Often the name-calling was followed with physical abuse. Even the brothers from the Catholic School hurled hurtful remarks about half-castes compromising the school's honour: "Aren't half-castes the result of moral turpitude?" When David's father was wrongfully accused of Japanese collaboration, David became "doubly an outcast." His only two friends were an older "half-caste" boy and a tenant farmer. Although he learned to read and write English and Chinese at the same time, David's culture and identity were significantly more British than Chinese. When David went to see his Chinese grandmother before leaving China, that was the first time in his twelve years that he ever had put on Chinese clothes.

Although David's stepmother was kind and responsible, David still sensed an irreplaceable loss caused by the departure of his beloved Chinese nanny and his mother Marianne. When David was two years old, Marianne had an affair. His father removed all physical traces of her and forbade anyone to speak about her, so that David's image of her was blurred. He was told that Marianne did not want the pregnancy and even threw herself down the stairs to miscarry, but he harboured no negative feelings about her, and his need to know Marianne is palpable throughout the memoir. Because Marianne was "Mummy," his anxiety about addressing his stepmother by that name caused him to walk in his sleep. As late as 1997 he questioned his stepmother during his last visit: "What was Marianne like?" David Kwan did not get an answer then, and he still did not know when he suffered a fatal heart attack during a public reading from his memoir at the Victoria Literary Festival in May 2001.

Auteure de force

Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis, and Valerie Raoul, eds.
Women Filmmakers: Refocusing. U of British Columbia P $29.95

Reviewed by Maurice Yacowar

Though this book results from a two-week conference and festival that SFU and UBC presented in Vancouver in March 1999, the articles go well beyond those presentations. This anthology is a model both for its comprehensive range and for its sensible balances: between theory and explication, art and industry, issue and personal experience, critical sophistication and clarity, the West and the emerging postcolonial identities.

The first section of this thoughtfully structured book provides the historical base. Ann Kaplan surveys the history of

woman filmmaking, especially as Europe leaves the US hegemony. Angela Martin explores the bias in the term "auteur" (Hence my title—I learn fast) and its conflation with virility. Donia Mounsef examines the French avant-garde through the anti-realism of Germaine Dulac and Marguerite Duras. For Catherine Fowler, the matured cinefeminism of Sally Potter, Chantal Akerman, and Yvonne Rainer inheres in their denial of illusionism.

Fowler's theme is amplified in the second section, which consists of studies and/or interviews with four major filmmakers. The focus is on Helma Sanders Brahms's *Germany, Pale Mother,* Sally Potter's *The Tango Lesson,* Agnieszka Holland's *Provincial Actors* and *Europa, Europa.* Margarethe von Trotta gets a general interview, then a close study of *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages.* All are models for a viewer's active engagement with the film.

Part three surveys the implications of working in a popular genre in Europe, with studies of Doris Dörrie's comedy, *Nobody Loves Me;* the appropriation of a male form like the road movie (from *Le camion* to *Baise-moi*); thematic and stylistic tendencies of some current French women directors; and Lina Wertmuller's inflection of the grotesque in the apparently misogynous *Seven Beauties.* Reviving that brilliant classic is especially welcome.

Part four shifts to the conditions of production, including the emigration of Eastern European filmmakers to the West, the effects of political change in Poland and East Germany, and Patricia Plattner's response to demographic issues in Switzerland. Two directors' panels charmingly reflect upon the problems of government funding and confronting cultural domination and isolation.

The next three sections prescribe postcolonial filmmaking as the antidote for Hollywood. Part five introduces women filmmakers of Kenya, Malaysia, Argentina, Cuba, and China. The discussions are all the more important, given how difficult it is to obtain these films. Part six looks at India projects shot by Indian and non-Indian directors, including Deepa Mehta, Pratibha Parmar, Raman Mann, and Patricia Plattner. Again there is a salutary mix of critical analyses and director interview.

Their example of border crossing and cross-cultural communication continues into part seven, "Representations of and by Minority Women." The former colonizers are found to be as postcolonial as their former colonies. Carrie Tarr examines the depiction of North African women in French film, Lesley Marx the work of the white South African director Katinka Heyns, and Elena Feder two Chilean filmmakers in Canada. Guita Schyfter, a Mexican Jew raised in Costa Rica, discusses *Like a Bride,* her film about Jewish community tensions in Mexico.

Part eight brings us home. Nicole Giguère and Jocelyne Denault provide complementary surveys of Quebec documentary and feature filmmaking. Carole Ducharme discusses her parodic approach to homophobia in *Straight from the Suburbs.* Ken Eisner and Michelle La Flamme survey First Nations women filmmakers. Diane Burgess considers the implications of the closing of the National Film Board's Studio D. In an apt climax, camerawoman Zoe Dirse demonstrates how a woman wielding the camera can critique "the male gaze": "If, in fact, the female gaze is almost absent from dominant culture, then the challenge is to change the patriarchal way of looking by imposing the female gaze on our cultural life." This collection reports how brilliantly this challenge has already been met globally, and encourages the next generation to extend the frontier.

Each chapter has its own notes and filmography, as appropriate. Especially useful are the eight-page section of film sources and the eighteen-page select bibliography. A remarkable offering to Women's Studies,

Film Studies, and the intelligent lay reader, this is probably the best single text on women filmmakers, and the sort of work that should inspire many instructors to develop courses based on its rich contents.

Livesay's Archive

Dorothy Livesay. Dean J. Irvine, ed.
Archive for Our Times: Previously Uncollected and Unpublished Poems. Arsenal $19.95

Reviewed by Stefan Haag

Three texts lead us into and out of this new collection of Livesay's poems: Miriam Waddington's foreword, Di Brandt's afterword, and Dean Irvine's editorial postscript. In her foreword, Waddington reminisces about the Dee she knew in the 1940s and states that "her themes flowed from her daily life and her deep emotional interest in politics," but also suggests that "perhaps it was not politics so much as a hunger for justice and freedom in the world" (which would still be a kind of politics, at least from a contemporary critical perspective). In the afterword, Brandt, speaking for a younger generation of women poets, stresses the importance of Livesay as a mentor. Waddington's and Brandt's short pieces frame Livesay's poems well. One gets a vivid sense of Livesay's numerous roles in the lives of other poets. Brandt also raises a number of very pertinent questions in regard to the editorial impact of this collection:

> Which of these poems were intended for book publication in their present form in Livesay's mind? How does this collection change her oeuvre, posthumously, without her consent, so to speak? To what extent should we read these poems as background material, and to what extent as completed text? What new information can these relatively unedited poems shed on her poetic project, and what authority do they carry?

While answers to these questions clearly go beyond the scope of this review, it is important to keep them in mind. Waddington suggests that these poems are not "intended to be Dee's *best* poems, but they . . . must not be left out of the body of Dee's work" because they can tell us more about Livesay's process of writing poetry. Irvine's editorial postscript sketches Livesay's development and adds some reflections on Livesay's archive and its relation to the current volume. Examining correspondence between Livesay and her archivist friend Elizabeth Varley and relying on Jacques Derrida's notion of the archive as promise, Irvine comes to the conclusion that his volume serves to extend the life of the poet by making the archive (or at least part of it) available to the public.

Organized chronologically into decades, the volume allows us to follow Livesay's development as a poet. I have always been intrigued by Livesay's activist verse of the 1930s and still think "Day and Night" is one of her stronger poems, especially in the way it integrates agit-prop performance with poetic qualities. To my delight, there is much along these activist lines in the current volume. Some poems from the 1930s seem overdrawn and simplistic; however, one has to see Livesay's political convictions in her poems as responses to real social conditions. Only then will we do justice to them. Listen to the following lines and imagine them being hurled from a stage in the 1930s at a union gathering:

> "General strike"—
> The words mean nothing: the words are empty,
> Empty as the sudden quiet world,
> Until one word comes hurling, striking at the root of you,
> Crumpling all the pettiness, turning rust to dust,
> Until from the ploughed lands, the mines or the factories
> "Revolution" sounded out in many marching feet.

Organizing workers into unions then was an arduous process often met by unfair (or even illegal) opposition and had Livesay's full sympathies and support. She was also aware of the abuse of words in these quarrels and hoped that poetry could play a role in revitalizing the language:

> Words! I am ashamed to use words; you have so abused them
> Crushed under the weight of too many meanings.
> Yet I must use words, to make you listen—
> You have only your ears left: your eyes are blinded.

And Livesay always has a fine ear, as in these lines: "Now curl me colour, a plumed cloud / Purple to circle the sky."

From the 1940s to the 1970s, Livesay wrote striking examples of what she called "documentary" poems. "The Hammer and the Shield" documents the diplomatic career of the Swede Dag Hammarskjöld, who served as Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1953 until his death in a plane crash in 1961. Livesay's poem ends with Hammarskjöld's own words in italics, in a gesture towards the undying memory of the great man.

In the 1980s, Livesay seemed to have reflected on her poetic career. In the last poem of the volume, "Anything Goes," she appears to lose herself in aloof and abstract reflections on poetry; however, in a gesture hearkening back to some of her best agit-prop poetry of the 1930s, Livesay returns to concrete political issues to round out the poem:

> Above all a poem records speech: the way it was said between people animals
> birds
> a poem is an archive for our times That is why NOW today a poem must cry out against war.

All in all, these poems are well worth reading, both on their own and as additions to Livesay's substantial body of work. Irvine points out that there is more material left for future industrious editors, for *Archive for Our Times* collects only about a fourth of Livesay's unpublished writing.

Concept and Culture

Ian G. Lumsden, Curtis Joseph Collins, Laurie Glenn
The Beaverbrook Art Gallery Collection: Selected Works. Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, NB $19.95

Charles Green
The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism. U of Minnesota P US $24.95

Tom Henighan
The Maclean's Companion to Canadian Arts and Culture. Raincoast Books $24.95

Reviewed by Jack Stewart

Lord Beaverbrook collected paintings as investments and endowments; his taste did not run to abstract art. *The Beaverbrook Art Gallery* provides a cross-section of Canadian as well as British and international art. From Confederation until well into the twentieth century, Canadian painters preferred to train in Europe, deriving their styles from Paris or London. The Group of Seven based theirs on Post-Impressionism, but created a Canadian art through passionate expression of landscape. In J.E.H. MacDonald's *Evening, Thornhill* (c. 1914), outlines of a tree and houses flame with orange paint that flickers against complementary purple and blue. Tom Thomson and Emily Carr painted Native people, as well as their surroundings. Bright patches of colour enliven Carr's *Indian Village: Alert Bay*, with its totem poles and squatting figures. Thomson's *Spring* (c. 1915) shows a highly developed sense of design; Lawren Harris's geometric form and colour make *Morning* (c. 1921), with its red houses and gap-toothed fence, starkly dramatic; A. Y. Jackson's *Grey Day,*

Les Eboulements (1935) depicts landscape in voluptuously wavelike forms.

In the 1940s, the New York art scene influenced Les Automatistes in Montreal and Painters Eleven in Toronto. Jean-Paul Riopelle applied heavy impasto with a palette knife, his canvases recording rhythmic impulses. The Saskatchewan School of Art's Emma Lake Workshops hosted artists such as Barnett Newman, giving birth to the Regina Five. Contemporary works include John Greer's *Nine Grains of Rice* (1991), large pieces of polished marble, and Paul E. Bourque's multimedia installation, *Plexus* (2000), while the spokes and rims of Greg Curnoe's *Doc Morton Front Wheel* (1980) make it a "colour wheel" of a different kind. Salvador Dali's *Santiago El Grande*, a monumental pastiche of horse and rider ascending against a background of metallic-blue cantilevers, introduces the "International Collection," spanning the years 1340-1957 and containing a few masterworks, such as Botticelli's simplified, almost poster-like *Resurrection* (c. 1490) and Lucas Cranach the Elder's *Lucretia* (c. 1530), cut down to emphasize breasts and de-emphasize dagger.

Charles Green's *The Third Hand*, a penetrating survey of collaboration in conceptual, performative, ecological, and environmental art, explores the "cusp of modernism and postmodernism," from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Rather than offering the artwork as a thing to be apprehended by senses and imagination, postmodern artists prioritized their intentions and tried to control the play of meaning; much of their work consequently ranges from banal to hermetic.

After Marcel Duchamp, art is no longer medium-specific, but belongs primarily in the mind, taking form as concept or intention. In a "post-identity" culture, object-shy artists shifted emphasis to communication, actions, and ideas, blurring boundaries between image and thought, and sometimes dissolving the single artist/author into a "composite subjectivity." Joseph Kosuth, showing the influence of information systems, displaced visual images with words and texts. His "archival" art, subordinated to textual theory, took the "surrogate" form of paid notices in newspapers. For Kosuth, art is "a game of signification," that seeks to illuminate language—literally, in his neon-lit installations. Like Borges's librarian, the "artist as archivist" deploys a grammatical and textual system. Rejecting a first-person singular signature, Kosuth and his collaborators put the spotlight on interrelation of print and visual media. With Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden, the discourse of art becomes its subject. Burn focused on the technological production of "value," his textual *Soft-Tape* (1966) and *Xerox Books* (1968) calling on P.D. Ouspensky's correlation of space and consciousness. Materials such as glass and mirrors were favoured for their self-effacing transparency and reflection. Burn distinguished between "looking" (passive observation), "seeing" (finding), and "reading" (interpreting). His textual designs occupy a twilight "zone between art and philosophy." Word and image, criticism and art converge in Burn's *"Value Added" Landscapes* (1992-93), in which he superimposed his own text, printed on Perspex, over an amateur painting bought in a second-hand shop and framed. This form of collaboration after the fact betrays a "nostalgia for the autonomous art object itself," even if relegated to the status of found art and subjected to reinscription.

(The) Boyle Family practised a kind of "fragmented and hermetic" postmodern primitivism; their exact reconstructions of segments of earth from remote campsites around the globe testified to a forgotten reality. Their work had ecological and political overtones, and their emphasis on discursive knowledge pre-empted aesthetic critiques. Boyle Family's "earthprobes" combined geological fact with fictional illusion: the "fiberglass resin casts" were dra-

matically lit to expose textures. Through reproduction of randomly selected motifs, they tried to concretize a moment of perception in its most concentrated form. The heightened sense of reality in seeing a segment of the earth's surface constituted the art experience, compounded with a sense of the "uncanny" that stemmed from the retrieval and communication of memory. The Boyles put the emphasis on seeing as finding and their key trope was metonymy—the relation of surface detail to memory and sensation. Anne and Patrick Poirier's city models signify memory "as a symbolic landscape of icons arranged for mnemonic effect," without the limits of historical fact. The archaeology of memory and research on lost time coincide with fictional invention in *Ostia Antica* (1972), an "enormous scale model of an ancient ruined city." Such installations concretize the act of memory in assembling images of the past. One is reminded of fictional texts like Borges's "Funes the Memorious" and Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, as well as of Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

Helen Meyer Harrison and Newton Harrison present environmental studies as art. Their *Lagoon Cycle* (1974-84) was intended to raise consciousness about fish conservation. Seeing the planet and its ecosystems more clearly became the ethics of their art, so that a museum could double as an aquarium. The Harrisons opposed Earth art such as "[Robert] Smithson's aborted 1970 project to cover an island near Vancouver . . . with broken glass." Such ecological issues subsume the signatures of individual artists. Christo's landscape art, notably *Wrapped Coast, Little Bay, One Million Square Feet, Sydney, Australia* (1969), altered perception, dramatically reducing the gap between "nature" and "culture," but was destined to end up in photographic archives. In some cases, the act of collaboration *became* art, as in the theatrical mime of Gilbert & George that reduced the participants, with their stilted manners and gilded faces, to "sculptural objects," eliding the barrier between art and artist. The body of the artist again became the medium in Marina Abramovic's daring self-presentation as a passive object to an audience. Such experiments, along with more meditative interactions, have an ontological basis that goes beyond traditional concepts of art (if not of ritual).

Tom Henighan's *Companion to Canadian Arts and Culture* is a useful and readable guidebook, alternating introductory essays with specific sections: "Theatre," "Music," "Visual Arts," "Dance," "Film," "Literature & Book Publishing," "Television & Radio," "Cultural Spaces & Showplaces," and "Festivals," ending with "Conclusion: The Arts in the 21st Century." It includes lists of award winners, cultural magazines, literary texts, and short biographies of artists and writers, and is fun to browse through, being well enhanced with photographs. Henighan gives special attention to cultural production and consumption in Canada and to cultural festivals as a way of popularizing the arts.

Tales of the Seannachie

Alistair MacLeod

No Great Mischief. McClelland & Stewart $32.99

Reviewed by Dianne MacPhee

Irish writer Colm Toibin considers the discovery of Alistair MacLeod's collection of short stories *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* to be the high point of his work in editing *The Modern Library: The 200 Best Novels in English since 1950*. For Toibin, the discovery was "a surprise, a shock to the system," and he asks, "How could we have not known about the Canadian, Alistair MacLeod?" How indeed? MacLeod is a slow writer whose thirteen short stories are contained in two small volumes published ten years apart. *No Great Mischief* is his first novel

and has been thirteen years in the making.

The story begins as the narrator, Alexander MacDonald, drives from his home in southern Ontario to Toronto for a weekly visit with his alcoholic older brother, Calum, who lives in a bleak downtown tenement inhabited by "people who do not own much of anything." We quickly learn that there is more to this relationship than brother caring for brother. For Alexander is the *gille beag ruadh* of the *clann Chalum Ruaidh*, the little red-haired boy of the clan of Red Malcolm (and this changes everything as MacLeod reveals himself as a modern-day *seannachie*—the Celtic chronicler, the guardian of memory). His precise, rhythmic, bardic prose leads us with the words "As I begin to tell this" into the past of the MacDonald clan which fought with Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn, was betrayed and murdered in the pass of Glencoe, was decimated in Charles Stuart's destructive bid for power at Culloden, and whose descendants today are dispersed throughout the world.

The setting for this story is complex as we move through time and space while the narrator uses flashback and memory, myth and legend to relate family history. Past and present blend together in the enduring loyalty of the extended family of the clan and the demands of bloodlines, while MacLeod also explores what happens when cultures collide and the bonds of clan and family are broken.

Clann Chalum Ruaidh is named after Malcolm MacDonald, Red Malcolm, who left Moidart, Scotland in 1779 at the age of fifty-five accompanied by his sick wife, who died on the trip, and twelve other family members, along with the family dog who refused to be left behind. *Calum Ruadh* lived another fifty-five years in Cape Breton and lies buried on a point of land which is gradually being worn away by ocean storms that will eventually unite the old patriarch with the ocean that separates him from his Scottish home.

The narrator, Alexander MacDonald, and his twin sister are raised by their grandparents after the deaths of their parents and eleven-year-old brother who fall through thin ice while attempting to cross to the island where the parents are lighthouse keepers. They leave nothing behind them "but a lantern—perhaps tossed on to the ice by a sinking hand and miraculously landing upright and continuing to glow, or perhaps, set down after its arc, wildly but carefully by a hand which sought to reach another." The three older brothers are left to raise themselves in the old *Calum Ruadh* house, fishing and hunting and increasingly speaking only Gaelic, "the old language of the land," as they grow up without electricity, plumbing, or schooling, sleeping under horseblankets with loaded guns under their beds. They shoot deer from their windows, "straining to get the antlered head in line with the rifle's sights by the the light of the '*lochran aigh nam bochd*,' the Gaelic phrase for the moon, the 'lamp of the poor.'"

The two Cape Breton grandfathers, both "of the *Calum Ruadh*," who play such an important part in the lives of the orphaned twins, are appealing characters and provide balance for the old stories and clan legends. The maternal grandfather is a neat, fastidious, and logical man who studies clan history and imagines the tired, hungry, wounded, and defeated clansmen trying to make their way home after the futile rebellion of the '45. Alexander's other grandfather is a joyful, earthy, whisky-loving man who sees the ancient MacDonalds "coming home across the wildness of Rannoch Moor in the splendour of the autumn sun. . . . Singing the choruses of their rousing songs, while the sun gleams off the shining of their weapons and the black and the redness of their hair."

Generations after the original *Calum Ruadh* leaves Scotland in search of land and economic stability for his family, his descendants migrate in search of work and

money and become part of the Gaelic diaspora. The sister marries a petroleum engineer and lives in a modern home in Calgary; the older brothers wander the remote places of the world as specialized "drift and development miners." Although Alexander has graduated from university with a degree in dentistry, he does not hesitate to join his brothers as replacement for a namesake Alexander who is killed in a suspect mine accident. The members of the *clann Chalum Ruaidh* remain true to the family maxim: "Always look after your blood."

MacLeod's handling of the complex themes of displacement and loyalty interwoven with treachery enriches the underlying sorrow of this story. When the sister visits Moidart on a journey to Scotland, she is instantly recognized by the clan members as one of their own and informed that "You really are from here. You have just been away for awhile." Stories drift through time and unite past and present as though they are one and the same. The *Auld Alliance* between Scotland and France is mentioned; it was broken when the promised French ships and gold did not arrive to help French-raised Prince Charlie in his bid for the throne of Scotland. Ironically, young clansmen were often educated in France, becoming fluent in French and Gaelic. The words of the title, *No Great Mischief,* are those of General Wolfe about the Highlanders in his army at Quebec: "They are hardy, intrepid, accustomed to a rough country, and no great mischief if they fall." But it was a French-speaking MacDonald who climbed the steep cliff path at Quebec and deceived Montcalm's sentry by speaking French; likely the same MacDonald fought against Wolfe in the battle at Culloden. In the mining camp, members of the *clann Chalum Ruaidh* feud and brawl with a team of French Canadian miners. The two groups distrust one another, and yet in one moving scene, they are united by "the common fabric of the music." The catalyst which brings the two groups together is yet another member of the Gaelic diaspora, James MacDonald, *cousin agam fhein,* a James Bay Cree who plays all the old Scottish tunes on his great-grandfather MacDonald's fiddle.

The fierce clan loyalty creates an unexpected incident that shatters Calum's life and changes the family irrevocably. Treachery and betrayal, sorrow and loss mark them. In the final chapter, Alexander takes his brother Calum home to die in Cape Breton. MacLeod makes the closing scene, in which the two Macdonald brothers drive at full speed through deep water on the washed-out Canso Causeway, a memorable image of the passage from this world to the next. *No Great Mischief* demonstrates the truth of MacLeod's own assertion that "what makes things universal is that they touch a core, a storehouse of human experience and concerns that transcend regions and transcend time."

Two Wars, Two Histories

Eric L. Muller

Free to Die for Their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters in World War II. U of Chicago P US $27.50

Reporting Vietnam: American Journalism 1959-1975. Library of America US $17.95

Reviewed by Joseph Jones

In most respects—authorship, length, scope, and distance from the subject—these two books are polar opposites. One thing they do share is a concern with the American response to Asian otherness.

Of the more than 110,000 Japanese Americans relocated to internment camps during World War II, some ten thousand young men were eligible for the draft. All were classified IV-C (persons not acceptable to the armed forces) in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, but government policy changed early in 1944 because new and

replacement soldiers were needed for combat units. When called to military service, over three hundred interned Japanese chose to resist.

Based on personal interviews and extensive archival research, *Free to Die for Their Country* proceeds chronologically from internment to recruitment, reaction, trial, imprisonment, and pardon. Author Eric L. Muller, a professor of law, demonstrates special interest in the functioning of judicial process and relevant constitutional theory. Half of the book details the draft violations and ensuing trials of resister groups from three of the ten internment camps. These groups might be called the Heart Mountain 63 (Wyoming), the Minidoka 38 (Idaho), and the Tule Lake 27 (California).

The history and sociology of the West Coast Japanese community inform the entire narrative, with attention paid to issues like assimilation, generational difference, racism, segregation within the military, and internal divisions. A major corporate character in the story is the Japanese American Citizens League. Muller's interviews concentrate on ten resisters, over half of them from Heart Mountain, where draft resistance "gave birth to the best-organized and most articulate resistance movement that ever took shape on any issue at any of the ten WRA [War Relocation Authority] camps." The Heart Mountain group faced two trials, one of resisters and one of conspirators. While the resisters were convicted, the presumed conspirators managed to overturn their conviction through appeal.

An entire chapter is devoted to the dismissal of charges against the resisters from Tule Lake. Although the legal and practical implications of the judgment receive specialist treatment, the outline of the issues remains clear. For most readers, elaboration on the background and circumstances of the judge seems likely to hold greater interest: "Louis Goodman undoubtedly had some sense, as both a Jew and a child of immigrants, of what it meant to be an outsider in America." One other individual particularly stands out in this book. Jimmie Omura, editor of a Denver Japanese American newspaper, covered the events at Heart Mountain. WRA officials had him removed from his position, and he was then brought to trial for conspiracy. Vindicated by acquittal, Omura nevertheless failed to reestablish his career as a journalist.

In both preface and afterword, Muller comments on his affinity for his topic as the son of a Jewish refugee. He also mentions his own personal history of having been just a few years too young to face conscription for Vietnam. Genuine engagement with his material is matched by a sense of proportion and an appealing narrative style.

Reporting Vietnam is an anthology of sixty-one pieces of "journalism" (three from wire services, twenty from newspapers, seven from news magazines, eighteen from general interest magazines, and thirteen from books) ranging from two to fifty-four pages in length. Published in 2000, this volume represents a selection from the two-volume version published by the Library of America in 1998. The original periodical sources amount to some twenty publications, of which the least mainstream are *Ramparts* and the *New Republic*. The stated intention of this version is "to put a moderately priced paperback within reach of the widest possible audience, particularly students." The foreword proposes that the volume "provides a coherent and compelling account" able to give the reader perspective on "past mistakes and future challenges." The introduction claims "good-faith effort at a representative sample" that should serve "anyone seeking answers," with journalism touted as a form that "modestly sticks to the facts."

This announcement of what amounts to a textbook bears careful examination, since the anthology is extracted from an impos-

ing series devoted to American writing. A glance through the table of contents reveals expected names. The chronological ordering gives a vague sense of an overarching narrative, one which the foreword describes as "rising action . . . climax . . . decline."

The "Vietnam" of this anthology is clearly an era, not a country, since ten of the pieces have to do with the United States. Of the remainder, forty-five centre on Vietnam, four on Cambodia, and three on Laos. About three-fifths of the Southeast Asian pieces convey a sense of live combat. This proportion leaves an impression of the Vietnam War as combat in a distant foreign country. Such a geography complements a historiography that closes the subject as a unified event in the past.

Of the US material, only three pieces represent public occurrences in the extended and divisive internal conflict over the war: the Pentagon protest of October 1967, the Kent State killings of May 1970, and the Miami Republican convention of August 1972. The styles of the first (by Norman Mailer) and the last (by Hunter S. Thompson) may go some way towards discounting their content. Two surprising absences (covered by three pieces in the two-volume edition) are the Chicago Democratic convention of August 1968 and the Moratorium of November 1969. Given the 758 pages of text, it seems strange to find so little trace of the extreme reactions that the Vietnam War provoked in the United States: hundreds of thousands of deserters and draft offenders, tens of thousands of exiles, thousands of jailed conscientious objectors, hundreds of violent protests and bombings, and some self-immolations. For example, the only hint of exiles in Canada occurs at the end of a *Newsweek* report on a returned veteran: "I wish I hadn't even gone. Maybe I should have gone to Canada."

Other aspects of the anthology also suggest smoothing and avoidance. Pieces not selected for republication in this single-volume version include accounts of defoliation, civilian casualties, and atrocities. The one passing mention of Watergate occurs in John McCain's homage to Richard Nixon. McCain's prisoner-of-war recollection is the fourth-longest piece in the anthology, dominates the final hundred pages, and sets a tone for the ending of the war. Without the piece on Miami 1972, there would be no mention whatsoever of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. An account of their April 1971 Operation Dewey Canyon III, with medals hurled onto the steps of the Capitol in Washington, would have provided some balance to McCain.

Ongoing deep disagreements over the Vietnam War have disappeared in this chronological collection of unrelated contemporary pieces. Implying—and even claiming—selection and proportion and shape, the package distorts and falsifies its worthwhile contents. The naive historiography of this anthology tends toward the quagmire school, which sees the good intentions of the United States somehow gone astray, with no one responsible. There are also touches of outright revisionism in some pieces, which seem to present the view that fighting communism through military action in Vietnam was a noble and inescapable cause.

War Stories

Dagmar Novak
Dubious Glory: The Two World Wars and the Canadian Novel. Peter Lang US $53.95

Muriel Whitaker, ed.
Great Canadian War Stories. U of Alberta P $19.95

Great Canadian War Stories (audiotape). U of Alberta P $39.95

Reviewed by Susan Fisher

Dagmar Novak's *Dubious Glory*, a survey of the modern Canadian war novel, will be a useful reference for scholars, for it examines

works from both world wars of the twentieth century. She discusses writers such as Basil King and Bertrand Sinclair who have been largely forgotten; she also examines well-known writers such as Ralph Connor whose war novels have been (perhaps deservedly) forgotten.

Her method is serviceable: there is a brief biographical sketch of each author, followed by a plot summary. She proceeds chronologically, not only for obvious historical reasons but also for critical ones. Novak classifies the early works of World War I as romance, in which essentially pure and virtuous heroes descended into the hell of war, emerging either dead or wounded, but certainly not tainted. This mode, so evident in works such as Ralph Connor's *The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land*, was succeeded in the late 1920s and the 1930s by the brutal realism of such works as Charles Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed* and Philip Child's *God's Sparrows*. According to Novak, works about World War II maintain this realistic mode, but adopt a more sharply ironic tone. Whereas the romances of the first war tend to treat officers as noble creatures, the novels of the second war focus firmly on the "little man" and his experience of the pointlessness of warfare and the bureaucratic indifference of the military.

Novak devotes her penultimate chapter to Findley's 1977 *The Wars*, which she regards as the apotheosis of this development. Her discussion usefully links Findley's novel to the traditions of Canadian war writing she has already outlined: *The Wars* revisits, albeit in an ironic mode, the "idealistic romance" of much early Great War writing; it also employs the "grim realism" of the war writing that emerged in the late 1920s and 1930s; finally, it embodies the "quest for meaning" that Novak describes as characteristic of such World War II novels as Colin McDougall's *Execution*. But *The Wars* needs to be viewed, according to Novak, not only as a culmination of these traditions but also as Findley's response to contemporary conditions. Accordingly, she devotes several pages to Canada's involvement in Vietnam. This is interesting enough material, but Novak never explains how it might affect our reading of *The Wars*.

Her final chapter employs a Frye-inspired schema of historical cycles to explain the evolution from romance to realism to irony. The differences in tone that she describes certainly do exist, but to claim as she does, invoking Frye's theory of modes, that these differences are the natural outcome of historical cycles will be a bit much for most readers. Novak's adherence to this diachronic perspective leads her to neglect other aspects of war writing. She does not discuss, for example, the rhetorical problems of representing the horrors of war. Moreover, except in her discussion of *The Wars*, where she points out Findley's originality in using photographs and archives, she does not examine the complex links between fiction and other forms of cultural or collective memory.

The rigidities imposed by this critical model perhaps also explain why Novak's study (apparently completed in 1999) ends with *The Wars*, and does not include Kevin Major's *No Man's Land* (1994) or Jack Hodgins's *Broken Ground* (1998). Of course, one can never cover everything, but looking at these novels, which contain very little of the irony so prominent in *The Wars*, might have caused Novak to modify her critical framework.

Muriel Whitaker's collection *Great Canadian War Stories* contains excerpts from a wide range of twentieth-century works. The emphasis in her informative introduction is on the First War, but the selections are fairly evenly divided between the two world wars; there is even a short piece by Hugh Garner on the Spanish Civil War. Geographically, too, the range is wide—from the Western Front to an internment camp in Borneo to a Polish vil-

lage. Some of the pieces are excerpts from well-known longer works that are still in print: *The Wars, Generals Die in Bed, Obasan.* But others are taken from works such as Peregrine Acland's *All Else Is Folly* and Will Bird's *Sunrise for Peter and Other Stories* that are not easy to find, and these are welcome. Some of Whitaker's choices are excellent: I particularly enjoyed discovering "Winter's Tale," a short story by Thomas Raddall about the Halifax explosion. A well-selected bit from *Turvey* is amusing; a whole novel of this sort of thing is tiresome, but this brief excerpt works very well. Rather than excerpting Colin McDougall's *Execution*, Whitaker has included "The Firing-Squad," the original short story on which the novel was based; the outcome of the story is completely different from that of the novel. For readers wanting an introduction to Canadian war fiction, including selections from francophone works such as Louis Caron's *The Draft Dodger* (*L'Emittouflé*) and Roch Carrier's *The Hockey Sweater and Other Stories* (*Les Enfants du bonhomme dans la lune*), Whitaker's collection will be very useful. As an anthology, its value is perhaps limited to high-school or lower-level college courses. Instructors of upper-level courses may prefer their students to read works like *Generals Die in Bed* and *The Wars* in their entirety.

An accompanying set of audiotapes presents eighteen of the twenty-two selections. The readings by John Born are, by and large, effective, although his attempts at a Newfoundland accent (for Will Bird's "Sunrise for Peter") are regrettable. In reading D.A. MacMillan's "The Newspaper Writer," Born gives one character, a young Canadian pilot, a Midwestern twang. Two pieces have first-person female narrators, yet Born delivers these as well. Despite such flaws, these tapes will be a useful classroom resource, even for instructors who choose not to use the print anthology.

The Afterlife of Trauma

Michael Rothberg
Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation. U of Minnesota P US $19.95

Fred Turner
Echoes of Combat: Trauma, Memory, and the Vietnam War. U of Minnesota P US $16.95

Leigh Gilmore
The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony. Cornell UP US $16.95

Reviewed by Marlene Briggs

A decade has passed since the publication of *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (1992), a landmark book on trauma co-authored by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. Now (illuminating the retrospective anxieties of the millennial turn), such preoccupations as amnesia and memory, haunting and inheritance, mourning and reconstruction motivate a wide array of researchers in the humanities and social sciences. Scholars have become increasingly attentive to the protracted social, economic, and cultural aftermath of massive trauma. For instance, the Holocaust and the Vietnam War are now widely acknowledged historical traumas whose legacies remain ongoing and unresolved. By way of contrast, traumas engendered through sexuality or family life occupy a more precarious place within the contemporary politics of memory. Oscillating between past and present, the current proliferation of memoir and testimonial writing blurs distinctions between public and private, thereby highlighting the complex afterlife of trauma, a subject investigated in distinct ways by Rothberg, Turner, and Gilmore.

Michael Rothberg's attention is turned to the afterlife of the Holocaust. Noting the absence of "a transdisciplinary space of dialogue" between the fields of Holocaust Studies and cultural studies, Rothberg proposes to fill this gap. Ranging among

philosophy, literary testimony, film, television, figure skating, the US Holocaust Museum, as well as fiction and art produced by subsequent generations, his ambitious book follows a tripartite division in pursuit of the postwar responses of modernism, realism, and postmodernism. Not surprisingly, in the face of such a bewildering range of material, the book is highly schematic. Arguing that neither mimetic nor poststructuralist models alone are adequate to interpret Holocaust artifacts, Rothberg introduces a new category: "traumatic realism." Through this category, he juxtaposes issues which normally polarize discussions in Holocaust studies: the everyday and the extreme, narrative and anti-narrative, survivors and descendants, the real and the hyperreal. This category seems most valuable in its application to works of testimony by Charlotte Delbo and Ruth Klüger, projects which strive for connection even as they enact a profound rejection of conventional modes of response or consolation. And adapting the work of Marianne Hirsch on "postmemory," Rothberg is eloquent on the dilemmas of the present generation in their search for "representational practices adequate to the aftermath" in an age of commodification. Because "the process of coming to terms with the past is not simply belated but radically uneven, the afterlife of an event needs to be periodized as carefully as the event itself." Whether or not traumatic realism may be adapted as a heuristic tool to other instances of historical trauma remains open.

Fred Turner's focus is the Vietnam War. Arguing that the Vietnam War is a "cultural trauma," the author tracks down traces of the conflict in popular culture, from pulp fiction serials to paramilitary paintball contests. Drawing on sociology and communications, his most provocative readings involve well-known films such as *Taxi Driver* (1976) and *Star Wars* (1977). Turner has a nuanced understanding of the way successive histories and conflicts overlap, and he makes selective but effective forays into group psychology and psychoanalysis; fantasy, misogyny, and perversion are key terms in his discussion. He draws on the work of American historian Richard Slotkin in a fascinating chapter on the ways in which Puritan captivity narratives are redeployed in staged fantasies of rescue ranging from the Iran Hostage Crisis to the Gulf War. Turner is persuasive in his condemnation of an "amoral rhetoric of recovery" that works to occlude American violence and its legacies in Vietnam. Above all, in the wake of powerfully recast myths, the author insists that the violence done to the Vietnamese people has "slipped from sight," in spite of the fact that "more than *three million* Vietnamese had been killed, nearly two million of whom were civilians" (italics in original).

Leigh Gilmore is not concerned with historical trauma. Instead, her carefully framed readings of injury in literary texts focus on traumas caused by family and sexuality. She considers law a critical and undertheorized aspect of trauma studies, particularly in her interrogations of the family, a topic neglected in a body of literature oriented toward war and genocide. She offers highly detailed readings of texts by Dorothy Allison, Mikal Gilmore, Jamaica Kincaid, and Jeannette Winterson. These limit-cases of autobiography "constitute an alternative jurisdiction for self-representation in which writers relocate the grounds of judgment." The chapters on Dorothy Allison and Mikal Gilmore addressing the nexus of childhood, property, patrimony, and violence break significant new ground. Building on the research of Laura Brown, Janice Haaken, and others, Leigh Gilmore attends to questions of gender and trauma throughout.

Gilmore's analyses are inspired by psychoanalysis, speech-act theory, and deconstruction. Critics cited most frequently

include poststructuralist icons such as Althusser, Butler, Kristeva, de Man, and Spivak; *Limits* begins and ends with invocations of Foucault. Somewhat surprisingly, however, Gilmore does not draw on recent work that observes a fixation on trauma in poststructuralism. As a consequence, the author's insistence on textuality becomes somewhat strained when she repudiates the validity of redress, compensation, or reparation for survivors of violence; however, these matters deserve more extended consideration. Critiques of poststructuralism that emphasize its curious admixture of emancipatory rhetoric and its tendency to disembodiment become relevant here: to call limit-cases "extratestimonial" is to depoliticize their links with other modes of testimony, including those analyzed by Rothberg and Turner.

Reality Theatre

Caroline Russell-King and Rose Scollard
Strategies: The Business of Being a Playwright in Canada. Playwrights Union of Canada $24.95

Judith Rudakoff, ed.
Questionable Activities: The Best. Playwrights Canada P $19.95

Reviewed by Shannon Hengen

Strategies is, as its subtitle indicates, a practical guide to the business of being a playwright in Canada and as such includes much useful information about how various members of the theatre community see the profession, about where and how to consider production, development, agents, and more. It is not a guide to writing plays. A main goal of the book seems to be to foster a greatly needed sense of community among theatre practitioners, the implication being that this sense does not exist although the Canadian theatre world is small—or perhaps because it is small. A siege mentality affects a number of the ten practitioners interviewed in the section entitled "The Community." Critics are against Canadian theatre and should be avoided, as are government, the general public across the country, and regional theatre boards. Mass media undermine all that the stage represents. Theatres are beleaguered, endangered things but also the source of the most vibrant commentary on Canadian life. Dramatic writing alone stands apart from market values.

With such a mentality, the fostering of community would seem a logical solution. And yet the very purpose of this book is to address that lack. Maybe the basic question is how to create a theatre community that remains self-critical while also presenting a united front against the forces that at worst oppose it and at best fail to support it—critics, government, the public, mass media. Clearly this is not a book for anybody outside the theatre community.

Some data may surprise readers. Much good writing takes place in Canada but too few venues exist for its production, for example. But gaps occur, such as the dearth of writing for young people, or the comparative absence of what might be called serious comedy. Almost no unsolicited manuscripts are chosen for production, but rather only those which are recognized somehow by the person who receives the manuscript in the mail. Networking is therefore essential in the theatre world. Playwrights are cautioned again and again to study the mandate of the theatre to which they plan to send their work. A hunger for Canadian drama exists in universities. Second productions of Canadian work occur rarely. The workshop system must be used with care.

A central theme is the necessity of creating a climate in which boldness and risk-taking are encouraged. Writers must follow their passions, look for good stories, and avoid pandering to market values. However, while the heroic stance that some of the practitioners quoted here maintain

seems admirable, it also seems somehow at odds with the stated purpose of the book, which is to develop the sense of community within the Canadian theatre world. Perhaps if the obviously identified enemies of that world were somehow less demonized, Canadian theatre would open itself to an even larger community, and the process of fostering community would become easier. For when such a large segment of the Canadian populace is defined as inimical to great dramatic art—indeed, the public itself—its future seems tenuous. Those most committed to its future, to whom this book is directed, have the greatest responsibility to it. All of them should read it.

The strength of *Questionable Activities* is the editor's acknowledged aim to include commentary from people who appear usually not to agree but who are seen here to have points in common. The book is comprised of seventeen interviews with a good range of members of the Canadian theatrical community; these interviews were conducted by Rudakoff's students in the years 1995-2000, and some were previously published in chapbook form. The editor claims that theatre culture in Canada is still evolving from oral to written, and that a book such as this is essential in that evolution. Little written documentation of Canadian theatre history exists.

Rudakoff's introduction describes the same siege mentality as that referred to often in *Strategies*. Theatre, which can be a kind of communion, persists in what she calls a war against cultural annihilation. That war involves giving voice to Otherness, including one's own.

More of the forces working against theatre are named in these pages than in those of *Strategies* because this book is composed entirely of interviews, with, for example, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Tomson Highway, Daniel David Moses, Jim Garrard, Ronnie Burkett, Wendy Lill, and Daniel MacIvor. The very short rehearsal time—three weeks—given to Canadian productions is cited often as a serious impediment to excellence. What is perceived as a movement to the right in Canadian culture has destroyed the notion of solidarity in the theatre world. Relationship-based theatre precludes that which explores social issues. Perhaps the most cynical view of the current scene comes in designer Shawn Kerwin's remarks, a view that is implied elsewhere: "I always thought the best thing about creating theatre in Canada is that nobody cares if you do it, so you can do whatever you want. The worst thing about working in the theatre in Canada is that nobody cares if you do it, so you can do whatever you want."

Some of the interviewees have more hopeful commentary. Ethnic voices are being heard on the Canadian stage for the first time; Native artists are reviving a "laughing God." Some market successes such as *Forever Plaid* have managed to keep companies afloat. Even highly specialized theatres can consider going more mainstream. Theatre should demand of itself that it be both entertaining and challenging, without one aspect dominating over the other. No theatre should be considered wrong.

The need to develop a sense of community comes through as strongly here as in *Strategies*. Critics, however, are excluded from that community here as in the other book. But the audience appears often as a positive force in these pages, and that indicates that theatre artists and practitioners, in spite of their stated positions in these two books, do appreciate the ultimate significance of a relationship between the public and the theatre world.

Ethnicity in America

Caroline Chung Simpson
An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture 1945-1960. Duke UP $19.95

Johnnella E. Butler
Color-Line to Borderlands: The Matrix of American Ethnic Studies. U of Washington P US $22.50

Reviewed by Carin Holroyd

Ethnicity and culture continue to bedevil academia in the United States. America has, at one level, put aside its illusions that it is a "melting pot" in favour of greater recognition of the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity of the country. Within the university system, however, debate rages about affirmative action quotas for students and faculty and, led by Dinesh D'Souza, about the alleged political correctness of the academy. For more than a generation, scholars have attempted to identify the role that ethnicity, minorities, and socio-cultural relations have played within American society. *An Absent Presence* and *Color-Line to Borderlands* are representative of the continuing intellectual struggle to weave strands of ethnicity and culture into the American narrative.

An Absent Presence is an insightful look at the impact of the forced relocation and internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War on the subsequent development of American national identity. Caroline Chung Simpson argues that while the internment itself has been well documented, the nation avoided "the deeper challenge of the role of the internment in our understanding of postwar and cold war national history." To reflect on the internment would have forced the country to challenge the stated ideals of democracy and nationalism in which the America of the Cold War era had wrapped itself. Within this broad argument, Simpson devotes chapters to various aspects of Japanese American identity during the immediate postwar period, including a fascinating look at the case of Iva Toguri d'Aquino, the Japanese American woman accused of being the legendary radio propagandist Tokyo Rose, and the story of the 1955 Hiroshima Maidens Project, which brought twenty-five young Japanese women who had been disfigured in the bombing to the United States for corrective plastic surgery. She draws heavily on literary interpretations of the internment experience and does a fine job of integrating literature into the historical narrative and cultural analysis.

Color-Line to Borderlands is a collection of thirteen essays which explore various aspects of Ethnic Studies scholarship and teaching on the experiences of racialized ethnic minorities in the United States. Johnnella Butler, editor of this volume and coordinator of the 1993 conference designed to reflect on the state of the emerging discipline of Ethnic Studies, explains, "In regard to human relations in the United States, we live in a borderland that maintains policed yet unmarked color-lines implicit in our actions and our folkways. Thus we frequently seek legal and often vicious retreats to the color-lines when the indeterminacy of the borderlands challenges racialized, gendered, and classed self-concepts." The book aims to engage a wide audience in looking at these borderlands and includes chapters on the historical development and current state of Ethnic Studies and detailed surveys of Chicano and Chicana Studies, Asian American Studies, Latino and Latina Studies and American Indian Studies. Several articles, some more anecdotal than analytical, reflect on the institutional challenges facing Ethnic Studies as these new "disciplines" struggle, in a contradictory fashion, to influence mainstream thinking while maintaining their separate academic identities.

While these two books concern themselves with very different themes, both ask questions about race and collective memory. The impetus behind the founding of Ethnic Studies was the belief that general scholarship on American history, literature, sociology, and a range of other disciplines had not adequately addressed the experiences of millions of racialized ethnic Americans. African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other ethnic groups believed the stories of their communities were, to use Simpson's phrase, an "absent presence" in academic discussions. Ethnic groups insisted, often in overtly political ways, on being granted a distinctive place in the academy. Having "won" these concessions, and having gained access to journals, publication series, and academic conferences, scholars in the field still argue that their world is blocked from the mainstream.

Works like *An Absent Presence* remind us how much of the narrative of American history remains untold and even suppressed; the more substantial articles in *Color-Line to Borderlands* illustrate the formal intellectual and institutional barriers that prevent these arguments from becoming part of the national story in the United States. Simpson's argument that the lack of true national acknowledgement of the internment had a profound impact on post-war American history and culture is not made with sufficient strength, and there is a disjuncture in *An Absent Presence* between well-crafted and carefully researched historical chapters and the broader less convincing cultural analysis. *Color-Line to Borderlands* contains contributions of widely varying quality, with several making a compelling case that Ethnic Studies warrants far greater attention in the academy. In the final analysis, Simpson's work provides a striking illustration of the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural contributions of Ethnic Studies, precisely the kind of work that Butler and her contributors encourage.

Life Recordings

Hanna Spencer
Hanna's Diary, 1938-1941. McGill-Queen's UP $32.95

Amy Wink
She Left Nothing in Particular: The Autobiographical Legacy of Nineteenth-Century Women's Diaries. U of Tennessee P $25.00

Reviewed by Laurie McNeill

Hanna's Diary and *She Left Nothing in Particular* turn the spotlight on women's diaries, the narratives they construct and the functions they perform for their writers. Spencer's text, a self-edited edition of her diary, chronicles the diarist's journey from Czechoslovakia to Canada in 1939. Spencer, a Jewish woman, began the diary as a record for her lover Hans Feiertag, a Christian Austrian who was unable to date her openly after Hitler began to gain power in Europe. Feiertag, an up-and-coming composer, feared the consequences of being linked romantically to a Jew. Spencer understood this fear, and the two lovers agreed to "go underground," with the hopes of reuniting "later on." Spencer's diary, a "one-sided dialogue," was intended to substitute for personal contact until that time, but for these lovers, "later on" never came. Hanna married a Canadian, Elvins Spencer, in 1941; she learned decades later that Hans, who perished in Russia during the siege of Stalingrad, had also married and had fathered a child during his last leave. I wonder if the publication of the diary is an act of penance for Spencer, meant to fulfill and celebrate a commitment that could not, in the end, be honoured. For *Hanna's Diary* is in many ways as much about Hans Feiertag, whose musical compositions Spencer is still trying to promote, as it is about the diarist.

A professor emerita of modern languages, Spencer has designed her text to suit both a scholarly and popular reading audience. Unobtrusive endnotes, along with the

preface, introduction, epilogue, and appendix provide much-needed context for this story that inevitably interweaves public and personal history. The diary format allows Spencer to illustrate how incremental and insidious were the changes and restrictions Hitler's reign imposed. Her friendship with Erna Menta, a fellow teacher in Olmütz, provides one example of the inhumanity that Nazism unleashed in former friends and colleagues.

The love story between Hanna and Hans, the central purpose for the original diary and, in many ways, for the published version, is one of the more unsettling elements of this text, and may affect how it is received and employed. Contemporary readers may find repugnant Hanna's agreement to make her relationship with Hans clandestine, after eight years together, in order to save his promising musical career. Spencer tries to explain in her introduction why he had such a hold over her that she would support rather than resist the inherent anti-Semitism—not to mention sexism—of such an arrangement. The diary form provides context for such attitudes, with daily entries that record the moment and therefore highlight the volatility of situations, loyalties, and beliefs. For its daily record of life in Europe under Nazi occupation, for its tale of life as an immigrant in Canada, for its chronicle of kindnesses, hopes, loves lost and found, *Hanna's Diary* makes rich reading.

She Left Nothing in Particular argues precisely for the value of this kind of daily, personal narrative from ordinary citizens. An examination of six diaries by American women in times of crisis, Wink's text analyzes how these diarists used writing to structure and interpret their experiences, including abusive marriages, Overland migration, and domestic upheaval during the Civil War. Reading these diaries as important acts of resistance and self-inscription, Wink argues that keeping a diary allowed these women to "maintain and adapt their sense of their own identity to particular situations," giving them a sense of personal control in the face of "overwhelming external experiences." In discussing these diaries as literary texts, and in taking their authors seriously as writers, Wink contributes to the recovery of women's writing and challenges the enduring idea that "private" genres are "nothing in particular."

Wink adopts what she calls a "personal critical approach" in the hope of extending the intimate relationship she feels with her diarists to her own readers. This methodology results in a spotty theoretical framework that, for studies in life writing at least, leaves out several vital players. While the value of Leigh Gilmore's *Autobiographics* is undeniable, her latest book, *Autobiography: The Limits of Trauma and Testimony*, would have been even more relevant to the discussion of battered wives' narratives. Similarly, Sidonie Smith's foundational *Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body* would enrich Wink's concept of gender and subjectivity. With the majority of her critical materials coming from the late 1980s and early 1990s, Wink's theoretical model of is out of date.

Although each chapter points to such larger issues as the relationship between place and identity and the intersection of the public and the private, Wink's exclusive focus on textual analysis means that she consistently fails to acknowledge the context of textual production. Her celebratory reading of two Southern women who must take on "public" roles while their husbands fight for the Confederate army, for instance, would benefit from acknowledging that these women's personal liberation took place while they were still slave-owners. Textual analysis is certainly appropriate, especially for unpublished manuscripts or out-of-print sources, provided that these readings situate texts within their social, historical, and cultural moment. This is particularly true for diaries that lie so ambiguously on the axis of public and private experience and history.

Tremblay conteur

Michel Tremblay
Hotel Bristol New York, N.Y. Leméac/Actes Sud $14.95

Bonbons assortis. Leméac/Actes Sud $21.95

L'homme qui entendait siffler une bouilloire. Leméac/Actes Sud $22.95

Reviewed by Alain-Michel Rocheleau

Imposante par sa richesse thématique et formelle, l'œuvre de Michel Tremblay affectionne particulièrement les amalgames et les croisements en tous genres. Trois récits, que l'auteur vient de publier, témoignent bien de ce fait. Le premier, *Hotel Bristol New York, N.Y.*, nous raconte à peu près ceci. Dans une missive destinée à Dominique, "psychanalyste québécois en sabbatique à Paris," Jean-Marc décrit les émotions liées à un secret familial qui lui gâche l'existence depuis longtemps et qui, dans le présent de la narration, mobilise presque entièrement son état de conscience. Cette lettre, écrite entre le 11 et le 13 mars 1998 à l'Hôtel Bristol de New York, se présente à la fois comme un questionnement identitaire et une réflexion sur les circonstances qui ont d'abord favorisé la conciliation entre les fils aîné (Richard) et cadet (Jean-Marc) de la Grosse Femme, puis leur éloignement tragique.

Ces deux personnages sont déjà connus des lecteurs de Tremblay. Le premier est celui qui, dans les Chroniques du Plateau Mont-Royal, partage—jeune homme—la même chambre que sa grand-mère Victoire, qui ressent au parc Lafontaine les premiers signes d'éveil de sa sexualité et qui parvient à calmer la détresse engendrée par ceux-ci grâce à Mercedes, qui l'initie aux choses de la vie. Quant au second, il est dans *Le Cœur découvert* (1986) et *La Maison suspendue* (1990) le professeur de littérature quadragénaire, l'écrivain et l' amant de Mathieu, puis, dans *Le Cœur éclaté* (1993), celui qui vit douloureusement la rupture d'avec celui-ci.

Or voilà que dans *Hotel Bristol New York, N.Y.*, Jean-Marc, âgé de 55 ans, se voit confronté à l'inopiné d'une constatation empoisonnée, à savoir la découverte, dans une vitrine, d'une ressemblance incroyable avec ce qu'il croyait être la contre-image de son identité: ". . . ce que j'ai entrevu dans la vitrine, le temps d'une fraction de seconde [écrit-il], c'est mon frère Richard, que je ne peux pas supporter depuis ma tendre enfance." En d'autres lieux, il aurait su interpréter la valeur démonstrative de ce reflet, l'utiliser même dans la construction d'un récit fictif qu'il aurait pu déconstruire, "reconstruire en changeant les noms, [se] servir, comme d'habitude, des [s]es hantises, problèmes et autres obsessions pour bâtir une belle histoire à travers laquelle [il] exprimerai[t] tout ce que contient cette lettre. . . ." Mais ici, le miroir ne se borne pas à restituer ce que Jean-Marc est devenu: il se charge de mettre au jour, au prix d'une sombre révélation, une hérédité qu'il s'épuise à nier et qu'il ne pourra nullement changer.

Dans ce roman épistolaire de quatre-vingt pages et écrit à la première personne, ni les peines d'amour, ni l'orientation sexuelle de Jean-Marc ne font l'objet d'une attention particulière. L'évocation des réminiscences du passé—véritable fil conducteur dans l'œuvre tremblayenne—anime toutefois la confession de ce personnage attachant, d'une manière à la fois sobre et émouvante. Il en est ainsi dans *L'homme qui entendait siffler une bouilloire.*

Deux semaines avant la fin du tournage de son film, Simon Jodoin, un ami d'enfance de Jean-Marc, voit son existence chavirer quand, dans son oreille interne, se met à siffler un bruit strident, pareil à celui d'une bouilloire. Il y voit d'abord le symptôme d'une fatigue chronique. Mais le son persiste et s'amplifie même, les jours suivants. "Cette présence. . . , l'avait-il plantée lui-même en écoutant de la musique trop fort pendant des dizaines d'années?" se

demande-t-il. Conseillé par Jean-Marc, Simon se résout à consulter un oto-rhino-laryngologiste, qui lui révèle que le sifflement est un acouphène provoqué par une tumeur affectant le nerf auditif. Il rencontre alors un neurochirurgien qui l'informe de la possibilité de complications post-opératoires (incluant une paralysie faciale), sans qu'il ne soit pour autant débarrassé de son acouphène. A la suite de l'opération, la semaine de convalescence du réalisateur ne sera pas de tout repos. Par mesure de précaution, le patient sera réveillé aux vingt minutes pendant quinze heures. Puis certains proches viendront le voir: Jacqueline, son ex-épouse, et leurs deux fils, Vincent et Hervé. La visite de Jean-Marc, le lendemain, lui fera aussi plaisir, du moins avant que celui-ci ne commette une incroyable maladresse, en demandant: "La perte totale de l'ouïe, à gauche, ça te pose pas trop de problèmes? Tu vas t'habituer vite, y paraît?" Simon comprend alors que les docteurs ont dû sacrifier son nerf auditif de façon à retrancher la tumeur et note aussi le retour de l'acouphène. L'homme devra se convaincre qu'il en avait besoin pour vivre et que, sans lui, sa vie était inimaginable.

En s'inspirant d'une expérience personnelle—le prélèvement, en 1998, d'une tumeur à l'oreille interne—Tremblay parvient à nous décrire les convictions puis le désarroi d'un être sournoisement affecté par la maladie, et ce, par une écriture empreinte de délicatesse et par des propos qui ne tombent jamais dans le mélo. La conclusion de ce roman, toutefois, communique un sentiment d'incomplétude et aurait méritée une meilleure attention.

Si la détresse psychologique caractérise les deux histoires précédentes, les souvenirs liés à des tranches de vie d'une enfance idéalisée et racontée par l'entremise de dialogues colorés font le charme du troisième ouvrage intitulé *Bonbons assortis.* Ceux qui ont aimé lire les récits contenus dans *Un ange cornu avec des ailes de tôle* (1994) retrouveront avec bonheur l'univers familial de Michel et de ceux qui le constituent: les femmes de la maison (la mère du narrateur, Rhéauna [dit Nana], sa grand-mère, Olivine Tremblay, et sa tante, Robertine); les hommes (le père et les deux frères, Jacques et Bernard); quelques cousins et cousines (dont Claude et Hélène), de même qu'une famille de voisins, les Allard.

La première histoire s'intitule "Le cadeau de noces." Parce qu'elle n'a pas les moyens d'acheter un présent à la fille de ses voisins et que les femmes de la maison s'inquiètent du jugement d'autrui, Nana décide de sacrifier son "plat à pinottes"—qui est en réalité un moutardier— et de le lui offrir en cadeau. Les deuxième et troisième récits, "*Sturm und Drang*" et "La Passion Teddy," nous racontent à peu près ceci: alors que les femmes hurlent d'une seule voix et se cachent dans les placards quand un terrible orage éclate, le père de Michel le transporte sur son dos et lui montre la splendeur des éclairs, tout en lui faisant perdre à tout jamais la terreur de la foudre. Puis, après lui avoir offert un ourson en peluche à Noël—alors que le jeune narrateur rêvait de recevoir une poupée—son père lui fait découvrir la signification de ce petit animal. Les deux autres nouvelles, "La preuve irréfutable de l'existence du Père Noël" et "Nouvelle preuve irréfutable de l'existence du Père Noël," nous présentent Michel auquel son oncle a passé au téléphone le Santa Claus américain de "la taverne Normand." Jacques, de son côté, lui faire croire que celui-ci, au lieu d'entrer par les cheminées, a une "brique magique" qui le fait rapetisser et grandir à volonté pour passer sous les portes des maisons qu'il souhaite visiter. Dans "Le Chanteur de Mexico," il est question de la mort du vieux gramophone d'Olivine Tremblay et de son remplacement par un lecteur de quarante cinq tours qui inaugure dans la maisonnée le "règne de Luis Mariano," alors que "Le

soulier de satin" nous apprend que pour ne pas décevoir sa mère, Michel accepte, lors de sa première communion, de porter des souliers "du genre escarpins dont les filles raffolent mais que les garçons abhorrent" et qui sont beaucoup trop étroits. De retour chez lui les pieds ensanglantés, sa mère lui reproche de n'avoir rien dit. Le dernier récit, "Petit Chinois à Vendre," met lui aussi en valeur le sens critique de Nana qui tente d'inculquer au jeune narrateur une leçon de vie un jour où il lui réclame, de la part de son institutrice, "une piastre" pour sauver l'âme d'un petit Chinois.

Dans ce recueil de nouvelles, où l'humour sait laisser la place à de rares mais intenses moments de tendresse, Michel Tremblay atteste à nouveau ses accointances avec un certain réalisme magique qui émerveille, alors que dans les deux autres ouvrages, il nous confirme le fait suivant: si l'impact de son œuvre tient en partie à une forte identification des lecteurs et spectateurs aux personnages qui la constituent, il tient encore plus à la maîtrise de l'écriture de l'auteur, consciente d'elle-même et distanciée par un constant regard critique.

The Truth

Rui Umezawa

The Truth About Death and Dying. Doubleday Canada $32.95

Reviewed by Janice Brown

From the title alone, some readers might expect Umezawa's book to contain a study of severe trauma, the final stages of terminal illness, or perhaps, at best, a new-age treatise on how to cope with old age and death. In a sense, *The Truth About Death and Dying* does touch on all these matters, but in fictional form. A finely crafted first novel, *The Truth* brings the extremities of human experience into blunt relief. The storyline follows the fortunes, or misfortunes, of a Japanese family caught up in the mindlessness of twentieth-century war and violence. Focusing on brothers Toshi and Kei Hayakawa, brought to America as young children, *The Truth* delineates the tragi-comedy of the diasporic family caught between two cultures and three generations. Although the cross-cultural/generational conflict found in much Asian North American fiction is very much a part of *The Truth*, the author, Rui Umezawa, succeeds in building another perspective. Deftly intertwining the stories and memories of family members, parents and grandparents, pasts and presents, Umezawa demonstrates not only the confusion, misunderstanding, and hardship of transnational lives but also the interconnectedness of all phenomena and living beings.

Although the Buddhist priest who gives voice to this message near the beginning of the novel casts this notion in a placidly sombre light, Umezawa demonstrates that between things and people connections seldom occur in reasonable ways, and in fact, can be random, brutal, or crazy. Shoji, expatriate professor and father of Toshi and Kei, would be the first to agree. As the novel opens, Shoji lies dying, with his adult son, the autistic Toshi, at his side. Dwelling for years in the lofty realms of theoretical physics, Shoji has tried hard to ignore the existence of the absurd or irrational. His own life, however, reads as testament to such experience—the grotesque demise of his own father at the hands of a fanatical military policeman; the freak event that robbed him of his first love in wartime Japan; the unexplained autism of his eldest son, Toshi; and finally the cancer that appears from nowhere to claim him. Catastrophes are happening all the time, and physics and Buddhism seem to be equal partners in Umezawa's attempt to make sense of the chaos and constant change that characterize the lives and deaths of the Hayakawa family.

Shoji is not the only one bound by what Umezawa calls life's trivial ironies. Kei, a

talented rock musician in Toronto, cannot bear to listen to his own music, while Toshi, an enigma and disappointment to his brilliant father, makes every effort to understand the parent who misjudges him. Their mother, Mitsuyo, an outspoken iconoclast in Japan, is unable to adapt to the new language and way of life she finds in America and Canada. Similarly, her own mother, Hanako, the wife of a diplomat, finds living with her daughter's family in America disorienting. Having survived the bombings and firestorms of World War II, Hanako perishes in a house fire in Milwaukee as she attempts to rescue a cat. Umezawa's gradual revelation of the inextricable ties and bonds that join the Hayakawas to each other and to the worlds they inhabit, including those of American and Canadian friends, families, and lovers, makes *The Truth* a dazzling tour-de-force. Even so, Umezawa asks, in the face of death, how can anything human hold meaning over eternity? The last view of Toshi is at a beach where he and Kei have gone to cast Shoji's ashes, an act which evokes the fate of Japanese folktale hero, Urashima Taro, and his transformation into ashes on the seashore. Umezawa, however, adds a new element: the sight of a baby being wheeled along in a stroller. At this unexpected sight, Toshi smiles, and the sky clears.

Community and Solitary

Jane Urquhart
The Stone Carvers. McClelland and Stewart $34.99

Marian Botsford Fraser
Solitaire: The Intimate Lives of Single Women. Macfarlane Walter and Ross $36.99

Reviewed by Barbara Pell

The Stone Carvers is the novel that should have won the Governor General's Award for Fiction and the Giller Prize in 2001. Richard Wright's *Clara Callan* (which won both) is a "worthy" novel by an underrated writer and therefore a sentimental favourite, but it is very small potatoes beside Urquhart's mammoth scope and brilliant achievement.

Beginning in the nineteenth century with the story of Father Gstir, sent by "mad" King Ludwig on a church-building mission to the German immigrants of southwestern Ontario, *The Stone Carvers* traces the lives of several immigrant families through World War I and the Depression and back to Europe for the building of Walter Allward's massive Vimy Canadian War Memorial (completed in 1936). The modern protagonist, Klara Becker, a seamstress and sculptress from Fr. Gstir's village of Shoneval (really Formosa, Ontario), loves but rejects the Irishman Eamon O'Sullivan (from Urquhart's earlier novel *Away*), whose idealistic dreams of flying an airplane are destroyed in the mud of Flanders. Her brother Tilman, afflicted with wanderlust, runs away from home, lives as a tramp, loses a leg in the war, and finally returns to take Klara (disguised as a man) to be a stone carver on Allward's monument. There, after two decades of loneliness, she exorcises her guilt and commemorates her love for Eamon in carving his face and his name on the memorial with the help of Giorgio Vigamonti, an Italian immigrant, veteran, and artisan from Hamilton. Their new love, hard-won and mature, embodies Urquhart's personal and national themes of redemption and resurrection:

> . . . the two damaged people, the now distant pain of bereavement and lost youth, the warmth of the affection that surrounded the pair, a warmth that in some ways was engendered both by the bloody, endless tragedy of the war and this huge white structure meant to be a memorial to grief, on the one hand, and a prayer for peace, on the other.

The structure and symbolism are beautifully patterned (some have said contrived),

and the complicated plot and archetypal characters are also realistically satisfying. The novel begins and ends with monuments: a nineteenth-century Gothic church in the New World and a twentieth-century war memorial in the Old World. Throughout the novel Urquhart has highlighted the tragic irony of European immigrants, having escaped with their creative talents from war-torn lands, being forced to send their descendants back to wasteful deaths. In many realistic and moving small scenes Urquhart portrays the details of individual lives: the loss of a lover, the loneliness of a spinster, the desperation of a parent, the warmth of an immigrant community, the cruelty of friends, and the kindness of strangers. But the reason this is a great and important novel is that she also sets these individuals within an epic national framework of dreams and obsessions, sacrifices and salvation:

> And so the impossible happens as a result of whims that turn into obsessions. A priest is struck by the light in an unexpected valley. . . . A Canadian man dreams the stone that will be assembled and carved to expiate the sorrow of one country on the soil of another. . . . And the windows and statues and towers are maintained longer than you might think, . . . they disperse light and strength and consolation long after the noise of the battle has ended, and all of the warriors have gone home.

Marian Botsford Fraser is a divorced writer who has collected stories and interviews from over 150 single women across Canada from every background: widows, spinsters, divorcees, and lesbians, rich and poor, urban and rural, professionals and housewives. She groups their anecdotes in chapters devoted to social constructions, sexuality, finances, motherhood, widowhood and divorce, aging and death. Within these she intersperses sections from her personal diary of divorce and "Kitchen Table Tapes" transcribing conversations of groups of women from Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and St. John's.

Fraser succeeds in overcoming the common negative social stereotype of the single woman and gives voice to a group silenced and marginalized in Western culture. Her admittedly unscientific survey sympathetically records the advantages and disadvantages of the single life and validates a woman's right to make that choice against society's expectations. Her personal conclusions are that "women have liberated themselves" from "the institution of marriage [which] was the instrument for controlling the rights, persons, and property of women" despite the pressures of "men over 30 [who] have not evolved at all!" Her clearly personal and biased editing of the stories in this book is intended to justify her thesis as social capital: "Single women, not locked into the demands of a nuclear family, are available to society at large." It is persuasive narrative but poor sociology.

Of Cities, Wars, and Food

Yeh Wen-hsin
Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond. U of California P US $24.95

J.Y. Wong
Deadly Dreams: Opium and the Arrow War (1856-1860) in China. Cambridge UP $48.00

Gang Yue
The Mouth That Begs: Hunger, Cannibalism, and the Politics of Eating in Modern China. Duke UP US $22.95

Reviewed by Maria Noëlle Ng

The editor of *Becoming Chinese* claims that with the recent increase in contact between Western and Chinese scholars, and "in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square Incident," questions regarding "the nature of Chinese revolution, [and] the promises of Chinese modernity" have been receiving renewed attention. This volume of eleven

essays, which is subdivided into two sections, "The City and the Modern" and "The Nation and the Self," undertakes to "treat Chinese experience in the first half of the twentieth century in a new way."

The introductory essay in "The City and the Modern" is by Leo Ou-fan Lee and entitled "The Cultural Construction of Modernity in Urban Shanghai." Referring to Western nation-theorists such as Benedict Anderson and Homi Bhabha, Lee accuses the early Chinese intellectuals of the May Fourth period of drawing "broad contours of a new vision of China," a vision that "remained a 'vision'—an imagined, often visually based evocation of a 'new world' of China." Lee argues that the vision of a new China was made possible not only "by elite intellectuals" but "more importantly, by the popular press." Readers interested in the role Shanghai played in the construction of Chinese modernity might want to refer to Lee's *Shanghai Modern* (1999), a more comprehensive investigation of the topic.

Huang Chujiu, the patent medicine entrepreneur Sherman Cochran discusses in "Marketing Medicine and Advertising Dreams in China," was also based in Shanghai. Born in 1872, Huang moved to Shanghai in 1887, where he "soon discovered opportunities to make money selling medicine as a street peddler." The most interesting part of Huang's career, for readers who know the language, is that he apparently popularized the usage of the term *yaofang* (literally drug-room), when he called his business *Zhongfa da yaofang* (China-France Great Drugstore, though Cochran translates the name as Great China-France Drug Store). Huang's success and his marketing strategies, some of which were "adapted mainly from the work of Walt Disney," testify to the Western presence in Shanghai at the turn of the century and after. Other urban areas discussed in *Becoming Chinese* are Lanzhou in David Strand's "'A High Place is no better than a Low Place': The City in the Making of Modern China," Nanjing in William C. Kirby's "Engineering China," Tianjin in Richard Madsen's "Hierarchical Modernization," and Guangdong in Helen F. Siu's "The Grounding of Cosmopolitans." These writers all treat Chinese urbanization from different perspectives, but they create an internal coherence by referring to each other's work.

The second part of the book lacks cohesion, since it focuses on the concepts of nation and of the individual, both rather amorphous topics. Wang Hui begins this segment with a discussion of Zhang Taiyan, "because," Wang explains, "the concept of the individual is central to his [Zhang's] thinking" and furthermore, his "ideas were uniquely different from those of other major late Qing liberal thinkers." In "Crime or Punishment?" David Der-wei Wang discusses May Fourth literature by highlighting the treatment of brutality in fiction by, for example, Lu Xun and Ding Ling. Concentrating on a brutal period in Chinese modernity, Frederic Wakeman Jr., who has written other books on Chiang Kai-shek and the interwar years in China, examines the politics of treachery in his essay, "*Hanjian* (Traitor)!" Readers who are interested in the topic have Wakeman's full-length studies to turn to. In the remaining two essays, Prasenjit Duara writes about authenticity and modern Chinese women's subjectivity in "Of Authenticity and Woman," while Paul G. Pickowicz examines a short period in Chinese film industry—between 1945 and the consolidation of China under Mao Zedong—in "Victory as Defeat."

At the end of the volume, one is overwhelmed by the diversity of topics treated, though Yeh attempts to give the volume a unifying principle in his introduction. The reader also becomes convinced that not everyone who speaks of China, Chinese culture, and Chinese modernity really knows much about these subjects.

While *Becoming Chinese* offers diversity, *Deadly Dreams* concentrates, in five hundred pages, on one event and its ramifications in Chinese history. Wong attempts to set the record straight on the so-called Opium Wars in the 1840s and 50s. He questions calling the Sino-Anglo conflict in the 1840s the First Opium War; he also claims that opium was never even an issue in the Sino-western conflict of the mid-1850s. Wong consistently uses the term Arrow War to denote the military confrontation that resulted in the ceding of Kowloon Peninsula. His research has been far-ranging, as we learn from his outline of "the search for information." First, Wong "scrutinized the papers presented to the British Parliament," then "turned to Hansard," and "went back to the original sources" of the policy papers. He "searched the British Admiralty records," as well as going "to Russia on the off chance" that he "might get into the archives there." His travels did not end in Russia; he carried on to "the Quai d'Orsay in Paris and the Library of Congress in Washington." Apart from going through newspapers, Wong also examined "the original diplomatic correspondence between British representatives in the Far East and the Chinese authorities." He claims to have "buried [his] head in the Canton Archive"; he also went to Beijing upon hearing that records in the Beijing Palace Museum had been opened to researchers. His research stops also included Nanjing and Shanghai.

The result of such industry is a heavily footnoted document about the Arrow War that began "in 1856 with Thomas Kennedy, an Irishman from Belfast who nominally captained the Chinese crew of a lorcha called the *Arrow*." On 8 October 1856 the Chinese crew was arrested while the *Arrow* was anchored in Canton and the British flag "was allegedly pulled down." Soon, the confrontation became an international incident involving China, Britain, France, the United States, and Russia. Much wider implications of course involved the production and trading of opium, the revenues from which were of utmost importance to Britain in the nineteenth century. One might, along with Wong, describe the struggles of the Arrow War as "shades of things to come."

The Mouth That Begs relates to *Becoming Chinese* in its examination of Chinese modernity and to *Deadly Dreams* in introducing the reader to a period in Chinese history following the nineteenth-century military encounters between the West and China. The subtitle of the book is "Hunger, Cannibalism, and the Politics of Eating in Modern China," but the central trope is cannibalism. As Gang Yue explains, the allegorical text of modern China is invested not only with colonial legacies, but also with "the historical memory of ancient flesh eating and its modern residues, and the artistic imagination of the grotesque world and its discursive recycling of *rou* [flesh], human and nonhuman alike." The book is a valiant attempt to apply Western theory to well-known Chinese texts. While most of the writers analyzed come from mainland China (and Taiwan), the last chapter deals with three American Chinese: Kingston, Wong, and Tan. Gang Yue claims that these writers are included as "a way of highlighting the problems of cross-cultural encounters in concrete experience." I believe this final chapter is motivated by a desire to be inclusive and to appeal to readers more familiar with American Chinese writing, but unfortunately it makes an awkward conclusion to Gang Yue's book.

A Blues of One's Own: Poetry on CD 2

Kevin McNeilly

When I picked up *Why I Sing the Blues: Lyrics and Poems* (Smoking Lung, $19.95), edited by Jan Zwicky and Brad Cran, I got some worry on my mind. Problems with cultural difference, poetic idiom, and historical and racial identity emerge almost as a matter of course in work such as this, which derives its formal and thematic trajectories from the African-American folk blues. Still, when I went flipping through the pages of this seductive anthology, I found myself hooked. These are, as Zwicky admits, blues by invitation, the results of a "process of solicitation" inspired by her listening to records of Robert Johnson, which prods the poems she receives (from forty-odd writers, well-established—Lorna Crozier, Sharon Thesen, Fred Wah, bill bissett—and emerging—Karen Solie, Adam Dickinson, Sue Goyette, Lynn Coady) into confronting and deliberating their own inspired contrivances. They wilfully remake the blues, an idiom from elsewhere, and face up to an inevitable sense of not quite coming in from the outside, a sense of their own want.

They get the blues, in other words, because they wish they had the blues. Sue Goyette's "Waiting for Robert Johnson" imagines a woman abandoned (by Johnson?) "who wants to be haunted, / who will spend the rest of her days feeling hopeful when the curtain / moves and the window is closed," a figure literally excluded from the blues who nonetheless makes a blues of her own from this spectral absence, an interstitial language caught and suspended between "the waiting" and "the never / coming back." Shane Book's "After Being Asked to Write a Blues Lyric" deploys a kinetic language of rivers and trains—tropes of dissolution and flow derived from the blues idiom—to enact a late listening, which he names with tentative similitude at the poem's outset as "a knowledge, like a knowledge / that some feeling / should probably come after," that the lyrical experience of "a simple stillness" ought to lead him somewhere, toward writing. Where Zwicky herself listens to and remakes a recorded past from elsewhere, Book asserts that he "will try to hear" the erosion and sedimentation of poetic consciousness, of his own will to catch the "old stories [old songs]" of "ancestors" as they "break into" his lines. His poem, a bit sprawling and overlong, reads as a project, as aspiration, as trajectory rather than as some "strict geometry" of finished work. These texts pursue, and provisionally frame, a cluster of interrogatives, foregrounding unresolved struggles to come to terms with their unreconciled and irreconcilable language, often with startlingly beautiful, sometimes aching results.

The last poem of the collection (organized alphabetically by author), Zwicky's "Broke Fiddle Blues," distances itself from this habitual reflex by refusing intellectual imposture: "Smart folk say meanin's dead /

They happy shoppin on its grave." If, at an epigone distance, the authentic spirit of the folk blues can never be reconstituted by the "middle-class folks of European ancestry" who make up the bulk of the writers here, it won't do merely to embrace that lack of meaning and shop it around, to fake it like a smart aleck poseur. Zwicky's own take, while it uncomfortably parodies a rural Mississippi style (dropping g's and copula verbs) that sounds more contrived than assimilated, aspires to ground its language in a mix of spiritually rooted lyricism and deep ecology: "Earth don't breathe / Won't be no music anymore." (John Donlan's "Bush Blues" also articulates a lyric ecology akin to Zwicky's—"Wished I'd never lived to see the wild things go," he laments—a preoccupation, alongside a suspicion of urbane human rationalism, they have shared over the course of a decade of writing.) If her fiddle is broke, and if she must make her late-comer's music out of the "pieces on the floor," the shards of an unreconstituted instrumentality, when things mattered or when they were meaningful, she chooses not to indulge in postmodern cynicism but instead to gesture to an ethical imperative, a mutual responsibility, that all humanity shares for the world around us, human or otherwise: "Leaves turnin yellow in the springtime, / Ain't no exit, baby, cause there ain't no door." If we cannot re-root ourselves in the earthiness of the blues, we have no real alternatives; there is no other earth. Despite their problematics of race, history, culture, idiom, these poems, in Zwicky's reading, have no choice but to seek out, from compromised and difficult positions, the dissipated authenticity of a blues of their own. When, in her contributor's note, Zwicky claims facetiously to have "restrung her gutbucket a couple of times" (she is a violinist), her misuse of idiomatic language—"gutbucket" is an adjective for a gritty musical style, not slang for an instrument—may be troubling for pedants and poseurs such as myself, but it also suggests an active reappropriation of a dead and distant speech, and a revitalizing of its metaphorical potential.

In other poems, lines like (what am I saying?—there are no lines quite like it) "O dearie dearie god O dearie god" from P. K. Page's "Empty House Blues" seem to fuse Delta reels with A. A. Milne's worrying Piglet; Page creates brief pockets of arresting, hybrid language that sometimes skirts an uncomfortable bathos—when she goes on to drop her g's and slum it through low-end slang and folksy double negatives ("My bed is empty like an empty parkin' lot / Ain't no one parkin' there"), I don't buy it—but that still enacts the unsettling work of transgression and remaking, and the collision of disparately cultured vocabularies that constitute the "blues" of this collection, its recurrent poetic want. Stan Dragland's "Twelve Bars," another longish sequence of prose-poems that puns on the basic formal structure of the blues to describe twelve visits to various pubs, returns self-consciously to these hybrids and displacements as constitutive, as fraught ontology: "That's the way I am. Rather than look at you and talk to you I jump away into the words of others, those distances I love." Lyric subjectivity is made up—embraces its own poesis—in alterity, in its small leaps towards the other side of somewhere, or someone ("you").

These gestures outward can produce a comically tensile line, as in Daria Petrarchus's excellent "Home Loan Blues" ("I'm going out to Brampton, / I said Brampton here I come. / They've got some relatively inexpensive townhouses there, / and I'm gonna get me one"), where twelve-bar lament meets an upwardly mobile, overextended middle-class desire. Or they can surge as rhythmic excess, a prosy heave, in an unkempt chorus that recalls the slippery bar-lines of Blind Lemon Jefferson, in the refrain of Charles Wright's 1981 "Laguna

Blues": "Something's off-key and unkind. / Whatever it is, it bothers me all the time." As poetry, the blues takes hold of its own dissonances, those lovely unruly distances that Dragland describes. And there are too many fine and troubling moments in these poems to mention. The anthology reprints a few earlier attempts by Canadian poets to use the blues form, some of which now seem to me to take on the aura of contemporary classics: George Elliott Clarke's honeyed vernacular "King Bee Blues" and "To Selah" (from *Whylah Falls*, 1990), Don McKay's regionalist masterpiece "Long Sault Blues" (from *Long Sault*, 1975), Dennis Lee's cadenced *Riffs* (1993), and Patrick Lane's song "Blues for No One" (1980). Other pieces written for the anthology negotiate with alacrity the formal and linguistic tensions I've been discussing: Mark Anthony Jarman's "Tattoos & Cigarettes" reworks "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" into a suburbanite's stifled hatred for local junkies ("and I'm just mowing my lawn / I'm just washing my car"), while Adam Dickinson's "Falling and Falling Blues" draws delicately startling images from its foreshortened rhythms ("lie among the apple cores / with me"), and anyone who can poetically recuperate the word "lady," as Lynn Coady does, has my true respect and admiration.

Ken Babstock's "Blues Junket into Harmonica" and Karen Solie's "Low Dog Down" are among the most strikingly original and compelling poems in this book, reshaping the incremental cycles and subtle rhythmic asymmetries of the twelve-bar form to produce tense, terse incursions into the language of making itself. Babstock's fractal syntax—alternating in the poem between AAB tercets and bracketed voice-over, between song and commentary—lays claim to its creative turf even as it rakes it over: "Harmonica / grifts, braggadocio, then with its graven plastic head kicked / in. Stove stoked by Harmonica / breeds left-behindness sends a postcard." His lines find a torsion between rip-off and avowal, fecundity and grift, wringing the lyric's neck, refusing the all-too-easy posture of folksy nostalgia even as they revel in the evocative machineries of lament: a language that drips honey even as it puts your teeth on edge. Solie's jump cut declaratives follow out a parallel give-and-take, but inhabiting more fully than Babstock a rattlebag of retooled commonplaces: "There's a time for everything. / This isn't one of those." Solie finds a metaphoric elasticity in the everyday, and then tugs at it, frays it, pulls it loose, as her poems orchestrate voices in search of something like meaning: "At last, / a little something we can use. Last call has pitched us a highball / we aren't game to refuse. Saturday rolls over on us, coughs / it up, hits the bricks." The buried rhyme and phase-shifted four-on-the-floor rhythm show off Solie's artful dodginess, and her wicked ear. But more importantly, they enact, verbally, the honed byplay of past and present, of a language here and elsewhere: how to make the rough sense of a long-gone blues sing out.

This feeling of leftbehindness, of the too late blues, colours the music on the CD that accompanies *Why I Sing the Blues*, thirteen of the lyrics set by Bill Johnson, Ken Hamm, Peter Alan, and Jon Wood, as well as Rick Maddocks performing his own "Tobacco Belt." Most of the recordings sound, to my ears, a bit too cleaned up, too practised. Patrick Friesen's "St. Mary Blues" gets a bit of roughening, perhaps because his close reworking of traditional blues tropes—trains, death, rivers, abandonment—spurs the musicians back to familiar terrains. Conversely, displaced and unknit forms such as those of Babstock and Solie won't be set to music, but remain recalcitrantly verbal, poetry culled from a music but that won't return to it. Hamm's overdubbed guitars look to contemporary folk performance styles rather than roots music,

while Alan sounds like a cross between Woody Guthrie and Randy Newman. Wood's layered and processed soundscapes come closer to the edgier presentation I might have expected from this material, and Maddox's intercom vocals and dampered guitar lines echo the textures of early recording technologies. Don't get me wrong: it's good to hear this music, but I'm not so keen on its polish, and I wish that it could have pushed its own limits a bit more, to honour some of the innovative and edgy work in the anthology.

Recording played a key role in the blues diaspora, as a culturally and historically localized music crossed idiomatic and racial boundaries, and in the 1920s—for instance—became a kind of national sensation in the United States. This book and CD take up the scattering and resumption of documented blues traditions; they play along with the records, in a sense, taking up blues form as a fixity, a given, and then try to reconstitute and to inhabit its performative energies, asking why they too might want to sing the blues, and if a latter-day blues is even really possible, as Zwicky asserts in her introduction: "One poet did think the idea was crazy: didn't I know that the blues was an oral art form? How did I imagine poets were going to write lyrics uncoupled from their musical incarnations? They'd be the literary equivalent of the tin in bronze, or the baking soda in an unbaked cake." There is a slippage in such statements between performance and orality: how, Zwicky implicitly asks, can spontaneity be contrived, be made deliberate? Clearly it can't, without some kind of verbal *rigor mortis* setting in. But the point is not to abandon folk roots; instead, she wants to find a way to represent, no, to speak the tensions between the ephemeral, vital, and dissipated past and the typographically ossified present of the page, and to make her own interrogatives—the how and the why—start to sing.

Warriors in Flight: John Buchan's War Novels

Maria Noëlle Ng

John Buchan, Governor General of Canada from 1935 until 1940, wrote over sixty books, ranging from biography and essays to fiction ("Lord Tweedsmuir"). But it is as the creator of Richard Hannay, the main character in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (and four other novels), that Buchan is chiefly remembered.[1] In his autobiography *Memory Hold-the-Door*, Buchan describes how he came to write about Hannay:

> [W]hile pinned to my bed during the first months of war and compelled to keep my mind off too tragic realities, I gave myself to stories of adventure. I invented a young South African called Richard Hannay, who had traits copied from my friends, and I amused myself with considering what he would do in various emergencies. (195)

The war Buchan refers to is not the Second World War, which he did not outlive, but the First. In August 1914, Buchan was ordered to rest in bed because of his duodenal ulcer. There were two literary results from this enforced inactivity. As a historian, Buchan began writing *Nelson's History of the War*, published by the firm of Thomas Nelson (in which he was a partner); the series ultimately ran to twenty-three volumes and "appeared at regular intervals throughout the war" (Lownie 123).[2] As a novelist, Buchan produced *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, the first of the "stories of adventure" featuring Richard Hannay. Its success led to two more Hannay novels about the war: *Greenmantle* (1916) and *Mr. Standfast* (1919).

All three novels inhabit the literary divide between imperial adventure fiction of the prewar period and the later, ironic version of this genre.[3] Written and published at nearly the same time as the events they depict, they present, in a sense, a contemporary eyewitness report of the war—its

beginning, its middle skirmishes, and its final great battles. Read together, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *Greenmantle*, and *Mr. Standfast* reflect an outsider's growing allegiance to the idea of the British Empire and its ideals through the war years, as Hannay progresses from being a colonial from South Africa, bored with the Old Country, to a heroic officer of the British Army at the Second Battle of the Somme. Like Buchan's history of the war, the Hannay novels were propaganda for the Allies and the Empire. Yet they cannot be dismissed merely as propaganda or adventure yarns, for they depict, often with great immediacy and force, the psychological toll the war exacted from its soldiers.[4] Moreover, far from being dated, these novels tackle in surprisingly modern ways such themes as the loss of identity, gender roles, betrayal, and guilt.

The Thirty-Nine Steps

Although the Great War is not explicitly mentioned until the coda of the novel, it is a presence in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* from the time when Scudder, the stranger, reveals to Hannay the conspiracy to assassinate the Greek Premier. Most of the novel belongs to the "hero-on-the-run" subgenre as Hannay decides to take flight after Scudder is killed in Hannay's apartment. Buchan frames the novel within the trope of the innocent who is pursued by both known and unknown enemies. This guarantees the reader's sympathy as well as providing the narrative arc, which consists of a number of improbable events culminating in Hannay's exoneration. Hannay thus appears as the lonely individual attempting to elude ever-increasing danger while the world looks on indifferently. Woven into the narrative are life-threatening chases across the Highlands and the discovery of a German espionage network.[5] Superficially, this seems an inappropriately light-hearted adventure story to offer when the rest of Europe was embroiled in armed conflict. However, Buchan wrote the story in the first months of the Great War, and the relative insouciance of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* reflects the attitude of the British at the beginning of the war, at least amongst Buchan's social set.[6]

An earlier incarnation of the "hero-on-the-run" subgenre is Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* (1886); its present-day progeny are numerous, from Arturo Pérez-Reverte's well-researched literary puzzles to airport thrillers such as *The Bourne Identity* by Robert Ludlum. Although Buchan did not invent the literary spy hero—Kipling's Kim is usually acknowledged as the first—he establishes the tradition of the covert hero who is wrongly accused, who must assume a false identity, and who has the double duty of surviving numerous attempts on his life and clearing his reputation.[7] To meet these challenges, Buchan endows Hannay with fearlessness, intelligence, and resourcefulness—qualities not unlike those an officer needed during the Great War. As Buchan himself acknowledged, Hannay is a composite of his friends, men such as Raymond Asquith and Auberon Thomas Herbert. And just as many of Buchan's friends did, Hannay joins the war.

Greenmantle

The plot of *Greenmantle* is considerably more ambitious than that of its predecessor. Hannay is no longer the sole focus of action. There is now a fellowship of spies consisting of the Scottish aristocrat, Sandy, whose real name is Ludovick Gustavus Arbuthnot; an American, John Blenkiron; and an Afrikaner, Peter Pienaar. Ranged against the allies are Germans as well as Turks. The action takes place in Europe, Istanbul, and along the Turko-Russian border. The historical context is vividly portrayed, no doubt because Buchan was researching the same events for *Nelson's History of the War*. When it was published in 1916, *Greenmantle*, perhaps because of its topicality, was more

popular than *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. Its appeal extended even beyond the British reading public, for the Russian royal family in exile were said to be "greatly cheered and comforted" by it (Webb 42).

Certainly *Greenmantle* contains its share of jingoism, but it is noteworthy for its complex portrayals of the Germans. The novel features a cameo appearance by Kaiser Wilhelm II, described as "a little below middle height" with "a face the colour of grey paper" (106). Buchan's humanized German Kaiser is someone "whose thoughts rode him like a nightmare" and who is eager to defend his actions, even to a comparative stranger (108). The engineer Gaudian, another German whom Hannay meets during his adventures, is "a capital good fellow" (103). Even in constructing the arch-villain Colonel von Stumm, Buchan provides a character who is not a mere gun-waving stereotype. Stumm, apart from being a bully, is also "a man who had a perverted taste for soft delicate things" (113). In a sublimated rape scene, in which Stumm locks himself with Hannay in his "boudoir," Buchan hints at what would become explicit sadistic homoeroticism in later thrillers, the best example being Ian Fleming's James Bond series.[8]

Another German villain is Hilda von Einem, the mastermind behind the German campaign to conquer the Muslim world. Apart from being a more formidable foe than the men, she is also seductive: Sandy, the Scottish aristocrat, becomes her lover. In the midst of standard but effectively handled battle scenes involving overwhelming German gun power and British sangfroid, Buchan inserts a surreal exchange between the two lovers, in which Sandy rejects von Einem and reaffirms his allegiance to his male comrades. Yet, when von Einem is killed in the crossfire between the approaching Russians and the Germans, Sandy risks his life to retrieve her body. Buchan invests both the male and female German villains with potent, if at times perverse, sexuality. Buchan seems to be exploring gender identities in creating sexually fraught German-Allied relationships that are, strictly speaking, extraneous to the main war narrative. Hannay's outrage at being cornered by Stumm reflects conventional attitudes of the time towards homosexuality. Yet Sandy is very much a feminized character, in spite of his unfailing courage. With "a high-boned face and a pair of brown eyes like a pretty girl's" (23), he appears at the end of the novel dressed in a flowing gown, his hair shorn, metaphorically emasculated by his German lover.

Superficially Sandy is the quintessential British war hero, the kind that Buchan eulogizes in *Memory Hold-the-Door*—beautiful to look at and fiercely courageous, with just a dash of quixoticism. In this sense, a figure such as Hilda von Einem, an enemy and a woman, constitutes a doubly dangerous interference in the heroic trajectory of the narrative. However, in the modern context, Sandy (like that other European adventurer, Kurtz) experiences erotic transgression and psychological breakdown, a fate that resembles the *sparagmos* that Northrop Frye writes about, the stage when the hero breaks into parts or is torn into pieces (192). Ultimately, the adventure hero Sandy is a liminal man whose national and gender identities are uncertain. But adventurers are always liminal characters. As Martin Green points out in *The Adventurous Male*, adventure signifies the opposite of work, of the quotidian, and of deferred gratification (17-9); adventurers occupy "places where respectable citizens . . . feel ill at ease" (18), these being not only such literal places as the battlefield but also the figurative terrain of "deviant" sexual desires.

Mr. Standfast

Mr. Standfast is far more earnest in tone than the other two Hannay war novels. Instead of the happy-go-lucky colonial of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, Hannay is now an

experienced war leader: "Here was I—a brigadier and still under forty, and with another year of the war there was no saying where I might end" (2). The first half of the novel takes place in England and Scotland, and the second in Switzerland and the battlefields of France. Hannay has been commissioned to track down his nemesis, the German spy who eluded him at the end of *The Thirty-Nine Steps.* He also meets his future wife, Mary Lamington. Their union has the function of ensuring the future of Great Britain and empire, so that all good men can teach their sons about "Saint Crispin's day" in time of peace.

In keeping with its patriotic agenda, *Mr. Standfast* also examines elements that undermine the war effort. One of these is the conscientious objector, a role that Hannay unwillingly plays in the beginning of the novel. Buchan's complex treatment of this dissident group shows once again that he is no mere propagandist. The character Launcelot Wake is despised for being a c.o., yet he proves himself an exceptionally brave man in the Swiss mountains and at the Second Battle of the Somme, even though to the very end he refuses to fight. *Mr. Standfast* also unites two themes already explored in the first two Hannay novels: treachery at home and danger abroad. Thus, the chameleon German spy is first a suburban Englishman, and then resurfaces as a decadent megalomaniac in France. (The character of the deceptive pukka sahib is explored again in the fourth Hannay novel, *The Three Hostages* [1924], an altogether less conventional work than *Mr. Standfast.*)

Like *Greenmantle, Mr. Standfast* concludes with a spectacular battle scene. However, while the ending of *Greenmantle* is somewhat ambiguous, in that Sandy appears in a T.E. Lawrence-like apotheosis (even though he has spent the previous chapters rejecting the role), *Mr. Standfast* ends with a series of dramatic scenes meant to evoke maximum emotional response: the heroic conflagration of Peter Pienaar; the deathbed pathos of Wake; Hannay's heroic stance in holding the line against all odds; and the burial of Pienaar. These scenes are contrived, yet they possess real emotional power. No doubt Buchan was articulating the grief that he and many others were experiencing as more and more friends and relatives were killed. *Mr. Standfast,* then, is a tribute to the bravery of the fallen. Cynicism about their sacrifice would have been out of place in a war novel written in 1917 and 1918.

Buchan's three Hannay war novels follow a narrative arc that reflects the course of the Great War and the changing responses of the British public. Hannay might have felt that it could be quite a lark to be in the army in 1914, but by 1917, he is standing at the graveside of one of his best friends, reading from *Pilgrim's Progress.* As if Buchan the writer were also worn out by the war, *Mr. Standfast* is an uneven piece of writing, at times perfunctory, at times evocative, but never ironic. The hint of experiment in characterization and the assuredness with which he handles vast space and rapid movements in *Greenmantle* are replaced by skilful mechanics and a more pronounced bitterness about the Germans, which at times overwhelms the narrative. But if one bears in mind the historical context, then these literary shortcomings are redeemed by the pathos of men's intense, though hopeless, desire for peace while their lives are threatened: "I was looking again beyond the war to that peace . . . . I had a vision of a green England landscape, with its far-flung scents of wood and meadow and garden" (332).

Buchan's war novels are, shorn of their propaganda, adventure stories in the tradition of his fellow Scot, Robert Louis Stevenson. They are also espionage thrillers in the tradition of his fellow imperialist, Rudyard Kipling. With their exotic locations,

these novels at times read like travel narratives similar to the works of another writer who was involved in intelligence work, W. Somerset Maugham. But more definitively than any of these writers, Buchan established a contemporary heroic type—the lonely warrior on the run. Because Buchan's novels are generally confined by the imperatives of espionage fiction—"valorization of exotic settings, the life of action and the heroic individual" underpinned by the imperial enterprise (Thompson 85-86)—it is easy to overlook the fact that his lonely, restless male characters are the clear forerunners of the espionage existential hero, the ultimate outsider, who would later appear in works by such writers as John le Carré.

NOTES

I want to thank Peter Stenberg for generously giving me his books by John Buchan.

1 *The Thirty-Nine Steps* was made into a film three times, the most successful treatment being Alfred Hitchcock's original 1935 version. In 1988, a thirteen-episode television series entitled *Hannay* was produced. These adaptations have ensured John Buchan's presence on websites of popular culture. For more details, see *Internet Movie Data Base.*

2 Buchan's multi-volume contribution to the history of the First World War, while elegantly and clearly written, has generally been acknowledged to be a work of propaganda (See Lownie 125-26; Buitenhuis 92-93).

3 See Jon Thompson on the pre- and postwar adventure novels. As Martin Green points out in *Dreams of Adventure and Deeds of Empire*, the grim aftermath of war and the collapse of empire gave rise to the satirical adventure stories of such writers as Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene (320-21).

4 A comparison between the Hannay war novels and *A Prince of the Captivity*, which Buchan wrote in 1933 about a spy during the First World War, illustrates the uniqueness of the Hannay novels. The later novel is plodding and ponderous, though it covers the same territory as the earlier ones.

5 The scene in which an airplane sweeps the Scottish sky searching for Hannay was borrowed by Alfred Hitchcock in his 1959 man-on-the-run film, *North by Northwest.*

6 For the initial reaction of the upper middle class to the war, see Jeanne Mackenzie.

7 Kipling is a writer to whom Buchan is often compared: Andrew Lownie, Martin Green, and Jon Thompson all couple Buchan with Kipling in their analyses.

8 In a review article in the *London Review of Books*, John Lanchester calls the Bond novels "a series of lavish beatings strung together with thriller elements."

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To the Wars & Other Places

Eva-Marie Kröller

Readers of Jane Urquhart's *The Stone Carvers* will find interesting information on Walter Allward's Vimy Memorial in Jonathan Vance's acclaimed *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (UBC P; reviewed in CL #173 [Summer 2002]: 199). Equally useful and even more detailed are David W. Lloyd's comments in his comparative study *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919-1939* (Berg). Vance's and Lloyd's books were published at roughly the same time and therefore do not cite each other, but their approaches are quite similar. Both challenge the notion, advanced by Fussell, Eksteins, and others, that high-brow culture tells the important story about the war, and both insist that World War I did not represent the definitive entry into modernism that these authors make it out to be. Commenting on military historian Bob Bushaway's reading of commemorative ritual as mostly manipulated by political interest, Lloyd asserts that this "approach leaves little room for individual responses and feelings and [it] largely ignores their role in attributing meanings to the languages and rituals of remembrance." The arrogance of the powers-that-be is apparent in such missives as the one issued for the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey sorting out the seating arrangements for "selected widows and mothers, especially of the humbler ranks," but Lloyd also offers rich documentation of the spontaneous democratic rituals that sprang up around the Cenotaph and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, both of which "temporarily replaced Trafalgar Square as the central place in London" between the wars. Lloyd's sections on Australia and Canada are brief, but they still effectively outline some of the areas in which commemoration served the purpose of growing national assertiveness in both countries. His account of the Vimy pilgrimage which brought 6,000 Canadians (including Hudson's Bay employees who received "special leave of absence with full pay") to the unveiling of Allward's memorial draws out the many ways in which ritual was adjusted to ascertain that the occasion was indeed recognized as Canadian. These accommodations ranged from timing the ceremony so that Canadians could listen to it on the radio to ensuring that the King was "met by both the Canadian Minister to France and the British Ambassador, even though this would offend the Ambassador." Guard of Honour and bugler were Canadian as was the radio announcer, and the order in which "God Save the King" and "O Canada" were played was the subject of protracted discussion among the organizers. In Lloyd's careful documentation, the entire episode is a fine example of the numerous negotiations, both practical and symbolic, that have characterized Canadian nationhood, whether these take place between so-called mother country and dominion, or among the country's ever-changing constituencies.

Battlefield tourism is also one of the topics in Marjorie Morgan's *National Identities and Travel in Victorian Britain* (Palgrave). Waterloo stood for the "Freedom of Nations"; one particularly earnest pilgrim to the site took away an ear of wheat, a clod of soil, and some poppy seeds so that "in some

choice spot of [his] garden [he would] have poppies from the field of Waterloo growing in soil over which the feet of our guards passed in deathless courage to decide the destiny of the World's liberties." Visits to a famous battle site were a way of affirming one's nationality when travel in general worked against such assurances. At the same time, battlefield tourism occasionally served to merge spheres that were carefully kept apart in more familiar surroundings. Thus, one female traveller was disconcerted by her fascination with battlefields because, to her, this denoted transgression into male prerogatives. Morgan's observations on battlefield tourism are part of an impressively documented study with premises that closely resemble Lloyd's: she is interested in the ways in which "ordinary people internalize and imagine the nation"; she wishes to illustrate the "creative, protean nature of national identity and tradition," but she also insists on the "continuities shaping national identity" that exist side by side with the sometimes opportunistic inventions of ritual and tradition. Colonial attitudes, she argues, have their precedent in the views that the Irish, Scots, Welsh, and English held of each other and of continental Europeans, and she offers observations on "landscape and climate," "religion," "customs, comfort and class," and "liberty, language and history" to tease out the sometimes considerable variations in these interactions. Morgan's study of passports and the reluctance of nineteenth-century British travellers to obtain one, let alone submit to a *signalement* (the listing of personal characteristics), adds historical depth to Paul Fussell's argument in *Abroad*, that the compulsory introduction of the passport during World War I was shocking to British tourists used to travelling without hindrance throughout a vast empire. This is an excellent book, one that deserved better proofreading. Also deficient are some of the biographical notes provided as background to the individual travellers. For example, dates of birth and death are given for some travellers, but not for others. This may be logical enough when little information is available, but to identify Jane Carlyle, *sans* dates, as "a Scotswomen [*sic*] who, with her husband Thomas Carlyle, moved to London in the 1830s. Her letters home are full of comments comparing Scotland and England," is almost comical in its sparseness.

By contrast, the biographical notes at the end of Andrew Hassam's *Through Australian Eyes: Colonial Perceptions of Imperial Britain* (Sussex Academic P) are more consistent. Out of seventy-odd authors of journals and letters, Hassam offers a sample of nine biographies, presumably because their common middle-class background makes them representative enough. Although their class creates a certain sameness in their response, Hassam insists that not only was there much variation in the ways in which colonial travellers "read" Great Britain, but also that the latter was itself in a state of flux. "To be aware that British culture was produced out of colonial encounters as much 'within' as without is to challenge by implication the imperial geography of centre and periphery," the author concludes, a position that takes Morgan's inter-European approach further afield. Hassam's study includes attentive phenomenological analyses of an emigrant's return to his or her former home ("a home frozen in the past"), comparisons of portable colonial iron houses with the temporary architecture of the 1851 Crystal Palace that inspired them, as well as discussions of beef as marker of national identity, of the significance of landmarks like Cleopatra's Needle in constructing sites of imperial history, and of the shifts in Australians' understanding of themselves as imperial, colonial, or national, depending on whom they were with and whither they were bound. There are repeated allusions to World War I as fostering both allegiances and independence, and there are several references to

the strengthening bond with other colonies such as Canada in the context of war. This, like Morgan's study, is a groundbreaking book, and Hassam is much to be commended for the patience and acumen with which he sifts the evidence, coming up with several exceptional documents in the process. Here, for example, is an account of the disharmony among migrants on a ship bound for Australia, rendered in phonetic spelling: "[they're] one north country man one welsh man one west and one as been at work near alton tows [Alton Towers] and them two chaps from hednesford and Alfred Joins . . . he is the cakey dofey half baked slopey cakey headed fool I hever seed . . . they will find falt with one another twang especly the Durham mans language . . . it is A very rong thing mak game of another twang . . . it will cause A row sooner than any thing else. . . ." My only criticism about *Through Australian Eyes* (and a petty one it is) concerns a technical point: for subheadings, Hassam uses quotations from the texts rather than descriptive titles, and they are not very useful as signposts.

If Morgan and Hassam remind the reader that "othering" was a practice well established throughout nineteenth-century Europe, then *The Faber Book of Exploration*, edited by Benedict Allen (Faber and Faber), offers an even broader historical and geographical perspective. As is often the case with such anthologies, the juxtaposition of texts makes for interesting comparisons. Excerpts from Julius Caesar on the Gauls and Britons and from Ibn Fadlan on a Viking funeral don't seem all that different in their mixture of prurience and scientific precision from Bronislaw Malinowski's observations on love-making in the Trobriand Islands or John Hanning Speke's reflections on the havoc a tropical beetle can create in one's ear. The general introduction to the volume is fluff; the introductions to individual sections ("Seas and Landfalls," "Plains and Foothills," "Hot Deserts," "Cold Deserts," "Forests," "Mountains") are somewhat more substantial. Too many samples seem to have been chosen for their sensationalism, but it is still well worth browsing through this hefty volume. Among other discoveries, one finds selections that offer different versions of one expedition or cluster of expeditions. Readers of Wayne Johnston's *The Navigator of New York*, for example, will enjoy the samples from Frederick A. Cook, Robert Edwin Peary, Josephine Peary, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and William Laird McKinley.

Historian Angela Woollacott's *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism and Modernity* (Oxford UP) presents a more specialized approach to Hassam's topic, and like Lloyd and Hassam she comments on the crucial role of World War I in asserting nationhood among the members of the British Empire. The book charts the ways in which certain London neighbourhoods, boarding-houses, clubs, organizations, newspapers, and publishers created islands of Australia in the British metropolis that provided a haven for expatriates but also bases from which to venture into unconventional careers and ways of life. Despite a sometimes tenuous grasp on the criticism of travel writing and on feminist scholarship, as well as the occasional lapse into turgid prose, the result is a magnificently detailed picture of the support and networking systems that sustained artistic careers and political solidarity. There are numerous parallels to the situation of Canadian writers like Sara Jeannette Duncan, Jean McIlwraith, or Alice Jones that make one look forward to a Canadian equivalent of this book. Surely there was much to share when Australian and Canadian travellers alike were all too often treated to versions of the following: "My little Parisian dressmaker was surprised to know that we did not habitually speak French. Oh! So Australia belonged to the English! The lift-boy at my Florentine hotel,

an otherwise well-informed young person, had an idea that Australia was part of India. And the hotel-porter at Hastings was proud to own himself familiar with the name. It was somewhere in Canada he knew. At St. Ives, a resident asked if I had met some relatives of his who were living in Australia in Charles Street, not far from the pier. One understood why our soldiers during the Great War yielded to the temptation of inventing ostrich ranches at Woolloomooloo and kangaroo farms at Footscray." The quotation beautifully confirms one of Morgan's observations, namely that travellers who found themselves saddled with identities they had not bargained for could also impressively rise to the creative challenge.

Woollacott underlines the significance of a room or apartment of their own in helping travelling women establish their independence in the metropolis, but Morgan also describes how the responses of Scots (who were familiar with such buildings) differed from those of the English who thought "this style of living was not conducive to wholesome domestic life." Sharon Marcus's *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (U of California P) illustrates how the apartment, a highly desirable and prestigious space to inhabit in France, came with an air of scandal in Great Britain. Even if the flat in question had little in common with boarding-houses and the "gross acts . . . which cannot be detailed in print" that their inhabitants were suspected of committing, there was still a whiff of libertinage about an apartment that was probably quite welcome to a bohemian. Bristling with eighty pages of notes and a thirty-page bibliography (the book itself is some 320 pages), Marcus's book covers subjects including urban design, architecture, book design, popular artforms like the *tableaux* (a forerunner of the comic strip), and the fiction of Balzac, Zola, Wilkie Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu among others. Coverage of the French material by far exceeds that of the British, and Marcus points out that this imbalance is a logical result of the relative significance of the apartment in the two cultures. But as the very promising subjects of the ghost story and of the Victorian cemetery ("The Englishman's Castle as his Grave") are treated quite cursorily, this explanation is not too convincing, not to mention the omission of the sorts of contexts outlined in Woollacott's book. There are other problems with Marcus's argument, which sometimes veers between belabouring the obvious and contradicting it in the space of a few pages. For example, she comes to the hardly surprising conclusion that "the more constricted bourgeois apartment usually accommodated only a single conjugal bedroom and thus promoted a greater degree of spatial heterosociality than the aristocratic *hôtel*," only to present shortly thereafter a detailed analysis of Balzac's *Le Cousin Pons* where the relationship between Pons and Schmucke suggests anything but "heterosociality," a situation that requires considerably more comment than is offered here. Citations are in English throughout, with awkward insertions of the original where no satisfactory equivalent exists. Frequently frustrating, *Apartment Stories* is, however, still a commendable book, because it is strewn with nuggets of fascinating observations and offers fine readings of French and British classics.

If Woollacott describes women who travelled to London to seek their freedom from the restrictions of Australian society, then Bridget Hill's *Women Alone: Spinsters in England 1660-1850* (Yale UP) includes among its types of unmarried women those who were courageous enough to emigrate on their own, and who often willingly abandoned the middle-class pretensions that held them captive in Britain in order to undertake careers they would have never been able to consider at home. Lucidly

organized and written, *Women Alone* offers many examples of single women's frugality (requiring not much more than "the use of a little land and the ability to keep a cow" to ensure their independence if they lived in rural areas) and the serious difficulties they faced in old age with no family to support them. Citing Anna Jameson on the causes and consequences of celibacy enforced by population surplus, Hill discusses the few occupations open to single women, caregiver and governess prominent among them, but also has much to say about their resourcefulness in overcoming the many limitations imposed by their status. These range from the formation of women's communities, including those replacing the religious orders dissolved after the Reformation, to the adoption of surrogate families and cross-dressing. A related, but more specialized, study is Rita S. Kranidis's *The Victorian Spinster and Colonial Emigration: Contested Subjects* (St. Martin's). Canada features repeatedly in this book, beginning with the cover photo and its view "Across Picturesque Digby Gut, Nova Scotia," with two elaborately attired ladies perched on some mighty rocks in the foreground. Pitching the historical situation of unmarried female emigrants against the prevalent metaphor of mother country and daughter colony, Kranidis's discussion is most interesting when it points out the contradictions between the two. Canada's conservatism, for example, promised a seamless transplantation of British values to the colony, but it was also feared that the influx of unwanted social elements would taint Canada's wholesomeness and endanger those determined to maintain their respectability no matter what the challenges.

Lloyd, Woollacott, Hill, and Kranidis illustrate that the connection between metropolis and colony was far from unidirectional. *Defining Travel: Diverse Visions* (U of Mississippi P), an anthology edited by Susan L. Roberson, broadens the definition of travel to include a variety of mobilities, ranging from leisure tourism to enforced exile. Indeed, the sections entitled "The New Internationalism" and "The Politics of Relocation" are the most innovative sections of the book. Included here is work on the "Middle Passage" (which, for African American authors, reverses Thoreau's "Eastward I go only by force but westward I go free") and on "homing in" narratives by Native Americans (which modify the "classic" American story "of leaving home to find one's fate farther and farther away"). There are also essays on Cuban emigrants and Mexican migrants in the US and on enforced relocations of rural communities worldwide. The latter is one of the few items that is not preoccupied with the US, and there is surely a contradiction that is both odd and entirely logical in the fact that, in seeking to address the decentralization generated by globalism, this anthology should so insistently depict the centralization that is at its root. The selections include classic essays on travel-writing by Dean MacCannell, Michel Butor, Paul Fussell, Mary Louise Pratt, Homi Bhabha, and Edward Said; instructors will be glad to have them assembled in this way. The writing does vary enormously, however, and Said's brilliant "Reflections on Exile" keeps uneasy company with a diffuse item such as "A Global Sense of Place."

Bruce A. Harvey's *American Geographics: U. S. National Narratives and the Representation of the Non-European World, 1830-1865* (Stanford UP) also focuses on the United States, but the book illustrates the difficulties of locating a national narrative dependable enough to serve the purpose of patriotic indoctrination. Harvey's affecting portrait of the geographer and pastor Jedidiah Morse (father of Samuel Morse) shows a man so passionately preoccupied with collating information on a highly unstable world that his congregation felt neglected, a difficulty only solved to every-

one's satisfaction when he presented a Thanksgiving sermon in 1795 on the topic "The Present Situation of Other Nations in the World, Contrasted with Our Own." The chapter on Martin R. Delany illustrates the dilemma of an African American who returns "home" to Africa but finds himself a foreigner there. In his conclusion, Harvey insists that the individuals he has discussed deserve attention as "more than a cipher, a vessel of national ideologies." There is some squirming lest he be misunderstood as an unsophisticated theorist, together with a festive eruption of jargon to prove the opposite ("The 'self,' in this regard, is not desubjectified, becoming merely a hybrid space where ideologies and different affiliations or experiences collide; rather it is the necessary precondition for ideologies to come into visibility"). But here, as in several of the books under discussion, individual experience is granted a degree of authenticity and agency that it has been denied by cultural studies for some time.

This insistence on individual experience is also granted centre-stage in Julia Harrison's refreshingly belligerent *Being a Tourist: Finding Meaning in Pleasure Travel* (UBC P). Roberson's collection features several attempts to categorize travel-writing (see, for example, Erik Cohen's "Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences"), but Harrison insists that these categories need to be capacious enough to accommodate the actual experiences. "Few grand, totalizing statements can be made," she writes when she sets out the parameters of her study of a select group of Canadian travellers, adding that "even with this small group, it is essential to remember that the tourist experience is at the least a three-way conversation among the tourist, the local citizen, and the site or place visited." The book draws unusual but persuasive connections between a tourist's souvenirs and transnational travellers' mementoes of their lost homes, thus extending the discussion of "ancestors" (ritual, religion, music, food, and performance in addition to family) proposed in Farah Jasmine Griffin's essay on the African American migration narrative (*Defining Travel*). Harrison intends to show that tourists are "not the buffoonish nitwits" they have been made out to be in much criticism, and her approach is often fruitful and original. But the reader is also left with many questions ranging from larger conceptual concerns to smaller worries. In citing excerpts from the interviews, for example, Harrison does not sufficiently analyze their nature as performance and the way they allow the speaker to create a persona for him/herself that fits the situation—and through the notoriously circuitous medium of the spoken word at that. Such analysis would, however, be crucial to make the central argument of the book stick. There are also occasions when, despite Harrison's insistence on a nuanced reading of her subjects' experiences and their renditions of them, the method is one of paraphrasing a popular theory and slotting the interviews in it: in the process she creates a standard tourist of the sort she resists elsewhere. This is especially apparent in the discussion of the influential *Imperial Eyes* (1992) by Mary Louise Pratt (here referred to as "Mary Pratt"), the views of which here remain unchallenged although more recent work on naturalists' and ethnographers' travel (especially the expeditions of Alexander von Humboldt and Maximilian von Wied) has considerably modified them. It was also news to me that the Americans bombed "Kosovo, a Baltic state" in the late 1990s. One is only too familiar with the strange deceptions the brain will foist on the weary writer, but what was the copy editor doing? After all is said and done, however, *Being a Tourist* had me thinking about theories of travel in ways few other recent books have, and that is a lot to be grateful for.

Harrison "applaud[s] the contributions

[on the search for the authentic] prompted by McCannell's work on the tourist," but asserts that "such discussions need to be put aside." Her take on McCannell's theories of the "front" and "back," however, does not do full justice to their complexity. In her chapter "Modernism and Travel" in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, edited by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge UP), Helen Carr cites Edith Wharton on Italy as offering the tourist both "a foreground and a background." In suggesting that the latter is superior to the former, Wharton does endorse the elitist split between "mechanical sight-seer" and "serious student of Italy" that the author of *Being a Tourist* finds so objectionable, but her distinction also draws attention to Italy as spectacle. This spectacle could be either a cheesy show or a connoisseur's delight, but it was for tourists to choose which kind of entertainment best suited their tastes. The reference to Wharton is only one of many items that make the *Companion* excellent reading even for the specialist, although like all the volumes in the series, this collection primarily seeks to address the college student and general educated reader. Divided into three sections ("Surveys," "Sites," "Topics"), the book is particularly strong in sorting out complex historical and social developments behind various vogues in travel, and one comes away from chapters on subjects like "The Middle East/Arabia" (by Billie Melman) or "The West/ California" (by Bruce Greenfield) with a vivid sense of events on one side of the globe triggering movements, often large-scale, on the other. One of Glenn Hooper's sentences, in "The Isles/Ireland," took me a good half hour to disentangle, but the syntax marvelously mimics the global complications addressed in it: ". . . although Linda Colley cites the Treaty of Paris in 1763 ('in which Britain restored some of its winnings to France and Spain in the vain hope that they would refrain from going to war in the future to regain the rest') as a turning-point—a moment of English re-evaluation in which Scotland came to be regarded as effectively absorbed within the Kingdom—she also points to the willingness of Scots to join in this process of absorption themselves as combatants within the British army, as emigrants to the British colonies in America, and as southward-bearing movers who would do well in the English capital, and then overseas as part of the British Empire." Researchers of Canadian travel writing will enjoy the determinedly metropolitan perspective on the travels of Frobisher, Mackenzie, Vancouver, and HBC Governor George Simpson, and admirers of Clarke Blaise and Bharati Mukherjee's sophisticated travelogue *Days and Nights in Calcutta* will find a discussion of the book in a chapter on "India/Calcutta" by Kate Teltscher. It pays to read the Hume/Youngs collection alongside the Roberson anthology: many phenomena that are described in the Roberson anthology as recent developments triggered by contemporary communication technology and capitalist "flow" are found to have well-established historical precedents. A quibble: travel writing thrives on the nuances of the text and the complications of its production, and some contributions—Greenfield's among them—pay attention to these even within the space restrictions of the series, but more would have been welcome. Still, this *Companion* must be considered the standard introductory text to travel writing currently available; it is equally useful in all sorts of other contexts, the literature of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries among them.

Jane C. Desmond's *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display From Waikiki to Sea World* (U of Chicago P) shares with the essays in the *Companion* a historical method, but like Harrison, it also takes an empirical approach to its subject. Desmond describes her work as combining "historical research with multisited ethnography": that is, she

has visited a wide variety of touristic sites and studied a broad range of publications, written and pictorial, associated with them. The book falls into two discrete sections, the first ("Staging the Cultural") a tightly theorized and somewhat stilted investigation of tourism in Hawaii, the second ("Staging the Natural") a much livelier essay on the public display of animals. "Staging the Cultural" bears all the characteristics of a former dissertation, albeit an excellent one. Desmond's study of hula pays attention to both its commodification and its uses in Hawaiian nationalism, and she has instructive things to say about the iconographies associated with each. She pays close attention to the construction of a native physique (the "hapa haole") deemed acceptable to tourist consumers, to the place of hula culture within US nationalist discourse, and to the cross-overs between ethnography and pornography, including one photo in which the "dancer sits on a *pahu* drum, the type used to accompany the oldest chants and usually handled with great respect." The work is thorough, intelligent, and illuminating, but like Harrison's book it also highlights the limitations of the ethnographic and auto-ethnographic approach. Writing about the rituals of "Germaine's luau," the scholar holds her nose and remains a keen observer even while she submits to the hugs and kisses of several "strange men," but her conclusions are conditioned by her education and taste. The tourists who genuinely enjoy the show, however, are unlikely to analyze their reasons and write about them, and so the picture remains incomplete. In contrast to "Staging the Cultural," the second section of the book suggests that Desmond is not only an animal lover but also a brilliant cultural journalist. There are many quotable passages in her analyses of Sea World and other spectacles, and in the best of these she makes (one hopes) poker-faced fun of the lingo of her profession, as in ". . . to see the tigers at Marine World USA play leapfrog is not to see them being more tigerly; it is to see the abstraction of tigerliness (capacity to jump) into a framework that takes its intelligibility from human actions." And having just spent a week on Vancouver Island's Long Beach, sometimes with binoculars trained on a colony of sea lions, I particularly enjoyed her description of "[g]iant masses of gray-brown flesh [that] occasionally woke, snorted, and rearranged their bulk, their big fleshy snouts wobbling at one end of their ill-defined bodies."

A good book to read alongside Desmond's is *Body Trade: Captivity, Cannibalism and Colonialism in the Pacific*, edited by Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn (Routledge). Based on a symposium held in honour of Gananath Obeyesekere (who contributes an essay on cannibalism) and introduced by Peter Hulme, the collection features essays on such topics as the display of Aboriginal people at world fairs, the uses of phrenology in colonialism and the desecration of graves that often preceded them, the testimony of Korean "comfort women," and the deployment of captivity narratives in museum culture. Jeanette Hoorn's parallel reading of Marlon Fuentes's *Bontoc Eulogy* and Vicente Minnelli's *Meet Me In St. Louis* is particularly fine. In *Bontoc Eulogy*, the Filipino filmmaker chronicles his search for the skull of his grandfather who—together with a thousand Igorots—was exhibited at the 1904 World Fair in St. Louis but not taken back, despite protests both in the Philippines and in the United States. Fuentes's search makes for a haunting backdrop to the boosterism of Minnelli's film and, although her conclusions are sometimes forced, her analysis of Tootie and Esther's jungle song and of the *intérieur* in which they perform it provides a subversive perspective on the film. The practice of preserving the skulls or skeletons of indigenous people was of course widespread, and Canadians were only recently reminded that the skull of the last Beothuk was shipped to London and stored

there until it was lost. There is also a connection to be made here to the story of "Minik, the New York Eskimo" told in Kenn Harper's *Give Me My Father's Body* (Steerforth P), which relates the horrified discovery of Minik's son that his father's bones were displayed in the American Museum of Natural History, although a mock funeral had been staged in the museum gardens for the boy's benefit. Father and child had been brought back from the Arctic by Robert E. Peary at Franz Boas's request, and thus, like *The Faber Book of Exploration*, Harper's study makes for interesting (and appalling) background reading to *The Navigator of New York*, while *Body Trade* provides a wide-ranging and rigorous examination of the ethical problems raised by such practices.

In contrast to Desmond's richly orchestrated writing, the critical commentary in *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing*, edited by Shirley Foster and Sarah Mills (Manchester UP), stays within one register, of which this passage is a representative sample: "[A]s mobility became a marker of social progression towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was no longer necessary to foreground the exceptionality of women who ventured beyond the normal parameters of womanly undertaking." The collection seeks to be more inclusive than previous anthologies and to feature the writings of "orthodox" females along with the famous eccentrics, but the excellent selections militate against this purpose: every one of these women is exceptional, and there is a great deal of stylish writing. Ysenda Maxtone Graham's near fatal hike in the Grand Canyon is as riveting as missionary Susie Rijnhart's sad tale, in *With the Tibetans in Tent and Temple*, of her baby son's sudden death, or Virginia Reed's letter from the "Western Trail," reporting with equal gusto on "several tribs of indians" observed along the way, on "gramma's" funeral, and on a "botel of licker" presented to her "paw" on 4 July. Biographical notes offering more information on these bold women would have been helpful. There are generous selections from Anna Jameson, Catharine Parr Traill, and Susanna Moodie, and from Amelia Murray's *Letters from the United States, Cuba and Canada*.

Biographical notes is what the next book is all about, but these are no dry encyclopedia entries. The relevance to Canadian travel writing of *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800*, compiled from the Brinsley Ford Archive by John Ingamellis (Yale UP), is not immediately apparent, but it is easy to convince oneself that this magnificent volume identifying more than six thousand travellers deserves pride of place on one's shelf. The exiled Young Pretender and his entourage held court in Rome during the period in question, and the *Dictionary* vividly sketches the details of his sad existence there and those who lived and worked with him. A fabled figure and ghostly presence in Canadian historical fiction, Charles was no longer the "bonnie prince" when contemporary visitors to Italy paid their respects. Andrew Lumisden, an advocate, spent much of his time dealing "principally with the grievances of impoverished Jacobites" and living "in a sort of bondage," catering to the demands of the Old and Young Pretender. It is a relief to read that Lumisden escaped the Stuarts eventually, living out his life in Scotland, "a lively, laughing old gentleman, with polish'd manners and stiff curls." Another entry describes Benjamin West, creator of *The Death of General Wolfe*, one of the most frequently discussed (and parodied) paintings in Canadian literature. In addition to learning a great deal about his contacts with painters and sponsors, we also hear that "during an audience at Court, he kept his hat on, quaker-fashion, throughout the ceremony, to the dismay of the courtiers and the delight of the Duke." Among the women travellers was Mariana Starke, who spent much of her time looking after a consumptive relative and found herself handicapped in her sight-

seeing by her "occupation as a nurse." Written during the invasion of Italy by the French in 1792, her letters document the challenges that a sudden outbreak of war poses for the traveller: the Starkes always seem to have been a step ahead of the French, but they also found that "[p]rices began to rise and there were civil and ultimately military disturbances, culminating in the exile of the Pope." The volume is prefaced by William Patoun's "Advice on Travel in Italy" (1766) which provides fine practical context for the exigencies of getting oneself from Britain to Italy in the eighteenth century. Patoun's description of the miseries that will ensue if an "English Post Chaise" is not taken along closely resembles that of the warnings issued to modern users of the Alaska Highway: "Ropes, Lynch Pins a jack and drag for the Wheels &c are always to be at hand," he advises, and he evokes a terrifying picture of the consequences if his counsel is not taken: "You buy a . . . wheel Chaise. . . , which usually costs from Thirty to Forty Louis d'or. They break down. You repair, you patch & peice [*sic*] them, you get new Wheels." The *Dictionary*'s "Note on Method" is only two pages long, but it is a brilliant exercise in the arbitrariness of everything from measuring time and space to determining a traveller's nationality. "British subjects born in North America or the West Indies are included," we are told, but the "interpretation of 'British and Irish'" has not always been easy and an extra appendix has been necessary to accommodate individuals who fall between the cracks. Time and its coordinates are as unstable as Italy's territorial divisions: until 1752, British travellers were using the Julian calendar and found themselves obliged to indicate both the Julian and Gregorian date when in Italy, and the Note provides a brief lesson in the accurate reading of dates. This is a superb book, and one of these days I will read it from cover to cover.

This review opened with a reference to Jonathan Vance's *Death So Noble*, and it is appropriate that it should close with his most recent book, *High Flight: Aviation and the Canadian Imagination* (Penguin). Taking its departure from the subject of Vance's earlier book, *High Flight* too has much to say about war and its symbolism, and in some areas—such as the anachronistic depiction of the fighter airplane as "the steed that carried the cavalry of the clouds into battle" and of the pilot as a nobleman unsullied by the enmities of war—the book overlaps with previous studies such as Eksteins's *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (1989). However, like the best of books discussed above, this one also makes a well-established topic new by dwelling on the many ways in which actual events can challenge official rhetoric and, because they do, may find themselves suppressed. Thus, Vance aligns himself with recent European historiography in taking another look at the bombing of civilian targets during World War II and examining Canadians' responses to it. His research also provides wide-ranging practical background to the myth of the Avro Arrow by describing the economic and strategic conquest of a previously resistant North through aviation, and by documenting the fear—going back to the aerial attacks on Guernica, Shanghai, and Nanking—that this very North might also become the portal to a raid on Canada. Aviation was believed to pull the nation together and tie it firmly into a global nexus ("Will the word foreigner remain at all when the peoples of all countries are within a few hours of one another?" intoned the *Ottawa Journal* in 1919), but it also made it more vulnerable, a paradox that was bitterly illustrated by the events of 9/11. (A good book to read alongside the imperialist jingoism exposed in *High Flight* is Mark Gottdiener's *Life in the Air: Surviving the New Culture of Air Travel* [Rowman & Littlefield], a curious mixture of cultural analysis and advice column but also a frightening prophecy.) As in his earlier

book, Vance makes extensive use of Canadian journalism, literature, and popular culture both well known and forgotten, and the book should be required reading for anyone interested in Canadian modernism. He tells his story with passion and presents unpopular views with courage. But he also has a great sense of humour: the anecdote of "a German reconnaissance pilot report[ing] a mob of panicked and disorganized British soldiers" that turn out to be "engaged in a soccer game" rather than succumbing to demoralized defeat is not soon forgotten. And finally, in discussing the so-called "Baedeker raids," he also confirms that tourism of the kind described in Hassam's book can be deployed as a powerful strategic weapon: in deploring the air raids on historical landmarks like Exeter, York, and Norwich, a columnist in *Maclean's* reminded her readers of how terrible is the loss of "those spots where US and Canadian tourists find their way with eager feet and loving hearts."

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Reviews

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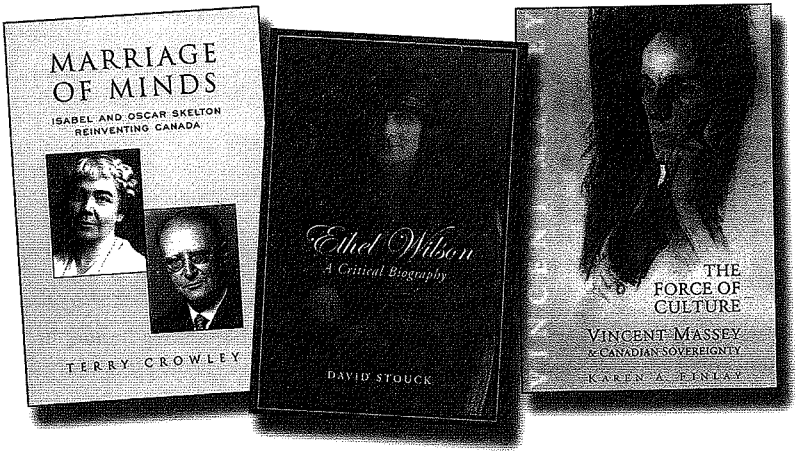

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