

## Book Reviews

Jay Prosser. *Light in the Dark Room: Photography and Loss*.  
Minnesota UP, 2005. 248 pp. ISBN 0816644845. \$69.00.

Is there a text on photography cited more often or more approvingly these days than Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*? Does any new book on photography fail to mention "that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead"?<sup>1</sup> Can any writer on photography resist the trap of recycling, as if it were a properly analytical distinction, Barthes's openly subjective opposition between the studium and punctum of a photograph? At one point a useful provocation to historicists, Barthes's last book has been well and truly canonized in both academic and wider circles. It makes one nostalgic for the times when serious photography theorists like Victor Burgin and John Tagg were roasting Barthes for betraying the cause. Along with Abigail Solomon-Godeau and others, they spent the late 1970s and 80s on a critical enterprise diametrically opposed to the stated objectives of *Camera Lucida*. Whereas Barthes set out to discover the "essence" of photography, Anglo-American pho-

<sup>1</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (1980; London: Flamingo, 1984), 9.

tography theory at that juncture was at great pains to demonstrate that there was no essence of photography, that photographs could only be read and understood in terms of the institutions which frame them (Art, art-historical, medical, legal, scientific) and the practices which define them (amateur, professional, commercial, documentary, surveillance). In this project, they regularly drew inspiration from writings by Barthes from the 1960s, writings that he seemed in *Camera Lucida* to be disavowing. No wonder Tagg felt compelled to indict the book for its “regressive phantasy ... of photographic realism.”<sup>2</sup>

In retrospect, *Camera Lucida* was not the act of heresy that it was taken to be. As it turns out, the “ontological desire” (3) Barthes sets out to satisfy quickly reaches an impasse, for encountering the essence of photography prevents one from saying much at all about it. Here, for me, is the crucial passage: “I exhaust myself in realizing that this-has-been; for anyone who holds a photograph in his hand, here is a fundamental belief, an ‘ur-doxa’ nothing can undo, unless you prove to me that this image is not a photograph. But also, unfortunately, it is in proportion to its certainty that I can say nothing about this photograph” (107). Anyone who has tried to write about photographs soon runs up against the fact that they are, as Barthes puts it, “matte and somehow stupid” (4). What choice, then, but to consider them in relation to those meaning-making institutions and practices which produce them? And yet, *Camera Lucida* continues to exercise a powerful influence, its subjective approach licensing, for example, the first-person meanderings of Geoff Dyer’s *The Ongoing Moment* (2005). It is also the guiding theoretical text for Jay Prosser’s *Light in the Dark Room*, which adopts Barthes’s basic proposition on the “referential” nature of photography, dedicates its first chapter to a reading of *Camera Lucida*, and at the end confesses to a misreading of the text in an earlier book (*Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*). Prosser’s reading of *Camera Lucida* is careful and subtle, recounting some of the irritation and misunderstanding Barthes engendered, and his public correction of the error in the previous book takes considerable intellectual honesty. However, an admission of fault is not proof against further error, and *Light in the Dark Room* continues to betray the text that legitimates its discourse. As well as wheeling out yet again that purely private category, the punctum, Prosser cannot resist the temptation to make photos speak, with the very unBarthesian verb “reveal” much in evidence. He also suc-

<sup>2</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 4.

cumbs throughout to the first-person plural; for example, starting his book with a universalizing gesture one cannot imagine Barthes risking: “We treat photographs as if they had a kind of presence. Photography is the commonest way for us to record our own and our loved ones’ lives” (1).

The subject of *Light in the Dark Room* is a minor twentieth-century genre that Prosser has unearthed: the photographic memoir as palinode. A palinode is a recantation or retraction of a previous position, and in Prosser’s terms it becomes a ritual of impossible contrition. Consciously or unconsciously, his writers and photographers return, in late work, to earlier work, in order to reconsider and re-evaluate. His examples are *Camera Lucida*, the second half of which is palinode to the first; Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *Saudades do Brasil* (1994), a collection of photos from the 1930s in which Lévi-Strauss abandons the distrust he had always expressed about the use of photography in anthropology; a series of autobiographical texts by Gordon Parks articulating his regret over an assignment in Brazil for *Life* magazine in 1961; an unpublished work on Brazil by Elizabeth Bishop, *Black Beans and Diamonds*, which attempts to make amends for the fiasco of *Brazil* (1962), a coffee-table book the poet “co-authored” with the editors of *Life*; and, finally, Prosser’s own palinode on photography and the transsexual body. In each case, “the palinode is ... a return that realizes that realization could only come with loss from the original” (163). The realization of loss is best achieved by way of photography, Prosser contends, because photography itself is a mode inextricably tied up with loss—the loss of a referent, to which, paradoxically, it promises access.

This is nicely neat and symmetrical, and once we’ve got the hang of Prosser’s palinodic logic, we know pretty much where each chapter is headed (to an encounter with loss which is more or less redemptive, if always slightly out of reach, like the referent in photography). For this reason, the paths that Prosser takes to his conclusions are generally more interesting than the conclusions themselves. Easily the best chapter is the one on Gordon Parks, the first African-American staff photographer on *Life*, who did a series of photographs in 1961 of Flavio da Silva, a young Rio *favela*-dweller. Very much in the mode of Tagg and Solomon-Godeau, Prosser charts the fate of those photographs as they were taken up by the institutional context of *Life* magazine and inserted into and interpreted through U.S. ideological imperatives in Latin America. After this rich and nuanced account of the social contexts of photography, it is disappointing to find a rehashing of the myth of the gifted photographer in Prosser’s uncritical assessment of unpublished photos by Elizabeth Bishop: “These are places journalists and *Life* photographers don’t go. Like paintings, like

poetry, they are mediated. Unlike them the photographs catch a reality that we can see really was there” (150). (The syntax is a bit confusing: “they” and “them” refer, I’m assuming, to the work of “journalists and *Life* photographers,” although “them” also refers to painting and poetry. The point, I guess, is that Bishop’s photos manage to transcend all of them).

The back cover of *Light in the Dark Room* tells us that it engages with “the photographic reflections of figures as different as Roland Barthes and Claude Lévi-Strauss, Gordon Parks and Elizabeth Bishop.” The diversity of “figures” treated, which includes of course the author himself, is clearly meant to be a strength, but we might equally ask what makes the whole thing hang together. One linking thread identified in the Introduction is Brazil and, particularly, the term *saudades*. In an epilogue which makes a plea for the preservation of the rainforest, Prosser explains that *saudades* is “endemic melancholy” and that it is “intrinsic to Brazilian self-conception. It is native, national loss: the realization that we are born into loss; that it inheres in the human condition” (183). In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes teasingly and playfully seeks out the “essence” of photography and duly discovers it, only to find it empty (“nothing to say”), while Prosser, who admits to having visited it twice, claims to have identified the “intrinsic” core of a country. Prosser is not a Luso-Brazilianist (there are no Portuguese-language references in the notes), and, if he were, he would presumably not hazard such a generalization, particularly since *saudades* (usually in the singular—*saudade*) is neither intrinsic nor exclusive to Brazil but originates in Portugal.

Finally, I wish that the University of Minnesota Press had intervened a bit more decisively in the editing process, because much of this book is not well written. Transitive verbs used intransitively, the muddled heaping of sub-clause on sub-clause, a profligacy with dashes, and numerous awkward expressions: all these things make *Light in the Dark Room* something of a chore to read, as well as obscuring the arguments it seeks to make.

*Peter Buse*  
*University of Salford*

Barry Menikoff. *Narrating Scotland: The Imagination of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005. 233 pp. \$46.95.

In *Narrating Scotland*, Barry Menikoff undertakes to examine the printed sources from which Robert Louis Stevenson drew his depictions of the Scottish history in *Kidnapped* (1886) and *David Balfour* (1893). Part of Menikoff's project is to argue that, far from being mere adventure stories, designed, as Stevenson suggested in the preface to *Kidnapped*, "for a winter evening school-room when the tasks are over and the hour for bed draws near," the two novels represent the culmination of Stevenson's painstaking research into Highland history: "In these two novels he placed his extensive historical and legal training in the service of his country's past" (2).

In Chapter 1, "A Scots Historian," Menikoff traces Stevenson's interest in "original" historical documents back to his early *The Pentland Rising* (1866), noting Stevenson's concern with authenticity: "his preference is always to work with primary materials," searching in particular for first-hand accounts "from people who were there" (9). Menikoff then examines the juxtaposition of two major events in Stevenson's life. In the 1880s, Stevenson grew passionately interested in writing a "circumstantial history" of Scotland from the Union to the present. Menikoff argues that, although scholars have generally regarded this project as one that "could hardly be taken seriously" (20), Stevenson himself could not have been more serious. In fact, he devoted himself with characteristic enthusiasm to the extensive reading required for the book, much of which would contain material "written about for the first time" (21). His interests in the story of Scotland included, as one might expect, stories of Rob Roy and Flora MacDonald, but he also noted his concern with "the odd, inhuman problem of the great evictions" and "the growth of the taste for Highland scenery" (*Letters* 3: 149; quoted on p. 21). During the time when he was planning his history of Scotland, Stevenson also secured a nomination for himself as a candidate for the chair in constitutional law and history. Despite acquiring letters of recommendation from notable scholars (including the vice-chancellor of St. Andrews), Stevenson failed to gain the post. One consequence of this failure, suggests Menikoff, was that Stevenson abandoned his project to write a history of Scotland and, instead, turned his attention to a fictional account of the Highlands. Much of the material Stevenson researched for his intended history of Scotland appears in fictionalized form in *Kidnapped* and the sequel, *David Balfour*.

The rest of the book proceeds to examine the two novels in relation to the sources that Stevenson used, drawing on evidence from Stevenson's notebooks which, according to Menikoff, he "cannibalized . . . for incidents that would give his fictional narrative the factual reality of his source narratives" (47). Chapters 2 and 3 examine accounts of Highland life that Stevenson used extensively: Edmund Burt's *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to His Friend in London* (1754), Colonel David Stewart's pro-Jacobite *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlands of Scotland* (1822), and to a lesser extent John Buchanan's *Travels in the Western Hebrides: From 1782 to 1790* (1793) and John Knox's *A Tour Through the Highlands of Scotland, and the Hebride [sic] Isles, in 1786* (1787). In Chapter 2, "Country of the Poor," Menikoff considers how Stevenson used information and events found in these texts in his depiction of the Highlanders as desperately poor but proud. Focusing on Allan Breck's concern about attire, for example, Stevenson indicates his understanding that in such poor conditions, finery was a mark of status. Chapter 3, "Country of the Brave" examines Stevenson's use of the same sources for his representation of the Gaelic language and the clan system. Stevenson's depiction of David Balfour's reaction to the strangeness of the Gaelic language works to make the reader aware of the exclusivity of the linguistic borders in the Highlands. David's subsequent realization that the Highlanders mask their ability to speak English also shows the way that the Highlanders' identity is dependant on controlling that border. Menikoff concludes that "there is unquestionably a Highland bias that emerges" in Stevenson's work. The reader experiences a gradual acceptance of and admiration for the Highlanders by seeing them through the eyes of David Balfour, a Lowlander and a Whig.

Chapter 4, "Broken Sept: Criminal Law and the Clan Gregor" focuses on the relationship between the law and history in Scotland. Examining John Maclaurin's *Arguments and Decisions* (1774), Hugo Arnot's *Collection and Abridgement of Celebrated Criminal Trials in Scotland* (1785), David Hume's *Commentaries on the Laws of Scotland, Respecting Crimes* (1797), and the Bannatyne Club's publication of *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland* (1833), Menikoff suggests that there is a "strong tradition in Scottish legal history" from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth "that emphasizes the importance, if not the primacy, of documentary evidence for establishing any rational system of criminal jurisprudence" (78). Menikoff then shifts to consider Stevenson's interest in the case of Rob Roy Macgregor as a "crucial element in a history of the Highlands" (82) and

to outline the history of the clan Gregor as seen through eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources.

Although Stevenson doesn't use Rob Roy as a character in his novels, he does include representatives of the "the emblematic Highland clan upon whom ... nostalgia had devolved" in the personages of Rob Roy's sons, Robin Oig and James Moore Drummond. Chapter 5, "Rebel With a Grace Note," examines how Stevenson elevates and elegizes the clan Gregor in *Kidnapped* by representing Robin as proud but sympathetic, "infusing forever his youth and passion into his music" during his bagpipe contest with Allan Breck. Chapter 6, "Pipes at Dusk," continues the consideration of Stevenson's treatment of Clan Gregor, focusing on the structuring of *David Balfour* around the story of James Drummond. Stevenson retells the story of the trials of James and Robin for the abduction of Jean Keys, representing the brothers' prosecution as an example of the use of criminal law to subdue the Highland martial spirit.

Chapter 7, "The Appin Murder," examines Stevenson's retelling of the story of the shooting of Colin Campbell by James Stewart: "Stevenson interleaved the printed trial [from the *State Trials*] within its fictive offspring, thus bringing to life the antique document along with its long dead personages" (132). By so doing, Menikoff suggests, he creates a "narrative of fact" (132).

Chapter 8, "The Trial of James Stewart," looks further at Stevenson's use in *David Balfour* of the *State Trials* and also the commentaries on Stewart's trial by Arnot and John Hill Burton. In this chapter, Menikoff argues that Stevenson juxtaposes his sources in an "intricate collage" (171), playing with the medium of history. This chapter seems to part ways with previous chapters and the following one in suggesting that Stevenson consciously refracts and reflects on history rather than just attempting to capture as much "historical truth" about situations and characters as possible.

Chapter 9, "The Bass Rock," examines Stevenson's treatment in *David Balfour* of the abduction of Lady Grange by her husband in 1732, juxtaposing this incident with the "sequestration" of David and the abduction of Jean Keys. Here Menikoff repeats the argument of Chapter 7, suggesting that Stevenson succeeds in "historicizing the fiction and dramatizing the history" (177).

*Narrating Scotland* presents a wealth of information for the reader interested in Stevenson's approach to writing and in the specific printed sources for *Kidnapped* and *David Balfour*. Menikoff has done meticulous work in bringing these sources to light, and the book is handsomely

illustrated with sketches from works on Scotland from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. In addition, Menikoff's researches hint at new ways to think about the trajectory of nineteenth-century fiction and about authorship in general. He suggests, for example, that "in its form and originality [*Kidnapped*] anticipated by nearly a hundred years Truman Capote's self-declared invention of a new genre, the nonfiction novel" (3). However, the theoretical base underpinning the central argument of the book is difficult to follow. *Narrating Scotland* posits a Manichean opposition between fiction and history, between the stuff of novels and that of non-fiction. This is a problematic enough binary in itself. In addition, Menikoff's assessment of Stevenson's negotiation between these two genres shifts. At times, Menikoff takes Stevenson to task for failing to draw solely on his imagination in crafting his work, seeing the author as guilty of attempting to "deceive readers" (28) by larding his work with details drawn from historical documents. At other times, Stevenson is applauded for "dissolv[ing] the distinction between fiction and history" (177). Chapter 8 offers the most interesting possibility, arguing that Stevenson reflects critically on both history and fiction. Similar slippages occur in the context of Menikoff's treatment of the historical sources. On occasion, *Narrating Scotland* implies that historical documents such as those by Burt and Stewart are unquestioningly "accurate," as Menikoff credits them with granting Stevenson "documentary evidence" and "unfiltered" material (29), due to the writers' "honesty, credibility, veracity, observation, fairness and impartiality" (72) as noted by nineteenth-century reviewers. Menikoff himself draws on sources such as Burt and Stewart—and on nineteenth-century editors of their work like Robert Jamieson—for his own understanding of Highland history, particularly the disintegration of the clan system. Yet at other points in the book, Menikoff argues that Stevenson was well aware of "the problematic nature of evidence" (170) and historical sources.

Moreover, although *Narrating Scotland* aims to place Stevenson within an ongoing discourse of Scottish authors writing about Scotland to a "predominantly English audience" (3), it shows surprisingly little engagement with contemporary critical discussions of Scottish literature. Menikoff argues, for example, that while both Walter Scott and Stevenson "offered a narrative that appeared to reinforce the conventional English wisdom that the defeat of the Highland clans prepared the way for the development of modern Scotland," Stevenson concentrated on "the loss suffered by the indigenous culture," while Scott propounded a "rosy progressivism" (3). Scott's relationship with the past has in fact been subjected to a range of subtle readings by scholars such as Ian Duncan and Caroline McCracken-

Flescher, for example, who have revised this earlier perspective. Although *Narrating Scotland* provides insight into the individual novels and their sources, then, it would benefit from a more theoretically consistent argument regarding the relationship between fiction and history and a more critically informed perspective on Stevenson's negotiation of his place as a Scottish writer engaging with previous Scottish writers as well as with his readers.

*Leith Davis*  
*Simon Fraser University*

Diana Maltz. *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870–1900: Beauty for the People*.  
Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.  
290 pp. \$69.95 U.S.

“When I see a spade,” declares Cecily emphatically in the second act of Oscar Wilde’s *Importance of Being Earnest*, “I call it a spade.” To which Gwendolyn tartly retorts, “I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.” Chances are, neither character had ever done much more with a spade than hear their gardeners mention one, but Wilde had. Whenever examples of real-life action are called for in support of the writer’s socialist views, one is informed of his uncharacteristic shovel-handling in support of John Ruskin’s efforts to get Oxford undergraduates to dig a flower-edged road through a swamp separating the villages of Upper and Lower Hinskey. Over the years, scholars have written much on Victorian interests in the mutual support of aestheticism and class-based social reform, giving attention to Ruskin, Wilde, and William Morris and, to a lesser extent, Vernon Lee, Walter Pater, Olive Schreiner, and several others. In the majority of these studies, the main subject has been the views that these educated individuals held regarding the relationship between beauty and social development. Beginning with monographs as early as Regina Gagnier’s *Idylls of the Marketplace* (1986), however, academics have also come increasingly to consider aestheticism’s position within the cultural milieu of the urban, middle-class public. These studies have demonstrated that, despite the high-class pretensions seen to characterize British aestheticism since its inception, the Aesthetic Movement was as thoroughly swamped by bourgeois values as was Cecily and Gwendolyn’s class-sensitive bickering.

Notwithstanding these scholarly developments, research in the field has continued to address predominantly the works of established authors

and artists, while the concept of an aestheticism arising *from* the middle classes has yet to be fully explored. In *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870-1900: Beauty for the People*, Diana Maltz does much to address this lacuna. Indeed, in a sense she does the subject one better by considering the relationship between aestheticism and those classes categorized as below the petit bourgeoisie. Rather than focus on various writers' views of the role of beauty in everyday life, Maltz enhances our understanding of the urban working classes' relationship to aestheticism. This aim is far more complex and challenging than one might at first expect. The voices of the poor and working classes have rarely been preserved. In addition, the recording of such voices by the likes of Henry Mayhew and Octavia Hill generally resulted in a notable degree of interpretation on the part of the person doing the recording. Moreover, the unmediated documents of Victorian working-class experiences that exist are almost always brief and lacking in self-analytic depth.

As the book's subtitle, *Beauty for the People*, suggests, Maltz's research similarly offers, perhaps inevitably, more information about individuals who felt they were working "for" the urban working classes than it does about the views held by those members of society themselves. Nevertheless, this monograph makes a useful contribution to Victorian studies in its sustained exploration of the relationship between aesthetics, ethics, and labour in the minds of those individuals who, rather than self-defining primarily as writers or artists, were more invested in their identities as philanthropists.

Maltz acknowledges the difficulty in maintaining aestheticism's relevance to her study when her discussion moves, as it often does, into the consideration of philanthropists' wishes simply to make the surroundings of poorer people more pleasant. To accommodate the sometimes tenuous connection, she opens with a broad definition of aestheticism that centres on the Pre-Raphaelites, Matthew Arnold, and, especially, Ruskin. Maltz uses Ruskin's aesthetics to define a strongly moral aestheticism that then supports her focus on philanthropy. This model is an accurate representation of Ruskin's views, but it does on occasion encourage the dilution of aestheticism into the more general notion of beauty as innately moral. And, at other times, aestheticism appears to be synonymous with "the house beautiful" or simply with aesthetic appreciation. The latter is the case, for example, when Maltz characterizes a "missionary aesthete" as "a lover of beauty and a social reformer concerned to improve the material environment of the poor" (27). Indeed, Maltz states in her discussion of Octavia Hill and Victorian Tenement Reform that, "by describing Hill as

a missionary aesthete, I am redefining the term aesthete as much as I am theoretically repositioning Hill” (43). Similarly, she defines “missionary aestheticism” as “the fantasy of remedying slum chaos and slum brutality through communal aesthetic revelation” (1). By this definition, neither the unique formal qualities of aestheticism nor the history of the Aesthetic Movement are necessary components of missionary aestheticism.

Notably, while missionary aesthetes did invite established members of the Aesthetic Movement to give lectures to the working classes, these philanthropists also “declared their distance from popular aestheticism” (11). And, while a philanthropic character can be found in versions of aestheticism rooted in the views of Ruskin, Arnold, and Pater, Maltz acknowledges that she might be overextending her argument by describing Pater as a missionary aesthete (9). Ultimately, the boundaries of aestheticism, aesthetic perspective, and art appreciation prove too blurry to maintain clear distinctions, in part because aesthetes, philanthropists, and others used different vocabularies to voice their views. In response to this persistent conceptual ambiguity, Maltz effectively positions what she calls missionary aestheticism within a “constellation of social activities one might call aesthetic” (19), a move that, while over-diluting aestheticism on occasion, also reflects the fluidity of the phenomenon among the working classes and the poor.

The chapters themselves are predominantly historical, reflecting Maltz’s extensive archival research, which makes use of a number of sources that had yet to be as fully discussed in this context. One example of the book’s innovative analysis occurs in Chapter 3 and involves a discussion of the relationship of art appreciation and working-class philanthropy at Toynbee Hall. Maltz focuses this part of her study on Henrietta Barnett’s article “Pictures for the People” and two journals recording Italian excursions the Toynbee Travellers’ Club made to introduce members of the lower middle class to high art. As Maltz notes, Barnett tends to contextualize the comments of her subjects in order to fit her own aims, such that “one is tempted to ask whether the representative working people who speak in her essay are genuine, because their speeches seem so designed to satisfy the bourgeois reader” (73). Barnett’s essay shares its objectifying attitude with the fashionable trend of slumming, which involved visiting poorer sections of a city or town for purposes of philanthropy and/or amusement. Notably, the voyeurism inherent in slum tourism was akin not only to the approach that philanthropists such as Barnett took to those they aimed to help but also to the artistic perspective that aesthetes claimed to adopt toward the world around them. In Maltz’s words, “[W]e have moved from

the application of aesthetic design, lilies and sunflowers, and reading of Ruskin in the slums, to the aestheticizing of the slum itself” (96). This correlation of aestheticism’s interest in viewing everyday life with an aesthetic eye and the philanthropists’ tendency to objectify the lives of the poor and working classes is one of the strongest insights in the book.

Chapter 4 explores the debate around giving the working class free Sunday access to art galleries. While some religious leaders and groups condemned the move, others—such as the Sunday Society—supported it as a means of fostering cultural education and aesthetic refinement. Although not celebrating explicit ties with the Aesthetic Movement, the Sunday Society, which included Frederic Leighton, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, and G.F. Watts among its members, espoused views that accorded with the movement’s interests and values. This chapter demonstrates that an explicit discussion of aesthetic appreciation as a means toward moral and spiritual growth was taking place within philanthropic culture. Of equal interest, Maltz uses what limited records are available to note the distinctly more ambivalent attitude that members of the working classes themselves had to spending a rare day away from their wage labours visiting an art gallery.

The penultimate chapter looks at the “slum ritualism” of priests who believed that “sacramental worship, along with architectural and ornamental interiors of churches, would provide an initial experience of aesthetic appreciation that would prompt a spiritual awakening in the worker” (133). In the last ten pages of the chapter, Maltz compares two aesthetic religious novels by Pater and J.H. Shorthouse to “mission novels” of the 1890s by Arthur Morrison, James Adderly, and Hall Caine. According to Maltz, the two sub-genres of the aesthetic religious novel and the mission novel notably fail to harmonize because, by the end of the century, realist mission fiction no longer as readily conjoined aesthetic appreciation to increased spiritual awareness. Maltz’s discussion of this separation of slum missionary work from aesthetics as a source of religious growth is innovative and insightful, and there is definitely room for further analysis of this social, philosophical, and literary development, especially as it runs alongside other major shifts such as the growing commoditization of aestheticism and decadence. One wonders, for example, if the split that Maltz notes is a reaction to the careers and attitudes of Wilde and other dandy-aesthetes or if the missionaries were finding that riding the bandwagon of the Aesthetic Movement was no longer effective.

Similar questions are stimulated by the final chapter, which addresses George Gissing’s gradual shift away from both aestheticist tastes and his

belief in the potential for aesthetic philanthropy to encourage the spiritual growth of the working classes. Although Maltz does not fully explore the connections, these developments in Gissing's views parallel those that she notes at the end of the previous chapter, as well as the trajectory of the Aesthetic and Decadent Movements themselves. Maltz concludes the chapter by noting that Gissing, at the end of his career, quite surprisingly reverted to a Paterian aesthetic position. The historical information she offers verifies Gissing's interest in the author of *The Renaissance*, but one is left wanting further consideration of the way in which Gissing could have reconciled his new interest in aestheticism with his realist writing. Clearly, there is much more to be done in this rich area of study, but Maltz's toil in the field of aestheticism has made a distinct and important contribution to our understanding of the Aesthetic Movement in relation to the poor and working classes, those people whose ready acknowledgement of their familiarity with a spade did not make them blind to beauty.

*Dennis Denisoff*  
*Ryerson University*

Elizabeth Sabiston. *The Muse Strikes Back: Female Narratology in the Novels of Hédi Bouraoui*. Human Sciences Monograph Series 9. Sudbury: Laurentian University, 2005. 167 pp. \$99.00.

Hédi Bouraoui, Tunisian-born poet and novelist who has taught at York University in Toronto since 1972, invites his readers to seek meaning between the lines and to read with the heart in search of the essence of the text rather than with the eye of a "critique savant" (*La Femme d'entre les lignes* [Toronto: Les Éditions du Gref, 2002], 50). If we believe the author, this creates an inherent problem for the literary critic who, after all, is expected to look at texts with a critical eye. The task of making logical sense of richly poetic, intense, postmodern prose is particularly challenging. Elizabeth Sabiston, associate professor of English at York and director of the Canada-Maghreb Centre founded by Bouraoui in 2002, rises to the challenge, managing to combine a close reading of Bouraoui's novels with a more spacious understanding of his complex thematic.

Sabiston provides an introduction and conclusion composed with a refreshing tone, creating stable methodological bookends for six, more pointed chapters whose close exegesis leaves the reader reaching for the

novels under discussion for a quick review. The result of this somewhat time-consuming approach to reading what is, by itself, a relatively brief, critical text, is rewarding and creates the feeling of an ongoing dialogue with the author. Sabiston's expressed aim is "to highlight the all-important female dimension of Bouraoui's texts," in particular "the rebellion of his heroines against the traditional role of Muse ... and their appropriation of the supposedly 'male' role of artist or writer" (9–10). The importance of the female in Bouraoui's fictional/poetic world cannot be denied, but just how the female voice should be heard is one of those areas open to debate. The second chapter asks if *Le Retour à Thyra* is a female epic and offers that Zitouna and Mansour may actually be "an androgynous couple, whose 'feminine' and 'masculine' traits complement each other" (43). Indeed, they do, and Sabiston clearly understands how female Zitouna and male Mansour are each bending their gender by adopting traits of the "opposite" sex. The female Pharaoh Hatchepsut of *La Pharaone* is androgynous, or at least ambiguously sexual, as is clear from her hermaphroditic depiction on the novel's cover and the assertion that she was the one who abolished the frontier between the sexes (*La Pharaone* [Tunis: Les Éditions L'Or du Temps, 1998], 92). Just as cultures are changing phenomena that interact and transmogrify over time and distance, male and female sexual principles are not immutable and, as with the ancient Sphinx, are subject to confusion. If the word "transsexual" wasn't already pre-empted, it would make a nice counterpart to Bouraoui's concept of the transcultural. (Sabiston claims he coined the term "transculturalism" [11].) One senses in Bouraoui a deliberate desire to disturb the boundaries defining both culture and sexuality. As different cultures have the potential for transforming each other by contact between their solitudes, the sexes do as well. They mix and become harder to distinguish as principles of existence and creative forces—and, importantly, as human voices. Twylla Blue's medicine man in *Ainsi parle la Tour CN* speaks with a half-male half-female voice, and the CN Tower is a phallus with attributes of the female reproductive system, speaking with a female voice. There are images elsewhere of similarly bisexual phallic objects (like the obelisk in *La Pharaone* that gives birth to a goddess through a slit at the top), symbolizing reorganization of the creative principle (detailed in *La Femme d'entre les lignes and Bangkok Blues*) in which the muse is traditionally female and the creator traditionally male. None of this is news to Professor Sabiston on the level of detail in each chapter, but it does force one to struggle with the somewhat martial metaphor of the muse "striking back" in the title, which seems a bit out of place for Bouraoui. In the chapter on

*La Composée*, subtitled “The Muse Strikes Back,” Sabiston acknowledges that, for Bouraoui, “the binary opposition between male and female ... has ended in our time” (133). It is then hard to know who was striking back at whom and to what purpose, and, in such a context, the distinction between male and female narratology becomes less clear. Nonetheless, this is more of a semantic quibble than anything else, as this chapter is actually rather nuanced in this regard.

The breakdown of the borders between people and cultures involves the nature of the space between them. Sabiston does well to see this space as the equivalent of a textual comma for Bouraoui and demonstrates an excellent understanding of the confusion of the lived and the written (or spoken) in the non-linear world of these novels. She is adept at picking up on Bouraoui’s deliberate confusion of word and concept, spoken sound and silence. In *Bangkok Blues*, Virgilius and Koï are, in turn, the comma that separates ever so briefly and the coitus that unites. In speech as in life, male and female are meaningless without reference to each other. And the spoken word has no meaning without the silence that surrounds it. Sabiston could add reference to the *hamza*, the Arabic glottal stop that, like the comma for the written word, is at once the sign of separation and the promise of union in speech, an important concept in Bouraoui’s work. She does refer to the *khamisa*, the familiar hand worn as a charm of good fortune, a familiar trope of Bouraoui’s related both phonically and significantly to the *hamza* as a symbol of unity and singularity.

Both Sabiston and Bouraoui are academically prepared in English and world literatures. Bouraoui makes liberal use of literary allusions and Sabiston does a convincing job of pointing them out, which is very helpful for a richer understanding of the texts. One allusion that is notable by its absence, however, is to Hugh MacLennan’s *Two Solitudes*. In what might be considered Bouraoui’s “great Canadian novel,” *Ainsi parle la Tour CN*, the two solitudes more contemporaneously become four (francophone, anglophone, allophone, and First Nation). Sabiston is currently translating this novel into English and has already published *Return to Thyna* in English. Her careful attention to the details of Bouraoui’s novels and her solid understanding of Bouraoui’s French texts have created a critical work that is very helpful for understanding and promoting the work of a fascinating author deserving of broader recognition.

*Kenneth J. Fleurant*

*University of Wisconsin at Green Bay, emeritus*

Ronald W. Cooley. *“Full of all knowledge”: George Herbert’s Country Parson and Early Modern Social Discourse.*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

238 pp. \$50.00.

Since Richard Strier’s landmark study, *Love Known* (1983), established George Herbert’s theology as firmly Protestant, critics have concentrated their attention on the role played in Herbert’s writings by politics and religious “externals” such as forms of worship and church government. Pioneering work by Sidney Gottlieb (1988), Michael Schoenfeldt (1991), and others led to books by Christopher Hodgkins (1993) and Daniel Doerksen (1997), which portray a Herbert who occupied a Jacobean and/or Elizabethan *via media*, attached to ceremonies and social order but mindful of the priority of the inward experience of salvation. To this line of criticism, Ronald Cooley’s book is a welcome addition.

The first full-length study of Herbert’s late pastoral manual, *The Country Parson*, Cooley’s book aims to synthesize the research of historians and to fuse the historical with the literary-critical by providing a close reading of Herbert’s text as a strategic intervention in historical processes. His focus is both narrow (one short prose work) and wide (early modern culture), and one of his main contributions is to expand the historical territory considered by Herbert studies. Cooley writes that his “is not in any sense a theoretical study”(10). Yet in important ways it is. Particular arguments are informed by Marx and Foucault, and the book as a whole is strongly influenced by Max Weber. In this respect, Cooley’s study resembles Christina Malcolmson’s *Heart-Work* (1999). Both offer Weberian readings focused on *The Country Parson*. But while Malcolmson follows Weber’s famous thesis about the “Protestant ethic” and uses *The Country Parson* to ask questions about Herbert’s poetry, Cooley draws on Weber’s less-known argument about the rationalization of modern social structures and uses *The Country Parson* as a way of exploring questions about early modern history. Like Schoenfeldt and Achsah Guibbory (1998), Cooley sees Herbert’s writing as expressing the contradictions at the heart of early modern society. Ultimately, his book advances a theory of history according to which innovation and “improvement” gradually alter traditional society by placing “the rhetoric of continuity”(171) in the service of change.

The heart of the book is four chapters on *The Country Parson*’s relationship to developments in religion, professionalization, rural labour and land use, and patriarchal authority. The historical thesis is least evident

in the first, which argues that Herbert constructs a religious *via media* in response to the religious conflicts of the day. The key word in the chapter is “between.” Herbert attempts to “steer a course between a retreating conformist Calvinism and an advancing Arminian authority” (41), “between clericalist and populist conceptions of pastoral conduct” (48), “between broad and narrow definitions of preaching” (51), and so on. This portrait resembles those of Hodgkins and Doerksen, but Cooley differs in stressing the instability and strategic nature of Herbert’s position.

The next two chapters are the most original in the book. In the first, Cooley argues that *The Country Parson* participates in the modernizing project of professionalization, engaging with the parson’s legal and medical rivals in “a complex struggle for professional and discursive territory” (58). The second explores *The Country Parson’s* relation to changing agricultural practices, including enclosure. Invoking Marx on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, Cooley argues that Herbert’s inconsistent presentation of the land and of country people reflects the mixture of tradition and innovation that characterized the early seventeenth-century countryside in general and Herbert’s Wiltshire in particular. Both chapters advance Cooley’s historical thesis. In *The Country Parson’s* “main thrust towards clerical professionalization,” he argues, “we might call it innovative, yet it consistently employs the discursive materials of tradition in pursuit of that objective” (68). Similarly, the “specific ideological character” of *The Country Parson* is “its embrace of an agrarian capitalism sustained and rendered palatable by a residue of traditionalist commonweal rhetoric” (111).

The final chapter on *The Country Parson* investigates its relation to patriarchal family and social structures. Cooley claims that *The Country Parson* is “distinctive if not unique” in its “systematic extension of the familial analogy into the professional sphere” (116). In the chapter’s last section, he adopts a Foucauldian account of disciplinary innovation, finding that “Herbert shifts the emphasis of household discipline from overt exercise of patriarchal authority to covert procedures of social control” (130). Again, Cooley argues that Herbert responds to an unstable and self-contradictory historical reality by representing “innovation as continuity” (113). A chapter on *The Temple* extends Cooley’s themes into a reading of Herbert’s poetry. Cooley explores the (often metaphorical) presence in Herbert’s poetry of agriculture, the court, cloth-making, and the patriarchal family, arguing that the poems participate in history in ways shaped increasingly by Herbert’s experience as a country parson. The readings are a bit miscellaneous, and it has to be said that they don’t directly advance the argument about *The Country Parson*. But the book would be poorer

without them, especially given the quality of their historical insights and the challenging nature of their arguments.

Cooley rightly identifies the book's "most obvious tension" as that between a Foucauldian notion of power as "discursively constructed and nonsubjective" and a materialist conception "of ideology as false consciousness," along with "the related notions of originating subjectivity and economic determination" (10–11). Consequently, the question of agency haunts the book, complicating its historical thesis. Impersonal forces sometimes seem the main historical actors, as when Cooley describes "early modern patriarchal thought" as "straining under its own contradictions and remaking itself in the face of new social realities" (118). Such forces then determine the shape of Herbert's text. In the chapter on the countryside, for example, we hear that "the fragmented and contradictory vision of rural life offered in *The Country Parson* corresponds to the larger instability of English agriculture in the early seventeenth century" (94), that "Herbert's own pronouncements reflect the fragmentation of early modern discourse on the subject" of enclosure (85), and that the "contradictions in Herbert's treatment of rural labour and vocation do seem consistent with an attempt to frame generalizations about a diverse population" (99). But Cooley also frequently credits Herbert with a high degree of historical awareness—of "consciousness of the game he is playing" (66)—and grants him a correspondingly high level of agency. Instability, fragmentation, and contradiction, at other times the characteristics of discursive formations (the "social discourse" of the title), become at such moments the tools of individual historical agents. So, Cooley writes, the "educated cleric's special expertise consists in destabilizing his parishioners' sense of the permitted," and his "household becomes the arena for the strategic delegation and diffusion of his own limited authority, allowing the pastor/father to capitalize on, rather than suffer from, the intrinsic mutability and instability of that authority" (134). Or again, in a strong reading of "The Glimpse" against the background of the Wiltshire woolen industry in the 1620s, Cooley first argues that "Herbert invites us to find ... an incipient working-class consciousness" in the poem (154–55) but then retreats to a version of his historical thesis: the poem's spinner "emulates his masters, declaring his allegiance to their ideology, by fusing traditional moralism and economic rationalism" (156). Here what Cooley terms "strategic ideological compliance" makes the movement of history an object of knowledge and a matter of conscious control. To a degree, this tension between individual agency and historical process, the consequence of Cooley's self-described willingness "to live with a measure of eclecticism

that might be hard to defend systematically” (11), can be seen as an enriching heuristic, but it also makes the book’s historical thesis less exact.

Nevertheless, this is a serious and intelligent book. Cooley raises important questions and has read widely and judiciously (although I wish he had seen and so been able to refute Stanley Fish’s over-the-top 1999 essay on *The Country Parson*). His writing is a model of clarity, and his arguments always merit careful consideration, even if one occasionally disagrees. If Cooley sometimes spends too much time summarizing familiar historical debates for a specialized audience, he makes up for it by introducing less familiar but no less relevant local histories. Like most books by professors of English that tackle historical questions, the target audience remains literature professors. As Cooley knows, historians are unlikely to respond well to the second-hand nature of much of the historical research or to the overt reliance on Foucault. For those who read this journal, however, the book will stimulate thought about historical change, early modern religion, the rise of professions, agrarian reform, domestic relations, and, last but not least, George Herbert himself. Herbert continues to be well served by his critics.

*Kenneth J.E. Graham*  
*University of Waterloo*

## Works Cited

- Doerksen, Daniel. *Conforming to the Word: Herbert, Donne, and the English Church before Laud*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1997.
- Fish, Stanley. “‘Void of Storie’: The Struggle for Insincerity in Herbert’s Prose and Poetry.” *Writing and Political Engagement in Seventeenth-Century England*. Eds. Derek Hirst and Richard Strier. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. 31–51.
- Gottlieb, Sidney. “The Social and Political Backgrounds of George Herbert’s Poetry.” *The Muses Common-Weale: Poetry and Politics in the Seventeenth Century*. Eds. Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988. 107–18.
- Guibbory, Achsah. *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton: Literature, Religion, and Cultural Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

Hodgkins, Christopher. *Authority, Church, and Society in George Herbert: Return to the Middle Way*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993.

Malcolmson, Christina. *Heart-Work: George Herbert and the Protestant Ethic*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999.

Schoenfeldt, Michael. *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Strier, Richard. *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Nick Mount. *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York*. Studies in Book and Print Culture. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. 217 pp. \$45.00.

Nick Mount's admonishment of early Canadianist literary critics in his polemical 1998 essay, "In Praise of Talking Dogs: The Study and Teaching of Early Canada's Canonless Canon," may well have been dismissed by much of its intended audience. As a doctoral student at McGill in the late 1990s, I read Mount's essay in awe of its unashamed audacity and in admiration of its caustic assessment of what he calls "a new subindustry," namely "all the conferences, articles, scholarly editions, reprints, anthologies, and courses" since the mid-twentieth century devoted to the study of early Canadian literature (77). The seven-year wait for the book-length study to follow up his critique of early Canadian literary studies has brought about a change of tactics, although by no means an abandonment of the kind of evaluative criticism that he called for in his 1998 essay.

When, in 1998, Mount picked up where John Metcalf's *Kicking against the Pricks* (1982) left off denouncing early Canadian literature as "largely crappy" (149), he might have been setting himself up to write another scathing study in line with Stephen Henighan's 2002 blast against contemporary Canadian literature, *When Words Deny the World: The Reshaping of Canadian Writing*. As it happens, Mount could have found ready companions among Canadian literature's current cohort of evaluative critics and literary polemicists, including David Solway (*Director's Cut* [2003]) and Carmine Starnino (*A Lover's Quarrel* [2004]). Or, perhaps, Mount might have carried on the tradition of evaluative criticism practised by his predecessor at the University of Toronto, W.J. Keith (*A Sense of Style: Studies in the Art of Fiction in English-Speaking Canada* [1989] and *An Independent*

*Stance: Essays on English-Canadian Criticism and Fiction* [1991]), who was “brought up in a literary-critical tradition highly influenced by the evaluative approach of F.R. Leavis” (Keith, “Blight” 72–73). More ambitiously, Mount could have attempted to revive the canon debates initiated in the 1970s by the University of Toronto Press’s *Literature of Canada: Poetry and Prose in Reprint* series (1972–79), the Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel (1978), and the *Annotated Bibliography of Canada’s Major Authors* (1979–94), continued in the 1980s by the first scholarly editions published by the Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts (1985– ) and Canadian Poetry Press (1986– ), resumed in the 1990s by Frank Davey’s and Robert Lecker’s canonical agon on the stage of *Critical Inquiry* (1990), and capped off by the essays collected by Lecker in *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value* (1991) and his own essays in *Making It Real: The Canonization of English-Canadian Literature* (1995).

None of these projects could meet Mount’s criteria for a new evaluative criticism in a literary critical climate increasingly dominated by cultural studies and cultural history. The movement away from evaluation in early Canadian literary studies, Mount reminds us, was initiated in 1965 by Northrop Frye’s injunction that “[t]o read Canadian literature, one must outgrow the view that evaluation is the end of criticism” and that Canada’s literary history is better read as “cultural history” (Frye 213, 215). Because scholars have persisted ever since in reading Canada’s pre-WWI literary texts as cultural documents alongside “music, painting, architecture, philosophy, science, and religion” as well as “jokes, advertisements, sporting events, fashions, political pamphlets, letters to the editor, and so on,” Mount questions the contradiction between the “nonevaluative, cultural-historian agenda” of early Canadian literary studies and its “disciplinary desire to claim a special status for certain products of that cultural history” (“In Praise” 92, 79). The consequence of that contradiction, he claims, has been an inflated assessment of the literary value of Canadian literature before 1914. In short, he rejects what he considers either explicitly or implicitly false valuations of early Canadian literary texts that provide the basis for ideologically and politically inflected feminist, queer, cultural materialist, new historicist, and postcolonialist criticism.

In view of his essay’s polemics, it’s perhaps understandable that upon turning to the Introduction to *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York* I expected a prolonged assault on the unexamined assumptions of critics working on early Canadian literature, principally their blindness to the *fin de siècle* expatriate literary community in New York and their inattention to the formation of a transnational literary culture in late

nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century North America. Instead, I found the body of Bliss Carman—or, rather, the story of Carman’s death and funeral in New Canaan, Connecticut, in June 1929 and the repatriation of his ashes for burial in Fredericton, New Brunswick, later that summer. Carman’s expatriated and repatriated body is the metonym that haunts Mount’s cultural history of Canadian literature—a transnational literature that he claims began “not in the backwoods of Ontario, not on the salt flats of New Brunswick, but in the cafés, publishing offices, and boarding houses of late-nineteenth-century New York” (18). *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York* is yet another act of repatriation: it reclaims a missing body of expatriate literature and an entire expatriate literary community. This is not a polemic but a eulogy, not a manifesto for a new evaluative criticism but a cultural history of the loss and recovery of what Mount calls “the beginning of a Canadian literature” (6).

Mount’s book is a streamlined version of his two-volume doctoral thesis of 2001. The transformation of thesis into book saw the necessary loss of what will surely prove an invaluable resource for subsequent researchers, namely the thesis’s second volume which includes preliminary “Bibliographies of the New York Expatriates,” the most complete annotated lists of primary texts and archival resources yet assembled for the majority of the authors included in Mount’s study (“Exodus” 2: 348–79). Even a cursory glance at these bibliographies provides an overwhelming sense of the comprehensive, meticulous, and exhaustive research that Mount has undertaken in preparation for this book. This bibliographic appendix provides the backbone of both the thesis and the book; it is an indispensable scholarly tool, one that is worthy of separate publication—or, better yet, digitization for online access.

Given its expansive (albeit unpublished) apparatus, the book itself is surprisingly slim, although its 217 pages (including bibliography and notes) are packed with original research on authors who have remained canonical (Bliss Carman, Charles G.D. Roberts, Ernest Thompson Seton), who have maintained limited recognition (Palmer Cox, Norman Duncan, Peter McArthur, Theodore Goodridge Roberts, Arthur Stringer), or who have since disappeared from critical notice (Craven Langstroth Betts, Sophie Almon Hensley, Thomas Stinson Jarvis, Harvey O’Higgins, Arthur E. Macfarlane, William Carman Roberts, Edwyn Sandys). The majority of the book’s five chapters consist of assiduously detailed accounts of what American literary historian Richard H. Broadhead calls “cultures of letters,” that is, as Mount puts it, literary communities organized according to “content and sensibility” rather than genre or mode, each of which “devel-

ops recognizable characteristics that help to promote it ... and that allow others to join by successfully reproducing those characteristics" (13). The sensibility that united this expatriate literary community Mount locates in its authors' rebellion against the morally, spiritually, and physically degenerative conditions of an overcivilized and inauthentic modern culture that Jackson Lears documents in *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920*.

Mount's promise of a renewed commitment to evaluative criticism is deferred until the closing chapter, "Exodus Lost." Having read four lively chapters of cultural history about New York's expatriate, antimodernist, new-romanticist culture of letters, I found myself disheartened to learn that the poetry and prose that constitutes "the beginning of a Canadian literature" wasn't worth reading at all: "With a few exceptions, the bulk of the writings of Canada's expatriates of these years belongs exactly where I found it, in university libraries, on microfilm, in periodical indexes. The expatriates matter to Canadian literary history as a commercial and cultural phenomenon, not as individual artists" (138). Is this the corollary to Mount's earlier directive "to rethink Frye's injunction" ("In Praise" 93)? It seems that Mount refuses to outgrow evaluative criticism, but only insofar as Frye, too, could urge us to become cultural historians of early Canadian literature even as he rationalized his own assessment of Canada as a nation without an "author who is a classic" and without need, therefore, to preoccupy itself with critical evaluation which is "concerned mainly to define and canonize the genuine classics of literature" (213). While Mount's concluding remarks provide a tentative gesture toward evaluative criticism in an era of cultural studies, I'm left with an uneasy feeling about the conservative vision of literary history and canon formation that informs his closing argument. Which authors and texts are among the "few exceptions" that merit closer scrutiny? If the expatriates are better studied as a literary community rather than as individual authors, wouldn't an anthology of turn-of-the-century expatriate writings be well suited to their peculiar "commercial and cultural phenomenon" and possibly welcomed into courses devoted to pre-WWI Canadian literature? Are there no candidates among the expatriates for reprint editions, selected or collected editions of fugitive writings, or even critical editions? If so, it would appear that Mount's otherwise compelling narrative employs an evaluative criticism in order to maintain the integrity of what he once dubbed "early Canada's canonless canon" ("In Praise" 71). Still, in spite of his devaluation of the expatriates' literary merit, I will count myself among the newly introduced readers of crime stories by Arthur Stringer,

tales of little Syria by Norman Duncan, the adventures of the Brownies by Palmer Cox, and the feminist writings of Sophie Almon Hensley, and I look forward to working my way through other titles listed in Mount's bibliographies of a Canadian literature that, for the most part, I honestly never knew existed.

*Dean Irvine*  
*Dalhousie University*

## Works Cited

- Frye, Northrop. "Conclusion to a *Literary History of Canada*." *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*. 1965; Toronto: Anansi, 1971. 213–51.
- Keith, W.J. "Blight in the Bush Garden: Twenty Years of 'CanLit.'" *Essays on Canadian Writing* 71 (Fall 2000): 71–78.
- Mount, Nick. "In Praise of Talking Dogs: The Study and Teaching of Early Canada's Canonless Canon." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 63 (Spring 1998): 76–98.
- . "Exodus: When Canadian Literature Moved to New York." Dissertation. Dalhousie University, 2001.

William Hay. *Deformity: An Essay*. Edited with an Introduction by Kathleen James-Cavan. English Literary Studies Monographs 92. Victoria: University of Victoria, 2004. 64pp. ISBN 0 920604 91 9. \$14.00 paper.

"When I die," writes William Hay, "I care not what becomes of the contemptible Carcass, which is the Subject of this Essay." Yet his "Carcass"—scarcely five feet tall, his back bent in the womb, has face scarred by the pox—might serve: in the last paragraphs of *Deformity: An Essay* Hay, a self-described hunchback, offers to be "opened and examined of eminent Surgeons" so that something might be known about another of his afflictions. If a stone should be found in his bladder, he wishes it "preserved among Sir *Hans Sloane's* Collection," a substantial (and famous) cabinet of curiosities that became the foundation for the British Museum (44). The *Essay* ends with a medical *historia*, entitled "My Case," of vesical calculi which, he writes, "may be of more immediate service" to fellow sufferers than his future autopsy.

Dozens of early modern texts treat the causes and consequences of human deformity, refractory curiosity, and the trade in body parts between collectors, museums, and raree shows, but Hay's *Essay* is among the first by a "sufferer." First published in 1754 at London and frequently reprinted until the end of the eighteenth century, Hay's *Essay* is a cadastral meditation on his ailing body, an erstwhile conduct manual for the deformed, and a grand if unsuccessful attempt to sweep aside ancient associations of physical beauty with moral virtue, shapeliness with rectitude. The latter were tenacious: Sir Philip Sidney insisted that "we laugh at deformed creatures, wherein we certainly cannot delight" (68), Bacon famously derided deformity as an index of odium, and, in 1697, Thomas Pope Blount wrote that it was "a received Opinion among the ancients that Outward Beauty, was an infallible Argument of inward Beauty; and so on the contrary, That a deformed Body was a true Index of a deformed Mind, or an ill Nature" (217). In his *Dictionary* (1755), Samuel Johnson defines "deformity" as "Ridiculousness," "the quality of something worthy to be laughed at." Contempt, "joined with the Ridicule of the Vulgar," Hay writes, is a "certain Consequence of bodily Deformity" (33). But Hay's "unapologetic self-portrait in the *Essay*," in Kathleen James-Cavan's view, "rejects the culture's equation of bodily deformity and character defect" (10). Born in Sussex in 1695, Hay was orphaned at five and, according to his first biographer, lost "all the natural protectors of infancy" (9). He matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford in 1712 but left for Lincoln's Inn and the Middle Temple in 1714–1715. After travels in England, Scotland, and the continent, Hay was active in the Sussex magistracy, and, in 1734, he was returned as a member of parliament for Seaford. In parliament, Hay was "committed ministerial whig" with a particular attention to poor law reform (Taylor). Although his early verse was admired by Alexander Pope, he is chiefly known for his parliamentary journal and the *Essay*, a rich, important text which Kathleen James-Cavan offers in the first edition since 1794.

Although there are a few typographical errors in the notes (including, I should point out, "Spender" for "Pender" when she cites my work; see, for example, notes 13, 16, 20, 23, 59), the text is deftly edited, annotated, and elegantly introduced—although quite why she consigns Hay's own footnotes to endnotes is unclear. In the introduction, James-Cavan argues that the *Essay*, a "memoir, literary and cultural critique, and medical testimony," redefines (she means, I think, redescribes) Hay's "alterity as a fortification of an enlightened middle class culture" (10–11). The text "refuses to align the non-deformed with either neutrality or normalcy." Instead, Hay endeavours to undermine such "binaries" as great and small, crooked and

upright, normal and abnormal (12). In fact, deformity is a “Protection to a Man’s Health and Person,” both of which are better defended by “Feebleness” than ability (31). His target, of course, is Francis Bacon’s essay “Of Deformity” (1612). Hay answers each of Bacon’s charges—that deformed persons are bold, that they are good spies and informers, and that they are void of natural affection—with an anatomization of self, with his own, redescribed experience (his model, as he points out, is Montaigne). The final charge vexes Hay most; though rarely rebarbative, throughout the *Essay* Hay is at pains to demonstrate his sensibilities, affections, and passions, from his love for animals to his susceptibility to weeping while reading of virtue or innocence in distress (36–37, 42). “I have not the Strength of *Hercules*,” he writes, “nor can I rid the World of so many Monsters; but perhaps I may get rid of some my self” (43). He does so via temperance, “the great Preservative of Health” (29), and a moderation of the passions. What he cannot avoid, “he should learn not to regard”; by frequent and serious reflection, he is “convinced of the small Value of most Things which Men value the most” (40, 39).

In this context, James-Cavan’s Introduction does a slight disservice to the variegated richness of Hay’s argument by pressing him into service in the ranks of disability studies *avant la lettre*. She obscures an omnipresent, and wholly traditional, habit of thought: the *Essay* is a work on the passions almost as much as on deformity, and she pays scant attention to his neo-stoicism, to his terrifically banal moralism, and to his repeated embrace of what one might call a “medical-moral” philosophy, in which physical and emotional temperance underwrite a conception of self. Perhaps enlisting Hay in disability studies spurs her comment that his final *historia* “appears to overturn” the “character advantages and health benefits available to the deformed.” The “admission of ill health” alongside an endorsement for a specific medicine “defeat the essay’s central argument” (19). They do nothing of the sort: rather, meditations on illness are a stock element of early modern memoir and autobiography, and Hay ends, in keeping with his focus on temperance, by advertising both his regimen and his remedies. James-Cavan’s historical sense is sometimes askew as well: she marshals quite disparate material to establish certain attitudes toward the deformed, apparently unaware of shifts in sensibility between Pierre Boaistuau’s *Histoires prodigieuses* (1560) and the eighteenth century (Park and Daston). Too, both in James-Cavan’s introduction and in Hay’s essay, Bacon appears as callous, even villainous. Yet, like his contemporaries, Bacon had a rather more complex notion of beauty and deformity than either Hay or James-Cavan allows. Finally, after claiming that Hay’s rhetorical mode “dissolves

... the deformed body of its author” (13, 19), James-Cavan concludes her introduction by suggesting that “Hay’s memorial is a fragment of a body, detached from positive or negative value” (19). That is precisely what Hay strives against: although he embraces the normative, he does not seek “neutrality.” He argues, precisely, for the precedence of the embodied person over and against the valence of bodies themselves.

Despite these minor caveats, Kathleen James-Cavan’s fine edition of William Hay’s *Deformity: an Essay* should engage a wide readership among scholars concerned with disability, the passions, and the “contemptible Carcass.” It is a splendid edition.

*Stephen Pender*  
*University of Windsor*

## Works Cited

- Bacon, Francis. *The Essays, or Counsels Civil and Moral*. Ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Blount, Thomas Pope. *Essays on Severall Subjects*. London, 1697.
- Johnson, Samuel. *Dictionary of the English Language*. 2 vols. London: Thomas Tegg, 1831.
- Park, Katherine, and Lorraine Daston. *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750*. New York: Zone, 1998.
- Sidney, Sir Philip. *A Defence of Poetry*. Ed. Jan van Dorsten. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1966.
- Taylor, Stephen. “Hay, William (1695–1755).” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12739](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12739), 28 August 2006.

Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster, eds.  
*The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*. Cambridge:  
Cambridge UP, 2005. 303 pp.

The publication by Cambridge University Press of this volume of essays on the work of young writers marks the full emergence of juvenilia as a subject of scholarly study. Readers of *ESC* have had a privileged view of the construction of this new discipline. In 1996, Juliet McMaster, one of the editors of the current collection, first reported in the journal on the

editing project she was leading at the University of Alberta to publish the apprentice works of canonical writers and to give students experience in scholarly editing. In 1998, she, along with two of the apprentice editors, reflected on the critical and theoretical implications of their work. By the time she discussed the editorial principles articulated and refined through practice in 2001, the *Juvenilia* Press had published twenty-six volumes and was extending its mandate to include important work by child authors who did not continue to write as adults. Since then, the Press has relocated to the University of New South Wales in Sydney, where it is directed by Christine Alexander, the other editor of this collection, and is overseen by an international board of contributing editors from Canada, the United States, Britain, New Zealand, Japan, and Australia. As the annotated bibliography by Lesley Peterson and Leslie Robertson included in this volume indicates, the number of publications alone has made the Press an important force in producing an object of study. The collection at hand makes it clear that scholars affiliated with the Press are also at the forefront of the ongoing work of mapping the new field.

The volume is divided into two unequal parts. The first part comprises four chapters, three by Christine Alexander and one by Juliet McMaster, in which the editors define terms, sketch the history of the editing and publication of *juvenilia*, catalogue subgenres, propose sets of generic characteristics, and explain and discuss a number of theoretical approaches to the study of *juvenilia*. The second part is made up of ten essays by ten writers, including one by each of the editors, essays that focus on the apprentice texts of individual, canonical writers, as well as the annotated bibliography already mentioned, compiled by assistant editors of the *Juvenilia* Press, of primary and secondary sources for the study of nineteenth-century *juvenilia*.

Broadly speaking, there are two recurrent concerns in the essays of the second part. The dominant interest is in the relation of the early writings to the later work for which the writer is known and suggests that the primary audience for these essays are other specialists in the study of the particular writers under discussion. The bibliography confirms that such work constitutes the bulk of the scholarship on *juvenilia*. Several of the essays assume a developmental model of artistic change and trace the growth of the writer into her or his characteristic subjects and styles: among these are the pieces by Rachel M. Brownstein on Jane Austen and Lord Byron, Victor A. Neufeldt on Branwell Brontë, Juliet McMaster on George Eliot, and Daniel Shealy on Louisa May Alcott. In other of the essays, the relations between early and later writings turn out to be con-

siderably more complicated than any simple division into apprentice and “mature” work: Beverly Taylor, for example, demonstrates that Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s understanding of the function of poetry as a tool for assessing “the society she inhabits” is evident from the earliest extant poem (140); Gillian E. Boughton documents the ways in which Mary Ward’s “energetic experimentation” in her juvenilia recapitulates major shifts in the development of English fiction in the nineteenth century (251); Margaret Anne Doody argues that a study of Jane Austen’s juvenile work reveals that she had to prune “a good deal of her own ruthless and exuberant style of comic vision in order to be published” (119); and Naomi Hetherington, working with the writing of Amy Levy, explicitly recasts the child-to-adult trajectory as a movement from amateur writer to professional writer, as she reads Levy’s juvenilia for its engagement with the rhetoric of first-wave feminism (260). All these textured accounts locate the young writers within cultural, ideological, and material circumstances of their nineteenth-century contexts, the second of the recurrent concerns of this part of the collection. Notably, all these accounts also understand the writers to be actively engaged from their childhoods in the process both of taking up and of resisting social imperatives, as well as in the process of negotiating family relationships and building selves.

The essay that most dexterously demonstrates the imbrication of these public and private projects of childhood is David C. Hanson’s study of “the economy of the evangelical self” in John Ruskin’s juvenilia. Hanson sets the Ruskin family psychology, which he understands as structured by “aggression and remorse” (212), within the nineteenth-century evangelical discourse of the monstrosity of precocious children and shows young John Ruskin exploiting the contradictions of that discourse in order to manage his censorious mother at the same time as he refuses to curb his extravagant writing performances.

To a significant extent, the essays of the second part provide the detailed evidence for the more general discussions and conclusions of the first part. In addition to the definitions of terms and the overview of the history of the field, Alexander and McMaster offer a series of provocative observations that invite further exploration, explanation, and challenge, not only from scholars already working in juvenilia but also from scholars working in children’s literature, in the history of childhood, in nineteenth-century texts, and in theories of the creative process. For example, Alexander notes the number of Victorian novelists whose early writing was undertaken as “collaborative play” with siblings and family friends, a form of authorship, she argues in her essay on the Brontës, that

privileges “a fragmented narrative ‘I’” (160). Child writers typically assume an adult audience for their work, it seems, perhaps because so many of the nineteenth-century children considered here—among them Charles Dodgson, Amy Levy, and Virginia Woolf—produced their first work in family magazines. But it is also true that few of these young writers take children’s books or magazines as models for their productions, preferring to imitate or to parody novels such as those of Sir Walter Scott or periodicals such as *Blackwood’s* or *Punch*. Where they do appear, the children of children’s writing appear to bear little resemblance to the children of children’s literature. At the heart of Victorian juvenile writing McMaster finds “the child’s urgent need for knowledge in the face of knowledge denied,” a crisis, she argues, that results in the “pursuit” of collectible words and the recourse to visual observation which she finds to be characteristic of the work of young writers (52). Examples of such intriguing claims abound in these first chapters, suggesting that there is much of interest in the study of juvenilia beyond the questions of literary biography.

What is missing from the definitions and the generalizations of these studies, however, is an articulation of the theoretical understanding of the idea of “the child” that is invoked in the title of the book and that undergirds the essays of the first part. In the absence of such a systematic interrogation, the category of “the child” becomes a free-floating signifier, available to signal significance but shifting in reference from context to context. The problem becomes evident on the first pages of the Introduction, where readers are told, in quick sequence, that the study of juvenilia is “a place for what children have to tell us of themselves” (1), that the purpose of the collection is “to recognize the child’s own authentic voice and authority” (1), that the nineteenth century is a crucial site for such study because it is “when what we know as ‘childhood’ came into its own” (2), and that juvenilia allows us to “trace the child’s process of self-construction as author” (2). These statements assume, variously, that children are importantly individuals with different experiences; that “the child” is a homogeneous category with a singular, essential, prediscursive identity; that childhood is a historical, culturally constructed category; and that “the child” who writes constructs himself or herself. Each of these ideas about children carries with it different implications and commitments. The only obvious commonality in the statements is that the category of “child” is stabilized by an explicit or implicit reference to an “us,” presumably the adults studying juvenilia, reading this collection, and producing the meaning of childhood. In telling the story of the fascination of the mid-Victorians with the diary of eight-year-old Marjorie Fleming, Alex-

ander remarks that it “is a salutary reminder of how the child writer can become a construct of the adult imagination” (15). In fact, all adult study of young people is shaped by the fears and desires attached to “the child” in history and in contemporary society. Theorizing juvenilia as a genre or a practice will proceed more surely if scholars ask themselves what child they are conjuring and why.

The essays of the second part all are informed by the developmental paradigms that Anglo-American societies have inherited from the Victorians and used to institutionalize childhood, but, in general, these pieces are less troubled by unarticulated and contradictory assumptions about “the child.” This is the case, of course, because these essays focus on actual young people embedded in particular networks of families and friends, situated in determinable geographical settings, and acquainted with concrete material, institutional, and cultural practices. It is to be hoped that, in the move from the study of juvenilia as apprentice work to the study of “childhood writings as a body of literature, almost a genre, in their own right” (3) announced by this collection, the disciplinary grounding in the actual, particular, various historical conditions of young people’s lives will not be lost. The Juvenilia Press—committed to publishing texts written in English by authors under the age of twenty without limitation of gender, nationality, period, or genre and edited collaboratively by editors with different levels of literary experience—has an important part to play in retaining this specificity. As Alexander remarks, “Since editing is one of the ways we produce literary meaning, editors are at the forefront of changing attitudes to juvenilia” (92). Editors of juvenilia might also be at the forefront of changing attitudes to young people.

*Mavis Reimer*  
*University of Winnipeg*

## Works Cited

- Chung, Kathy, Juliet McMaster, and Leslie Robertson. “Juvenile Writings: Theoretical and Practical Approaches.” *English Studies in Canada* 24 (1998): 289–308.
- McMaster, Juliet. “Apprentice Scholar, Apprentice Writer.” *English Studies in Canada* 22 (1996): 1–15.
- . “Editing and Canonicity: ‘Minor’ Works by ‘Major’ Authors.” *English Studies in Canada* 27 (2001): 47–66.

Paul Comeau. *Margaret Laurence's Epic Imagination*.  
Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2005.  
204 pp. \$34.95 paper.

The word “epic” brings to mind European literary forms from previous centuries and even millennia: traditional oral epics such as *The Odyssey*, classical epics such as Virgil’s *The Aeneid*, and religious literary epics such as Dante’s *Commedia* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Paul Comeau argues, however, that the epic in revised form was alive and well in North America in the latter half of the twentieth century. In his intriguing and often convincing book *Margaret Laurence's Epic Imagination*, Comeau suggests that Laurence’s fictional works contain complex and varied references to and echoes of European traditional, classical, and religious epics. At the same time, he argues, Laurence’s books revise and update epic conventions by exemplifying what David Quint calls the “loser epic” of the oppressed and resistant. Such an analysis of Laurence’s fiction, while it necessarily omits mention of many other central aspects of her work, allows for a persuasive exploration of some of the postcolonial and feminist resistance evident in her writing.

Comeau begins his analysis by noting that because Laurence’s work appears accessible to readers and because it has been approached by many different critical interpretations, some commentators have concluded that its “topicality somehow precludes aesthetic value, that the dilemmas of spinsters, housewives, and garbage collectors may not be the stuff of great literature” (xii). He argues that the greatness of Laurence’s fiction is indeed evident in the intricate way in which she both echoes and revises the epic tradition. Before he can make this argument, however, Comeau must first recuperate the epic as a mode suitable for contemporary literature—not an easy task after Mikhail Bakhtin’s description in “Epic and the Novel” of the tradition as fixed, closed, antiquated, and dead (3, 19). Comeau follows Janet Giltrow and David Stouck in re-valorizing epic by describing it not as genre but as mode and by arguing that, unlike genre, mode is not delimited by contemporaneous ideas about gender, class, and race but can sometimes transcend the ideological restrictions of the era in which it is written.

Although this intriguing claim begs for more evidence than Comeau provides, he is persuasive when he complicates his argument by suggesting that Laurence’s work also fulfills Elleke Boehmer’s definition of postcolonial writing. Such writing, Comeau suggests, appropriates and converts for its own anti-imperialistic purposes literary codes such as the epic

that have historically supported imperialism through the imposition of an authoritarian master narrative. Comeau further links the postcolonial to the epic in Laurence's fiction by suggesting that her work epitomizes the kind of revision to the epic that Quint defines as "loser epic" (in his discussion of much earlier works by writers such as Lucan and d'Aubigné). Instead of presenting the point of view of the imperial victors, Comeau reiterates, loser epics present stories of great scope from the perspective of the defeated or, more to the point in analyzing Laurence's works, those who resist rather than supporting the imperial centre.

Comeau's book is most successful when it discusses the movement toward this kind of anti-imperialistic epic in works such as Laurence's African fiction (especially her novel *This Side Jordan*) and in later works such as *The Diviners*. However, *Margaret Laurence's Epic Imagination* also analyzes the ways in which her fiction conforms to some extent to conventional epic patterns. Most obviously and consciously written to this pattern is her children's book *Jason's Quest*, which mimics the epic quest (in this case, that of Jason and the Golden Fleece) at the same time as it employs the technique of "epic diminution" by presenting the hero as a mole (101). In the sections of Comeau's book that examine Laurence's adult fiction, he divides that fiction into two parts and analyzes each in terms of different epic traditions. He interprets her African fiction as gesturing toward, if not completely fulfilling, the traditional European epic mode as well as the Christian pattern of "exile, alienation, and redemption" (41). He views the Manawaka books as working through a more specifically Christian epic mode; thus he interprets *The Stone Angel* as "a vision of hell," *A Jest of God* and *The Fire-Dwellers* as "a perspective on purgatory," and *The Diviners* as "an attempt to mitigate the burden of paradise lost, thus forging whatever redemption may be possible in a postmodern world" (xvii–xviii). Comeau analyzes all five Manawaka books as part of a larger epic scheme, concluding that *The Diviners* is "the culminating redemptive vision in the *commedia dell'anima* that is the Manawaka cycle" (116). He attempts to fit Laurence's two story collections—*The Tomorrow-Tamer*, set in Africa, and her Manawaka collection, *A Bird in the House*—into his various epic schemes but acknowledges that they are more difficult to categorize as such, since stories (especially those in *The Tomorrow-Tamer* that have varying narrators and points of view) present a less coherent package than novels.

Laurence's first published novel, *This Side Jordan*, lends itself to analysis as part of both religious and traditional epic modes because of its metaphoric reliance on the biblical story of Joshua crossing the Jordan River and

its gestures toward oral modes of storytelling. In *This Side Jordan*, however, as Comeau mentions but does not stress, the use of oral modes is as much indebted to the African oral tradition as to the oral mode of traditional European epic. And the book's unusual epic story revolves around the individual and collective struggle to gain self-rule after colonization. Comeau provides a fascinating discussion of the "post-colonial predicament" of one of the novel's two protagonists, Ghanaian Nathaniel Amegbe, who recognizes that he has been influenced by the culture of the colonizers as well as by traditional local culture, yet (as Elleke Boehmer notes in relation to people in similar situations) is "alienated from both" (115).

In his chapters on *This Side Jordan* and *The Tomorrow-Tamer*, Comeau traces the influence that O. Mannoni's psychological interpretation of the colonial situation in Madagascar had on Laurence's African writings. Comeau's analysis of this influence is thorough, but it would have been enriched by a more detailed exegesis of Mannoni's theories, which even at the time of Laurence's writing were being criticized for their "blame the victim" approach to one particular colonial situation. Similarly, many of the short stories in *The Tomorrow-Tamer* would have benefited from a more detailed analysis of their reflections on gender and colonialism. For example, Comeau interprets "Godman's Master" as a religious rather than colonial allegory and describes a passage in "The Drummer of All the World" as delineating "global possession" (21) without examining the very gendered aspects of the possession described.

All of Laurence's books are liberally sprinkled with biblical references, and she has repeatedly stated her debt to the Pentateuch and other parts of the Christian Bible. Some of the connections Comeau makes between Laurence's scattered references to Christian religious mythology and the Christian epic mode, however, may be somewhat tenuous. In the chapter on *The Stone Angel*, for example, readers may initially balk at Comeau's comparison of main character Hagar Shipley to Satan. He quickly makes it clear, however, that this Satan is not the devil of Christian popular mythology but the rebel angel of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Comeau's perhaps overstated conclusion that as such Hagar "personifies evil in the Manawaka world" is tempered when he admits that readers still admire her "gumption, tenacity, and irrepressibility" (69, 70).

Similarly, in Comeau's discussion of *A Jest of God*, he comments on Rachel Cameron's "disaffection with the male Christian God," whom she calls a "brutal joker" (82), but does not always fully explore the way in which that novel, and indeed many of Laurence's other fictional works, are resistant to the Christian epic rather than reinscribing it. The study's

focus on the religious aspects of both *A Jest of God* and *The Fire-Dwellers* sometimes precludes a more detailed discussion of gender issues raised by both novels. And the relentless focus on religious references means that Comeau at times appears unaware of other implications of the passages he examines. For example, when he analyzes the Christian religious implications of Laurence's use of three skipping rhymes in the opening of *A Jest of God*, he fails to acknowledge that Laurence is borrowing these rhymes from popular culture rather than composing them herself.

For the most part, however, the book's epic argument is coherent and convincing, and Comeau's prose is lucid and at times even elegant. Where the book sometimes proves frustrating is in its citation of sources. I found three citation errors in the first four pages of the book: a quoted author not listed in Works Cited; an occasion when the author of a quoted passage is identified but not which one of her many works is being quoted; and a citation that is impossible to identify because it includes a short title of a work but no indication of the author (as it turned out, Northrop Frye). Such incomplete citation makes it impossible for the reader to turn to the primary sources for more information or clarification. Also irritating are small factual errors, such as when Comeau suggests that Christie's tale of the Red River (in *The Diviners*) is based on the same historical events as Jules's very different stories about Seven Oaks and Batoche.

Despite these few problems, *Margaret Laurence's Epic Imagination* provides much food for thought about Laurence's use and revision of classical and Christian epic for feminist and postcolonial purposes. He argues convincingly, for example, that revisions to the epic mode allow *A Bird in the House* to exhibit a "polyvocality" that stands in "creative opposition" to a single authoritarian voice (113). In his discussion of *The Diviners*, he argues equally persuasively that like other loser epics, Laurence's final novel opens up the possibility for multiple and often overlooked historical perspectives by focusing on the history of the defeated or resistant and by avoiding completion of the epic plot. And as he provocatively concludes, "Epic mode accommodates the postmodern perception of language as multi-layered, provisional, and historically adventitious. It accommodates, too, the post-colonial feminist objectives: to redefine the traditional myths of power and to assert typical post-colonial themes" (143). Ultimately, this unconventional use of epic in a postmodernist, postcolonial, and feminist context highlights Laurence's sympathy with "the dispossessed, the social outcast, the marginalized voice" (143).

*Wendy Roy*  
*University of Saskatchewan*

## Works Cited

- Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Epic and the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. 3–40.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Giltrow, Janet, and David Stouck. "'Survivors of the Night': The Language and Politics of Epic in Antonine Maillet's *Pélagie-la-charrette*." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 71.3 (2002): 735–54.
- Mannoni, O. *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*. Trans. Pamela Powesland. New York: Praeger, 1964.
- Quint, David. *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.

Robert Miles. *Jane Austen*. Devon: Northcote House, in association with the British Council, Writers and Their Work, 2003. 10+175 pp. \$25.00

Robert Miles's *Jane Austen* is a useful tool which gives a generous overview of recent trends in Austen criticism. It also provides a wealth of information (perhaps more than a North American reader will need or want) on the Home Counties, on Anglicanism and Evangelicalism during the Regency, and on the ideological conflicts of Whig and Tory. Miles's starting point is a last, unfinished essay by the late anglophile New York critic, Lionel Trilling, who asked, "Why Read Jane Austen Today?" Trilling died before answering the question, but Miles does his best to pinpoint the source of Austen's continuing appeal. The gist of Miles's argument is that she represents the Home Counties of England and embodies the readers' nostalgia for the old "small-t tory" idealism of Anglican rural England (6). In other words, he agrees with Marilyn Butler's reading of Austen, in *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975; rev. 1987), as ideologically a Tory and a conservative (a reading which causes Butler to dismiss the more romantic *Persuasion* as a "muddle"). Miles never refers explicitly to Claudia Johnson, whose analysis of Austen's progressive tendencies, in *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), has probably been the most influential riposte to Butler.

Q.D. Leavis asserted that we love Jane Austen “as a person” (quoted 1), and Miles’s Introduction opens with the cliché (his word), “no other English writer is quite so English as Jane Austen” (1). The remainder of his analysis focuses on her “English-ness” and its definition, on why she is “our thing” (1). To this end, Miles’s book is structured around four sections: (1) personality in fiction, (2) considerations of genre, (3) Austen’s long-noted pioneering use of free indirect speech, and (4) considerations of class, gender, and nationalism.

In the first section, “Personality in Austen,” he admits that all a realist can create is the *illusion* of personality. He proceeds to contrast her simple and complex characters through her focus on manners as “the semiological medium through which we socially know others and even ourselves” (25). He resists using E.M. Forster’s distinction between “flat” (Miss Bates, Mr Woodhouse) and “round” (Elizabeth Bennet, Emma, Mr Darcy, Mr Knightley) characters and, instead, refers to the “flat” characters as “grotesques,” a term which has the wrong connotation for readers of Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner. He does recognize, however, that Jane Austen’s fictional world “is amazingly inclusive” (26). He then proceeds to consider the novel of manners as a genre which reflects “a political ideology, with a history” (27). He makes a sweepingly negative statement about writers excluded from F.R. Leavis’s “Great Tradition” of the novel of manners, implying that they refused to “accept that the self is how history has made it, which is why writers with strong antipathies to the British class structure, such as the Brontës, Hardy or Lawrence, have been hostile to the form, an hostility shared by American romancers, such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville” (27). In point of fact, the Brontës—or at least Charlotte and Anne—are fairly traditional in their social and religious beliefs, apart from their formal experimentation. Hawthorne, before Henry James, lamented the absence of history, culture, tradition, art in the materialistic young United States that precluded the writing of a novel of manners.

There is no arguing with Miles’s contention that Jane Austen “is the key figure in the early nineteenth-century consolidation of the novel” (28), and he sees *Northanger Abbey* as the transitional work in which “Austen had first to square her accounts with romance” (29)—in this case the Gothic. Miles assumes that *Northanger Abbey* is entirely early, although we know that she revised it around 1803 and perhaps again at Chawton toward the end of her life. It was published posthumously, in 1818, together with *Persuasion*, often described as “the other Bath novel,” and the two have certain affinities: a tyrannical father-figure, an inheritance plot, and,

above all, overt discussions of art, in particular women's art and the art of the novel.

Miles provides thought-provoking material on Austen's relations with the Prince Regent, whose clergyman secretary, James Stanier Clarke, had requested her to write a historical romance about the House of Saxe-Cobourg (or, failing that, about a clergyman). He quotes her famous epistolary reply: "I could not seriously sit down to write a serious romance under any other motivation than to save my life" (30). She did, however, dedicate her new novel *Emma* (1816) to the Prince Regent. Her *aesthetic* reply was the hilarious "Plan of a Novel, According to Hints from Various Quarters"—an anti-romantic parody whose title, she informs us, is "*not* to be *Emma*."

Lastly, in this section, Miles deals with Austen's works as variations on the pastoral, and especially *Emma*, with its "pastoral closure" (5). He defines Austen's pastorals as "not simple exercises in nostalgia, but complex representations of a social order, an 'organic' community, capable of growing, regulating, and healing itself ..." (52). But *is* that pastoral, or is pastoral rather a longing for that which can never return? And surely *Emma* invites us to speculate beyond the ending of the text. Miles spends most of his time on *Emma* because his reading of it fits his thesis, primarily because he views Mr Knightley as an "idealized" embodiment of the Tory landowner. Miles agrees with Butler that it is "her most conservative work," and dismisses the more subversive readings almost parenthetically: "[I]t is in her qualifications that Austen's critics find purchase for their counter-conservative readings" (57). He acknowledges that by the time of *Persuasion* (less than two years later) "the pillar has collapsed" and that *Persuasion* is her novel "most touched by history" (57). But what are we to make of it, then? That Austen's supposed "Tory conservatism" goes down in defeat, through its own foolishness, embodied in Sir Walter Elliot? That the naval "profiteers" take over to fill the void?

The only close reading Miles gives of specific novels occurs in his third section, "Point of View." His reference to Kathryn Sutherland's new Cambridge edition of Austen's works, which restores her original pre-Chapman punctuation, is an extremely valuable pointer for current scholars. His own analysis, however, appears to be more thematic than stylistic.

Again in this section, he places *Northanger Abbey* first, ahead of *Sense and Sensibility*. Although he sees Henry Tilney as a "master ironist," like Jane Austen, he seems to miss the humour in Henry's analogy between dancing and marriage. And surely Henry does not marry Catherine simply to "respect the rules of marital engagement" (67). By the same token, he

seems to miss the fact that Elinor Dashwood, in *Sense and Sensibility*, is able for, and armed at all points against, her foil and rival Lucy Steele.

His discussion of *Pride and Prejudice* is helpful on the complications of class structure. If Darcy and Elizabeth initially “stare at each other ... across a class divide” (83), Darcy learns that bad manners are not the sole property of the rising middle class, and at Pemberley Elizabeth begins to appreciate Darcy’s taste, rather than resenting his status. Miles is also interesting on the emergent Evangelical wing within the Church of England, as a gloss on Fanny’s “theology” in *Mansfield Park*. He raises some provocative questions about the “dead silence” following Fanny’s curiosity about Sir Thomas’s disquisition on slavery in Antigua. However, he falls into Marvin Mudrick’s trap of seeing Mary Crawford, “the novel’s great ironist,” as charming and close to the author’s voice at the beginning (101).

Miles returns finally to *Emma*, allowing *Persuasion* to suffer the not-so-benign neglect in which Butler also leaves it. According to his neo-conservative reading, poor Harriet is “something of a class cuckoo” (102), and Emma’s attempts to improve her status for marital purposes are “a promotion of the baseless over the sound” (53). One wonders if Austen really expected her contemporary readers to know that Mr Woodhouse is a “3 per cent” whose wealth is invested in the City, rather than property, and is therefore inferior to Mr Knightley (56). If “the real threat to the community is Emma’s snobbery,” surely Mr Knightley’s desire to promote Robert Martin is more democratic than Tory. Nor is Emma “an unworldly teenager”: she is in her twenty-first year, and taking care of a “valetudinarian” father has given her a demeanour and authority beyond her years.

Section Four, “Nationalism, Gender, Class,” brings to the fore Miles’s more valuable contribution to Austen scholarship, and that is to emphasize “Austen’s historical moment” (111). It is intriguing to discover that an older critic, V.S. Pritchett, called Austen a war novelist (111). Miles is also aware that Jane Austen was fully cognizant of her position as one of the newly emerging women novelists. In this respect, at least, it is difficult to see her as *professionally* conservative.

However, one would like some clarification of Miles’s statement that “Austen regards the feminine as the self’s default state.” Apparently, he sees Austen’s heroines as rational, and her *idle* males as “effeminate.” Maybe Robert Ferrars fits, but surely Sir Walter Elliot is more a precursor of George Meredith’s male “Egoist” than “feminized”—not to mention the promiscuous Willoughby and Wickham. Maybe Mr Woodhouse is effeminate, but surely not John Knightley simply because he has gone into law in the City. And Austen herself did not “suffer” spinsterhood but, for various

reasons, chose it (119–20). Perhaps seeing the female as the default state explains Miles's belief that sexuality is absent from Jane Austen's work. To the contrary, Austen assumes the imaginative reader's complicity in a romance which is usually understated and often suggested through metaphors of scissors (*Sense and Sensibility*), arrows (*Emma*), piercing, and penetration (*Persuasion*).

Readers will find informative and enlightening discussions of the historical background. Less compelling, however, are discussions of the individual novels, which tend to straitjacket the texts. Miles seems to be trying too hard for a new synthesis of relatively recent critics (though not of the "anti-conservatives"), but significantly absent are some older seminal critics—Craik, Walton Litz, Tony Tanner, even Mary Lascelles who pioneered so much Austen criticism. There is a glance at Mudrick, but he seems to be misread, and his name is misspelled throughout.

To come back to Trilling's question, "Why Read Jane Austen Today?" we need to move beyond anglophilia and nostalgia for the Home Counties. Why does Bollywood make a film called "Bride and Prejudice?" Is a postcolonial people nostalgic for the colonizer? Or, rather, is there a recognition that arranged marriages, by any other name, exist today in postcolonial countries as they did in nineteenth-century England? What is universal in Austen's appeal is her representation of the male-female dynamic, her dissection of the patriarchy, her feminist presentiments, and, perhaps, her depiction of the order and restraint lacking in our twenty-first century lives.

There is another book to be written here, which Miles himself seems to recognize when he concludes that we may see her strength as "a precious cultural redoubt withstanding globalization's irresistible tide, ... Until, of course, we look closely into the writing and discover it is not so simple" (149). Indeed, and the admission of the reader's subjectivity, that she leaves a tremendous literary space for the reader, is the source of Austen's continuing fascination for us.

*Elizabeth Sabiston*  
*York University*

Irene Gammel, ed. *The Intimate Life of L.M. Montgomery*.  
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. 305 pp. \$70  
cloth, \$29.95 paper.

“Intimate friend, obsessive lover, sufferer of depressions, control freak, and ageing woman.” This is how the editor of this volume, Irene Gammel, describes the subject under scrutiny in these eleven essays devoted to the private writings of L.M. Montgomery. As the pessimistic tenor of Gammel’s list suggests, the authors contributing to this volume have been deeply affected by their readings of Montgomery’s journals, published in five volumes between 1985 and 2004, edited by Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, for these writings brought the darker side of the author—her obsessions, anxieties, and deep depressions—into plain view. However, as several of the essays make clear, the journals, diaries, and letters under discussion in *The Intimate Life of L.M. Montgomery* are, in Mary Rubio’s words, “life writing of a guarded sort,” much of it undertaken, like a good deal of life writing, with the possibility of some form of publicity hovering in the background.

Prefacing these essays is a never-before-published collaborative diary kept by the twenty-eight-year-old Montgomery and her close friend, schoolteacher Nora Lefurgey. It is a teasing diary, full of inside jokes and railleries, mainly about the two women’s various crushes on local young men. At moments, in the collection, rather grand claims are made about the significance of this text, here published for the first time; editor Gammel calls it “the *pièce de résistance* of this book” and contributor Jennifer H. Litster compares its high-spirited exchanges to those of Shakespeare’s Beatrice and Benedick. Both claims seem forced; scholars of Montgomery need not resort to such strained comparisons and rhetoric to signal the significance of such a document. As a piece of collaborative textual friendship/rivalry, the diary has its own claims to make upon the attention of scholars of women’s textual, social, and cultural history. That it is a shared text is itself of interest in terms of the long history of women’s collaborative authorship. More particularly, this diary offers us a glimpse of prevailing attitudes of the time. At one point, for instance, Montgomery notes that Nora has been “poking fun” at her for reading an “expurgated edition” of George Eliot’s *Adam Bede*. Tongue planted firmly in cheek, Montgomery responds that “when one is pure-minded one should endeavour to remain so and not risk their soul reading such dreadful books as

ADAM BEDE in the original!!!” Here was a woman destined to be a miserable wife of a small-town Presbyterian minister.

The journal does, indeed, show Montgomery and Lefurgey playing fast and loose with the pieties of their day, but also knowing, cannily, where to draw the line. There are occasional displays of wit that reach beyond simply personal giddiness; witness, for instance, Montgomery’s comic resolution of her competition with Lefurgey for the affections of a local swain: “I am to take one end of his moustache, Nora the other, and tug hard. To the victor will belong the spoils.” We are also afforded glimpses into the ethnically and religiously directed nature of the two young women’s wit; when one heartthrob begins to look winsome, Montgomery observes, “it is enough to make one turn Mohammedan or Mormon.” In the essay immediately following the diary, Jennifer Litster offers some helpful contextualizations of the document; she notes, for instance, that a yellow garter, one of the main props in a particular piece of tomfoolery described in the diary, was a good luck symbol that “worn constantly from Easter Monday would ensure marriage within the year.” Such information reinforces Litster’s reading of the diary as the two young women writing “themselves into a position of power” through sexuality and marriage at a time when women of their class were rendered signally powerless by and dependent on marriage.

One of the strengths of this volume is its attention to a wide range of writings that can be considered under the banner of “life writing”; essays appear on this collaborative diary, the published journals, the letters Montgomery wrote to Ephraim Weber, and her scrapbooks. On the latter subject, Elizabeth Epperly helpfully considers the scrapbooks as evidence of “the things of daily life given a new significance as they form parts of Montgomery’s visual story of her (inner) life.” Epperly concludes that “just as she enjoyed the physical act of writing, she also enjoyed the play of placing the materials [in the scrapbooks] in relation to each other.” In so observing, Epperly extends what can be considered “life writings” into various forms of visual culture.

Scholars of Montgomery will appreciate the closer look at familiar aspects of the Montgomery life narrative that this volume affords them. For instance, Hildi and Paul Tiessen delve into the forty-year epistolary relationship that Montgomery shared with the prairie schoolteacher Ephraim Weber, intriguingly arguing that Weber, an unsuccessful writer, offered little in the way of threatening competition to Montgomery but did, from time to time, challenge “her thinking and her very sense of who she was.” On these occasions, they argue, Weber stepped out of his epistolary role as comforting, supportive “fictive reader” and compelled Montgomery

“to confront facets of herself that she was not otherwise driven to engage.” In fact, this essay shares with Mary Beth Cavert’s study of Montgomery’s youthful co-author Nora Lefurgey, or Irene Gammel’s analysis of her love affair with Herman Leard, a welcome focus on the other characters occupying the biographical stage with Montgomery, giving us a portrait of Montgomery as creative, intellectual, and romantic interlocuteur.

At other times, the collection offers in-depth study of historical or social situations and conditions that had an impact on Montgomery’s career. In this spirit, Melissa Prycer offers an inquiry into the depiction of consumption in Montgomery’s fiction and life writings, and Janice Fiamengo considers the way in which depression operates. Fiamengo, notably, does more to establish depression as not only a subject of the journals and fiction but, in her words, “a strategy of representation.” This willingness to look beyond the simply personal and documentary allows Fiamengo to develop some genuinely intriguing hypotheses about depression as one such strategy in Montgomery’s works. She argues, for instance, that depression eventually came, in Montgomery’s journals, “to signal artistic creativity”: “secret sadness became the primary rhetorical vehicle for Montgomery’s articulation of her identity as woman, writer, and wife.” And this understanding allows Fiamengo to ask more sophisticated questions about Montgomery’s self-fashioning; did she, for instance, in describing her husband’s mental illness in almost exactly the same terms as her early bouts of depression, adopt “pain as a discourse of self-identity” in such a way that it “left no room to imagine the suffering of another?” Where does metaphoricity end? Questions like these usefully challenge previous critical tendencies to take the observations contained in Montgomery’s journal at face value as an accurate representation of events and conditions in her life.

Where the volume could have been more ambitious in its undertaking is in finding new critical and theoretical frameworks for its work. The same work, some of it reaching far back into autobiography and biography studies, tends to take centre stage (work by Georges Gusdorf, James Olney, Sidonie Smith). Clearly, studies need to ground themselves in the history of the discipline, but what is often singularly absent from Canadian life writing criticism, from my admitted vantage point as a non-participant, is recognition of newer critical and theoretical voices working in, for example, Latina or Native women’s autobiography. More exchange with this exciting work would be worth building.

Speaking of critical exchange, for a text that opens with a collaborative diary, this critical collection itself works collaboratively, to an extent.

As Gammel tells us, the volume grew out of a symposium on Montgomery and life writing held at UPEI in 2002, and contributors eventually exchanged papers “so as to deepen the dialogue and sharpen the focus” of the resulting volume. As numerous cross-references to each other’s work attest, this has been a productive strategy. And even though it is often adopted, these days, as a response to publishing and funding pressures that demand that collections of essays, particularly those growing out of conferences, achieve the focused effect of a monograph, the result is positive for many other reasons. Just as Elizabeth Epperly tells us that Montgomery “enjoyed the physical act of writing,” so too do these scholars evidently enjoy the act of writing—together.

*Lorraine York*  
*McMaster University*

Lucy Munro. *Children of the Queen’s Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.  
xiii + 267 pp. \$85.00.

That theatre is a collaborative enterprise is often remarked by critics of early modern drama, but rarely is the point argued with such focus and such scrupulous attention to documentary evidence as in Lucy Munro’s masterful study of the Children of the Queen’s Revels, one of the most innovative and politically daring playing companies of the early seventeenth-century. The Children of the Queen’s Revels has suffered unfortunate scholarly neglect over the years, with far more sustained critical attention being directed toward Shakespeare’s company, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men (later the King’s Men). Munro’s timely book not only succeeds in putting the Queen’s Revels back on the map of theatre history, it posits a number of compelling broader arguments, concerning, for example, the need to attend more closely to playing companies, rather than just playwrights, as cultural agents; the impact of economics, acting practice, and audience taste on genre; and the intellectual utility of a hermeneutic that bridges gaps between traditional literary criticism, performance criticism, and textual studies.

After a succinct Introduction, Munro presents a chapter devoted to what she calls the “company biography” (a clever borrowing from the vocabulary of author-centred criticism). A wide range of frequently overlooked manuscript sources are drawn on to reconstruct the evolution of

the company between 1600 and 1613, as it moved through the various appellations of the Children of the Chapel, the Children of the Queen's Revels, the Children of the Revels, the Children of Blackfriars, and the Children of Whitefriars. Munro discusses the issuing and reissuing of patents, the coming and going of shareholders and patrons, troubles with the authorities, and the changing repertory. Particularly fascinating is the author's examination of the challenges involved in finding and retaining child actors as the increasing commercialization of London drama severed the children's companies' traditional links with the grammar schools and choir schools. By the end of Munro's "company biography," the reader is left with an acute sense of the intensely social nature of dramatic production in early modern England.

From here, the study is structured under genre rubrics: separate chapters are devoted to comedy, tragicomedy, and tragedy. The idea, in Munro's words, is "to avoid the potentially reductive format of the chronological survey" (5). The approach works, and without sacrificing any of the thoroughness which is typically the chronological survey's virtue. Chapter 2, "Proper gallants wordes': Comedy and the Theatre Audience," explores how plays like *Eastward Ho!* (Chapman, Jonson, Marston), *Your Five Gallants* (Middleton), and *Epicoene* (Jonson) used jokes to highlight the precariousness of social hierarchy, displaying a propensity for critique which set the Queen's Revels comedies apart from other examples of comedic theatre in the period. Chapter 3, "Grief, and joy, so suddenly commixt': Company Politics and the Development of Tragicomedy," takes up what might be thought of as the trademark genre of the Queen's Revels. Munro's specific concern with tragicomedy is to identify the form's unique development in Queens Revels plays like *The Malcontent* (Marston), *The Widow's Tears* (Chapman), *The Isle of Gulls* (Day), *Cupid's Revenge* (Beaumont and Fletcher), and *The Faithful Shepherdess* (Fletcher). The Queen's Revels version of tragicomedy is traced from the point of view of the company as a whole, not just the authors who wrote the plays. By shifting the critical perspective in this way, Munro delineates an alternative approach to source study, one which breaks free from the "fundamentally limited" paradigm of the individual playwright "sitting alone in a study with books spread out on a table" (98). After all, as Munro is at pains to demonstrate throughout her book, this is not how dramatic production worked in early modern England: there are many "readers" to account for, besides just the playwright (actors, audience members, patrons, shareholders), many ways in which a source or influence could enter the repertory. The final chapter of *Children of the Queen's Revels*, "Ieronimo in Decimo sexto':

Tragedy and the Text,” turns to “the most prestigious and, at times, most problematic of early modern dramatic genres” (134). George Chapman’s *Bussy D’Ambois*, Samuel Daniel’s *Philotas*, John Marston’s *Sophonisba*, Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Cupid’s Revenge*, and a number of other tragedies formed a substantial, if frequently neglected, part of the Queen’s Revels repertory. Munro shows how tragedy’s common association with universal and immutable qualities falls apart when applied to Queen’s Revels plays, which were constantly reshaping the protocols of tragic drama in response to the perceived tastes and interests of their audiences at the Blackfriars and Whitefriars theatres. *Children of the Queen’s Revels* is capped off with five valuable appendices. Here the reader will find a catalogue of all Queen’s Revels plays; information pertaining to performances in London, the provinces, and at court; actor lists; and biographical descriptions of all those known to have been involved with the Children of the Queen’s Revels in any capacity.

Lucy Munro has written the first book-length study of the Children of the Queen’s Revels, and she has done so with careful consideration for structure and organization and an impressive degree of attention to detail and documentation. For this alone *Children of the Queen’s Revels* deserves our praise and attention. Even beyond this, though, Munro manages to give her several interlocking arguments about the playing company broad enough scope to make her book of value to Renaissance drama scholars with a wide range of backgrounds and interests. Whether you seek an authoritative account of one of the most important playing companies in seventeenth-century London or a more general rethinking of the relationship between theatre and society in the early modern period, *Children of the Queen’s Revels* will deliver.

*Kevin Curran*  
*McGill University*

Shelley Tremain, ed. *Foucault and the Government of Disability*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005. 332 pp. + index. \$28.95.

The first thing to say about *Foucault and the Government of Disability* is that it is the best book on disability and Foucault ever done. The second thing to say is that it is also the only book on Foucault and disability. So the question arises, why did it take so long to see a significant volume linking this thinker with this identity category? Shelley Tremain, for her part, has

written on Foucault for a long time, but her influence is only now being felt. So this book, collecting many excellent essays on governmentality, institutions, sexuality, and so on, is a welcome addition to the intellectual life of disability studies. With it, we may well hope, Foucault's insights will find a more direct appeal to those who are involved in disability studies.

To explain the relative absence of Foucault, we might want to consider that disability studies has basically been an Anglo-American endeavour, which is just beginning to expand its insights into the globalized world. As an Anglo-American endeavour, it has for the most part eschewed continental philosophy and cultural criticism. The works of Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Foucault, Derrida, Agamben, and others have composed a rather small rivulet in the torrent of positivist, quantitative, and qualitative work done first in the realm of sociology, political science, and legal studies—and then in the cultural and humanistic extensions of the enterprise. It is true that the British school has focused on continental philosophy but only to the extent that it included Marx, Engels, Gramsci, and other socialist writers and thinkers, all of whom were again largely in the positivist mode.

Foucault presents us with an interesting example of a continental thinker whose work is a blend of metaphysics and data. The fact that Foucault himself rarely engaged with Derrida or any of his philosophical confreres illuminates his positivist side, but at other moments he does seem very much a part of the poststructuralist enterprise. His use of the archive links him with historians, but his analysis of the archive brings him into a broader area of philosophy, sociology, the history of ideas, and the like.

While it is rare to see Foucault entirely excluded from discussions of the body in the newer phase of disability studies, his appearance is often largely a token one. Foucault's main insights about the clinical gaze, madness, the panopticon, docile bodies, and so on are used as touchstones, but his larger theory and its implications are usually left behind. The reason for this, which becomes fairly obvious in reading Tremain's collection, is that the application of Foucault *qua* Foucault to disability is not one that will yield obviously liberatory solutions to onerous social and political problems. In fact, Foucault, in his full-strength, undiluted form is powerful medicine verging on poison. There is no feel-good, uplifting message to be distilled from the bitter dose of analysis that Foucault offers. There is no safe place to hide from the klieg lights of his scrutiny of institutions and practices that make up modernity. So inviting Foucauldeans to a party is like bringing an annoying pessimist to an optimists' ball. They'll hate the music, criticize

the food, and don't try to say "have a nice day" to them. But, in the end, they may be right about it all.

When you read many of the essays in this collection, you see that being a Foucauldean in disability studies will put you in opposition to much common wisdom and received ideas. In this sense, true Foucauldeans are contrarians when it comes to celebrating the virtues of identity politics, mainstreaming, and assisted living, for example. That's why we haven't seen a lot of this work on the disability marketplace, since its tough-to-take analysis doesn't lead to easy solutions. Another reason is that, unlike Marxism for example, Foucauldism has no obvious political solutions, no party, no ideal state to be formed, not even the satisfyingly unspecified vision of anarchy. Or, to put it most simply, you can't smash the state because for Foucault, like Louis XIV, the state is "moi." How can you have liberation when, as Tremain says, power "*enables* subjects to act in order to *constrain* them" (4) [italics hers].

Tremain's point is that the disabled subject is the product of an extensive network of discourse and power. But the discourses and services she lists—special education, prosthetics, paratransit, home-care services, income support programs, worker's compensation benefits, and the like—will strike most people as beneficial and indeed progressive measures. Why critique these when there is the world of ableism to take on? Rather, Tremain takes on the idea of the social model, seeing that the disabled subject is not a naturally occurring phenomenon but one that comes to be through networks of knowledge and power. As she reminds us, the complexity of being a subject, having subjectivity, also means being the subject of someone or something else's power. So, in effect, you can't celebrate disability or disability identity because you'd be celebrating the powers that caused disability to be brought into the world of discourse as a separate and abnormal state in need of social programs, remediation, care, etc. She then, logically, critiques the social model saying "it would seem that the identity of the subject of the social model ('people with impairments') is actually formed in large measure by the political arrangements that the social model was designed to contest" (10). So impairment, for example, the degree zero of the social model, is for Foucauldeans not a neutral category, a fact of nature, but a highly articulated category exists "in order to legitimize the governmental practices that generated it in the first place" (11).

You can see from such a stance why Foucault in his strong argument isn't necessarily going to go down well with activists, disability-rights advocates, or even disability-studies programs. Instead of offering disability as

a celebrated identity and disability studies as a liberating discourse, you've got to examine the way you are part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Many of the essays in this collection go about presenting just that point of view. Nirmala Erevelles compares Foucault's treatment of Pierre Rivierre, a man who killed his family and who was subjected to an extensive legal, medical study in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the controversy concerning facilitated communication and autistic people. While it may not be obvious at first, Erevelles points out that both controversies revolve around trying to define, through rational discourse, what constitutes coherence in a deviant subject. From a Foucauldian perspective, Erevelles presents the constitutive aspect of these cases without trying to lift some moralizing or celebratory story from the complex narratives. Or, rather, the enemy is capitalism rather than any rationalizing discourse produced within it.

Bill Hughes writes one of the stronger pieces in the collection, and it is perhaps stronger because he critiques Foucault. One of the ongoing objections to Foucault, articulated by Edward Said among others, is that Foucault's emphasis on "docile bodies" makes him in effect, as Said has said, a "scribe of power." If one wants to perform the biographical fallacy, one could explore how Foucault's personal relationship with sado-masochism might somatize and personalize his more academic studies of power and docility.<sup>1</sup> Hughes begins with the point that Foucault, because he avoided phenomenology, including the work of Merleau-Ponty, "underestimates the body's role as subject, that is, as an agent of self- and social transformation" (80). Hughes notes that the history of people with disability has been one of impotence but that in recent years this has turned around. However, this change in agency cannot easily be accounted for by Foucault's oeuvre. Hughes goes on to describe the posthumanist sense of the body, which is essentially textualized, constructed, and whose only form of political activity is the celebration of diversity of identities (that is to say, the difference presented by constructions of bodies). In its place, he recommends a phenomenological view of the body as "our point of view on the world" (87). While Hughes presents a valid critique of Foucault, his solution, the substitution of someone like Merleau-Ponty, leaves one

1 If one continued in this manner, I might add my own personal observations. I attended Foucault's lectures at the College de France in 1972–73, the year he was lecturing on the book that would become *Discipline and Punish*. One of my most clear memories is how Foucault would become animated when he discussed the tortures inflicted on prisoners in the eighteenth century, going into great detail, repeatedly and obsessive, almost hissing the word "cicatrice," his face distorted and beads of sweat standing on his brow. He was, to use a phrase he wouldn't have had available to him, "into" it.

somewhat unsatisfied, if only because Hughes doesn't have the space in this essay to develop that viewpoint.

Barry Allen launches another salvo against Foucault, this time for being a "nominalist." From this strategic position, Allen critiques Foucault for relying too much on a linguistic approach, seeing his emphasis on discursivity as primarily a familiar recourse to eighteenth-century ideas that names and things were the same (which ironically Foucault himself critiques in his seminal *Les mots et les choses*). Alongside of Hughes's criticism, we can see emerging some sense of Foucault's lacks—his disengagement, in a sense, with the world, or his hypothesizing a world that is purely discursive. Indeed, many of the interviews we have with Foucault, carried on by various political groups and thinkers, focus on this very point. Foucault was always much more activist in these interviews than in his academic work, and in a way he never figured out how to combine his active life as a demonstrator with his formal life as a scholar. Of course, some radicals like Noam Chomsky claim there is no relationship, while others like Edward Said always saw the two as interconnected.

Essays by Fiona Kumari Campbell, Licia Carlson, and Jane Berger on Supreme Court decisions, the history of institutions for mental retardation and for deafness simply retread Foucault's more obvious work on legal-juridico systems and totalizing institutions. A question raised by Berger concerning schools for the deaf was if there was some value to these institutions. Foucauldeans have never met an institution they like, so the question is are the deaf better or worse off with schools for the deaf. While there are many stories of the tragedy of being separated from families at an early age, most of these accounts end up celebrating the community that deaf schools provided and the life-saving function of learning sign language, usually not available at home. While schools for people with mental retardation can be seen, through the retrospectoscope as abysmal institutions tied up with eugenics and ableist notions of normality (although they probably started out as very progressive institutions devoted to the notion that idiocy was not an incurable or irremediable state), it is much harder to characterize schools for the deaf as such, although the easy out is to critique oralism.<sup>2</sup>

An essay by Anne Waldschmidt reviews the idea of normality in a rather superficial way but then goes on to show how genetic testing instantiates a eugenic program without having to do so by overt means. The use of risk analysis and an operative notion of normality are enough to enforce decisions to abort disabled fetuses. In this Foucauldean sense, self-surveillance and academic discourses, in this case risk analysis and

genetics, will suffice to give the illusion of freedom and autonomy while accomplishing an ableist project. Likewise, a section by Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein explores how normality gets enforced in the context of inclusive education schemes. Again, here we see that progressive agendas, like the one that sees disability not as bred into the bones but as a product of socialization, become ways that governmentality operates in the creation of normative (read docile) subjects. Thus individualized programs for the education of students with cognitive disabilities, seen by many as a hallmark of progressive politics and disability-rights activism, are critiqued. As the authors write, “the ‘individual’ of the discourse on inclusion is *an effect* or *product* of that discourse and the neoliberal forms of governmentality with which it correlates” (220). In the contrarian logic of contemporary Foucaultism, “human beings become subjects by exercising freedom according to certain rules, virtues, norms or skills, which they share with other free subjects” (221). Further, the idea of community, so cherished by progressive educators and valued in inclusion schemes, is also problematized since, for the authors, community is just another way of saying we’re all part of a totality, hence in a totalitarian set of constraints.

Chris Drinkwater now takes the Foucauldean wrecking ball to supported living. Using Wolfenberger’s work on normalization, Drinkwater shows how the emphasis in supported living is on having a “normal” life. As he says, “I want to suggest, in the spirit of Foucault, that supported-living arrangements exemplify not an emancipation, nor even a humanitarian reform, as much as a new dispersal of power relations, one that is entirely in keeping with the modern drive to greater efficiency” (229), so “the esteemed values of rights, independence, choice, and inclusion obscure the actual lived relations of support/power” (234). The point is that self-regulating subjects, whether produced through negative means or positive mean, still produce self-regulating subjects, so the kinds of services and accountability necessary to provide supported living are always regulated, recorded, inscribed, bureaucratized, and so on. From sexual behaviour to hygiene, from work to social manners—the life of the person in supported living is intersected with power and surveillance, and “challenging behaviours” are perceived as resistance to the general scheme.

2 But even that easy target turns out to be not so simple. Douglas Baynton has shown us that the most progressive elements of nineteenth-century society, notable socialists and feminists, were behind the push for oralism as a way of including the deaf in the polity and give them “voice” in social decision-making.

Among chapters on mobile phones and stadium seating, Kathryn Pauly Morgan's essay on Gender Police stands out as an odd and telling attempt to create a kind of "kit" for what she calls Gender Dimorphic Utopia (GDU)—the world that surveys and enforces gender norms. The essay isn't explicitly about disability, but its claim is that if you don't neatly fit into the gender binary, then you are gender disabled. As with much of postmodern thinking in this area, border crossings, gender outlaws, and gender neutral people are the hero(ine)s. Unlike many of the other essays, this one does have bad cops and good rebels—and no self-reflexive Foucauldean gaze glares on the rebels against GDU.

The collection is as good as it gets in using Foucault in disability studies. It will provide thought-provoking discussions amongst its readers. In the end, though, it suffers from Foucaultitis—a disease of pessimism that can lead to acute defeatism. Foucault, like Adorno, is best read in small doses and best taken *cum granis salis*. This is not to say that either Adorno or Foucault isn't speaking truth to power—they certainly are. But the problem is that when you see power in all the micro-connections that pervade society (including, for example, this very book review, which aims to instantiate norms of reading, provide authority to criticism, and is being published by a journal with clear and deep affiliations to what Gramsci calls the Ideological State Apparatus), then all you can do is describe power. Endlessly describe it. Consequently, this book provides a valuable corrective to any Pollyannaish views about the triumph of disability rights or disability studies. It reminds us that we must always be aware and vigilant about the incursions and byways of power. But perhaps it does not fully understand that asking us to do this is also an act of governmentality itself. And so on, in an endless *mise en abyme*. In this sense, Foucauldianism is a problem without a solution. The method is, in a sense, the madness.

*Lennard J. Davis*  
*University of Illinois at Chicago*

Christine Wiesenthal. *The Half-Lives of Pat Lowther*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. 489 pp. \$65.00.

How to tell the story of a poet murdered in her prime, a poet preeminently famous for having been murdered? “To Pat Lowther,” Christine Wiesen-  
thal writes, “goes the dubious if not fatal, distinction of having accrued  
the most sensationally tragic of contemporary literary reputations” (3).  
Identifying the slow and painful trajectory of Lowther’s life as a poet, and  
acknowledging the “afterlife” of attention to her life and work, Wiesen-  
thal concedes that “[o]ur collective memory of both her life *and* her work  
has not yet fully recovered from the violent fact of her murder” (9). We  
read her poetry through the prism of her murder. We read her life as half-  
lived. Wiesen-  
thal, accordingly begins by examining the Lowther legacy, studying issues of memory and the ways in which memory interferes  
with representation. Only when she has cleared the decks, so to speak, of  
the debris that follows catastrophe, does Wiesen-  
thal introduce the more  
conventional biographical elements of family, childhood on Vancouver’s  
North Shore, first marriage, motherhood, and the initial enlargement of  
Lowther’s world with her second marriage to the husband she so rapidly  
outstripped as poet and self-taught intellectual. With explicit reference  
to the biographer’s role, Wiesen-  
thal takes Lowther herself as guide. She  
is worth quoting at length on this point because she is so clear about her  
particular choices for this biography:

Lowther’s own, eventually acute, sense of her life as a forma-  
tion fissured like a “split rock” or “cleft mountain” is the idea  
that structures my approach to it. ... Rather than one con-  
tinuous “luminous and whole” biography—the life, or even *a*  
life of Pat Lowther—these narratives are offered instead as a  
series of overlapping, partially recursive biographical histories,  
coextensive and enfolded time-lines, each of which examines  
different (but interrelated) aspects of her life and work. Several  
half-lives, they seek to read Lowther within and across mul-  
tiple interpretive frames that accord close attention to her still  
under-read poetry and its historical contexts. Readers wishing  
a direct through line on a given subject or work may consult  
the chronology and the index. (15–16)

Wiesen-  
thal’s sophisticated foregrounding of the biographer’s interpretive  
stance addresses practical matters and then situates members of Lowther’s  
family and her friends and fellow poets in this web of memory and inter-

pretation, ensuring an attentive and respectful exploration of this troubled life and its creativity.

Wiesenthal's weaving is also attentive to the world of poetry and of Lowther's own literary values. Lowther's murder on 23 September 1975 follows two years to the day the death of her hero, Pablo Neruda. Like him, Lowther was a leftist, and activist, and believed in the poet as part of the social and political world of her time. Roy Lowther's rage and jealousy were aroused by his wife's poetry, and her emerging success as a poet, more evidently than by her lovers. In a surely extraordinary move, his trial for her murder included the politics of the poetry scene at the time and almost included a poem that he had written some time earlier, entitled "September 23," which could have suggested his premeditation of the murder. Wiesenthal handles these dramatic scriptings with a deft hand but is also careful to read the beginning of Lowther's "legacy" quite critically into the earliest reactions to her murder, the reactions of her fellow poets, the eulogizing and the heroising, the laments that are deeply personal because they so often express the felt vulnerability of the poet friend. These are early constructions that Wiesenthal acknowledges as part of the baggage she inherits. For her own work, she is concerned with Lowther as poet, Lowther as a high-school dropout and welfare mother who found her voice through mythology, science, and anthropology as well as on the streets of Vancouver or the bluffs of Mayne Island. She situates Lowther in the poetic community of 1960s and 1970s Canada, noting in particular her importance as a west coaster. Certainly, Lowther's traveling was very limited, always as circumscribed by her lack of money as by her husband's control of her life, but it was as a west-coast poet that she was chosen Chair of the League of Canadian Poets in 1974, a position in which she worked hard and demonstrated some administrative flair. Not least, this legacy includes the politics of literature in Canada in the 1970s. More permanently, perhaps, Lowther's remarkable development both as a poet and as an intellectual is central to Wiesenthal's consideration.

Significantly, for Canadian literature, Wiesenthal's critical and analytic appreciation of Lowther's poetry fills a comparative vacuum. Where poets and critics had lamented her violent death, Wiesenthal is able to point some thirty years later to "the continuing dearth of critical work on Lowther" (116). Her own careful attention to Lowther's poetry compensates for this dearth and will surely invite the more rounded appreciation that Wiesenthal certainly suggests Lowther's work deserves. Wiesenthal does not separate her consideration of woman and poet but describes the poetry as emerging out of the very eye of Lowther's domestic maelstrom

(176), her struggles to publish in small and too often ephemeral magazines, her successes with the Canada Council, and the increasing artistic “capital” that could, surely, soon, gain her freedom from her impossible domestic situation.

In the process, Wiesenthal reads with analytic finesse and evident enthusiasm from *This Difficult Flowring* (1968), *The Age of the Bird* (1972), *Milk Stone* (1974), and *A Stone Diary*, finally accepted for publication just before Lowther’s death in 1975. She explores Lowther’s imaginative reach—to the Arctic, to Latin America, and into the bedrock and British Columbian landscape of the North Shore and Mayne Island, demonstrating in the process her own intimate knowledge of these places in these times. Wiesenthal also explores the remarkable breadth of the scholarship that fired Lowther’s imagination—the physics of time and space, visual and mixed media forms, mythology, cosmology, and feminist science fiction. She situates Lowther in the literary world of her time, citing interviews with a positive who’s who of CanLit and rummaging through old correspondence. “Dee” Livesay was a supportive friend. Joy Kogawa worried about Lowther’s private life. Peggy Atwood was kind and supportive. So many colleagues, like the friends Lowther made especially in the feminist caucus of British Columbia’s NDP, form the communities in which Lowther belonged, providing the personal support and intellectual and artistic context in which she was well valued in her lifetime

*The Half-Lives of Pat Lowther* is a remarkable biography for its own generic achievements and for its sensitive attention both to a difficult life and to a rich poetic legacy. Lowther has now been astutely recognized and appreciated and would surely be well pleased. Even the notes are more interesting than is often the case, detailing extensive interviews, unpublished manuscripts, court documents, and further discussions of poetry. Wiesenthal wears her scholarship, and the hard labour of this biography, with lightness and grace and a charm that is replicated even in the material object—the book itself. Credit for this production is therefore also due at the University of Toronto Press. From its riveting repetition of a head shot of Lowther on the front cover to the rich bibliography and fine index, this is a beautiful book to look at, to handle, and to read.

*Susanna Egan*  
*University of British Columbia*

Drummond Bone, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. xx + 305 pp. 0-521-78146-9, \$65.00 cloth. 0-521-78676-2, \$22.99 paper.

So long has been the gestation of this book, so endlessly deferred its expected date of publication, that some degree of anticlimax was inevitable when the newest addition to Byron criticism could at last be viewed. However, given the wealth of talent in contemporary Romantic Studies, it was impossible that a collection culled from the best and brightest scholars would produce a “hideous progeny” or anything less than a solid and informative volume. Nevertheless, there are slight oddities in the way the parts have been assembled and stitched together.

In his pamphlet on Byron in the British Council “Writers and their Work” series, Drummond Bone, a veteran of the Byron Society, rigorously separated the biographical and historical “facts” from textual analysis of the poetry in alternating chapters. Here, as editor, he seems to have made an attempt to do the same through the use of sections entitled “Historical Contexts” and “Textual Contexts,” whilst broader issues are relegated to “Literary Contexts.” Luckily, the liveliest of the contributors, such as Andrew Elfenbein, Philip W. Martin, Nigel Leask, Jerome McGann, and Susan Wolfson, appear to have blithely ignored such categorization. After all, it was the modern editor of Byron, Jerome J. McGann, who led those New Historicists influenced by deconstruction in breaking down the scholarly barriers between textual, critical, and biographical studies a quarter of a century ago.

In this anthology, however, the first three essays deal entirely with Byron as a historical personage, so that students have to wait until the fourth before the poetry takes priority. The editor airily declares: “We do not attempt to be comprehensive in this section, but many texts not picked up here are referred to in the other two sections of the volume” (1). True, but the coverage overall of Byron’s oeuvre is uneven and patchy. There is a concentration on the earlier “Romantic” verse. For example, we have two (admittedly brilliant) essays on the rarely taught first two cantos of *Childe Harold* and one on Canto 3 and *Manfred*. Meanwhile, Alan Richardson struggles manfully to deal with all the plays in eighteen pages, and Byron’s greatest poems, *Child Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto 4, and his satiric masterpiece, *Don Juan*, must share the editor’s attention with *Beppo* in twenty pages. With all the good work that has appeared recently on Byron’s drama, for example, by Jeffrey Cox, Michael Simpson, Richard Lansdown, and Daniel C. Watkins, more space should have been given

over to the recent revisioning of Romantic theatre and a new appreciation of the poet's most avant-garde generic experimentation. For those thinking of recommending this text to students, another regret is the lack of detailed attention paid to Byron's particular form(s) of Romantic irony, discussed in important studies by Fredrick Garber, Anne Mellor, Terence Hoagwood, and others.

The danger with the Cambridge Companion series is that established critics give a resumé of previous work rather than anything new. Though one or two of the "usual suspects" of Byron criticism do just that, a heartening number have taken advantage of the ever-lengthening deadline to produce new work that is fresh and stimulating. In a brilliant yet accessible essay which builds on earlier work by Franklin and Crompton on gender and sexuality, Andrew Elfenbein uncovers the dialectic in Regency writing between models of Christian stoic manliness and the contrasting theatricality of Byron's mysterious heroes, bringing out the latter's unsettling effeminacy and disquieting desires. Philip W. Martin's nuanced and thoughtful essay looks again at the public nature of Byron's verse but with a less pejorative view of this rhetorical poetry of surfaces than in his sharp 1980s monograph. He re-creates the novelty of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* to its first readers: the dramatic encounter with the warrior culture of the exotic East uncannily mirroring the militarism of Europe itself during the Napoleonic wars. Martin finds a poem mordantly questioning both the progress of modernity and the ancient ideology of heroism at one and the same time. Nigel Leask views Byron's Philhellenism more positively perhaps, taking the perspective of politics rather than philosophical pessimism, in his impressively well-researched essay. He convincingly outlines a Byronic dialectic in representations of Greece, melancholic contemplation juxtaposed with revolutionary activism: he names these contraries after passive and active heroines of *The Corsair*, the Medoran, and Gulnarean perspectives. Leask goes on to explore the significance of Byron's ambivalent portrait of the court of "the Mahometan Buonaparte," Ali Pasha, precisely delineating the historical context whereby European Philhellenes sought to regenerate modern Greece by purging its oriental aspects, whilst other commentators, such as Thomas Thornton, wrote positively of Turkish culture and indeed the regime of the Ottoman Empire. All three of these essays do much more than reprise existing scholarship on Byron, pushing forward with new insights into the dark poet of Romanticism.

It's always a pleasure to read Susan Wolfson's witty work, and she doesn't disappoint in her explication of how Byron (re)verses Southey's

*Vision* whilst self-reflexively anatomizing the author-function itself in a satire self-consciously wielding the pen for posterity. In Byron's satire, Junius is portrayed as the "antithesis of the author of name" (181), described as the aporia where the agency of writing itself has broken free from the play of even pseudonymous personality. McGann has written elsewhere on Byron's lyrics, but the well-focused essay in this collection usefully teases out the puzzling paradoxes of Byron's subjective yet public poetry; his compulsive exploding of the pose of sincerity; and coolly observed obsessive confessionism. Of the younger Byronists, Jane Stabler's detailed attention to the texture of Byron's allusive style works particularly effectively in an essay which draws out the Shandyeian aspects of *Mazeppa* and usefully compares these to the modes of intertextuality in the *ottava rima* verse.

It was refreshing, too, to have a whole essay devoted to Byron's prose. Andrew Nicholson handles the sheer diversity (reviews, parliamentary speeches, tales, notes, anecdotes, controversy) with both aplomb and infectious enthusiasm. He manages dexterously both to generalize about Byron's interweaving of fact and fiction in his writing practice and to analyze particular pieces in detail. Fascinating, too, was Anne Barton's incursion into Byron's mixture of jealousy and admiration for his eminent predecessor, William Shakespeare. This meant that his recourse to neoclassical strictures by which to deflate the bardolatry of his fellow Romantics coexisted with the saturation of his writing with conscious and unconscious Shakespearean allusions and by the deliberate rewriting and rethinking of certain plays in his own original dramas.

All in all, this is definitely a collection of uniformly strong and informative essays to be welcomed and to be recommended to students. The latter might have welcomed a more useful Introduction to the history of Byron's critical reputation than Bone gives in three pages. The bibliography, too, could have been more helpfully arranged. The Further Reading section would have been more student friendly if it had been subject-specific, perhaps broken down into individual suggestions by each contributor following the notes to his/her essay. As it was, there seemed no discernible difference between this list and the general bibliography, and many references were repeated in each. Such reservations aside, readers of Byron will find this book a friendly and erudite companion for many years to come.

*Caroline Franklin*  
*University of Wales at Swansea*