

Book Reviews

Citizen Machiavelli. By Mark Hulliung. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983. Pp. xi, 299. \$22.50.

Mark Hulliung believes that Machiavelli should be approached as a "Roman" author, an author whose models, and whose sense of literary conventions, were entirely classical. He also believes that most modern accounts of Machiavelli err by attributing to him the view that the ends justify the means: Machiavelli, in Hulliung's view, saw no need to justify the pursuit of power in this way; indeed the central thesis of all his work was that the state should, in imitation of the Romans, seek to expand its territorial power without limit and without concern for legitimacy or morality. Such a view, of course, involved a rejection of the values of both Christianity and stoicism. Hulliung's beliefs need not, I think, surprise anyone familiar with Machiavelli, nor are they without parallel in modern scholarship, although Hulliung is right to claim that his own emphasis on these two themes is novel and salutary. Hulliung's approach pays off in particular in his chapter on *Mandragola*, where he shows very clearly both the classical and the "Machiavellian" character of the work.

One of the great merits of Hulliung's work is that it reflects its author's cultivation, a cultivation which enables him on occasion to stand back from the thickets of modern scholarship and identify the trees. One of the central problems of the work however is that it shows no sign of being learned. Thus, for example, Mr. Hulliung portrays Machiavelli as an opponent of Christianity, I think correctly. But he knows such a view is contrary to current fashion, and writes in a footnote: "Jacob Burckhardt presented the Renaissance as an un-Christian and even pagan era in his *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, Pt. 6. Subsequent scholarship has moved away from Burckhardt's position. I suspect, without being able to offer proof, that scholars will eventually uncover pockets of militant paganism within the Renaissance." The last sentence is remarkable, both for its appeal to non-existent evidence, and for the ignorance it betrays of the work of Lucien Febvre on Dolet and on Des Periers, of Fritz Saxl on the tomb of MarcAntonio della Torre, and of Bruno Nardi on Pomponazzi. With this footnote Hulliung simply sidesteps the central question of the relationship of the "classicism" of Machiavelli to that of his contemporaries.

Citizen Machiavelli's strength lies in its treatment of Machiavelli the author, but it provides little insight into Machiavelli the politician: and for Machiavelli writing about politics was second best to (but sometimes a method of) practising politics. When Machiavelli writes about power it is

with concrete examples to hand, for it is the immediate exercise of political skill, not the general idea of authority, which he loves. What interests Machiavelli is not so much the end—glory and fame—for this is the preserve of the absolute prince and the republican magistrate, men whom he admired but did not aspire to emulate, but the means. Even in *Mandragola* the seducer, Callimaco, is at a loss without his advisor, the Machiavellian Ligurio. It is here that Machiavelli's expertise lay, and an account of Machiavelli so little interested in the arts of force and fraud as he practised them stands little chance of convincing. Hulliung, however, argues for a "synthetic" rather than a "genetic" approach to Machiavelli: in other words he believes that Machiavelli's views did not significantly change over time, and that Machiavelli's writings do not reflect his responses to, and attempted interventions in, contemporary events. To take this view is, as Hulliung is aware, to leave to one side much of the best modern scholarship on Machiavelli.

Hulliung's first footnote quotes J.H. Whitfield: "The problem of the reconciliation of the *Prince* and the *Discorsi* is the prime problem in the examination of Machiavelli." Nevertheless, Hulliung "resolves" this problem in a paragraph, in which he asserts that the monarchical means of the *Prince* are designed to serve republican ends. His own claim that the means/ends dichotomy is foreign to Machiavelli's thought should have made him pause over this claim, as should the text of the *Prince* itself, for it is hard to read chapters five and nine as anything other than a call for the abolition of Florence's republican institutions, institutions which the Medici wished to preserve. Indeed it is difficult not to recognise the implication that Machiavelli's patron, the Gonfaloniere Soderini, would have been wise to overthrow the republic which had given him office. These chapters can scarcely be reconciled with the argument in the *Discorsi* that anyone concerned to reform a republic should preserve existing institutions, supposing Machiavelli's ends to have been republican. Between the *Prince* and the *Discorsi* Machiavelli had changed his mind at least about means, and probably about ends.

Hulliung's Machiavelli is a republican out of admiration for the conquests of Rome. But a love of conquest is hardly likely to lead to a consistent republicanism, and if the *Prince* was (as is, I am convinced, the case) written before the *Discorsi*, then there is no reason to presume its author had ever been attracted to republican policies, particularly when one realises that Machiavelli was not (as Hulliung, along with many careful scholars, mistakenly claims) an advocate of a "citizen's militia." Bruni had defended the republican ideal of the armed citizen, but Machiavelli's central and consistent recommendation was for a conscript army of subjects, of peasants from the *contado*, not of Florentine citizens. Moreover when that militia was created a prominent role in it was given to the infamous Don Micheletto, a former henchman of Cesare Borgia's, a specialist in the art of strangulation. One could scarcely be further from the world of republican ideals, or nearer to the practicalities of the *Prince*.

Hulliung's ambition is to restore to Machiavelli his stature as a serious and disturbing literary figure, a challenge to liberal, humanist assumptions. Hulliung is particularly shocked that Machiavelli's goal was a world empire, although it is hard to see why such an empire should be necessarily more evil than an array of warring city states. It is, however, distressing that the civil servant of the republic aspired to be the architect of tyranny; it is disturbing that the author of the *Discorsi*, the republican Machiavelli, was convinced that the freedom of a few was the best foundation on which to construct the servitude of many; it is shocking that Machiavelli writes both wickedly and well. In England the devil was renamed Old Nick in his honour. Hulliung has been concerned to refute modern attempts to moralise Machiavelli, but it is to Carlo Dionisotti (whom Hulliung does not cite) that one must turn for a just assessment of a man who can still inspire horror and admiration.

London, England

David Wootton

***The Potter's View of Canada: Canadian Scenes of Nineteenth-Century Earthenware.* By Elizabeth Collard. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983. Pp. x, 194. \$29.95.**

Material culture fills our museums as once it filled our homes. This book is about the dishes and pottery our ancestors used a century and more ago, what we used to have in our dining rooms and bedrooms.

The pottery of Staffordshire was one of the earliest and most dramatic examples of growing dominance of British exports in the early years of Queen Victoria. British ceramics exported in the year 1840 were valued at £573,000; by 1850 they were running at £2,500,000 per annum. Most of it was not fancy china either; there was something for every purse, but it was largely sturdy, well-made and handsome earthenware dishes for everyday use.

The designs popular in British North America were based upon Canadian scenes, interpreted by various painters and designers. The most celebrated was W.H. Bartlett, an Englishman who came out to British North America in 1838, and whose charming drawings were made into prints in 1842, and transferred to pottery by 1845. The technique was to put coloured tissue paper onto the earthenware, then cover that with overglaze. Thus was Canadian scenery translated into Canadian homes: an English artist, Staffordshire (and other) potters, a vast industry, and finally the huge wooden cases filled with pottery packed with straw, that were landed on the docks of Halifax, Saint John, Quebec, Montreal and Toronto.

This book is as handsome as the pottery, elegantly printed and designed. Half the book is pictures. It is almost a handbook for a collector; it certainly makes the reader want to be one!

Dalhousie University

P.B. Waite

***The Whale's Wake.* By Harry Morton. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1982. Pp. 396. \$32.50.**

Canadian-born Harry Morton, distinguished scholar of the history of the sea, has given us a volume to match his widely-proclaimed book *The Wind Commands* (University of British Columbia Press, 1975). The whaling industry, still the main focus of international politics in the control and conservation of the world's ocean resources, was from its inception an international economy. As with sealing in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence or fishing on the Grand Banks, whaling attracted well-equipped seaborne entrepreneurs from the eastern United States and British American colonies, and from Britain, France, Germany and other European states. No less significant is the local industry it spawned in its distant areas of endeavour, specifically New Zealand. So students of Pacific and South Seas whaling have often been treated to the outward push of whaling captains and ships—from Nantucket and English ports predominantly. Now at last we have the other, vital side of the story, the influence of whaling on the history of New Zealand—its economy, natives, missions, legal history, and settlement. This book is a magnificent achievement in every respect, brilliantly conceived, thoroughly researched, and skilfully written. For the Canadian reader particulars of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick ships and commercial interests, including photographs, are a significant, essential inclusion.

Harry Morton begins his account with the whales themselves. He traces the wake of the whales, the techniques of the hunters, the whaling products, men, ships and the policies of the British, always besieged by American rivals after 1783. The pursuit of seals in New Zealand waters provides the precursor for the main story, in which we are treated to how deepsea and inshore whaling became the first staple of the New Zealand economy. It affected missionaries who sought to control the evil ways of beachcombers, gunrunners, and liquor vendors. It resulted in the New Zealand natives, the Maoris, going to sea, learning English, and establishing whaling ports. It brought agricultural development to the islands, for whalers turned to the land for a sea-stock. And all of the above brought British intervention: to protect the New Zealand islands and their inhabitants from irregularities by whalers and beachcombers, provide support for besieged missionaries, and prevent France from preempting British claims. The Treaty of Waitangi has its origins in the pursuit of whales, in the southern oceans.

A thorough search of ships' logs and records, government and private correspondence, newspapers and other journals has been undertaken in the course of this book's preparation. One hundred and nine photographs, skilfully-executed line drawings, and end-paper maps add to the attractiveness of this handsome volume. A full bibliography, containing a full list of ships' logs consulted (at least 460), and an index add to the value of this book as a reference and research tool. By the 1850s the "explosively exploitative" industry had killed itself as far as New Zealand was con-

cerned. But in "the Whale's Wake" had come irrepressible forces that changed the Maoris beyond measure and left the colony-dominion to find other export cargoes to serve metropolitan and local needs.

Wilfrid Laurier University

Barry M. Gough

***Joseph Howe Volume I: Conservative Reformer, 1804-1848.* By J. Murray Beck. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982. Pp. viii, 389. \$35.00.**

This is the first of two volumes of J.M. Beck's long-awaited modern biography of Joseph Howe, covering the years to 1848. As an essay in biography it adheres faithfully to the "life and times" tradition. Beck uses the career of a celebrated public figure to provide a perspective from which and through which to view the politics of the age of reform in Nova Scotia. He does not attempt the literary recreation of a historical character whereby the subject springs with vivid immediacy from the printed page, a three-dimensional individual of flesh and blood. Howe is treated as a peg on which to hang an account of familiar constitutional developments rather than as a charismatic personality able to manipulate the political scene or as a complex individual interacting with people who had their own strong convictions and burning ambitions.

This approach to biographical writing has both strengths and weaknesses. On the debit side, Howe's character and personality emerge only in glimpses and implicitly. The book lacks a penetrating exploration of the motives and incentives that drove him relentlessly on, his hopes and fears, his disappointments and aspirations. On such vital, fascinating matters the author keeps a tight rein on his creative imagination. Similarly, the parade of Howe's colourful contemporaries who flit through the pages of the book remain somewhat cardboard characters who scarcely come alive, and who seldom merit even a descriptive adjective that might have captured an essential characteristic or endearing eccentricity. The handling of the sources also contributes a certain flatness to the narrative. The study consists more of a rendering of the sources than an interpretation of them. An illustration of the peculiar way in which Beck remains the servant rather than becoming the master of his material is provided by his discussion of Howe's travels through Nova Scotia to promote his newspaper, the *Novascotian*. Instead of using all the available information to convey Howe's impressions of the country and its people, Beck seems reluctant to depart from the published version of these 'Rambles' which appeared in the press. He repeatedly apologizes for the dullness of the accounts Howe wrote and frequently interjects that letters to his wife, Susan Ann, concerning the same travels are far more colourful. The contrast between published and personal versions is again bela-

boured when Beck describes Howe's visit to England in 1838. "While these sketches are stylistically superior to the 'Rambles,'" he writes, "they are still lacking the human qualities of his numerous letters to Susan Ann." (p. 180) Why not then rely on the more graphic correspondence?

On the credit side, the advantage of this kind of biographical study is that it can afford new insights into the familiar story of responsible government and in so doing broaden our understanding of how this was accomplished. As a scholarly study of the coming of local self-government in Nova Scotia, it treats effectively and critically the libel trial of 1835, the Twelve Resolutions of 1837, and Howe's role in the coalition government of the 1840s. Despite Beck's self-proclaimed hero worship for Howe (p. vii), he readily acknowledges his warts and carefully delineates the stages in Howe's political development. Howe emerges from this account as a belated and somewhat ambivalent convert to responsible government. Here the reader would have liked to know more about his motivation in politics and the reasons for his conversion to reformism: was it belief in a principle of popular, local government, or the logical result of personal ambition and desire for office? Beck seems to imply that this was a gradual process of conversion from conservative to reformer, largely the result of Howe's increasing awareness of the defects of oligarchical control. But the evidence marshalled powerfully suggests to the reader a different explanation: that Howe was more concerned with office than with principle. His willingness to join tories in the executive council and operate a coalition in 1840, his "sycophantic approach" to Lieutenant-Governor Falkland until 1843, his scheming to secure appointment as collector of excise if not provincial secretary all suggest a degree of personal ambition which went far beyond accepted flexibility and shrewd tactics to secure the vindication of a principle of governance. The unedifying campaign of vilification and the slanging match in which he became embroiled in 1844-5 may also tell us more about Howe's frustrations and temperament than Beck conveys in his narrative.

One problem that arises from linking Howe's career so closely with the achievement of responsible government is that it gives the unfolding of his life a deterministic, even preordained, character and encourages the author, with the benefit or perhaps the limitations of hindsight, to shape and interpret his material in a way that distorts or oversimplifies the complexities of a life being lived. Difficulties, options, uncertainties, and inconsistencies are ironed out or omitted, for everything must lead to one eventual goal. While biographers must necessarily impose some order on the chaos of a life that cannot be objectively recreated, the reader of this book may at times become uncomfortably aware of a discrepancy between Howe's own appreciation of his unfolding career and a posthumous reconstruction.

A related difficulty arises from the omissions and priorities which emerge from writing a study of Howe as the father of responsible government and a folk hero. The predominant emphasis in the book is placed on

political affairs. This is Beck's special expertise and strength as a writer. But at times the detailed dissection of high politics in a parochial community becomes rather disproportionate and obsessive. When Beck does look fleetingly beyond the doors of the assembly chamber to see what is happening in the street, his assessments seem to rely unduly on anecdotal and antiquarian sources of dubious worth. The reader is scarcely made aware that this period was also characterized by significant changes in religion, education, business, justice, demography, and social thought. The endemic rivalry of Protestants and Catholics is mentioned but the character and vibrancy of this fundamental facet of mid-nineteenth-century life, politics included, are not effectively delineated. The nature of the colony's economy and the changing fortunes of its operations emerge only hazily from the study. The importance of his wife's role to Howe's career is treated perfunctorily and the production of their numerous offspring is presented without that assessment of family life which is so essential to well-rounded biography.

Some peculiar mistakes have crept into the text. The Free Church of 1843 appears in Nova Scotia in 1830 (p. 77), quite a revision of ecclesiastical history. The 3rd Earl Grey would be amazed to find himself Lord Durham's son-in-law instead of his brother-in-law (p. 297). Such minor lapses, together with the more fundamental constrictions of the approach, should not however be allowed to detract from the welcome appearance of a full-scale study of one of the major actors in Nova Scotia's political history. The volume will prominently grace the bookshelves of scholar, student, and general reader alike. The Howe legend can now be reliably tempered and corrected by documented fact and thoughtful analysis.

Dalhousie University

Judith Fingard

***The Revolutionary Imagination.* By Alan M. Wald. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983. Pp. xix, 288. \$28.00.**

John Brooks Wheelwright was for many years important mainly as a minor New England figure whose truncated career formed — partly, perhaps, by accident of acquaintanceship — the last chapter of Austin Warren's *New England Saints* (1956). Knowing, and known and praised by, so many more widely recognized figures of New England culture and literary modernism, Wheelwright has been too long getting his own due recognition. But with the publication of his *Collected Poems* (1972, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld) and Alan Wald's *The Revolutionary Imagination*, Wheelwright's work will be properly recognized.

Like some other reviewers, I am already doing several injustices to Wald's book and to its full subject. For the book's subtitle is "The Poetry and Politics of John Wheelwright and Sherry Mangan." And, we are told, the book intends not so much to "revise the canon in any remarkable way"

(p. xiii) as "to subvert the currently sanctified canon of letters and the vision of society legitimized by its codification" (p. xiii) and "to extend the theory of American literary radicalism, particularly into such areas as the interaction of Marxism and modernism, the formal features of left-wing poetry in the United States, and the fate of 1930s revolutionaries who remained unrepentant during the Cold War epoch" (p. xiv). Fair enough. Later in the preface, however, Wald reminds us that Wheelwright has "begun to emerge as a significant figure" (p. xiv) and grants what the material he quotes gives no reason to doubt, "the lesser importance of Mangan's poetry and prose" (p. xv); but according to which canon is not clear to me. Unlike Wheelwright's poetry, moreover, Mangan's poetry and prose remain not readily available nor have they surfaced in the standard anthologies, a lack which unbalances Wald's study of the two writers both as to its intrinsic interest and as to its ability to rely on readers' knowledge and expectations.

Wheelwright was killed in 1940, whereas Mangan did not die until 1961; this fact, too, unbalances Wald's comparison, especially regarding "the fate of 1930s revolutionaries ... during the Cold War." Would Wheelwright's "fate" during those years have confirmed the pattern of Mangan's, or qualified or even contradicted it? And does the loss of Wheelwright and his writings, with a third of *The Revolutionary Imagination* still to go, give other readers, as it did me, some feeling of anti-climax in spite of the public drama of those years and the private pathos of Mangan's scramblings for a literary voice, subject, and audience after 1940? Yet to those more directly engaged with the history and struggles of American radicalism than I, the issues, events, publications, and personalities Mangan involved himself with in the last twenty years of his life may carry within them an emotional, ethical, and intellectual charge that Wald has not always felt it necessary to recreate fully in his detailed, well-documented account of Mangan's involvement with such matters. No doubt Wald has assumed the kind of knowledge available to us from books such as Daniel Aaron's *Writers on the Left* (1961) and James B. Gilbert's *Writers and Partisans* (1968), both called to our attention in Wald's preface. I found it helpful to reread both along with *The Revolutionary Imagination*. It is interesting to note, however, that neither Mangan nor Wheelwright finds a place in either of these histories of American literary radicalism, a fact that could work both for and against Wald's undertaking.

No doubt the limits set by Wald's double subject did not allow a full narration of Mangan's complex and troubled career during the 40s and 50s or, for that matter, of his earlier life. A fuller treatment of Mangan's life would have raised the question of how "representative" Mangan's troubles really were of anything beyond his own very mixed qualities, a question also raised by Wald's discussion of Mangan's brief period in psycho-analysis after a mental breakdown (pp. 198-202). To oversimplify, which was closer to the true fate of American literary radicalism: Mangan's relative failure as Wald narrates it, or the relative success of the

Partisan Review writers, say, as narrated by Gilbert? Wald's Mangan, for all his promise and ambition and energy and his real sufferings, comes across — to me, at least — as a figure of not too much talent and not very many ideas, who might have failed just as much, and just as movingly, on the Right as on the Left. Given more fully, of course, Mangan's story and his writings might make a different impression.

To return to Wheelwright, his life and very distinguished writings dominate the first two-thirds of *The Revolutionary Imagination* and do certainly gain another helpful context by being paired and compared with Mangan's. For example, Wheelwright's New World New England Puritan background, already made familiar by Austin Warren, contrasts interestingly with Mangan's Old World Irish Catholic background, which I wish Wald had had space to present and explore more fully. Wheelwright's sense of his unhappy father's discontents strengthened his poems in a way Mangan's sense of his father's contentment apparently never did his. Those of Mangan's poems that Wald reproduces are flawed by obvious echoes of Eliot, Pound, and Cummings; Wheelwright has made these and other contemporary voices much more his own. In his "Introduction: Marxism and Modernism in the 1930s," Wald shows at once how Wheelwright's "Skulls as Drums" employs modernist verse skills successfully for radical ends (pp. 8-12); whereas Mangan's poetry is analyzed, when it is, chiefly as "a paradigm of his own impasse" (p. 145). (Wald may, however, give too much weight to Wheelwright's prose "argument" to "Skulls as Drums" in resolving the complex and ambiguous mythic, symbolic, and ironic imagery of the poem's last lines.) In spite of these and other differences between them, "Wheelwright and Mangan are ultimately comparable because of the manner in which they blended classical and modernist poetic taste with revolutionary politics" (p. 33).

No one today would deny that it can often be helpful to approach literature as in part the product of "the revolutionary imagination." Nor would anyone deny that much of Wheelwright's poetry, above all the poems in *Political Self-Portrait* (1940), calls for that approach. For Wald, such "political" poetry is "a special category of cultural practice requiring special methods of analysis," methods whose "object is not the revelation of abstract and universal literary essences" (p. 17). Critical pluralists might argue whether successful poems, even when "political," require only such special methods for only such an object. Wald himself identifies with "a Marxist tradition that assigns a 'relative autonomy' to literary forms and conventions" (p. 16), but it is not clear that he would extend even this "relative autonomy" to literary themes and concerns.

Wald follows his general introduction with two chapters on the relatively apolitical literary and biographical contexts out of which Wheelwright's political and other poetry grew, chapters seasoned with brief, cogent explications of poems closely related to these two contexts. The next chapter looks briefly at Wheelwright's "Harvard poems" and then surveys the five "religiomythic" longer poems of the 1920s and early 1930s. None of these poems is given anything like full analysis, but their

basic relevance to Wheelwright's poetic and political career is made clear — again, perhaps, with too much reliance on Wheelwright's prose comments. I should not argue against Wald's view that if the "knotty and hermetic ... religious mythic poems deepened his symbolic vision, they narrowed it as well" (p. 66). Yet I am not so sure that "North Atlantic Passage," although an early poem may not have more to say to us; its powers have yet to be identified adequately. And "Forty Days," too, interests and challenges me in ways that go beyond the superficial ingenuities of its apparent organization, ways hopelessly confused by Wheelwright's commentary. (Let me say once again and for the last time that for me Wheelwright's cranky prose arguments add more to our sense of the poems' contexts than to any full comprehension of their texts.)

After a chapter on Mangan's career up to 1930, we return to Wheelwright: to his political "turn" as social and economic conditions got worse, illustrated in "Masque with Clowns" and "Titanic Litany," to his literary and private life during the 1930s, and to his published books of poetry as products of the revolutionary imagination. Incidentally, Wheelwright tells us that "Masques with Clowns," a brilliant poetic three-ring circus on the elections of 1932 and 1924, "was commenced in collaboration with a certain William Blake" (*Poems*, p. 231); can this really refer only, as Wald claims, to "a playwright named William Blake whom he met in Provincetown" (p. 94)? Surely there were more William Blakes in Wheelwright's heaven and earth than Wald has here dreamt of?

Along with "North Atlantic Passage," "Forty Days," and "Twilight," the first of the long Thomas poems, *Rock and Shell* (1933) has shorter poems more obviously linked to Wheelwright's personal, poetic, and political lives. Wald considers certain of these poems as illustrations of Wheelwright's three New England concerns: spiritual autobiography, Ramist logic, and the jeremiad (p. 108), and charts "a morphology of conversion that passes through six distinct phases" (p. 112). Granting its thematic soundness, one must nevertheless regret that Wald's "morphology" did not find room — apart from generous quotation — to dwell on the literary power and excellences of its "key poems" or of such short lyrics as "Why Must You Know?" (*Poems*, p. 23).

In the second half of this chapter Wald turns to the "private voice — lyrical and often gently ironical" (p. 122) of *Mirrors of Venus: A Novel in Sonnets* (1938) but finds it, too, "the emotional and imaginative testament of a socialist," a work that "coheres because of its frame, and that frame is an aestheticized socialism" (p. 132). I find Wald's argument here interesting, but not to the exclusion of other possible "frames" of coherence. It is based on two plausible contexts: Wheelwright's biographical political history and Wald's own critical presuppositions. But it is no more proven upon the text of the sonnet sequence's own poetic pulses than such other hypothetical "frames" as agnostic humanism, naturalistic inhumanism, protoexistentialism, Whitmanesque love of comrades, or simply confessional verse, Wheelwright's "life studies."

After another chapter on Mangan, Wald comes to *Political Self-Portrait* (1940), the last book of poems published before Wheelwright's sudden accidental death and the obvious culmination of any study of the workings of Wheelwright's revolutionary imagination. A survey of Wheelwright's highly political final years leads naturally into the poems that reflect these commitments, and Wald traces these thematic connections with his usual care. Yet *Political Self-Portrait* is very uneven work. For Wald, the "religio-political poems ... are ultimately illogical and philosophically ambiguous, for, no matter how modulated, religion is one of the primary forms of alienation that scientific socialism seeks to transcend" (p. 163). But why should not good poems be illogical or ambiguous when such responses are called for? Otherwise, how explain the eloquence and striking imagery of "Some Plans Are Simple," which Wald ignores, as set against the strident rhetoric and impossible rhythms of "You-U.S.-US" and "Redemption," both of which Wald apparently admires. Some less strictly ideological standard seems called for, one that would further complicate our assessments of the workings of the revolutionary imagination, especially in poetry. Wald ends his study of Wheelwright's life and poetry here and does not take up systematically either *Dusk to Dusk* or the other poems Rosenfeld added to the *Collected Poems*.

I shall go on rereading the remarkable poetry of John Brooks Wheelwright for its own great powers and for its uncanny anticipations of the various poetic voices of Robert Lowell, and I shall return to Alan Wald's *The Revolutionary Imagination*, especially for its discussions of that poetry. It is not, I hope, too ungracious a tribute to Wald's book to wish it might have been two, even bigger books: to do even more justice to the human complexity of Mangan and the literary complexity of Wheelwright.

University of New Brunswick

Lauriat Lane, Jr.

***The Critical Strategy.* By Hédi Bouraoui. Toronto: ECW Press, York University, 1983. Pp. 146.**

The latest book of the Toronto critic-poet Hédi Bouraoui is predicated upon a number of concerns and seeks the critical salvation it urges upon us by opting for a multi-pronged approach to the literary phenomenon. What Bouraoui endeavours to counteract, both in the theoretical pieces and the new forms of practical critical/creative mediation he offers us, is the "pseudo-scientism" that abounds today with its "elitist" modes, its multiplying systems, its blinkered and blinkering *grilles* and ideologies, and, perhaps most dangerous of all, its tendency to a "critical overkill" (that is more apparent than real, given what, fortunately eludes its reductive grasp) which may bury and conceal the primary work, thus needlessly and paradoxically divorcing the public from its manifestly teeming availability.

Bourauoui's aim is therefore to shift away from a metaphenomenal criticism inspired less by a spirit of free and open exchange (text/author/critic/public/non-textual reality/other texts/etc.) than by the pressures of a self-absorbed act of textual (and-oh!-even sexual) appropriation. The *Critical Strategy* thus proposes itself as an experiment in mediation of various kinds, binding together — though loosely, without methodological compulsion — creativity and criticism, world and word, in the hope that the *frottement* that these fusions or parallels occasion may be fruitful and literating for all concerned. In part all this comes about as a reaction against dominant methodologies; and in part it seeks to respond to new creative modes constantly being thrust upon us. Always Bourauoui's tactic opts for a democratisation of critical response, a shaking loose of the bonds that would seek to limit and restrain natural, clear-headed and even creative, poetic response. Instead of opposition and distance, the myths of clinical objectivity and impassive, reifying dissection, Bourauoui opts for a convergence of literature and criticism based upon (com)passion, intersubjectivity and true, open, unfettered, exchange of meaning and being between creator and receiver.

The pieces Bourauoui gives us in this collection — for it is rather that than a coherently articulated single discourse — are many and varied. They touch upon the work of Cage, contemporary theatre exponents such as Baal and Grotowski, Burroughs, Lévi-Strauss, Glissant, Butor, Weinzweig, Beckett, Baudelaire and a host of modern critics from Poulet and de Man, Barthes and Hassan, to Derrida and Foucault. Bourauoui's writing, whatever its strategy, is informed and unpretentious. It can be crisp and incisive, teeming and personal. And it can have, like any critical piece, its slighter moments when the mode seems a trifle forced. But it is crucially honest, available to any worthwhile insight regardless of theoretical perspective, and in that is more allied to life itself, to the swirling movement of all being than to system and reduction. A more fully fledged series of creative-critical pieces would be welcome, a real plunge into the risk and experiment he has begun in *The Critical Strategy*. Such a plunge would dispense with theory and traditional discourse. The poet would cast off his moorings and, *bateau ivre*, traverse the swarming otherness of his reading.

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Michael Bishop