

## Book Reviews

*A Very Large Soul: Selected Letters from Margaret Laurence to Canadian Writers.* By Margaret Laurence. Edited by J. A. Wainwright. Dunvegan, ON: Cormorant, 1995. Pp. xxi, 264. \$18.95.

We can count on the fingers of one hand the writers whose letters are as interesting as their poetry or fiction: Byron, Flaubert, Lawrence and perhaps a handful of others. That this should be the norm isn't surprising when we keep in mind the conditions under which they—and we—deal with our correspondence. For instance, Margaret Laurence's letters to Canadian writers contain repeated references to deadlines, too many commitments to public appearances, personal problems and related matters, all of which have caused her to be late with a reply. Taking that into account, however, one can't help being impressed by the consideration, even warmth, with which she addresses each of her correspondents, many of whom were relative strangers writing without an introduction to one of the nation's pre-eminent novelists.

But while the tone is warm, genial, and personal, the letters resemble the previously published ones to Al Purdy (*Margaret Laurence-Al Purdy: A Friendship in Letters*) in drawing a curtain on matters too private to mention to correspondents who are recognized primarily as fellow members of the writing "tribe" and not as friends. The closest Laurence comes to raising the curtain is when she deals with religious matters. There is a particularly revealing letter to Hubert Evans (19 March 1982) in which she tries to define her Christianity: ". . . it seems to me that I have to look at myself as a kind of very unorthodox Christian, but a Christian all the same. The social gospel is what seems to matter to me more and more."

Laurence's fundamental generosity is evident on nearly every page simply in the fact that more often than not she concentrates her attention

on the person she is writing to, on his or her problems. A remarkable number of letters are concerned with her responses to the work of other writers, whether Don Bailey struggling with a novel or Hugh MacLennan awaiting her response to *Voices in Time*. Being a writer, she knows that the last thing another writer needs is the sort of comment he or she will receive from reviewers and academic critics. Instead, she concentrates on aspects of the work that she found impressive and only occasionally allows a slightly negative comment. The tact and good sense of her response to Timothy Findlay's *Famous Last Words* are typical:

You have doubts about *Famous Last Words*. You think I have doubts about it. Quite right. You have attempted to grapple with prime matters, good and evil, and probably you have not entirely succeeded. Does anyone? As I said to you on the phone, even Milton didn't entirely succeed. The important thing is the grappling. If I could take issue (which I could) with some things in *Famous Last Words*, that is to your honour. You raise issues which *demand* to be talked about, not hidden, not ignored. And you do it via people who are living fictional characters as well as people who were so-called "real" people, and that is some accomplishment, believe me.

With younger writers, the approach is more supportive, even nurturing, as if in responding to Bailey, John Metcalf, Frank Paci and Dale Zieroth she remembered her own vulnerability when writing her first stories and novels. There's no doubt that the letters distracted her from her own work in the late 1960s and through the 1970s, but there's also no doubt that she provided a vital support system for a generation of writers. When we write the literary history of her generation, we shall rightly focus on her stories and the novels, but to anyone writing a more generally social and historical study of the culture, Laurence's letters—like Purdy's and Irving Layton's, to take two other essential examples—will be required reading. Cultural influence is a complex matter, perhaps never more so than today, and Laurence has influenced writers both through her novels and what one can only call her "presence."

One can find examples of both in the informative and interesting commentaries by some of her correspondents that the editor, J. A. Wainwright, has provided in each section. As a group they form an informal tribute to a great writer from her contemporaries. Though ideally one would have liked to have the letters Laurence was receiving and

responding to—especially those from Ernest Buckler (“Dear Ernie,”) Hugh MacLennan and Gabrielle Roy—the correspondents’ comments are probably more concise and ultimately more memorable. For anyone reading, teaching or writing about Laurence, they are a quarry of often very suggestive opinions, views and ideas. George Woodcock emphasizes the socio-historical dimension of her fiction: “She had a good imaginative grasp of a prairie culture that bloomed quickly and died, and what she’s really telling us about, even more than Sinclair Ross, is the death of that culture.” Donald Cameron suggests that Laurence “consciously and deliberately closed the door far too early because of an exaggerated fear of dishonoring the books she’s already written.” And Al Purdy dissents from Laurence’s view that Canadian writers are a “tribe” and that returning permanently to Canada was good for Laurence:

I think that Canada was fatal for Laurence. If she had stayed in England, she would have written more novels, her drive would have still been there. When she came to Canada somehow the reception she got—so many people loved her and liked her and thought she was a great writer. Yes, she was. But that . . . destroyed her appetite for writing to some degree.

It’s appropriate that one of the last comments, by Dale Zieroth, is also the one that will find assent with almost all of Laurence’s readers: “I read her to find out what people did with their lives, lives that were either falling apart or were challenged or wrecked or were at a point where they had to make decisions. . . . For me she was a writer that I went to if I wanted to be nurtured in some way.”

Perhaps a useful way of summing up these letters would be to allow that while they are not up to the standard of the writers I mentioned above—but then how many are?—they are nevertheless indispensable to anyone interested either in Laurence or in Canadian literature. My only regret is that the book is not available in hardcover.

***Class Warfare: The Assault on Canada's Schools.* By Maude Barlow and Heather-Jane Robertson. Toronto: Key Porter, 1994. Pp. xii, 276. \$19.95.**

In the heady days of Trudeau's Just Society and Johnson's Great Society, the educational presses ran day and night. In the United States, they were busy with Paul Goodman, Jonathan Kozol, Theodore Roszak, and their like. At that same moment, reform-minded Canadians might have been reading *This Magazine is About Schools*, or tracts by Bob Davis and Satu Repo, or comments by Bob Stamp, Doug Myers, and Charlie Ovans—most now forgotten. If *Class Warfare* had appeared in 1970, arguments about it would have filled the airwaves for weeks, spawned copycat books, been adopted in dozens of university classes across the country, and forced politicians to admit the errors of their ways.

It is 1995. *Class Warfare* has been reviewed in the big dailies and its authors interviewed on CBC TV, but there have been no copycats. Despite their fame among nationalists, few writers and fewer university students know of Barlow (Chairperson of the Council of Canadians) and Robertson (a high functionary of the Canadian Teachers' Federation). *Class Warfare* could sink with hardly a trace. That would be unfortunate, for *Class Warfare* offers a particularly systematic inventory (I'll call this List A) of things Canadians say they want of public schools, and an even longer list (List B) of the tough things businesspeople and the "armies of the Right" have been saying since about 1975 on the same question.

Using Lists A and B, Barlow and Robertson show how politicians and teachers got into trouble by promising far too much in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. They could not, of course, deliver. The fiscal crisis of the 1990s has made matters still worse. When all of this became obvious in the late 1980s, the Canadian Business Council on Education, the Tri-Lateral Commission, the Fraser Institute, and a host of middle-class parents rose up to preach "skills NOW," vouchers, charter schools, an end to the multicultural curriculum, the elimination of self-esteem as an educational goal, and even the destruction of the state monopoly in education.

List A included a miscellany: economic growth, employment, non-violence, redistribution of wealth (over time), and a renewed Canadian culture. Even if no country could achieve these objectives *without*

universal public education, no school system would by itself guarantee them. List A requires a set of economic and social policies applied across many decades. Even then we could not be sure of attaining them.

This has helped to popularize List B: privatization of schools and application of tax savings to the deficit; vouchers and charter schools to impose market discipline on teachers and pupils; national testing and "payment by results"; and direct parental control of schools. Barlow and Robertson conveniently list the standard formulations for these schemes, and describe the myths that have quickly grown to support those formulations. The myths are diverse: "many" Canadians are practically illiterate (< 5% in fact, according to Barlow and Robertson); we do poorly in international tests (we do well considering the universality of our system); our high school graduates do not have "employment skills" (there's a semi-permanent recession, and jobs under NAFTA have been heading south).

Barlow and Robertson write that business would rather not pay taxes. Its leaders would like a cheaply-trained and meek workforce; would like schools to reward winners, not losers (the poor, minorities, women); and would happily restrict the curriculum to subjects having a measurable "payoff." Computing and information should dominate schooling. Above all, the customer (the individual family) should have "choice." On choice, Barlow and Robertson write with typical clarity:

Choice has . . . an honourable place in political and educational philosophy. The fundamental act of democratic politics is voting, the consummate act of choice. But universal suffrage ensures that the right to choose is equally available to all, the citizens are encouraged, at least intermittently, to think beyond personal gain in exercising this choice. . . . Freedom to choose must be constrained by its consequences to others and thus monitored in the public interest. (187)

In a voucher system, parents could choose to reward schools which ensure their children will survive economically, punish schools that don't, and ignore the fate of children and families who don't manage to make the cut.

Against List B, *Class Warfare* offers little. Barlow and Robertson ask middle-aged teachers to be experimental. They invite school administrators to think about education, not just day-to-day survival. They plead with legislators to keep public education public. They ask business people

to pay their way in society and to stop bashing schools. They suggest the rest of us should ask far more of schools than mere job-training.

None of this is sufficient to deflect the "armies of the Right." I agree, for example, that national testing won't do much for Canadian teaching practices. But tell that to parents who want *their* kids to win in the job-jungle. Parents are viscerally attracted to testing not because it will make schools "efficient," but because they believe their kids will come out on top. Barlow and Robertson mention this point, but have no answer to it. The same objection applies to much of *Class Warfare*. The book's idea of public education is just too thin. So while it may serve as briefing notes in debate it will change few minds.

*Class Warfare* would be vastly strengthened by judicious reference to the public education tradition. Parents just *might* pay attention to argument about the ways schools civilize us all, helping us keep our communities safe and well and honest. This is, in one sense, the argument from enlightened self-interest. But if Locke and Rousseau and Dewey found that argument an acceptable stopping place, why can't we? The curricular roots of our schools lie in Greece and Rome and Asia and in our own First Nations. Our idea of the child is a historically complicated legacy. Neither of these things is likely to persist except in the universal and common school, administered by the whole community for the good of all. The benefit of public education is, after all, none other than the benefit of democracy itself.

*University of British Columbia*

*William Bruneau*

***Clayoquot and Dissent.* By Tzaporah Berman et al. Vancouver: Ronsdale, 1994. Pp. 219. Paper, \$7.95.**

Few examples of large-scale civil disobedience in Canadian history match the protests against clear-cut logging in Clayoquot Sound for either size or ongoing dedication. Clayoquot is one of the only remaining temperate rainforests in the world, and also one of the largest. Located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, it contains extensive old-growth forests and three of the five intact watersheds on the entire island (out of a total of 90) that have not been touched by logging or other industrial activity.

Since 1979, when Friends of Clayoquot Sound was formed, there has been a series of efforts by concerned local residents, native peoples, environmentalists, and others to halt the decimation of this unique area. The story of Clayoquot Sound is one of government ineptitude and ill-management, extremely polarized positions, fears of unemployment and economic decline, corporate greed, illegal practices and ruthless political manipulation, international outcry and goods boycott, incredible legal snarls, and massive arrests, fines and tough jail sentences meted out to conscientious ordinary citizens by confused and mean-spirited judges. In short, it is a classic tale of environmental conflict and of clashes between seemingly irreconcilable interests. But it is also a process which inspires hope, inasmuch as we learn from it that persistent peaceful protest can help to bring about change, and that governments can muster the leadership required to address opposing stakeholders' viewpoints satisfactorily.

*Clayoquot and Dissent* concerns the conflict in general, as seen through the eyes and minds of prominent participants in the movement to save the trees and the ecosystem. While it covers many issues surrounding the protest, most of the material gathered here centres on events of the summer of 1993. During this period a "Peace Camp" was established in the forest to maintain a constant vigil and to train protesters in the philosophy, methods and self-discipline of civil disobedience. These purposes are movingly described by organizer Tzeporah Berman, who reports that some 12,000 people visited the camp and joined the protests.

Gordon Brent Ingram describes in detail the ecological issues and draws an illuminating contrast between "an ecology dominated by conflict" (20) and "ecosystems based on cooperation" (21). He also frames the clash over Clayoquot as one concerning the "decolonization of First Nation lands" (60). Maurice Gibbons explains his and others' participation and willingness to risk arrest in terms of the need to defend values grown out of personal experiences with nature.

Ronald B. Hatch writes from a layperson's perspective about the lengthy and complex series of trials associated with the protests. (In the summer of 1993 over 800 individuals were arrested chiefly for contempt of court for defying an injunction to stay off logging roads.) Hatch examines the issues with a great deal of subtlety and demonstrates convincingly that judges repeatedly made arbitrary decisions, presumed

guilt beforehand and were excessively punitive; that they completely misapprehended the character and motives of the protesters; that MacMillan Bloedel and the RCMP were in collusion with respect to evidence gathering; that MacMillan Bloedel succeeded in getting the courts to serve its own interests and remained unanswerable for doing so; and that defendants were systematically denied the right to present a suitable defence.

The last major contribution, an essay by Loys Maignon, explores the larger cultural significance of the Clayoquot protests, arguing that "environmental problems are cultural problems because the destruction of the environment is the destruction of culture" (156). Maignon contends further that "radical environmentalism is a will to recover the democratic foundations of our cultural heritage which have been usurped by technocratic pseudo-culture" (158). He offers a very useful and sensitive overview of different relationships to the land, contrasting aboriginal and other notions of proprietary rights and exploring how, from various perspectives, the logging of Clayoquot Sound amounts to "cultural rape."

*Clayoquot and Dissent* will be of interest not only to readers of Canadian social history but as well to those concerned with environmental conflicts and how they develop, with understanding civil disobedience, and with the strengths and weaknesses of the Canadian judicial system. What we learn from this excellent collection is that such protesters are not the "weirdos" many suppose; they are a representative cross-section of citizens who have decided the time has come to make a strong stand—on behalf of their heritage and nature itself. After this book was published Michael Harcourt's NDP government developed what looked like a truly constructive and comprehensive forest plan for British Columbia (see the *Globe and Mail*, "B.C. forest plan applauded," 6 July 1995, B2; "B.C. moves fast to save Clayoquot," 7 July 1995, B7). According to the *Friends of Clayoquot Sound Newsletter* (Fall/Winter 1995/96), however, clearcutting and other ecological abuses by the logging industry continue despite the new regime. Given this state of affairs and Harcourt's recent resignation ahead of the B.C. election, the future of the Clayoquot Sound ecosystem remains in doubt.



*Trudeau and the End of a Canadian Dream.* By Guy Laforest. Translated by Paul Leduc Browne and Michelle Weinroth. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1995. Pp. 217. \$44.95. Paper, \$17.95.

Guy Laforest from Laval University is well known in the English-Canadian academic community as one of those rare separatist political scientists who is willing to appear outside Quebec to discuss his views. As such, he is in much demand for panels and conferences across Canada. Within Quebec, he is a *télé-prof* who frequently can be found jousting on *Le Point* with his habitual federalist opponent, Stéphane Dion, from the University of Montreal.

Laforest's newish book, *Trudeau and the End of a Canadian Dream*, now appearing in English translation, was drafted in the summer of 1992, on the eve of the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord. Only a cursory attempt has been made to update the text to the summer of 1994, with the result that the success of the Bloc Québécois in the federal election of 1993, the coming to power of the Parti Québécois in 1994, and the referendum on sovereignty in 1995 have left the book smelling a little stale.

Laforest's basic thesis is that the essential nature of Canada is dualist: there are two distinct societies, Quebec and the rest of Canada, which came together in a political arrangement in 1867. As Quebec underwent the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, this dualist vision was being expanded and amplified until the arrival of the archfiend on the political scene. Pierre Elliot Trudeau was his name, and Laforest has a real thing about him.

Trudeau, says Laforest, killed the dualist Canadian dream by promoting a Canadian identity "that would be resolutely homogenous, despite the value attributed to cultural and lingual pluralism." "I am writing this book specifically for those who, like myself, occasionally believed in this [dualist] dream, or who continue to believe in it, or cannot bring themselves to abandon it."

Trudeau killed the dualist Canadian dream in two stages. First, he said to Quebecers during the 1980 referendum campaign:

I can make the most solemn commitment that following a No, we will start immediately the mechanism of renewing the Constitution, and we will not stop until it is done.

Laforest argues that in speaking as he did, Trudeau was being intentionally ambiguous. Far from giving Quebec greater powers through constitutional reform, in a manner consistent with a dualist vision of the country, Trudeau ultimately imposed his unitary vision on Quebec without its consent.

In so doing, "he was unworthy of the trust that the people of Quebec placed in him." Laforest is unable to resist a further dig: "that trust is not like a buttonhole that one wears and then discards at the end of the day." In Laforest's eyes, Trudeau's behavior during the 1980 referendum and subsequently at the time of the repatriation of the Constitution in 1982 constitutes his greatest act of perfidy.

Trudeau's second intervention in the debate over Meech Lake briefly attracts Laforest's grudging admiration. "His role in the saga is one more brilliant chapter in his political career." But again, Laforest betrays a sense of personal affront as he writes about Trudeau. "According to Christina McCall, he embodies the bilingual man par excellence; he is a sort of racial hermaphrodite. He came from a rich bilingual family. . . ." What all this has to do with Trudeau's rejection of Meech Lake is clearer to Laforest than his puzzled reader.

Laforest's assessment of Trudeau's role in defeating the Meech Lake agreement is harsh:

His speeches and articles in the Meech Lake saga are stamped with the seal of excess and insatiability. . . . Trudeau ultimately succumbed to a weakness that Machiavelli knew well: the inability of human beings to rein in their hopes.

It is precisely because of this tone of personal grievance that the book has a certain interest for the general English-Canadian reader as a fine example of the visceral emotions which Pierre Trudeau can still arouse in the chattering classes of Quebec.

Otherwise, however, the book is a bit of a bore. There are long discursive passages on John Locke and the constitutional deadlock between Canada and Quebec, the addresses to the nation of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Léon Dion, and Machiavelli and Trudeau, all of which, frankly, seem a little far-fetched. There are attacks on the arguments of other scholars. Ramsay Cook, David Bercuson and Barry Cooper attract his fire, but he reserves his heavy artillery for Janet

Ajzenstat, an English-Canadian political scientist whose book on the political thought of Lord Durham (an oxymoron?) is perhaps less well-known than it deserves to be.

Aside from its intellectual pretensions, the book reveals an author who takes himself extremely seriously indeed. How else can one explain such passages as: "From this point of view, Mr. Trudeau should redo his homework. He has known for three years about my argument, but remains silent"?

Nor can Laforest, good political scientist that he is, resist offering his own solution to the constitutional impasse:

So far, I have listed two conditions for the emergence of a genuine partnership between Quebec and Canada: the establishment of two distinct judicial systems and charters of rights, and full recognition of the fact that Quebec represents a people, a distinct national system.

And to top it all off, Laforest proposes to call the new entity "Canada-Quebec," inspired, perhaps, by Austria-Hungary or Halifax-Dartmouth.

In the end this is primarily an academic book for academics with plenty of time on their hands. It remains to be seen, as I write this review in September 1995, what will come of Laforest's dire prediction on referendum day, 30 October, 1995. Here is what Laforest thought a year ago:

But as I write these lines in August 1994, it is conceivable that Trudeau will soon lose everything: the Charter, the 1982 constitution, Quebec in his Canada, and perhaps even Canada itself. No one can be a soothsayer in a context as uncertain as ours.

Amen.

*Toronto*

*John Godfrey*

*Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario, 1791-1951.* By A. B. McKillop. Toronto: U of Toronto P, Ontario Historical Studies Series, 1994. Pp. xxv, 716. \$75.00. Paper, \$35.

I only wish that I had the talent and the patience to write the book that McKillop has. To say that it covers the ground it staked out for itself is to understate. This recent offering of the Ontario Historical Studies Series takes the reader from the precarious educational experiments of John Graves Simcoe's Upper Canada to the increasingly self-confident academe that burgeoned in the diversified and wholly transformed Ontario of George Drew's time. In the process, McKillop was obliged to juggle a great assortment of themes and subjects. To his great credit he has done so without dropping any of them or otherwise disrupting his presentation.

*Matters of Mind* adds an important intellectual and academic layer to the economic, political, and social ones already put in place by the historians of Ontario. But its author has done more than that. He has effectively intertwined his subject with the overall environment out of which Ontario's academy emerged. In other words, he never loses sight of context (which so often happens these days, especially in the case of certain revisionists) when he parades out the many and varied forces which shaped the distinctive development of Canadian higher education. As a result, the reader can observe the unfolding events of Ontario's past from a wholly different and illuminating perspective. This is particularly so when McKillop traces the impact made on higher education by this century's world wars. It was this feature of the work that I most enjoyed.

McKillop also offers fresh insights into such mandatory items as the early church and academe bond, the equally intimate link later forged between Queen's Park and higher education, and the ongoing and often testy Town and Gown relationship. He examines and analyses the factors that made for the adding and discarding of curricula under pressure from technological advances, a shifting society, or a changing political order. Thus theology and classics, long the traditional staples, were rudely jostled by the emergent natural sciences and social sciences, the latter galvanized by political science, economics and sociology. McKillop also looks at the early theological controversies which threatened to undermine the integrity of church colleges, and shows how far an older species of the religious rights was prepared to go in defence of its own notions of

correctness. He fully explores as well the influence exerted by faculty members and administrators, the attitudes and activities of successive generations of students, and the important role played by gender in academe, the last two sometimes getting short shrift in individual university histories. This comprehensive study also finds ample room for discussing the transatlantic and continental exchange of ideas and philosophies which profoundly influenced the course taken by higher education in Ontario, a theme with which the author is very much at home. Even so—to add a mild caveat—excessive attention is occasionally lavished on ideas for their own sake without explicit reference to academe as such.

That McKillop benefitted from the considerable corpus of university histories already published in this country does not take away from his own achievement. Though they provided much grist for his mill he has used them and other sources to grind his own highly palatable mix of ideas, concepts, and conclusions. Nor, thankfully, was he disposed to take such secondary studies at face value. Obviously, he has ranged far and wide through the abundant archival materials housed on the province's campuses. Moreover, he has done equal justice to other primary sources which provided essential background or backup. The result is an outstanding piece of work that enhances the series to which it belongs.

McMaster University

Charles M. Johnston

***Postmodernism and the Quebec Novel.* By Janet M. Paterson. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994. Pp. ix, 167. \$35.00. Paper, \$14.95.**

*Postmodernism and the Quebec Novel* is a translation of *Moments postmodernes dans le roman québécois* (1990; expanded version, 1993) which won the Gabrielle Roy Prize for best Québécois literary criticism; the English version is slightly modified and expanded. The 1990 French title appears somewhat more modest than its English counterpart, but this may be the inevitable result of translation rather than a desired effect. The English version presents a slightly expanded introduction geared towards English-language readers, and, more importantly, like the 1993 French expanded version, includes a new chapter (chapter eight) exploring Nicole

Brossard's novel *Mauve Desert*. Paterson defines her objectives with rigor; in her study the author proposes to answer three questions: "Is there a postmodern Quebec novel? What are its forms? What are its sites of interrogation?" Paterson does not claim to be exhaustive; rather she believes that her selection of novels studied is representative.

*Postmodernism and the Quebec Novel* is divided into three major segments. The first segment, entitled "A Postmodern Poetics," is essentially theoretical and outlines the notion of postmodernism in the novel, the various forms and discourses involved. The second segment entitled "Subversion of the Codes," comprising two chapters, and the third segment entitled "Exploding the Boundaries," comprising four chapters, are interesting and skilful analyses of six Quebec novels (each chapter examines one novel) spanning a 20-year time period (1968-1987). Under "Subversion of the Codes" Paterson analyses Hubert Aquin's *Trou de mémoire* (1968) and Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska's *La maison Trestler ou le 8<sup>e</sup> jour d'Amérique* (1984). Under "Exploding the Boundaries" the author examines Gérard Bessette's *Le semestre* (1979), Yolande Villemaire's *La vie en prose* (1980), Jacques Godbout's *D'Amour, P.Q.* (1972) and Nicole Brossard's *Désert mauve* (1987). We may note that although the first novel examined, *Trou de mémoire* or *Blackout* (its English title), is the earliest written of the six novels, and the last novel studied, *Désert mauve* or *Mauve Desert* is the most recent, the other four are not presented in a chronological order. It should also be mentioned that, regrettably for the Anglophone reader, only two of the six are presently available in an English translation, *Blackout* (1974) and *Mauve Desert* (1990). For the most part, this will not prevent the reader from following Paterson's analyses, as all quoted excerpts from the four remaining novels have been translated into English: *La maison Trestler, Le semestre* and *D'Amour, P.Q.* by David Homel and Charles Phillips (who are the translators of the entire essay), and *La vie en prose* by A. J. Holden Verburg who translated chapter six of the essay for previous publication elsewhere. And yet the English-language reader, lacking familiarity with at least four of the six novels discussed, will not always be able to appreciate fully Paterson's analyses and her conclusions. Let us hope that the publication of *Postmodernism and the Quebec Novel* will encourage the prompt translation of the four novels in question.

The essay is most compact and the ideas presented are complex, so a summary could not do justice to Paterson's work. I will merely attempt

to highlight here some of the main preoccupations running through *Postmodernism and the Quebec Novel*. In the first part of her essay Paterson defines and distinguishes such terms as *avant-garde*, metafiction, *nouveau roman*, contemporary novel, and modern novel, and analyses such strategies of postmodern writing as the plurality of narrative voices, self-reflexivity, multiplication of stories within stories, intertextuality, *mise en abyme*. . . . In the second part, the first chapter examines Hubert Aquin's *Blackout*: Paterson suggests that this novel's discourse resists synthesis and totalization, as every structure in the novel appears under the sign of decomposition. The second chapter analyzes Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska's *La maison Trestler* as an example of a historical postmodern novel that at the same time highlights History and challenges its legitimacy.

In the third part, Paterson explores the various ways in which the postmodern Quebec novel "explodes the boundaries" of the traditional genre. Thus, in the chapter examining Gérard Bessette's *Le semestre* Paterson focusses on strategies of intertextuality and intratextuality. *La vie en prose* by Yolande Villenaire is perceived by Paterson as a "mobile" text both on the level of the referent and that of the writing. Time, space, language as well as the feminine characters in the novel are, she says, governed by discursive strategies of transformation. The chapter on Jacques Godbout's *D'Amour, P.Q.* discusses the notion of "bliss" as described by Roland Barthes; Paterson notes that while the Quebec postmodern novel rejects Barthes's concepts of the impasse, the aphasia, and the neutral writing without origin, *D'Amour, P.Q.* displays the humour and energy of the euphoric meaning associated with Barthes's notion of "bliss." In the last novel examined, Nicole Brossard's *Mauve Desert*, Paterson distinguishes two aspects of postmodern thought: one nihilistic, apocalyptic, manifested in the theme of nuclear destruction; the other positive, liberating, manifested in the theme of quest and renewal. Paterson concludes her essay in a courageously honest way: "If, in the final analysis, the word 'postmodern' remains vague, ambiguous, and often problematic, the literature it designates in Quebec undoubtedly represents an important moment in the transformation of the novel."

This is a most useful book that examines and interprets, as precisely as possible, an elusive and notoriously ambivalent term. *Postmodernism and the Quebec Novel* will be of great pertinence to those interested in Canadian culture, in comparative studies between the English and the

French Canadian novel, as well as to those interested in the broader context of the postmodern novel across the continents, in world literature. It must be recognized that this essay is not a text written with the casual amateur of literature in mind; the scrupulous approach, the multitude of references, the wealth of examples, the abundant and informative endnotes (which force the reader into a constant "back and forth" mode) render the reading laborious at times and challenging throughout. The painfully confusing subdivisions within the chapters make the structure of a chapter unnecessarily difficult to understand. Clear numbering would have been more useful than the subtle distinctions between bold and small case letters on the one hand, and capitalized but not bold letters on the other (but who knows, we might be dealing here with a built-in postmodern strategy). Despite these minor sources of irritation, the critic will find *Postmodernism and the Quebec Novel* unquestionably worthwhile and rewarding reading.

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*Irène Oore*

***Natural Rights and the New Republicanism.* By Michael P. Zuckert. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994. Pp. xx, 397. \$39.50.**

Like many academics positioned in contemporary North American universities, I am often called upon to review the work of colleagues. Most often when I have agreed to do so I have been, all things considered, happy to have taken on the task. Never before, however, have I decided that I had to write a completely non-critical review; indeed, as an analytic philosopher, I had never even entertained such a prospect. But *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* is a great book; it is intellectual history at its finest. Michael Zuckert brings both the passion of politics and the passion of philosophy to life. And so I shall do the unthinkable, or at least the unthought of by me.

My reason for being uncritical is not the most obvious one, i.e., that I agree with all that Zuckert has to say. I do not. Rather, to provide any kind of adequate response to this insightful treatise would require an analysis of the political events and philosophical positions that he discusses which would be as richly nuanced, as philosophically and



historically sensitive, as textually and contextually detailed, as analytically astute and as sustained as his own. That is not possible in the space of any review. This work will inspire full-length articles, and even books, in commentary; such will certainly be needed to respond to it properly. Whatever the ultimate judgments of other intellectual historians, political theorists and philosophers might be, though, each will certainly learn much from reading Zuckert's book.

Zuckert's principal aim is to argue that the American founding was based upon a radically new philosophy of natural rights, Lockean in detail, and a commitment to an equally novel republicanism. Both theses are controversial. In defending them, Zuckert analyses the political philosophy and political science which developed in England during the turbulent seventeenth century, so as to argue against the many commentators who have claimed that those who made the American Revolution simply appropriated the ideas of those who earlier had instigated the English Civil War and Glorious Revolution. Zuckert argues that all such views are mistaken, for they fail to recognize the distinctiveness of Locke's political philosophy and of the American founders who followed him.

In arguing for the novelty of the Americans, Zuckert examines five central doctrines to which they were committed. The American founders followed Locke in claiming: that all men are equal (and especially equally free); that government is artificial (because man is not essentially a political animal as Aristotle had argued, but competitive as Hobbes claimed); that government is created only to secure the pre-political natural rights of individuals (made insecure by the inconveniences of the state of nature) and so political institutions both arise from and receive their justification through this protective role; that individuals can only be bound by ties of political obligation through their own consent; and that any governmental authority (be it a monarch or an elected legislature) can be rightfully overthrown if it acts contrary to the natural rights of the governed (as determined by the governed). Zuckert argues that each of these theses represents a break with previous natural law, contractarian and republican theories; together they represent a uniquely modern philosophical and political position.

Zuckert's analysis stands in contrast to a number of dominant themes in the intellectual history of England in the seventeenth century. It stands opposed to those commentators who deny the centrality of natural rights

in the documents of the American founding because they see the natural rights doctrine as merely an extension of the social contract theory that permeates Whig thinking from the opposition to James I and Charles I, through the English Civil War of the 1640s, to the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89. Zuckert argues that such a position is untenable, in part because it rests on the mistaken assumption that there was a unitary Whig tradition, which the Americans simply adopted. His analysis demonstrates that there were at least three competing Whig traditions: Protestant (dominant through the first half of the century, and aimed at justifying the actions of opposition Parliamentarians); Grotian (through the second half of the century, and central to understanding the events of 1688-89); and Lockean (a minority position until the eighteenth century). Only if one illegitimately reads Locke back into the Whig tradition, thus distorting both the historical and philosophical events of the seventeenth century, is such a view even superficially plausible.

Similarly, Zuckert argues against those who deny the radicalness of Lockean political philosophy by assimilating him to a continuing tradition of contractarianism. Scholars who subscribe to unicontractarianism gloss over the importantly different uses to which contractarian language was put in the seventeenth century. For such Civil War Parliamentarians as Herle, Parker, Hunton and Rutherford, for example, contractarianism provided a rationale for Parliament's actions against the King in 1642-43. Here we find the notion of an original contract providing the authority of the ancient constitution of England, which vests power jointly in the king, peers and commons. Consent is employed only to legitimate the positive law of communities, however; it is not given individually but by the community as a whole, and it binds future generations. There is no prohibition in principle to absolute monarchy, no recognition of natural rights, and no universal right of revolution. This could not be farther from the doctrines of Locke and his American followers. Whether the contrast is between the contractarianism of the Civil War Parliamentarians and the post-Restoration Whigs, or between Milton, Grotius, Hobbes and Pufendorf, any such unifying doctrine is shown to be untenable. And Locke stands distinct from them all.

Zuckert likewise challenges those who deny the radicalness of Locke by assimilating him to a unified natural law tradition. Here Zuckert goes beyond demonstrating that the history of natural law is itself a diverse tradition, varying immensely between such Thomistic theorists as Suarez

and Bellarmine, the Roman jurists, Grotius, Hobbes, Pufendorf and Locke. More importantly, he also argues that Locke makes a radical break with all of the previous natural law positions in developing a purely non-immanent transcendent law of nature. Through a very penetrating examination of both Locke's *Questions Concerning the Law of Nature* and *Second Treatise on Government*, Zuckert makes a strong case for the view that natural right entirely displaces natural law in Locke's philosophy. Thus the *Second Treatise* presents an alternative to, rather than an extension of, that natural law tradition.

Finally, Zuckert challenges the notion of republicanism which some authors have attributed to the American founders. Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood and J. G. A. Pocock have all argued that the republicanism evidenced in the founding documents can be traced back to Aristotle or Machiavelli, and so does not represent an innovation. On such a view, the republicanism which the Americans adopted was merely an extension of a much more traditional civic humanist position, which was introduced via Harrington into the writings of the Whig opposition theorists. Zuckert is rightly scathing in his denunciation of such a position. He points out that by reading Aristotle, Machiavelli or Harrington into the writings of the Whig theorists one gets a gross misrepresentation of such central figures as Shaftesbury. More importantly, perhaps, he also argues that insofar as these commentators offer republicanism as an alternative to the centrality of rights in the thought of the American founders, they rely upon a false dichotomy, which is caused by their confusing political philosophy with political science. For the republicanism of the Whig opposition, which the Americans did take up, was a piece of their political science. As Zuckert argues, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, writing as "Cato," provided a synthesis of Lockean political philosophy with the earlier Whig political science which influenced the American founders profoundly. To argue that the documents of the Americans represent a triumph of republicanism over Lockean or liberal thought is to set up a false opposition between the two (as Cato's synthesis shows), as well as to misrepresent the new republicanism that is found in *Cato's Letters* and which the American founders endorsed.

Together these explorations provide compelling evidence for Zuckert's central thesis: Locke was a profoundly innovative political philosopher.

Insofar as he inspired the American founding, it represents a truly radical political event.

*York University*

*Susan Dimock*

***Animal Welfare and Human Values.* By Rod Preece and Lorna Chamberlain. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier UP, 1995. Pp. x, 334. \$19.95.**

It is clear from the outset that the authors of this timely and argumentative book, both of whom are associated with the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Humane Society), have a double motive. On the one hand they wish to enliven the consciences of the decent majority, urging them to greater awareness of, and caring for, the plight of animals in contemporary society. On the other hand they wish to dissociate themselves from the indecent enthusiasm of those animal rights activists who are willing to go to the barricades to prevent cruelty to animals. Thus they quote in their introduction Yeats's line: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity." Thus, too, they have written a book with unresolved tensions at its core.

Chapters 1 and 2 present an historical overview of human-animal relations. It is well-researched and full of interesting detail. It warns, though, that both co-operative and exploitative behavior are part of our natures. In recognizing that we are just one animal species among many we may gain needed humility and perspective, but we also acknowledge that it would be fatuous to think that the domestication of animals was the first great moral error of humans. The ground is laid for a middle position which sees humans neither as masters for whom nature was created, nor as monsters of cruelty.

Chapters 3 to 6 discuss animal experimentation. This involves relatively few animals, but some of the most "unnatural" treatment of them. Accordingly, there are passionate debates over maiming animals to test hypotheses about normal development, causing them pain to test human cosmetics, breeding cancer-prone mice with the aim of making them ill, killing the animals when done with them, etc. The authors use

as a definition of cruelty to animals, "inflicting pain . . . when the pain is not compensated by the consequential good" (59). A great deal of what is "cruel" in ordinary English is thus redefined; it is not cruel, because the pain is justified by the consequent relief of human suffering. The authors are thus committed to modest incrementalism: to being pleased that the British have used fewer experimental animals each year since 1977, that only four-tenths of one per cent are used for cosmetics testing, and so on. There are informative chapters on alternatives to live-animal research, and on the constitution and success of regulatory bodies in various jurisdictions.

Chapters 7 to 9 discuss hunting and trapping, where some of the most conservation-minded and environmentally-sensitive people come in conflict with those who are sensitive to animal welfare. While the Council of Europe has decreed that fox and mink are too wild to be kept humanely in captivity at all, Canada continues to allow fur-farming and has not yet banned the leg-hold trap. The fur trade, after all, is the main reason why Canada was explored and settled by Europeans. In the history we tell ourselves, frivolous cruelty in aid of the European fashion trade, and the invasion of the native peoples' lands, take a back seat to the courage and spirit of adventure of the explorers. Belated respect for the ingenuity and sustainability of the aboriginal people's use of furs, however, is also inconsistent with the abolitionists' view that all use of fur is immoral.

The authors devote two chapters to using animals for entertainment, and only one to farm animals. Though the vast majority of animals used by humans are agricultural animals, this is nearly the shortest section of the book. The authors confess that they are unprepared either to visit an abattoir or to adopt vegetarianism, and strive to present an informed, compromise position. Citing extensively Singer's *Animal Liberation*, they conclude modestly that if legislators demanded much better living conditions for farm animals, and the corresponding increase in the prices of meat reduced Canadians' meat consumption by half, both animals and humans would benefit.

Agriculturalists often argue that a productive animal is a well-treated animal. The authors show that this is "outrageously false" (217) in cases where standards of "productivity" bear no relation to what is normal for the animal. No one, for instance, would think that a *person* who put on the maximum possible amount of weight was treating him or herself well.

We are wrong to think it a sign of being a well-treated animal. Thus the authors again present us with deeply-rooted objections to a practice on the one hand, and with modest proposals for revision on the other.

Chapter 13 deals with companion animals. The authors neatly use it as a transition chapter, arguing from the benefits of inter-species friendships to the potential for an enlarged sense of community. The authors are aware that all their information and judgment about cruelty and caring, offsetting benefits and intrinsic worth, are desperately in need of philosophical clarity. They outline in Chapters 14 to 17 their overview of the debates between those who measure morality by happiness maximization and those who measure it in terms of natural rights. In the end they opt for a conservative, "communitarian" account of the nature of morality. It is based in the naturalness of caring and co-operative sentiment towards those who are near and dear to us. We can learn to extend our caring to others as we learn more about wider affiliations.

One of the main arguments that runs through the book is that our duty to behave in a certain way towards non-human animals should be based on the fact that we too are animals. This is consistent with communitarianism, but there are obvious problems which emerge when the inclusion of an individual into one's moral sphere depends on her "being like me." Ironically, this common way of thinking is partly responsible for the historical and current prevalence of species-ism, racism and sexism. There are two main problems with this approach to ethics. First, how do we measure and rank the similarities between species? For example, does the fact that one species' outer behavior resembles my own necessarily mean that species is most like me in the ways most relevant to ethical consideration? (And, importantly, how could we find this out without doing the type of animal experiments that we wish to avoid?) Second, even if we were able to describe the characteristics that humans have on which we base our usual ethical obligations and if we were able to identify these in other species, why should our obligations toward non-human animals be based on the possession of these same characteristics? Perhaps there are sound replies to these objections, but they must be met for such a contentious position to be adopted.

Communitarianism, itself, is not a radical foundation for ethics. It can lend traditional cruelties the dignity of being "natural," and it leaves in the hands of those at the centre responsibility for extending fellow-feeling to those on the periphery. It also leaves the authors with deep tensions

unresolved: they will eat dead meat, but not watch the dying. Nonetheless, these tensions will be shared with many of their readers, who will find the book informative, lively and provoking.

*Dalhousie University*

*Steven Burns, Suzanne Kovinsky*

***Hyper/Text/Theory.* Edited by George P. Landow. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994. \$38.50. Paper, \$16.95.**

George Landow, author of the ground-breaking study *Hypertext: the convergence of contemporary critical theory and technology* (1992) has assembled in this book a selection of articles on hypertext, its applications and implications, by major scholars in the field of electronic writing.

Hypertext and hypermedia represent an important new interactive mode of presenting text and images. The text itself resides on a disk as a computer file. Embedded within the text are active links to other documents and images, which in turn are linked to still other documents. This weblike structure of interconnection provides the reader with the opportunity to make choices that determine his or her experience of the text. Some hypertext systems also allow readers to add comments and to embed links of their own, thus altering the text that subsequent readers will encounter. This blurring of the line between reader and writer has a number of implications for this text-based society of ours, and it is these upon which Landow focusses in this selection of essays.

Arranging the essays under the headings, "Nonlinearity," "The Politics of Hypertext," and "The New Writing," Landow introduces the volume with a wide-ranging paper that examines the multiplicity of experiences offered to the reader by hypertext and how critical theorists are attempting to deal with this. Citing a host of critical visionaries, from Derrida to Cixous, he concludes that hypertext embodies to a certain degree the theoretical aims of some schools of postmodern thought—that is, to level the barriers that the printed text erects between reader and writer—by inviting the reader to participate in the creation of the text. Furthermore, the most effective way to evaluate the impact of linked electronic writing on society, he maintains, is to employ it as the means

of communication. Like other communication systems, hypertext will alter not only the appearance of the message, but also the message itself.

The first group of essays examines issues surrounding the text as physical object, or semantic unit. Espen Aarseth takes a historical perspective, looking back on the forerunners of today's hypertexts, the nonlinear "cybertexts" created—mostly by computer scientists—in the 1960s, and speculates on how nonlinearity may reshape textual studies in years to come. Gunnar Liestøl focusses on the essential difference of hypertext and hypermedia from standard forms and describes ways in which the reader/author paradigm is reconfigured by technologies which permit the reader to enter or exit the text at any point. Mireille Rosello examines the vocabulary of the hypertext debate and questions the sanguine (and doom-laden) prophecies of those who see the demise of the printed page on the horizon. Concepts such as "space" and "context" are scrutinized, and Rosello asks if the hypertexts we are creating today are inheriting cumbersome and unnecessary features from the printed book in the same the way that designs of early automobiles drew from the horse-drawn carriage.

In his essay "How do I stop this thing?" J. Yellowlees Douglas presents a discussion of closure in traditional, modernist, and interactive narratives, and, with this in mind, embarks upon an interpretation of Michael Joyce's hyperfiction "Afternoon" based upon four alternative readings.

Leading off the section on politics, Charles Ess tackles the notion of hypertext as an instrument that, within the context of communication theory, promotes a democratic ethos. Referring to the work of German theorist Jürgen Habermas, he first provides a rationale for claiming that democratizing elements exist within hypertext and then constructs a model of hypertext based upon Habermas's discourse ethic.

In "Physics and Hypertext" Martin Rosenberg challenges the claim that hypertext is an agent of liberation. Applying principles taken from physics and geometry, he maintains that hypertext systems rely more on shifting nodalities and dislocations of awareness than on a structured nonlinearity that would allow the reader to make meaningful choices.

In "Rhizome and Resistance" Stuart Moulthrop describes "striated" (structured, ordered, hierarchical) writing spaces—typified by the printed text—and "smooth" (dynamic, transient, anarchic) writing spaces—exemplified by hypertext—and their cultural and political implications.



He detects a transition taking place from the first to the second with swells of resistance rising as old modes of discourse and thinking refuse to yield to the new.

In the first essay in the section on "The New Writing," David Kolb explores the possibilities offered to philosophy by hypertext, and the potential impact of hypertextual thinking upon the discipline. And Geoffrey Ulmer closes the collection with a conjectural essay ("an experiment in hyperrhetoric") that bursts through boundaries of convention and links seemingly disparate concepts. Justice and various forms of entertainment such as film and dance are merged within a chaotic (weblike) realm in which everything serves as a metaphor for everything else.

This volume provides a valuable sampling of the current thinking on the subject of hypertext, served up from a variety of perspectives. Only occasionally does the prose fall prey to the overblown rhetoric and linguistic opacity that can render postmodern critical discourse obscure and impenetrable. Overall the essays presented here are lucid, carefully-wrought explorations of a topic that is gaining in popularity and significance as the World Wide Web and other hypertext systems weave their way into our lives.

*Dalhousie University*

*Ian Colford*

*Constructive Criticism: The Human Sciences in the Age of Theory.* Edited by Martin Kreiswirth and Thomas Carmichael. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1995. Pp. ix, 223. \$45.00. Paper, \$17.95.

This collection of essays takes its subtitle from the conference at which they were first presented. Clearly in the view of the conference organizers we are living in an age of theory, though one should note that the perspective on the "human sciences" here presented is overwhelmingly that of professors of literature (11 out of 14 contributors). But, as Martin Kreiswirth and Thomas Carmichael point out in their introduction, the phrase "age of theory" can imply "an intellectual enterprise that has had its temporal boundaries marked off" (3). Although they begin with the militaristic language typical of the oft-told story of theory's conquest of

North American universities (they refer to an "invasion," a "theoretical assault," "bastions" and "shock troops" [3]), Kreiswirth and Carmichael move to a more eirenic mode, suggesting that their book appears at a moment of taking stock, at the point at which the claims of theory are being re-evaluated and the "now-qualified subject," like a prisoner who has served a sentence of penal servitude, is being released, subject to the establishing of certain "terms and conditions" (10), which presumably are set out in the various contributions to *Constructive Criticism*. This title itself could be seen either as a modest admission that the project of theory needs to reflect critically on itself in a friendly manner, or as a more ambitious claim that what is being offered is the beginning of a reconstruction of the human sciences after the work of deconstruction, typified in the famous and perhaps infamous *Deconstruction and Criticism* of Harold Bloom et al.

*Constructive Criticism* appears at a time when many have become convinced that the enterprise of theory, like other enterprises, is subject to the law of diminishing returns, so that another way of looking at the book might be as a kind of annual report on the present state of theory. Some of the essays, notably that of Martin Kreiswirth, approach this task with excessive diligence, producing what are in effect extended bibliographical surveys where the argument is submerged amidst the lists of names and titles. The contributors tackle a variety of topics: readings of particular theorists (Foucault, Hegel, Habermas, Ricoeur), studies of particular problems or modes of representation (AIDS and moral philosophy, dance, opera, two essays on narrative), while Diane Elam, Bill Readings, and John Fekete write what could be called essays on the politics of cultural theory.

In general, I found this a rather uninspiring book. Too many of the essays seem routine exercises, a few critical observations buttressed by an abundance of citation which seems designed to impress if not intimidate. Too often the writing is lacklustre; if the authors do not write the kind of meaningless jargon that anti-theory polemics allege, they nevertheless frequently write sentences like these:

In short order, then, particularly in the North American reception, the scope of 'heterogeneity' tends to be reduced to political sociology, to what get defined as the exclusions of counter-hegemonic subjectivities or, specifically, race-class-gender. The frame is thereby regressed to typically

modern structural polarities and, accordingly, to the liberal-egalitarian rationality of identity politics, all inside the homogenizing, pseudo-universal horizons of political society.

The problem is not, as opponents of theory sometimes say, that there is no meaning to such prose, but that the deciphering of it rarely repays the labor required. Sadly, the outstanding exception is the essay by Bill Readings, to whom the book is dedicated, and who was killed in an airline crash in 1994. The stylistic flair and incisive analysis in his essay, "For a Heteronomous Cultural Politics: The University, Culture, and the State," demonstrates that his death was a great loss to Canadian literary studies. Gary Wihl's essay, "Novels as Theories in a Liberal Society," a study of Quentin Skinner, Richard Rorty and Milan Kundera, also deserves praise, though I find his lack of any reference to Bakhtin curious.

I will conclude with some comments on what I see as the collective project of the 14 authors of the book. Inevitably, this means that some of the more individual contributions will be slighted, but in a brief review of a collection like this, it seems best to concentrate on the overall statement the book makes. As I have already implied, the primary impression one gets is that "theory" has exhausted itself. I suspect that one reason for this impression is that the writers are uncertain about whom they are writing for and why they are writing. Many of the essays assume in the reader a fairly close acquaintance with very specialized conversations about particular texts and theorists, and yet the contributors clearly want their work to have a relevance, generally a political relevance, not only to the whole endeavor of the human sciences but to the social world they inhabit. In addition, theory has always claimed to be making a critique of existing ways of doing things, yet on the evidence of this book it has now become routinized as a critical practice with a great deal of academic prestige. One of the main arguments of Bill Readings's rather bleak essay on the place of the university in contemporary society is that the so-called culture wars are based on the false premise that cultural power still matters in the same way that it did during the ascendancy of the nation-state (see 172). The other writers have, in varying degrees, more illusions about the importance of theory and critical polemics.

Diane Elam's essay most clearly addresses the crucial question of what is meant by the term theory. She suggests that:

The age of theory, as I am defining it, then, does not begin with structuralism, as convention might have it. Rather, I would argue that its beginning is marked by the *end* of the structuralist dream, which hoped to find a systematic theory for each of the human sciences, or even more ambitiously for an overarching theory of all the human sciences put together. (89; italics Elam's)

She adds that feminism and deconstruction, with which she is primarily concerned, are "*political practices*" that do not in any simple way proceed from theories, so that in some ways "movements" might be a better term (92; italics Elam's). Thus Elam argues in effect that what we call theory is really the abandonment of theory, taking the term to mean the attempt to construct a systematic explanation of the phenomena within a particular frame of reference. Thus far I would agree with her. But in her characterization, the "structuralist dream" was a naïvely utopian project, which took no account of the whole critical tradition of philosophy. As in much current writing on these topics, a stark alternative is offered: on the one hand, impossible totalizing theory; on the other, relativistic praxis, wholly motivated by ideological factors.

Christopher Norris's contribution argues that a close reading of Foucault's later works suggests that he moved away from his radically Nietzschean position, coming to an awareness of the importance of "accurate (truth-seeking) scholarship" (18). The implications of Norris's argument are far greater than his measured prose suggests, for he seems to be saying that some of Foucault's most influential and famous works are based on an erroneous position. However, instead of repudiating the master, Norris is content with the observation that Foucault was in the process of changing his mind at the time of his death.

A similar strategy of quiet revisionism is at work in Tilottama Rajan's study of Hegel's *Aesthetics*, where she writes:

'Phenomenology,' moreover, can provide a way of reinscribing certain concepts traditionally associated with romantic aesthetics but now dismissed because they are made to seem naïve. (26)

She cheerfully accepts that the persuasive impact of academic fashion is more important than reasoned argument. Just as no teenager wants to have the wrong clothes at a party, so no literary theorist wants to be caught seeming naïve. Rajan's complex argument presumably is meant to demonstrate a way of writing about romantic aesthetics that is sufficiently torturous and complicated to pass the test of theoretical sophistication.

Victor Li provides a lucid and elegant demonstration that Habermas's theory of modernity's opposition to mythic thinking is itself an example of mythic thinking. However, I don't think that we need, as Li suggests, to go to "critical ethnography" (56) to make this discovery; Northrop Frye's criticism could lead one to the same conclusion, for Frye often pointed out the mythic structure of liberal theories of progress. In fact, reading *Constructive Criticism* I several times reflected that, apart from feminist critique, literary studies has not advanced very far beyond the achievement of Northrop Frye. It will undoubtedly seem naïve of me to suggest it, but I think it would be a useful exercise for professors of literature to return to some of the basic problems of *literary* theory instead of continuing, as George Eliot put it, to roam "over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe" (*Middlemarch*, ch. 15).

*Saint Mary's University*

*J. Russell Perkin*

***Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories.* By Jenny Uglow. New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1993. Pp. xiii, 690. \$35.00.**

Jenny Uglow's sparkling new biography of Elizabeth Gaskell will delight the many readers of her previous study of George Eliot. What distinguishes the book under review from earlier studies of the same subject is surely the sheer quality of the writing. As a thorough-going Victorianist Uglow is steeped in the intellectual climate of the nineteenth century, which enables her to bring us an affectionate portrait of this remarkable Victorian woman and her literary achievement as one of the leading novelists of her age. Uglow has made judicious use of the latest research in the form of numerous letters this dedicated storyteller wrote to her many correspondents at home and abroad. The author has also re-created

the milieu of the dissenting Unitarian counter-culture in Manchester with authenticity and compelling interest: Mrs. Gaskell lived at a time of revolution abroad, and bitter class conflict in the first city of the Industrial Revolution. While William, her minister husband, loved the grimy city, and devoted his whole life to good works there, Elizabeth loved to get away and longed for the peace associated with her childhood in rural Knutsford.

But how does Gaskell stand with the modern reader? Is she best known for her brilliant biography of Charlotte Brontë, which showed the injustices suffered by a woman writer, or for the many lively short stories and gentle humor of *Cranford*, or for the frank story of a fallen woman as told in *Ruth*, which outraged her contemporaries?

Or is she best remembered for the power and moral indignation of her industrial novels like *Mary Barton* and *North and South*? The response to the former, her most powerful social problem novel, was predictable. It outraged the manufacturing classes and many of her own social circle. Uglow explains Gaskell's difficulty in reconciling her conscience when confronted with the "fine well lit shops" of the Oxford Road and the starvation of the poor who lived behind them. Skilled novelist that she was, it was no accident that Gaskell's next book was the idyllic *Cranford*, which served to vent the anger and bad feeling her fictional truths had elicited.

It is sometimes difficult to realize that *Cranford* and *Mary Barton* issued from the same pen. There is a world of difference between the idealized ethos that harks back to the miniaturism of Jane Austen, and the brutal reality of poverty. The Manchester that Gaskell writes about is that described by Engels in the 1840s. In her discussion of what many consider to be Gaskell's most important novel, Uglow has acknowledged Gaskell's role as a social critic, but it is curious that she fails to place her in a wider international context. While Engels is noted there is no mention of Marx who hailed Elizabeth Gaskell as a member "of a splendid brotherhood of fiction writers in England, whose graphic and eloquent pages have issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the . . . moralists put together."

It is instructive for the reader to compare the text of *Mary Barton* with that of the *Condition of the Working Class* by Engels, particularly the famous passage which describes the visit of John Barton and George Wilson to the miserable underground cellar of the Davenport family and

the description by Engels of conditions in the Old Town. One is a work of fiction and the other a sociological survey yet both confirm the facts of immiserization. While Gaskell and Engels met, of course, each was motivated by moral outrage, and first-hand knowledge of the "unending horror" Engels vividly describes. Both knew the famous Kaye-Shuttleworth *Report on the Labouring Population* (1842) which estimated the average age of death for "mechanics, laborers and their families" to be 17 years! Gaskell brings to bear a spirit of class reconciliation, Engels brings to his task as an investigator a rigorous critique of capitalist society. It is this ideological dimension of the influence of *Mary Barton*—attested to by Marx—that is absent from the author's discussion.

This biography concentrates upon Gaskell's middle-class lifestyle as the minister's wife of Cross Street Chapel. We learn of her extensive literary and social life, her frequent trips to the country, London, and the continent. Of particular interest is her collaboration and friendship with literary figures like Dickens, Forster, Carlyle, Charles Eliot Norton and Charlotte Brontë. In her dealings with publishers she possessed a keen business sense and was always preoccupied with money. Her role as wife and mother and her domestic relations, her sense of fun and gaiety, her servant problems, and the state of her health all make for absorbing reading. But what we should really like to know is what motivated her to be a high-minded radical and social critic? With the benefit of the letters one would have liked more detail than is given of her parish duties, of the appalling facts and painful experiences she encountered as a visitor to the slums of Ancoats.

Uglow is perhaps weakest in her attempt to come to terms with her subject's feminism. Can *Cranford* and *Ruth* really be read as feminist texts, even with qualifications, as she asserts? Uglow claims there is a contradiction between Gaskell's belief in women's autonomy and her own advocacy of self-sacrifice. "As she fought against the silencing of women, she also confronted, within herself, the effects of their dependency: the stultifying guilt attached to sexuality, the buried defiance and anger, the despairing impulse to self-annihilation." As many historians have learnt to their cost, we must be careful not to project current thinking onto an earlier age. Undoubtedly there is feminism implicit in the struggles of Gaskell's heroines in the various novels, but the author makes too little distinction between feminist ideology now and then. The great achievement of this eminently readable book is to show us what Matthew Arnold

called the "moral imagination" of its subject. In this task Jenny Uglow has succeeded with distinction.

Toronto

Clifford G. Holland

***Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture.* By Julian Moynahan. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995. Pp. xiii, 288. \$24.95.**

Histories of Irish literature often have an oddly Biblical shape. The landscape of Irish writing prior to about 1890 (so the story goes), was peopled solely by strange Old Testament prophets crying in the desert, listened to only because they heralded the arrival of the Messiah, a trinitarian behemoth we might call "YeatsJoyceBeckett" whose every utterance is emulated by a faithful band of apostles (S. S. Kavanagh, Heaney, Friel et al.). Understandably, most contemporary Irish writers have resisted this version of events, and while the multinational Yeats-JoyceBeckett industry continues to trundle along producing books and conferences, a living Irish writer today is more likely to be quoting Mandelstam or Walcott than Yeats. By contrast, the dead generations—particularly those of the nineteenth century—have fared less well. When compared with the sheer mass of critical writing on Yeats, Joyce, or (more recently) Heaney, there is a stark paucity of material dealing with the nineteenth century. Major critical studies exist for only a few writers, a mere fraction of the bibliographic groundwork has been completed, and many of the key primary texts are no longer in print.

Thus, there was reason to look forward to Julian Moynahan's *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture*, which traces a literary line from Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* of 1800 through to Beckett's *Watt*, with emphasis on the early material. Indeed, Moynahan's book attempts to redress the balance of conventional literary histories, granting nineteenth-century novelists like Charles Lever entire chapters to themselves, while poor Sam Beckett is left to struggle for elbow room in a chapter with Yeats and Elizabeth Bowen.

Unfortunately, however, there are problems with Moynahan's book which makes it unlikely to have a major impact on re-mapping the Irish



literary landscape. Moynahan begins by rejecting the applicability of post-colonial theory to the study of Anglo-Irish literature. "On the issue of colonialism I want to say one last thing," he writes. "The 'ism' doesn't apply." Edward Said is Moynahan's chief culprit here; and yet, Moynahan refuses to engage with Said, stating bluntly that Said "knows too little of Ireland . . . to provide the basis of an argument." To which the obvious reply is that Moynahan knows too little of post-colonial theory to hold up his end of the debate.

This is a pity, for it excludes Moynahan from using the most interesting recent work on his subject. The English-speaking, predominantly Protestant, landowners, clerics and businessmen who made up the group known as the "Anglo-Irish" are an excellent example of a subaltern class in colonial theory—a point developed by Terry Eagleton's recent work. "The doubled or split consciousness" which Moynahan haltingly identifies in the gothic fiction of this class has been dealt with by Patricia Coughlan, and could be developed in directions indicated by the Lacanian work of Homi K. Bhabha. David Lloyd has written at length about the relationship of violence to the nineteenth-century Irish novel, and Joep Leerssen has studied the Anglo-Irish writers of the early part of the century in relation to what he calls "exotericism"—the need to address a foreign (in this case, English) audience. These are all critics who use colonial theory in what is still a relatively small field, without in any way assuming that Ireland and Indonesia are identical (as Moynahan's caricatured post-colonial critic does). And yet, Moynahan's study shows no familiarity with their work, even though they are providing answers to many of the questions he raises.

Instead, he employs a genial Leavisite critical model, gently laced with Freud and a bit of old style historicism, praising Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte*, for instance, for its "moral maturity." This is not to say that his prose style is ever less than engaging, and he does cast light on some texts, particularly the early novels of Maturin and Lever, as well as the work of Somerville and Ross. The chapter on Somerville and Ross, however, throws into relief a second basic problem, for it is the only time Moynahan goes beyond general histories and biographical works to use manuscript sources. Even here, however, he makes almost no use of the ephemeral pamphlets and periodicals in which so much nineteenth-century Irish cultural debate took place. When compared to W. J. McCormack's *Ascendancy and Tradition*, for instance, which deals with

much the same area while drawing on a vastly larger range of sources, Julian Moynahan's book looks decidedly thin. For these reasons, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture* is a disappointing book, but one which will nonetheless prove useful if only because there is so little competition in the field.

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***The African Quest for Freedom and Identity: Cameroonian Writing and the National Experience.* By Richard Bjornson. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994. Pp. xvii, 507. Paper, \$18.95.**

In this pioneering study of Cameroonian writings as they relate to the themes of national consciousness and the forging of an identity, Prof. Richard Bjornson analyses in depth the complex question of nation-building and the yearning for a relevant personal and collective identity in the African country of Cameroon. Cameroonian writers aim at capturing the essence, heart and core of this identity as well as spear-heading its quest. They do so after the long night of the European colonization and domination of Africa. Above all, the Francophones dominate the Anglophones with the latter feeling very close to Nigeria, the next door neighbor.

The chronology in this excellent book is wrought around two distinct periods: (1) The apex of European colonialism in Cameroon (1945-1960); (2) The postcolonial times (1960-1990). The author gives to the reader a true feeling of the impulse and dynamism that are found within Cameroonian novels, plays, and poems. What is very conspicuous throughout this study is the peculiarity of Cameroon. This country is the only one in West and Central Africa to have been colonized and occupied by three European powers: France, England, and Germany. The latter lost their colony after their defeat in the First World War. Of the remaining two, France played (and still plays) a major role in the intellectual, political, cultural, economic, and social life of the people. Because of the triple experience by Cameroonians of German, French and English models, Prof. Bjornson correctly states that "the introduction of European culture in Cameroon was indeed an ambiguous blessing."

The other peculiarity about Cameroon is that, of all the African francophone colonies, it is the one that has experienced missionary activities most heavily. During the colonial period, the schooling and education of children was primarily through missionary schools managed by the Catholic church, although Islam remains predominant among the Fulani in the north.

Most Cameroonian writers of the colonial period took part in the anti-colonialist struggle. From a historical perspective, Ruben Um Nyobe the great nationalist leader of the 1950s, later assassinated, is the icon, the reference point, the source of inspiration, and the national hero around whom a collective identity coalesces. Without any doubt, the writer who has eulogized and paid the greatest tribute to Um Nyobe is Mongo Beti, a writer exiled in France for most of the thirty-odd years of independence, starting in the late 1950s, that is, the sunset of the French colonial empire. A. Ahidjo, the president of Cameroon from the early 1960s to the 1980s is a constant presence in the minds of the writers and artists, whether at home or abroad. On one hand Ahidjo is decried and said to be a dictator and a mere puppet paying lip-service to France, as is his successor Paul Biya, while, on the other hand, some writers such as Ferdinand Oyono chose to take part in the task of nation-building, alongside Ahidjo.

Besides the clarification of the very complex relationship between the Francophone and the Anglophone entities and their merging into a federal republic in 1972, Prof. Bjornson also lays out the most striking themes and questions of concern to most, if not all, Cameroonian novelists, playwrights, and poets in their works. The sojourn in France for most Cameroonian intellectuals and writers was *un mal nécessaire*. The synthesis of positive elements from the traditional cultures together with modern technology and science is a necessary condition in order to bring to the fore a new African identity. Within the context of the laborious enterprise of nation-building, the de-tribalization process must be carried out to its full extent. The concept of identity itself is very hybrid and cannot be fully modern, thus the necessity to draw from various cultures. However, an inherent danger in the act of borrowing is the sense of alienation that comes along with the package. In spite of the communal nature and the sense of solidarity in traditional cultures, Cameroonians cannot escape the reality and presence of the modern idea of selfhood and of individualism; in postcolonial times, most writers have denounced the

overwhelming and destructive nature of corruption in government and state structures led by Cameroonian themselves. As in many other parts of postcolonial Africa, and in a process that was repeated throughout the continent, the privileged class in Cameroon appropriated a disproportionate share of the country's wealth. Finally, most Cameroonian writers have understood the importance of culture and the decisive role that culture can play in the affirmation of a viable identity as well as a pertinent national consciousness. Overall, a great deal of Cameroonian writing is permeated by political statements which reflect the condition of postcolonial Cameroon. By the same token, there are competing definitions of individual as well as of collective identity in postcolonial African societies.

If certain Cameroonian writers have found an inspiration in the Senghorian concept of Negritude (as an economic and cultural development strategy as well as a characteristically African way of looking at the world), other writers and philosophers such as M. Beti and Marcien Towa have violently attacked Senghor and Negritude. For them, Negritude is essentially a hoax and a neo-colonial and imperial facade, behind which France lurks, its goal being to keep Africans in a permanent state of inferiority and subservience.

Along with the Negritude movement, print culture and the university (primarily the University of Yaounde) have had a measurable impact on the Cameroonian national experience. The importance of publishing outlets and houses such as CLE goes along with print culture. Otherwise and previously, most writers were published in Paris.

The major challenge faced by Cameroonian writers (and Africans at large) is that of language. Prof. Bjornson makes the valuable point, following Beti, that a French-language literature capable of reflecting the true concerns of the people implies an acceptance of French as integral to the national culture. Additionally, most Cameroonian writers are trying, with various levels of success, to launch new poetic idioms by subverting French poetic and prosodic conventions in order to express a modern African consciousness. As the author states, the danger attendant on the exclusive usage of the French language in Cameroon is the exclusion of a large segment of the population from participation in the national discourse and the perpetuation of a privileged class, whose members owe their status in part to their mastery of European languages. An important

aspect of Cameroonian writings is the expression of national culture and identity from Marxist perspectives by philosophers such as Towa, as well as from the Christian liberation theology angle by thinkers such as Jean Marc Ela and Fabien Eboussi Boulaga.

Prof. Bjornson takes the reader on an exciting journey inside the broad spectrum of Cameroonian writings: from the description of the relationship between Africans and Europeans within colonial society as captured by F. Oyono, R. Philombe, and M. Beti to the versatile and varied poetry of Dakeyo, Senguat-Kuo, Pouka, Epanya Yondo, and Nyunai; from the philosophical queries of M. Towa, J. M. Ela and E. Boulaga to the writings of women such as Delphine Zango Tsogo, as well as their view and vision of Cameroonian society and their criticizing of the male-dominated society and its effects on women. Female writers have also opened the debate about the conditions that lead women to accept their own subservience.

Prof. Bjornson describes with grace and elegance the rise of Cameroonian theatre through the works of the most important playwright, Guillaume Oyono-Mbia. Theatre in Cameroon is mostly based on social comedies and there are other prominent playwrights such as Mono Ndjama, Jean Mba Evina, Patrice Ndedi Penda, Pabe Mongo, and Victor Musinga. An underlying thread which links all the genres is the sense of poetic justice as elucidated by Cameroonian writers. The only weak point in Cameroonian writings, Prof. Bjornson points out, is the overemphasis on a supposed conflict between tradition and modernity.

This work is a major contribution to the criticism of African literature. The merit of the author lies in the way in which he weaves the themes pertaining to literature with history and politics. He describes and discusses the anti-colonialist movement, the forging of a collective identity and national consciousness couched in a powerful literary expression in the works of most Cameroonian novelists, poets, playwrights, and philosophers. Besides the task of rewriting colonial history from an African point of view, Cameroonian writers, fully participated in the forging of a true national consciousness and identity, and they still do.

*Transitional Objects and Potential Spaces: Literary Uses of D. W. Winnicott.* Edited by Peter L. Rudnytsky. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. Pp. xxiii, 309. Paper, \$16.50.

Rudnytsky has assembled fifteen articles, published between 1952 and 1989; all are influenced, even inspired, by D. W. Winnicott (1896-1971) who is "increasingly acknowledged to be one of the most important figures in psychoanalysis since Freud" (xii). He also offers us a pivotal chapter from Winnicott's best-known work, *Playing and Reality* (1971), as well as an introduction that is informative without being intrusive.

Winnicott's fascination with the parent-infant relationship led him to embrace the concept of "transitional objects," the first possessions of the very young children. These objects permit the infant's first cultural experience, which ". . . begins with creative living first manifested in play." Art derives from play, which happens in "potential spaces," the ". . . third area between complete subjectivity and complete objectivity" (xii). Winnicott saw in this approach an alternative to the theories of Freud, which do little to apprehend the aesthetic experience.

Readers already conversant with object relations aesthetics will surely be engaged by the wide range of applications to literature and culture; the uninitiated will benefit from a judicious choice and arrangement of texts which allow for a progressive introduction to the Winnicottian method and language. The first six essays examine "The Analytic Frame." In "The Location of Cultural Experience" Winnicott contends that children's play, hence cultural experience, is encouraged by a mother-figure who allows the exploration of potential space.

Marion Milner, whose views developed in tandem with those of Winnicott, examines the emergence of symbols and explains that a healthy relationship with our world depends on acceptance of the difference between symbolic and literal realities. It is not surprising that she discourages the isolation of psychoanalysis from art, and is nostalgic for the Wordsworthian aesthetic moment when we are at one with the "external" reality and are entirely engaged by our awareness.

Christopher Bollas acknowledges his debt to Milner, is also fascinated by the aesthetic moment, and examines our quest for 'transformation' which was first made possible by the first transitional object—the mother. Bollas also recognizes the power of artists, who create their own aesthet-

ic moments. He is interested in the claim by Murray M. Schwartz that ". . . the literary experience . . . lies somewhere in the 'potential space' between the text and the reader" (46). Next we encounter Schwartz, who asks "Where is Literature?" and locates it in our attempts ". . . to unite inner and outer realities" (61). Albert D. Hutter is also motivated by potential space. Inspired by Rossetti, Hopkins and Winnicott, he achieves a *rapprochement* of poetry and psychoanalysis and stresses the need for ". . . the space to move freely between subject and object, reader and text, patient and analyst" (84-5). This freedom is defended by Madelon Sprengnether, whose engagement with texts is ". . . an attempt through narrative to draw into consciousness some of the buried metaphors by which (we) live" (94). The freedom is exemplified by the six essays that deal with "Literary Objects" and are intended "to evoke a Winnicottian canon" (xvii).

David Willbern's reflections on the murder of King Duncan lead us to a Winnicottian appreciation of "Phantasmagoric MacBeth," and they show us how great drama prefigures the theory of psychoanalysis. Antoinette B. Dauber examines the seventeenth-century poetry of Thomas Traherne which evades genre, rejects transitional objects and is a veritable "assault on referentiality" (147). Winnicott's celebration of the child as the original creator informs John Turner's essay on Wordsworth and deepens our understanding, of the Child who is "father of the Man" and of Wordsworth himself.

David Holbrook links "overmothering" and the absence of family in most of the work of D. H. Lawrence; *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is, in particular, "a disastrous projection of Lawrence's own psychic difficulties" (207). Samuel Beckett's relationship with his mother is seen by Patrick J. Casement as the principal reason why he abandoned his mother-tongue. An honest and insightful paper by Richard Poirier juxtaposes Winnicott's theories and the meditations of Kenneth Burke in order to circumscribe, insofar as possible, the genius of Robert Frost. The work of Frost shows us that poetry is at the convergence of "the so-called reality principle" and "a residue of the infant's sense of omnipotence" (223). This reader would have been tempted to order these literary analyses in accordance with thematic similarities, rather than in chronological order.

The section "Cultural Fields" contains four essays which are neither critical nor literary and which challenge us to reconsider certain dimensions of Western cultures. In a chapter which is particularly thought-provoking, Brooke Hopkins invites us to see Jesus as the ultimate transitional object, who survives humanity's destructive attacks. "Jesus is the body in pain, the pain human beings inflict, in fantasy or in reality, upon one another from infancy on" (256). Symbolic representations which oblige us to face, rather than avoid, our nature remind us of the vast differences between Winnicott and Freud. Ellen Handler Spitz offers an engaging analysis of a popular children's book, Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, to show the power of images to create a space which can crowd out words as well as the mother-figure.

Readers who have become unconditional supporters of Winnicott will be surprised by the penultimate chapter, in which Claire Kahane reminds us that his theories are circumscribed by masculine language and norms. Anne M. Wyatt-Brown formulates a final question: why has Winnicott been neglected, particularly by the academy? She argues that the classroom is the perfect forum for testing the theories of a clinician-theorist whose work celebrates the intuitive creativity of the child.

Readers will be prompted to think of other literary uses of Winnicott's theories, and as the canon grows we should become more able to humanize psychoanalysis, to recognize the power of the child, and to articulate in tangible terms the specificity of literature.

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