

BOOK REVIEWS

The Irony of Identity: Self and Imagination in the Drama of Christopher Marlowe. By Ian McAdam. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1999. 283 pages. \$43.50 US.

Of the many excellences in Ian McAdam's *The Irony of Identity*, the first is an introductory chapter that argues for a complex combination of traditional and contemporary critical approaches so that one may arrive at an enriched understanding of two related ideas: "how the artistic imagination functions" to create and sustain "a viable human identity" (43) in both Marlowe and his characters, and "the reasons why, in psychological terms, the tension arising from the conflict between self-assertion and self-surrender always leads to tragic results in Marlowe's plays—that is, to a failure of self-fashioning" (43). The irony of identity, as Marlowe well understands, is that even as his characters work to achieve and maintain an individual identity, they realize its ultimate futility because they know they must eventually surrender to death. McAdam distances himself from the single-mindedness of the new historicists and cultural materialists and from Foucault whose theories he finds unconvincing (37–38). He fears that critical theorists who promote cultural self-authorization do so at the expense of the humanist subject (24). Embracing certain transhistorical moral and psychological assumptions, including similar Renaissance and contemporary notions of male identity, he proposes to examine links between the sexual and religious conflicts in Marlowe's plays and in Marlowe himself.

McAdam believes that the criticism of the last two decades of the twentieth century has placed much too low a value on the impact of Augustinian thought on Renaissance literature (15) and has not taken into enough account the playwright's ambivalence toward homosexuality. He sees both the "peculiar religious temperament within Marlowe" (17)—a mixture of a traditional religious upbringing, a brash subversiveness and, yet, as seen in the major figures of his plays with whom he identifies, a "drive toward and obsession with absolutes" (29)—and Marlowe's homosexuality as destabilizing elements in his personality, and as elements crucial to an understanding of his plays.

McAdam's chapters follow a sensible, speculative chronology of the plays: *Dido Queen of Carthage*, the *Tamburlaine* plays, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Massacre at Paris*, and *Edward II*. In each, he concentrates on the conflict in the protagonists between self-assertion and self-surrender and the ways in which Marlowe identifies with the conflict. In *Dido*, he finds that the Queen is an even better example of the conflict than Aeneas, because her struggle is internalized as Aeneas's is not. His "tenuous manhood"

(the chapter title) results from his inability to choose between his heroic duty and romantic love. Overall, he is a character more acted upon than acting. It is Dido whose final act of asserting a personal identity comes about, paradoxically, through her surrender to death on the pyre.

The chapter on Tamburlaine's "tenuous godhood" begins with an excellent survey of the complicated critical controversy surrounding the interpretation of the warrior. On the issue of Tamburlaine's true sexual inclinations, McAdam maintains that Marlowe's identification with his protagonist is particularly strong in his desire for affection and male companionship. Tamburlaine tries to make the people and events of his world mirror his greatness, but his efforts are destructive and, ultimately, produce an illusion of heroic self-fashioning in which his imaginings are unsuccessfully substituted for reality. McAdam does not shy away from discussing the critically acknowledged interpretive difficulties of the *Tamburlaine* plays, including Tamburlaine's relationship with Zenocrate, his speech beginning "What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?" (5.1.160), his killing of Calyphas, the parodic elements in the plays, and the uncertainties in an audience's response, especially at the end of the second play.

The chapter on *Doctor Faustus* moves from "tenuous godhead" to "the exorcism of God." Here, McAdam finds that Faustus's damnation "may be seen as a theatrical metaphor expressing his inability to resolve the conflict between self-assertion and self-surrender" (113). In his discussion of this conflict, McAdam is particularly astute on the ironies of the play, Faustus's sexuality, his involvement with necromancy, and the function and the powers of the imagination (especially, the destructive powers), as well as what the play may be revealing about its creator.

According to McAdam, *The Jew of Malta* differs from Marlowe's previous plays in examining the difficulties of self-fashioning in a social context. Ironically, biblical parody is used in the play to show the failure of carnal rather than spiritual identity. Like Tamburlaine, Barabas attempts to find his individual identity by destroying others—in part because he is a Jewish alien spurned in Malta. McAdam sees Barabas's alien status as "a kind of metaphor in the play for the homosexual in society" (154). Barabas is unloved and unloving. Lacking support from the community creates uncertainty in him. Both of these reasons play into his fatal error in trusting Femeze. Ultimately, McAdam's reading of Barabas, Femeze, and the play as a whole is bolder and more complex than the criticism on this play usually is.

The critics' condemnation of *The Massacre at Paris*, its corrupt text apart, has been strong. McAdam takes a more affirmative stance. After suggesting that the play "represents an attempt by the playwright to reidentify with his national and religious roots, to reestablish himself as a member of his own community" (177), he settles into a detailed analysis of the Duke of Guise, Navarre, and Henry III. Each of these characters has trouble with self-definition, and McAdam explores possible reasons why. The results deserve

special praise because they push interpretation as far as it can go without trying to make the truncated text yield more than it can.

McAdam begins the chapter on *Edward II*, "The Illusion of Integrity," by considering the "surprisingly unmoralistic approach to homosexuality" (202) and to history in the play. This approach allows Marlowe to focus on the personal and social failures of the characters and to see, ultimately, that "the absence of spiritual wholeness" in Edward also "lies at the heart of the meaning of the play" (204). The remainder of the chapter proceeds with an incisive analysis of several characters whose failures of imagination lead to failures of self-fashioning; depressingly, *Edward II* implies that the most we can obtain is competency and survival in an essentially loveless world" (227). McAdam concludes the discussion by indicating how this perspective, although not immediately apparent, reflects Marlowe's inheritance of Augustinian Christianity.

In his opening chapter, McAdam says, "I wish to adopt a broadly psychoanalytic base for this study" (24) and to be sure he is strongly influenced by Heinz Kohut whose theories on the psychology of the self are based on a pre-Oedipal pathology and speak to one's struggle for manliness and a coherent wholeness. Some will undoubtedly object that McAdam reads Marlowe's characters as if they had fully realized psyches, not as imaginative constructs subject to the needs of artistic manipulation and only secondarily to the needs of psychological credibility. Another, related objection might be that McAdam overestimates Marlowe's identification with his protagonists, that the relationship between the author's psychology and that of his characters is less ascertainable than he assumes. I would strongly urge those who object to this kind of psychologizing not to hesitate to read the book since, for the most part, McAdam's arguments are measured, articulated with admirable detail and precision, and the insights into Marlowe and his plays as stimulating as they are complex. That he manages to make sense out of *The Massacre at Paris* and to present coherent interpretations of the Duke of Guise, Navarre, and Henry III alone demonstrates the value not only to Marlovians but to all Renaissance critics who wish to see the results of adventurous, intricate thinking.

The Irony of Identity is an important book. The inclusive humanist nature of its subject, the abundant attention to critics and theorists, and the keen intelligence behind it ensure its value not only for anyone interested in Marlowe but for those interested in the development of critical approaches to early modern literature. McAdam has read widely; in presenting full explanations of his reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with critics, he gives exceptionally balanced and fair-minded views. Ultimately, this is a book that is likely to stay with readers, influencing their reflections on critical methodology and early modern texts well beyond its immediate Marlovian subject.

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The American Mystery: American Literature from Emerson to DeLillo. By Tony Tanner; foreword by Edward Said; introduction by Ian F.A. Bell. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. xxiv, 242 pages. \$54.95.

Willa Cather: Queering America. By Marilee Lindemann. New York: Columbia UP, 1999. xvi, 185 pages. \$69.50.

To read the last book we will have from Tony Tanner is a melancholy pleasure. Tanner's was a distinctive voice, not least but not only because British critics who have devoted themselves to American literature have always been rare. From *The Reign of Wonder* in 1965 through *The American Mystery*, his writings have investigated and celebrated the eccentric mutations that English literature underwent in the conditions of the New World. This collection is a reminder of the virtues one expected of his work: acuteness of critical perception combined with generosity towards a variety of perspectives, theoretical flexibility conveyed in a graceful and urbane style; they will be missed.

To be sure, *The American Mystery* does not really represent a major addition to Tanner's oeuvre. The rather mysteriously chosen title—mysterious because it comes from the one author, Don DeLillo, who receives some rough handling in the book—gives a spurious impression of unity to what is essentially an anthology of previously published prefaces and essays. What common threads they have are more the indices of Tanner's own characteristic interests and fascinations than the result of any integrating thesis. But in a way this is appropriate.

Tanner was not a critic for whom an abstract theory was primary; rather his ideas served as the pretext for a reading in the course of which they emerged transformed and complicated, in a way that matched his conception of an American literature, at its best, forever open and permanently uncategorizable, irreducibly ambiguous "writing," as he puts in his essay on Emerson, "against writing itself."

If there is a connecting motif to the book, it might best be described in terms of his recurrent focus on this ambiguity, and the instability and uncertainty of language that has been a constant concern of American writers. It is a theme that makes its first appearance in the opening piece on Emerson, described here not as T.S. Eliot's general in "the army of unalterable law," but as the Nietzschean geometer of power and energy whose recovery we owe largely to Richard Poirier—the Emerson who declared that "all symbols are fluxional; all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses are, for homestead." It is carried through to the final essay, on Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*, which features a certain William Emerson, about whom, we are informed, "Flow was his passion The first book he published was upon Fluxions." There are different ways of reading this fluxional ambiguity; Sacvan Bercovitch, for example, would be inclined to call the freedom of interpretation it ap-

pears to offer illusory, a limited tolerance that serves only to reinforce a profounder conformity. Indeed, one might say that Tanner's willingness to see in American culture symbols of hope rather than symptoms of delusion is an attitude more in evidence these days outside the American academy than within it, just as the most ardent celebrants of the American way are perhaps most likely to be found in Warsaw and Seoul. America began as a gleam in the eye of Europe, and the glamour of American promise is still clearest when seen at a distance.

Tanner, however, would no doubt agree with William James that "worse things than being duped may happen to a man in this world," indeed, that to be alive entails the inevitable risk of deception. And we might say that the opposition of life and death constitutes a hidden theme in the book, and relation of life to language, insofar as the life of language, in America at least, lies in its free play, its unwillingness to submit to the law of determinate meaning and resistance to the taxing demands of representation, even when that play is incarnated in the disturbingly unethical form of the protagonist(s) of Melville's *The Confidence-man*, to which a chapter is devoted. At any rate, this may explain why the only place where Tanner's sympathy wears thin is in a testy review of Don DeLillo's *Underworld*, whose apparent shortcoming is not to allow that play. Tanner quotes DeLillo's claim that news "has almost replaced the novel, replaced discourse between people," and comments disapprovingly that "'news' is what we get in *Underworld* ... in the relative absence of significant characters or narrative plot ... the book presents us with a string of more or less sensationalist new items" The problem seems to be that, for Tanner, DeLillo's famously flat style succeeds all too well, flattening literature onto reality, with an irony so blank that it irons out the very space of uncertainty that is irony's possibility. Deadpan, in other words, becomes simply dead.

This, however, is not the book's last word; it concludes aptly with a brilliant essay on Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*, a story of two Englishmen trying to take the measure of America, a project born of the "subjunctive Hopes" that seem to be the very substance of that "dream [of] Britannia." It is a project that takes the protagonists into a world of wonders, but it is doomed to be interrupted by the immensity of the task itself and by the untimely intrusion of death. The most poignant passage in the book is its closing paragraph, which quotes Pynchon's mysterious character William Emerson, who shows Mason and Dixon his "Dark-Age Maps" and declares gnominically, "The moral lesson in this being,—Don't Die." "But, of course," replies Tanner, "they do."

Marilee Lindemann's *Willa Cather: Queering America*, on the other hand, is a book with a thesis. There has been a boomlet in Cather studies in recent years, largely fueled by the currently widespread depiction of her as a writing lesbian, rather than a lesbian writer. To be sure, such a development would have appalled the fastidious Virginian, who conducted a "search and destroy mission" directed against any surviving letters and manuscripts that might compromise her artistic privacy. It would also be of little comfort for

the many readers, in her time and our own, for whom Cather was a solid rock of tradition in a sea of artistic self-indulgence. The hypothesis of Cather's "queer" sexual identity, as Lindemann notes, has by now descended to the level of conventional wisdom, in spite of some vigorous dissents, usually from outside the university, such as Joan Acocella's merciless dissection, "Cather and the Academy," published in *The New Yorker* a few years ago.

The potentially problematic aspect of such approaches, premised on Cather's unambiguously lesbian identity, lies not in the lesbianism but in the identity. The guiding supposition is what might be called sexocentrism, the assumption that at the molten core of the psyche lies a pulsating principle of sexuality, as personal as a fingerprint and as determinate as the serial number on a handgun, and which will provide the secret code tying together all manifestations of individual behaviour—a supposition that puts Sigmund Freud, the Harlequin romancer, and much contemporary critical writing in the same capacious bed bearing on its lushly sculpted headboard the legend *Amor Vincit Omnia*. But "perhaps, after all," as Herman Melville remarks in a different context, "there is *no* secret." What we call sexual desire may be no more than the interpretation of the electro-chemical processes otherwise known as life: a necessary misinterpretation, which is only another way of saying that all sex is bad sex. In any event, Cather's Darwino-Platonic argument that to regard sex as anything but the cunning of biology is to grant it an unearned dignity is as good a one any other.

Be that as it may, it must be said that Lindemann's book is open-minded and even-handed, and employs the concept of "the queer" very flexibly, "not as a way of pledging allegiance to any particular political program or critical paradigm but, indeed, as a mark of my skepticism toward any kind of programmatic thinking," as she herself puts it. The tone is chatty rather than challenging—in the course of this book one learns, for example, something about the author's dress habits (she has given up jeans for tailored slacks) and about her television viewing preferences (she likes sitcoms). One might go so far as to say that what engages her interest most is the word "queer" itself, whose various appearances in Cather's writings she assiduously and usefully catalogues, and which serves as conveniently polyvalent umbrella to cover the assorted ways in which Cather's work, Lindeman argues, troubles traditional American "axes of difference—psychosexual, racial/ethnic, economic, and literary."

Lindemann is entirely right to stress Cather's interest in the heteroclit and the marginal and to remind readers of the many versions of eccentricity that populate her novels; she is on record, after all, as having said that afternoons spent as a child with immigrant neighbours in Nebraska provided more intellectual excitement than anything that ever happened subsequently in her life. On the other hand, it is no easy task to make the case that the seemingly solid and strait-laced Cather was in fact hip, happening, and thoroughly up-to-date—no, really. A lot needs to be left out in stressing Cather's polyvalent predilections. Take, for instance, Lindemann's reading of Cather's

best-known novel, *My Ántonia*, in which the narrator Jim Burden is made out to be the champion of repressive stability, unnerved by Ántonia's "mobility" and her status as the "emblem of the queering of the nation." Perhaps, but this neglects the fact that it is Jim who is associated with the principal (and deeply problematic) symbol of movement in the novel, the railroad, and that it is he who has moved away from the prairie to the bustling and surely by any standard more "queer" space of New York City, while Ántonia remains in the place where she has taken root and grown to fertile maturity. And although the detail that she continues to speak "Bohunk" may appear to pose a challenge to the normalizing myth of America, it seems finally less significant than her assimilation to the ultimate ground of that myth—i.e., the ground itself, the land of the new continent in which America discerned a buried mirror reflecting shadowy figures of its own identity.

No one desires to argue, however, with an author who has not engaged one's interest and attention; this is a thoughtful and suggestive study, and a worthy addition to the expanding shelf of Catherology.

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This Side of Heaven: Determining the Donnelly Murders, 1880. By Norman N. Feltes. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1999. xvii, 208 pages. \$40.00.

I have pondered and worried about this review for some months. It is not because of any impact my words might have on Norman Feltes. The author, Professor Emeritus of English at York University, died since the publication of this study, although he lived to see some favourable comments about it. Rather, the worrying was because I could not decide whether this was a very good, or a very bad, book.

I now boldly declare it to be both. First it is necessary to be clear about what it is not. Feltes tells us at the very beginning that he has nothing to add to the story of the Donnelly murders. He accepts the now standard accounts in Donald Butt's doctoral thesis, "The Donnellys: History, Legend, Literature" (U of Western Ontario, 1977) and Ray Fazakas's *The Donnelly Album* (1977). Those accounts tell how the Donnellys, an Irish immigrant family, clashed with their neighbours in Biddulph Township, a farm area just west of London, Ontario. Local Catholics formed a "vigilance society" to deal with the endemic violence and, in February 1880, killed five of the Donnellys and burnt the family home. Given the fevered atmosphere, no jury could be found to convict the murderers and they went free.

Feltes not only accepts the received version of the murders, he barely discusses the killings. His interest is in the deep background of the case. His first chapter is called "Siting and Surveying," and it is in fact an account of the geology, geography and surveying of western Ontario. The second chapter is

a long wander through the ideas, or as Feltes prefers, the ideologies, about immigration. Chapter three studies the transportation system of the region and chapter four is preoccupied with the wheat staple. Finally, the last chapter gets to Biddulph Township and its social formation. The murdered Donnellys appear briefly at the end of this chapter.

It is, obviously, a peculiar book. Feltes wished to divorce the murders from stories about Irish feuds and to understand them instead in a materialist context. He boldly professes his marxism (insisting on the lower case as a signal he is presenting a particular understanding of history, rather than a political posture.) The precise form of m(M)arxism is difficult to discern. Early on Feltes quotes admiringly from Alfred Schmidt's *The Concept of Nature in Marx* (1971): "Consciousness always enters as an active spirit into the reality reproduced by it." (16) This sounds like the "soft Marxism" of the later Frankfurt School, if not Marx wandering into the linguistic turn. Yet much of the book is rigorously materialist, with precious little evidence of consciousness playing an active role. He even tells us, at the very end, that "just as this book has little to do with individual actions, and more to do with limestone, the Niagara Escarpment, and class, so it has little to say about guilt" (176).

Feltes does want us to believe, however, that the human greed was a motivating force. He discusses at some length how a free Black settlement in the area, Wilberforce, was driven out by those anxious to create a market settlement catering to the wheat staple and the railway. Indeed, he is so anxious to claim this that he collapses chronology, ignoring the reality that Wilberforce was given up for dead long before there was a railway or even the pretence of a staple trade in wheat. The historian's teeth grind here and in other places where Feltes ignores the sequence of developments, or makes unsubstantiated claims. For example, he cannot show that there *was* a staple trade in wheat in the Biddulph region. Many of his arguments take on the quality of desperate grasping because he knows so little about the family economics of the Donnellys or about the economic specifics of the region. Nor has he sorted out what particular forms of economic activity meant in terms of social formation. He wants the killers of the Donnellys to represent a modernizing tendency in economics, yet he is forced to confess the jury nullification at their trials was a reactionary social practice.

This sounds like a bad book. It certainly is a dull book. Yet the attempt is remarkable in its ambition, this rebuilding of the historical region from the limestone up. It is remarkable too in its learning about so many diverse topics, even if that learning is often worn like a day-glo tie. In the end, if one wants to learn about the geology of western Ontario, the Irish and Canadian styles of surveying, the intricacies of railway planning, and much more, this is the source. If one wants to learn about the murder and meaning of the Donnellys, it would be better to take in a performance of James Reaney's trilogy of plays about the tragedy.

The Reed Reader. By Ishmael Reed. New York: Basic Books, 2000. xxx, 486 pages. \$44.95.

The Reed Reader presents selections from the extensive and varied body of work that Ishmael Reed has produced over the course of more than thirty years. Included are excerpts from his nine novels, as well as a few selected essays, a broad sampling of poems, and the full text of two of his plays. Everything in the *Reader* displays Reed's characteristically confrontational and insightful style and the volume as a whole succeeds in what one would guess is its principal aim, to introduce the uninitiated to the world of Reed.

And it is a world unto itself. Few, if any, American writers combine the breadth of cultural reference, irreverent humour, and rhetorical aggressiveness that Reed does. Who else could construct a fictional scene, as excerpted from *Japanese By Spring* (1993), in which Drew "Bundini" Brown, Muhammad Ali's famous sideman, is invoked in an argument about racism in *Othello*? Reed has spent his writing life deriving a complex and challenging understanding of America, and the result is an impressive display of this understanding. As a character says in *Mumbo Jumbo*, considered by most to be Reed's masterpiece, "This country is eclectic. The architecture the people the music the writing. The thing that works here will have a little bit of jive talk and a little bit of North Africa, a fez-wearing mulatto in a pinstriped suit. A man who can say give me some skin as well as Asalamilakum. Haven't you heard? This is the country where something is successful in direct proportion to how it's put over; how it's gamed." Electric passages like this one dominate the *Reader*, linked by brief connective sections only long enough for the reader to rest before the next virtuoso onslaught.

Robert Elliot Fox has said of Reed, "Using analogies from comedy and music, one could argue that Ishmael Reed is much closer to Richard Pryor and *In Living Color* than he is to Bill Cosby, more akin to George Clinton or Sun Ra than to Wynton Marsalis." Another place to look for comparisons is the world of sports, upon which Reed has often commented. Here we find the useful coincidence that Julius Erving was born twelve years to the day after Reed's birth on February 22, 1938. This is a confluence of African American innovators who set in their chosen fields standards for fearless improvisation which have been admired and imitated. In fact, Ralph Ellison creates, in his essay, "The Little Man at Chehaw Station," written about five years after *Mumbo Jumbo*, a picture that sounds like an allusion to the passage from Reed's novel quoted above. In it, Ellison describes a six-foot six-inch, light-skinned African American man wearing a dashiki and a huge Afro, who appears on Riverside Drive near 151st Street in New York City, driving a Volkswagen Beetle with a Rolls-Royce radiator. In this man, who bears a retrospective resemblance to Dr. J, circa 1975, Ellison characterizes an "essential 'Americanness' in his freewheeling assault upon traditional forms of the Western aesthetic" and sees "an American compulsion to improvise upon the

given." The possibility of Ellison owing Reed a literary debt is especially tantalizing in light of a meeting between the two writers which Reed recounts in the volume's introduction, in which a drunken Ellison calls Reed "nothin' but a ganster and a con artist." Knocking icons off pedestals is a Reed trademark; nevertheless, both he and Ellison see in United States the same quality for deriving the new (and perhaps better) from the old.

Reed edited the *Reader* himself, allowing for an eighteen-page introduction by the author that traces the intellectual, social, and political paths that have led him to become "a world-class writer," as he says. And while this declaration is, of course, true, it does bring up the only criticism I would make of the book, which is that it might have been introduced by someone other than Reed. Then the introduction wouldn't have the feeling at times of horn-blowing or alternatively, axe-grinding. Such an introduction would give the whole volume more of a sense of this important writer getting his "props," the respect owed him.

But that, too, is Reed. He introduces the book as he wishes, without compromise, almost daring readers, new or old, to disagree with him. The choice of the introduction's author, in this light, makes perfect sense. *The Reed Reader* showcases the work of an important novelist and organic intellectual as Gramsci described them—"intellectuals [who] are distinguished less by their profession, which may be any job characteristic of their class, than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong." *The Reed Reader* will also encourage anyone who even samples it to read Reed's work in the depth and with the attention it demands.

Anthony Stewart

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The Turn to Ethics. Ed. Marjorie Garber, Beatrice Hanssen, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz. New York: Routledge, 2000. xii, 238 pages. \$19.95 US paper.

The editors of this collection of essays begin their introduction by asking "What kind of a turn is the turn to ethics? A Right turn? A Left turn? A wrong turn? A U-turn? Whose turn? Whose turn is it to turn to ethics? And why? Why now?" (vii). The question left out of this list, and out of the book, is where is this turn happening? It is true that the introduction suggests it is happening, vaguely, everywhere, but the book lacks a sustained analysis of the context in which ethics seems to be returning, or newly turned to. The publisher has classified the collection as Philosophy/Cultural Studies; the blurb on the back cover refers to the humanities and social sciences; the editors refer, variously, to "the popular imagination," "the world of technology," and "the contemporary political arena" (vii), and they announce that "Ethics is back in literary studies, as it is in philosophy and political theory" (viii). The assumption

seems to be that the book is broadly comprehensive, but the introduction doesn't do enough to unify the interdisciplinarity of the project.

The essays fall into roughly three categories: those that deal with poststructuralism and ethics, by Lawrence Buell, Judith Butler, John Guillory, and Barbara Johnson; those that "measure the relation between principles of ethics and their practice in the world" (x), by Perri Klass, Chantal Mouffe, Nancy Fraser, and Beatrice Hanssen; and those that address theories of culture in relation to ethics, by Homi K. Bhabha, Doris Sommer, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz. Not all the essayists agree that there should be, or even that there is, a turn to ethics—Butler says she has "for the most part resisted this return" (15) and Fraser suggests that "one should postpone the turn to ethics as long as possible" (122)—and there is surprisingly little recognition of the people who have all along been interested in ethics, and for whom no turn or return is necessary, as they've been there all the time. This blindness to the wider field of ethics is a serious problem: if the context of the "ethical turn" is not well-defined in the first place, the implication may be that the turn takes place in the study of ethics itself—but if there is no sense in this collection that ethics is ongoing, the essays risk naivety. It is as if literary theory has just discovered ethics, and is looking to cultural, political, and medical ethics for justification.

The presence of the last in this collection is particularly curious. Even in a group of essays whose disciplinary context is unclear, Perri Klass's essay "The Best Intentions: Newborn Technologies and Bioethical Borderlines" sticks out. First of all, surely the question of ethics is not a new one in biomedicine; and secondly, an essay that declares itself to be "rankly and frankly sentimental" (67) may be touching to read, but can only gesture toward the larger questions of ethical theory and practice. The essay tells the story of "borderline babies," those born prematurely who ten or fifteen years ago could not have been saved, but who now have increasingly better chances of survival, owing to "the administration of artificial surfactant, the refinement of hi-fi ventilation techniques and apparatus" (82), and in the future, perhaps artificial womb environments. The examples Klass gives, of the ghosts of babies that haunt medical practitioners, of "the whispered presence of the babies we would have saved and couldn't, might have saved but didn't, couldn't save then but would save now" (65), are indeed heartrending; yet the fact that the essay does not even mention the parallel story of the babies who could easily have been saved, but whose parents, doctors, and governments instead aborted them, means that the essay tells only half the truth about babies and bioethics.

It is one of the ironies of this book that theory and practice are shown to be so out of touch. Lawrence Buell concludes his discussion of "What We Talk About When We Talk About Ethics" with the following syntactically confused sentence: "Indeed, it may be that one of the best things that the ethical turn in literary studies can accomplish would be to keep us from getting so easily distracted from thinking about how what teacher-scholars do as professionals does and does not relate to what we are and what we wish

to be as persons" (10). Make of that what you will. Buell argues that "Appeal to 'ethics' makes possible a strategic blurring of standard boundaries: between life and work, persons and texts, poesis and academic exercise—as a consequence of which the notion of 'ethics' becomes user-friendly to both mainstream and counterhegemonic listeners" (4–5). A "user-friendly" ethics is likely no ethics at all, as the blurring of ethical questions, the reluctance to address those that are asked, and the resistance to placing the study of ethics in historical or disciplinary contexts in this volume demonstrates.

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Unauthorized Entry: The Truth about Nazi War Criminals in Canada, 1946–1956. By Howard Margolian. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000. viii, 327 pages. \$39.95.

A perennially contentious issue in Canadian public discourse is immigration policy, and no aspect of it more so than the question of why since 1945 Canada admitted a number of war criminals to this country. The controversy about how this was possible and how many such individuals gained entrance as immigrants or refugees reached its apogee perhaps in early 1987 with the publication of a massive report by the Commission of Inquiry on War Criminals headed by retired Québec judge, Jules Deschênes. The recommendations of that lengthy investigation—in particular that the cases of some 238 suspects should be prosecuted in Canadian courts or pursued further by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the federal Justice Department—led to the establishment within the latter of a Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes Section, where historian Howard Margolian was eventually employed. The principal researcher of the Commission, Alti Rodal, prepared a 500-page study for it entitled "The Nazi War Criminals in Canada: The Historical and Political Setting from 1940 to the Present," which among other things sharply criticized immigration screening by postwar governments that she claimed helped thousands of Europeans with very dubious backgrounds to get into the country.

Margolian's book sets out in no uncertain terms to refute one after the other of the conclusions Ms. Rodal reached (almost the sole positive exception the author makes concerns her account of the notorious Nazi collaborator Count Jacques de Bernonville, who managed to evade French justice by residing illegally in Canada for over four years); although curiously enough Margolian only specifically mentions his vehement dissent from Rodal in his copious endnotes and in an appendix on sources: her name appears nowhere in the text or the too skimpy index. For his part Margolian states that at most, 2000 among the million and a half immigrants to Canada in the decade after 1945—nearly two-thirds of them from Europe—were either war crimi-

nals or collaborators, both of German and several other nationalities. But whenever he concedes that some shortcoming or change in the security system (such as the often unhelpful format of visa application questionnaires and the steady liberalization of the admissible categories of persons during the 1950s) indeed facilitated the entry of these unwanted types, Margolian is at pains to emphasize the likely small numbers involved. He saves his harshest condemnation for the ethnic lobby groups, above all the Ukrainian-Canadian Committee that pressed relentlessly for the approval of ex-members of the Galician Waffen-SS division and the (German) Canadian Christian Council for Resettlement of Refugees, as well as the Allied intelligence agencies (OSS/CIA, MI6) whose "ratlines" for supposedly invaluable anti-communist informants sluiced an unknown quantity even of indisputable killers into Canada.

Howard Margolian writes fluently, and the archival research he has conducted in Ottawa and abroad is truly impressive. However, the storm his interpretations has unleashed suggests that the historiography of this subject is no less controversial than the political decisions which engendered it in the first place.

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