

## Editorial

THIS ISSUE OF *The Dalhousie Review* contains three articles on subjects loosely related to one another as aspects of contemporary culture. The first of these is Charles S. Taylor's analysis of some of the philosophical questions implicitly raised in a contemporary novel, Italo Calvino's *Mr. Palomar*. Taylor finds in Calvino's text an invitation to explore the unstable relationship between the postmodern self and the world which the self is engaged with, as an observer, a consumer, and an interpreter. The second article is Lucy Curzon's tracking of gender bias in the patronage practices of the Arts Council of Great Britain during the generation immediately following World War II. Curzon believes that an implicit linkage between artistic creativity and masculinity, characteristic of modernism in general, was among the assumptions governing state patronage in the postwar period. Anthony Stewart, in an article which demonstrates some of the ways in which the personal is political, argues that the dream of escaping the ghetto by means of success in professional sports is, for many young African-American males, a dangerous and debilitating illusion. Though he focuses on a particular problem, Stewart writes with the larger concerns of racial equity and identity very much in mind. All three of these works are indeed articles on contemporary culture, but they are strikingly unlike one another both in substance and in style. They take up some of the characteristic problems of our time (the self, gender, and race), but not in expected or formulaic ways, and that in itself is an excellent reason for presenting them here.

The short stories and poems in this issue, despite their wide-ranging divergence in tone and subject, also comment in various ways on some of the recurrent questions of contemporary culture.

Aislinn Hunter's story, "Unto Herself," and Pamela Bond's poem, "White Diamonds," offer allusive insight into the paradox of female creativity held in check by male-centred patronage. Lindsay Hawdon's "Safe" is, among other things, a disturbing study in fiction of the mechanisms of repression. Robert M. Martin's poem, "God Explains What He Does Nowadays," offers an ironic rereading of the disappearance of metaphysics from the contemporary world. The review article by Trevor Ross addresses some of the questions that arise in literary studies with the disappearance of the kind of consensus embodied in the idea of a canon of texts and authors, and the reviews of individual books raise related issues: the tenuous grasp on meaning of a culture that has lived through Hiroshima and Auschwitz, and the need for redemption from an environment of intellectual clutter and waste.

A word or two now about the future plans of *The Dalhousie Review*. Our next issue (77.1) will include articles and reviews on questions related to aesthetic theory of various kinds. This will be followed by a special issue (77.2) devoted to Africadian literature and history; in preparing this issue the editorial staff will be working in collaboration with George Elliott Clarke, whose creative and scholarly initiatives have done a great deal to promote awareness of black minority culture within our own region. In the more distant future we are proposing a special issue on aspects of privacy: its historical origins, its representations in literature and art, its legal status and boundaries, its precarious future in the electronic age, and so on. Potential contributors will want to consult the Call for Papers on the last page of this issue.

R.H.