allegory, and Gothic romance that, for me, make the stories so arresting. I have a similar complaint about his "conservative-humanistic" (136) reading of *The Kissing Man,* which does not satisfactorily account for the sheer weirdness of many of the stories, in which the elements of fertility myth seem less spiritually regenerative than irrationally atavistic, bound up with coercion and ritual othering as much as community cohesion. Encountering any good critic, the appreciative reader is prompted to respond with more than just assent, and my criticisms, far from indicating reservations about the value of Lynch's criticism, bespeak a fundamental engagement with this intelligent and stimulating book. I highly recommend it.

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JoAnn McCaig. *Reading In: Alice Munro's Archives.* Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2002. Pp. 193 + xvii. $24.95 paper.

In this study, McCaig has expanded and sharpened her first published "reading" in the University of Calgary Library's collection of Munro Papers, her article "Alice Munro's Agency: The Virginia Barber Correspondence, 1976–83" (*Essays on Canadian Writing* 66 [1998]: 81–102). However, she now no longer has permission to quote from the letters of either Munro or Barber nor from those of Ann Close, Munro's editor at Knopf in New York. This change explains the unusual start of McCaig's Preface: "This is not the book I wanted to publish. This is not the book I originally wrote" (ix). In short order, the Preface becomes a brisk personal narrative in which McCaig both asserts her scholarly authority and defends her work as "not an exposé of Munro nor of anyone associated with her" (xiii) but an examination of the archival material with three interconnected questions in mind: "How has this truly exceptional writer achieved her enviable artistry and authority?" "How is authorship constructed in literary culture?" And, "How can literary archives ... be used in conjunction with contemporary theories of literature to explain the inexplicability of authorship?" (3). Through her answers, McCaig aims to reveal the shaping of Munro's career as a writer. In the process, however, her scholarly microscope is prone to focus less on the Munro Papers themselves than on

theories of authorship, especially those of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Faith in his *The Field of Cultural Construction* (1993) and *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (1995) inspires McCaig to apply his concepts and ideology to "construct" Munro as a "cultural worker" (11) who becomes a profitable "cultural producer" with the marketing help of agents or "cultural bankers" (127–128).

McCaig's socio-economic cultivation of Munro's *field* of authorship and authority has a decidedly subjective tone of argumentation.

McCaig's socio-economic cultivation of Munro's *field* of authorship and authority has a decidedly subjective tone of argumentation. The book's four main chapters discuss, respectively, the terms Canadian, woman, short story, and writer as appositional attributes of Munro's career. Thus, the chapter on Munro's establishing herself in the Canadian publishing context with the support of Robert Weaver as her "mentor" (8) from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, leads into the explication of Munro's subsequent entry into the American market through the New York literary agency of Virginia Barber and, as McCaig prefers to see it from her feminist perspective, the resulting "sisterhood" (122) of writer and agent. In the case of the Weaver-Munro correspondence, McCaig still has permission to quote from his letters; yet, they number only a dozen as opposed to a score or so of Barber's letters over the much shorter period from 1976 to 1983.

Given the overall relatively small number of letters accessible in the Munro Papers and the legal restriction imposed on McCaig's use of the available financial and personal data, a sense of conspiracy against McCaig seems to enter the discussion with regard to the possibility of "accidental and deliberate" (75) gaps in the record and of Munro's "construction of a particular kind of 'story'" (58) through the archival collection. Such critical musings understandably lead McCaig to speculation, as does her repeated attention to the effects of suspected bias against Munro's gender, lower social class background, genre preference, and, in the American market, nationality. These issues are by their very nature open to opinion, ideology and politics. As to her opinion on gender, for instance, McCaig can be astonishingly simplistic: the women who don't give her permission to quote from their correspondence "still feel it necessary to be so self-protective," whereas the men in such situations would give their permission "promptly" and without asking questions about her work (xiv). McCaig's preference to see gender gaps instead of personality types is particularly evident in her comparative comments on Munro and John Metcalf (e.g., 144–145). While aware that Munro herself is neither naive nor undesigning in maintaining her distance from any organized cultural pressures of feminism, social empowerment, literary market forces, and nationalism,

McCaig argues for the measurable consequences of these kinds of pervasive pressures.

At the core of her chapter on Munro's adaptability as a writer of short stories, is the provenance of the novel-like story sequence published in Toronto as *Who Do You Think You Are?* (Macmillan, 1978), scheduled to be published simultaneously by Norton in New York as *The Beggar Maid* and brought out there under the same title by Knopf in 1979. Based on her reading of the available archival record, McCaig disagrees with some of the conclusions of Helen Hoy's substantial study of that book's publication history ("Rose and Janet: Alice Munro's Metafiction." *Canadian Literature* 121 [1989]: 59–84). Whereas Hoy sees Munro's artistic self in charge of the revisions and final arrangement of the sequence of the stories, McCaig discerns "a bewildering assortment of external pressures" (109) that shaped the "production" (110) of the book and forced Munro to realign her expectations of control over her stories. Here and especially in McCaig's two final chapters, Bourdieu's theories fit too neatly to determine the "implications of authority" (113) for Munro as a writer who has become a "name brand" author and valuable "*product*" (114). While the social forces of gender, class and the cultural market-place do not completely override Munro's personal independence as a writer, her personality can still supposedly put her "in the position of 'beggar maid,' the female outsider with a poverty of correct credentials for the claim of authorship" (147).

Hoeing the cultural and economic ideas in the field of social theories Bourdieu has planted under French skies does not, however, seem to yield the kind of inquiry that the both open and not-so-open complexity of Munro's North American habitat invites. Hoeing beans with Thoreau in his field by Walden Pond might just be a more fetching start-up venture to accommodate Munro's decidedly personal as well as competitive authority in the market-place and clearings no less than in the literary woods. In the end, McCaig's central question and title of her concluding chapter—"What Is a Canadian Woman Short Story Author?"—proves somewhat redundant concerning Munro's career. Again and again, McCaig's answers tend to be both bolstered and constrained by her ready acceptance of Bourdieu's theories and the translation of their authority from France to Canada. Thus, Bourdieu's concept of an author's "habitus," to single out one term, supposedly clarifies "Munro's position in the cultural field" (83), but it doesn't. While the choice of this Latin word imported via France to capture Munro's "practical mastery" (Bourdieu, qtd. 117) seems odd, one might just perceive it as coincidentally signaling the futility of looking for simplifying foundation words in the realm of literary theory. After all, *habitus* has a

variety of meanings in Latin, some nuanced, some contradictory, and it already exists as a noun in English denoting one's bodily constitution. On second thought, Latin may yet offer directives both out of and into the grayness of theory by way of the trinity of *auctor, habitus* and *cultus,* terms whose multiple ambiguities alone will do.

Despite its weaknesses, McCaig's reading in, and into, the Munro Papers is a lively and welcome cultural studies approach to Munro's prospects and spectacular progress as a writer starting out in the 1950s. To a lesser degree, it is also welcome as a spirited account of the scholarly joys and frustrations of publishing archival research.

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Bruce Stovel and Lynn Weinlos Gregg, eds. *The Talk in Jane Austen.* Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002. xxiii + 269. CDN $29.95 paper.

The fifteen essays in this stimulating collection were originally presented as papers at a three-day conference held at Jasper Park Lodge in May 1999, co-convened by the editors, Bruce Stovel and Lynn Weinlos Gregg, together with Juliet McMaster. Participants at the meeting could enjoy spectacular mountain scenery, as well as the talks; readers of the volume, in recompense, have access to expanded and documented versions of the papers. This is an Edmonton production: seven of the contributors are associated with the city or with the University of Alberta and the book is published by the University of Alberta Press. A somewhat garish cover avoids current controversy over the Austen portraits by depicting not the novelist but a young, female professor, dressed in a faux-Regency version of a green academic gown, talking vociferously to her class in front of a purple blackboard inscribed with the names of Austen's novels. The running-heads for each essay have been oddly dropped to the foot of the page and printed in a tiny, barely legible font; otherwise, the volume is elegantly designed.

A brief but suggestive editorial introduction considers the nature and function of talkers and talking in Austen's novels, and notes the surprising scarcity of previous work on the subject. (Patricia Howell Michaelson's *Speaking Volumes: Women, Reading, and Speech in the Age of Austen*