Gerald Lynch, *The One and the Many: English-Canadian Short Story Cycles*. Toronto: U of T P, 2001. Pp. 234. Paper. $21.95.

If only for the attention it pays to such under-appreciated texts as J. G. Sime's *Sister Woman* (1919) and George Elliott's *The Kissing Man* (1962), Gerald Lynch's *The One and the Many: English-Canadian Short Story Cycles* would be a worthy contribution to Canadian literary criticism. But the book offers much more than a championing of some neglected works. In an era when literary critics often seem more interested in testing a theory or establishing their ideological credentials, Lynch's clear and sustained focus on literary texts makes for a readable and stimulating discussion. His considerable learning and attentiveness to form are effectively displayed in this study, which considers the development of the story cycle across nearly a century of Canadian writing.

In his introductory chapter, Lynch argues that the story cycle is "distinctly and distinctively a Canadian genre" (4)—perhaps even *the* Canadian genre—for a variety of material, literary, and broadly cultural reasons. While Canadian novels at the end of the twentieth century became increasingly long and baggy—and probably unread, Lynch suspects—many of Canada's best fiction writers (and Lynch provides an impressive list) have turned to the story cycle for its simultaneous precision and flexibility of form, its unity amidst fragmentation, and its ability to represent a particular region or community from diverse but related perspectives. Lynch structures his book around "high points of cyclical story form" (17), beginning with Duncan Campbell Scott's *In the Village of Viger* (1896) and ending with Alice Munro's *Who Do You Think You Are?* (1978)—with a brief account of Thomas King's *Medicine River* (1989) in the concluding chapter. Along the way, he examines family resemblances and stylistic innovation, noting how the story cycle was shaped to accommodate the Modernist interest in individual psychology, with exemplary readings of F. P. Grove's *Over Prairie Trails* (1922) and Emily Carr's *Klee Wyck* (1941). Exploring how genre not only contains or conveys but actually creates meaning, Lynch is knowledgeable and—a surprise in a work of criticism—warm and witty throughout.

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The five substantial chapters that follow the introductory survey are consistently lucid and informative; in the remainder of this review, I focus on those that seemed to me most compellingly original. Although a few critics have placed *In the Village of Viger* at the head of the Canadian story cycle tradition, none has provided such a detailed reading of the cycle's complex patterning or revealed so convincingly the multiple echoes

and resonances that bind the stories together. Lynch's discussion of the ambivalent anti-modernism in Scott's defence of community is also well-handled. Moving to Sime's *Sister Woman*, Lynch makes a bold intervention in critical debate. *Sister Woman* has been recuperated almost solely as a feminist work, and Lynch makes good his claim that there is much more to say about the text's formal artistry and ideological contexts than feminist critics have yet discovered. Looking in detail at how stories build on and answer others in the cycle, he presents a detailed and enthusiastic defence of its structural coherence even while addressing some aesthetic flaws. He also provides a very useful discussion of the Fabian Socialist influences on the work, considering Sime's socialism as one cause of the cycle's critical neglect. Even while insisting that feminist approaches cannot fully account for the work's power, Lynch is sensitive to Sime's attack on patriarchy; his reading of her maternalism as both retrograde and radical is a perceptive response to the peculiar intensity of motherhood as subject and metaphor in the story cycle.

In discussing George Elliott's *The Kissing Man,* Lynch moves into largely uncharted territory, in the course of his discussion revealing how deserving is this "underground classic" (131) of more critical attention than it has received. Lynch provides a subtle and insightful discussion of the surrealist and magic realist elements of the book, aptly describing the reader of Elliott's enigmatic cycle as "puzzled, wary, toyed with, impatient, and ultimately perhaps, satisfied, if inexplicably so" (137). The description is an example of the critical deftness that Lynch brings to these readings. Firm interpretative conclusions are not to be sought from *The Kissing Man,* and Lynch is rightly intent on probing patterns of connection and cyclical coherence without attempting to resolve the text's various mysteries of meaning. He makes a good argument for the importance of rituals in the cycle, which are frequently inexplicable yet strongly associated with a repressed emotional dimension of community life.

Lest this review seem blandly laudatory, I should mention that I am not entirely convinced by all of Lynch's arguments. In my opinion, he tends to exaggerate the linear coherence and totalization of the twentieth-century novel in order, it seems, to make his case for the significance of the story cycle's destabilization and fragmentation of form. Furthermore, I am skeptical about whether Bakhtinian "genre memory" (5) can be applied in the case of Scott's *Viger* to claim influence for this little-known work. And there are inevitably some omissions in Lynch's approach. His emphasis on the social issues engaged by the *Viger* stories leads him to read them primarily in a realist context, with little attention to the elements of fable,

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