

A few contributions to Ruffo's anthology focus on the interpretation of specific authors or works. Jonathan Dewar connects Armand Garnet Ruffo's *Grey Owl* with Anne Cameron's *Daughters of Copper Woman* and frames his interpretation with dialogues from Drew Hayden Taylor's *alterNatives*. Brenda Payne gives a close reading of Marilyn Dumont's "Poems of Grief and Celebration" from her own location as a Cree/Métis person "interested in narratives that give voice to journeys of grief and loss, healing and recovery" (246). Laura Ann Cramer from the Nam'gis First Nation reads the poetry by Beth Cuthand and Louise Halfe through Marlene Nourbese Philip's work while Randy Lundy (Cree, Irish, Norwegian) discusses gender constructions in Tomson Highway's plays by drawing on such divergent scholars as Paula Gunn Allen and Howard Adams. Métis scholar David McNab, on the other hand, interprets the fiction by Anishnaabe/German writer Louise Erdrich from his knowledge of Anishnaabe oral traditions and history.

*(Ad)ressing Our Words* contains articles on Aboriginal oral narratives, poetry and fiction but emphasizes the importance of theatre: Manossa discusses Native theatre generally, Lundy interprets Tomson Highway, and Daniel David Moses gives an insight into his own creative process in a speech/essay excerpted from a talk at Dalhousie University in 2001 as part of the MacKay Lecture Series "Healing in Human Contexts: Cultural Dimensions of Health." He shows how, from his point of view as a Delaware playwright, European derived categories—like conflict as a prerequisite for drama or definitions of tragedy and comedy—confuse his own criteria for writing anchored in a different cultural background. The issues he is grappling with seem to echo similar examples of culture clash illustrated throughout this anthology so that other Aboriginal writers can probably relate to his assessment of his own writing that it was "as close as I could get in this work to healing, at least under that weight of ideas and history" (165).

*Renate Eigenbrod*  
*University of Manitoba*

Peter Duthie, ed. Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* (1798).  
Peterborough: Broadview P, 2001. Pp. 470. Paper. \$19.95.

Published in 1798, the same year as the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, the first edition of Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* is a watershed in late eighteenth-century literature. In certain ways as significant as *Lyrical*

*Ballads*, at least because of its “Introductory Discourse,” Baillie’s volume was subsequently given rather scant critical attention. This Broadview edition, ably edited and annotated by Peter Duthie, rescues Baillie from the margins of the canon, although Baillie (1762–1851) was hardly a marginal figure in her own day. She knew and was respected by Maria Edgeworth, Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Byron, and James Fenimore Cooper, among others. A key figure in a literary, social and medical *salon* of her day, and contrary to later gendered portraits of her as a retiring woman of the domestic sphere, Baillie was acutely engaged with British politics and social issues. A celebrated poet in her own time, her reputation now rests with her dramatic texts, which are the focus of a renewed interest in Baillie specifically and in Romantic women writers and Romantic drama generally. Drama was her genre of choice in a culture that emphasized quantity over quality, mass amusement over subtle delineations of character, or as Duthie states in his introduction, “image” over “word” (15). In this respect Baillie faced an uphill battle: how to make serious drama relevant for a rapidly expanding middle class seduced by other diversions and thus to reconcile the aesthetic penchant for interiorized, ‘closet’ drama with market demand for increasingly ‘superficial’ spectacle. She enjoyed greater theatrical success than many of her contemporaries, but more importantly in her hands the genre becomes an overdetermined metacommentary, conflicted about its own interior while exteriorizing those depths darkly to an audience content to dwell on the surface of things.

The full title of Baillie’s 1798 volume was *A Series of Plays: in which it is attempted to delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind. Each Passion being the Subject of a Tragedy and a Comedy*. It included two plays on love, *Count Basil: A Tragedy* and *The Tryal: A Comedy*, and one on hate, *De Monfort: A Tragedy*, arguably Baillie’s most popular work. Altogether she wrote twenty-seven plays, published either in the three volumes of *Plays on the Passions* or in several volumes of *Miscellaneous Plays*. Her plan for a definitive account of the passions proved imperfect, although it was more fully realized than other Romantic mega-projects (think of Wordsworth’s *The Recluse*, Coleridge’s *Logosophia*, or De Quincey’s *Suspiria de Profundis*). Her work’s taxonomical imperative, so at odds with the chaos of her subject, marks the volume’s Enlightenment genesis, particularly in the empiricist psychology of moral philosophy in both its British and Scottish forms. After an opening section on the biographical and social context of Baillie’s life, Duthie’s introduction situates Baillie’s theory of drama within this empiricist tradition, supplemented by a first appendix of excerpts from John Locke, David Hume, Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, and Dugald

Baillie faced an uphill battle: how to make serious drama relevant for a rapidly expanding middle class seduced by other diversions.

Stewart. (Other appendices include excerpts from Wollstonecraft's second *Vindication* and from Wordsworth's 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, specifically the Preface and "There was a Boy"; the Prologue and Epilogue to *De Monfort* from the Larpent manuscript in the Huntington Library; and contemporary reviews of the volume and of Drury Lane's 1800 production of *De Monfort*.) Duthie then places Baillie's achievement within the context of theater of her day, examining her texts as social reform and her contemporaries' responses to the 1798 volume. His notes are helpful without being intrusive and the appendices offer a valuable contextualization of Baillie's work—signatures of the Broadview editorial approach. And one is sympathetic to Duthie's portrait of Baillie as a dramatist of both page and stage, a woman carving her niche in a man's world. In general, the edition is a detailed introduction to Baillie's text both for undergraduates and post-graduates, and one applauds its having been rescued from critical disregard in such a thorough and timely fashion.

Despite Duthie's attempt to free Baillie from critical periodizations of her work, however, his introduction suggests more an eighteenth-century writer than a purveyor of later Romantic tendencies. This might be the result of Duthie's own biases, just as this reviewer has now betrayed his own. Yet one is reminded that Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" is contemporary with, and notably precedes by two years, that other seminal statement of Romantic aesthetics: the Preface to the second (1800) edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. In his opening portrait of Baillie's life, Duthie indicates that in 1820 (Baillie's fifty-eighth year) George III died and the "French Revolution was but a distant speck on the political horizon" (15). Yes, but certainly not in 1798. Duthie seems to *underplay* the Romantic afflatus of Baillie's first important publication, not to mention its relationship to other key texts of Romantic drama (one thinks most obviously of Wordsworth's *The Borderers* or Coleridge's *Remorse*). In this respect, it is telling that he omits from his Works Cited/Recommended Reading several key studies on Romantic Drama by Alan Richardson (*A Mental Theatre*), Julie Carlson (*In the Theatre of Romanticism*), Frederick Burwick (*Illusion and the Drama*), and Jeffrey Cox (*In the Shadows of Romance*), to name a few. Or is Duthie's point that Baillie stands apart from past 'Romantic' paradigms that have either colonized or dismissed her achievement? Saying that Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" and Wordsworth's "Preface" are related, but largely via their "powerful debt to the eighteenth-century moralist thinkers" (45), seems to sidestep how both texts constitute a complex Romantic mediation of post-Enlightenment distinctions of sensibility, empiricism, sentiment, and the gothic, among other forces. Put

another way: is Baillie's taxonomy of passions symptomatic or typical of Enlightenment thought?

Baillie argues for a delineation of passions which will engender in her audience the "sympathetic curiosity towards others of our kind, which is so strongly implanted within us" (69). This hypothesis projects a kind of dramatic therapeutics which exposes "some powerful rankling" or "concealed passion" (73) so as to monitor and thus to cure its growth in the individual before it can infect culture at large. (An aside: Baillie's uncle was John Hunter, the founder of scientific surgery, and her brother was Matthew Baillie, author of *Morbid Anatomy*. Brief excerpts from their works might have illuminated further her own passion for *psychological* dissection.) Baillie's incipiently psychoanalytical interest in locating a sympathetic 'transference' between subjects also evokes in turn a desire to place this exchange under cultural surveillance—to make the unthought thought, the irrational rational, and thus to regulate the passions of the growing masses for an increasingly utilitarian society. Hence, that Count Basil commits suicide, that De Monfort must die from remorse for his murderous paranoia, or that *The Tryal* ends, as Duthie states, "with the laughter and conviviality of a television sitcom" (26), are resolutions overdetermined by more than gender or the demands upon the stage by an increasingly complex social economy, as Duthie suggests.

While Baillie's plays are not exactly 'closet' dramas, they do reproduce a mental anatomy of 'concealed' passion which is oddly *dispassionate* and incipiently Victorian. And her project in general is like some vast simulation of the soul that, by its very desire to delineate the structure of human feeling, signals the 'end' of the human. Like much Romantic drama or gothic literature, the flatness of Baillie's plays reflect their milieu: a burgeoning industrial capitalism in which all identities, even those that plumb the psyche, are subordinated to economies of the public sphere (while not a focus of Duthie's introduction, the relationship between Baillie's and Byron's dramatic writings is especially evocative in this respect). This 'exploitation' is the result of moral philosophy's human sympathy—the subject finds her place in the world because her passion has been made productive:

To change a certain disposition of mind which makes us view objects in a particular light, and thereby, oftentimes, unknown to ourselves, influences our conduct and manners, is almost impossible; but in checking and subduing those visitations of the soul, whose causes and effects we are aware of, every

While Baillie's plays are not exactly 'closet' dramas, they do reproduce a mental anatomy of 'concealed' passion which is oddly *dispassionate* and incipiently Victorian.

one may make considerable progress, if he proves not entirely successful. Above all, looking back to the first rise, and tracing the progress of passion, points out to us those stages in the approach of the enemy, when he might have been combated most successfully.... (94)

As in Wordsworth's Preface, this moral utility is meant to educate the uneducated, a type of thought control displaced through the universality of passion, but one that checks a 'powerful spontaneity of feeling' associated with the working class.

What, then, does one make of Baillie's post-Enlightenment desire to describe, classify, and 'sort out' the passions, an operation which in many ways deadens—and deadens us to—their very vitality and chaos? The false theatricality of the stage that Baillie fights against in her own time is the very thing her dramas end up representing uncannily. Hers translated more successfully to the stage, whereas the isolated and less tractable psychology of others (Wordsworth's *The Borderers*, Shelley's *The Cenci*) did not. Was this a necessary compromise of passion's power for the sake of educating the public sphere about passionate dangers? Wordsworth projected his fear of an unrestrained interiority on, among other forms of "outrageous stimulation," "sickly and stupid German tragedies" (735). Who is the "enemy" Baillie speaks of? Duthie's edition does not pose these questions beyond the parameters it otherwise thoughtfully delineates. One is grateful, however, that he provides the forum for the rest of us to do so.

*Joel Faflak*  
*Wilfrid Laurier University*

## Works Cited

Wordsworth, William. "Preface to the Second Edition of Several of the Foregoing Poems Published, With an Additional Volume, Under the Title of 'Lyrical Ballads'" (1800). *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson. Rev. ed. Ernest de Selincourt. New York: Oxford UP, 1988.