

Book Reviews

The Performance of Conviction: Plainness and Rhetoric in the Early English Renaissance. By Kenneth J. E. Graham. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994. Pp. xiv, 232. \$32.50.

If conviction, the feeling that you know the truth, plain and simple, is defined in fundamental ways as *anti-rhetorical*, how on earth could it ever get itself expressed? This is the question that Kenneth Graham explores in the context of literary, political, religious, and educational writings, stretching from Wyatt to Shakespeare. His book is the second in Cornell's series, *Rhetoric and Society*, edited by Wayne A. Rebhorn. For this occasion, the series perhaps needs a sub-category: *Anti-rhetoric and Society*.

The Preface announces that "this is not a work on style" (ix). *The Performance of Conviction* is after something more basic than the Native plain style, or the Classical plain style, or the anti-Ciceronian style, or the new scientific prose advocated by the Royal Society. More basic, that is, than the "noticeably unnoticeable style" or the art which hides art. And more individualistic than Chaucerian "trouth," for the convictions that Graham's speakers are convinced of are less medieval and communal, more insistently personal, whether they confront an unreceptive public or withdraw to the solace of integrity. Graham's survey illuminates some of the peculiar pressures of the Reformation and of neo-Stoic individualism in sixteenth-century England.

The first chapter, on Wyatt, is one of the best, and in spite of the disclaimer of the Preface, it does represent an important advance in the understanding of Wyatt's plain style. Among its gems is a neat distinction between "plaining" and "complaining" in Wyatt's poems, "the one meaning a literary lover's moan, the other a more legalistic expression of a grievance" (40). The distinction is also caught in a beautiful sentence from Sidney's *Arcadia*: "Though he plaine, he doth not complaine; for it

is a harme, but no wrong, which he has received" (41). In this tradition, moaning and complaining are two quite different things. Wyatt sometimes does the one, and when he does, he adopts rhetorical means (persuasive) hoping for a rhetorical end (a faithful response); but he more often does the other, and though his complaints may employ rhetorical techniques, they are frequently founded on an anti-rhetorical premise. On the one hand, as a plain speaker, Wyatt prides himself on being intelligible; on the other, in a sort of emotional retreat, he can assert that he doesn't care if anybody understands: "Understand me who list / For I reck not a bean / I wot what I do mean" (32).

This anti-rhetorical attitude is sometimes aggressive, claiming the privilege (or as Graham defines it, the private law) of anger, and sometimes sorrowful and withdrawn. Even in retreat, however, from the tempestuous love and politics of Henry VIII's court, Wyatt is concerned to assert his right to his convictions, to perform them—publicly—and for this reason the poetry is never completely anti-rhetorical (especially not, one might add, in the poems addressed to John Poyntz, who is mentioned briefly, and Sir Francis Brian, who escapes the chapter's notice). In an earlier version of this chapter (*Style* 23.3 [1989]), Graham pushed this part of his discussion as more explicitly a supplement and partial corrective to Stephen Greenblatt's account of Wyatt's "inwardness" (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 115-56), but he now softens that debate (regrettably) and contents himself more with outlining the positive content of Wyatt's performance. The special bonus, however, of Graham's intelligent approach is the way it beautifully illuminates three remarkable poems which had not received their critical due: "Thy Promise Was," "O, Cruel Heart," and "When That I Call Unto My Mind."

There is not space here to treat the succeeding chapters in similar detail, but the approach should be clear enough. The Puritan authors of *An Admonition to the Parliament*, 1572, faced a dilemma akin to Wyatt's. If the truth of Scripture, newly translated into the vernacular, is plain and simple and speaks directly to the heart of the believer, what room is there for the public activities of education and interpretation that are essential to the moulding of a Christian community? And though the humanism of Roger Ascham's *Scholemaster* may seem to sort oddly with the Puritanism of the Admonition Controversy, it too is faced with the problem of creating a public community out of private convictions, a task which

turns in part on the function of wit: a plain source of truth or a tool for the discovery or invention of novelty?

In chapters 3 and 4, the tensions between public and private plainness and the ethical problems involved in political obedience or in a frequently anti-social anger are plotted in works by Fulke Greville, Sir Walter Raleigh, Thomas Kyd, and John Marston. In the final chapters, Graham turns his attention to Shakespeare, arguing that in *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*, "plainness is more a performance of proud desire than of true conviction" (187). It is *King Lear*, however, that presents the most interesting challenge, where competing convictions threaten most shockingly to tear the political, social, and religious order apart.

Like the Wyatt chapter, this one has appeared before (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 [Winter 1991]). It shows fewer revisions, but it also enjoys greater advantages from its new context. Graham's penetrating analysis of anger, built up in the discussions of Wyatt, Raleigh, Kyd and Marston, brings a useful perspective to the actions of Kent, for example. His analysis of withdrawal, or of conviction in retreat, works even better to account for the behavior of Edgar, both when he is (as Stanley Cavell says) avoiding love and when he is trying to act upon it. The treatment of such characters as the Fool or Cordelia, however, shows a limitation of the approach, a limitation connected to a certain nervousness or equivocation on the question of style. Graham speaks of the performance of conviction and the performance of love (in part as an answer to Cavell's critique of "the avoidance of love"), and he sees it as fundamentally "*plain*" (216). His argument is strikingly persuasive—up to a point—but it depends on emphasizing some aspects of style and downplaying or muting certain others. Consider the following:

All bless'd secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress! (4.4.15-18)

This, though it has the conviction of prayer, is neither plain nor simple; it is courtly and rhetorical and even, in its linguistic excess, ceremonial. It is one of the answers to the collapse of ceremony in the play's opening. It shows that the gestures of love do not necessarily require a

"stripped-down" (214) language to be genuine and that rhetoric may sometimes be more than a foil for conviction.

Graham, in fact, acknowledges that he takes "a rhetorical approach to anti-rhetorical plainness" (223), and he is often a wonderfully alert guide on matters of style—tone, diction, order or organization—but it is not finally quite clear just *when* the epistemological plainness that is his subject, and which tends to get defined as a fundamentally *individual* conviction, makes its appearance. Is it prior to any speech, or is it (at least sometimes) formed in the act of speaking? Is it visible primarily as a way of speaking, or as a particular kind of action, or speech-act? If it partakes in "a flexible tradition of shared moral values" (222), isn't it also bound in part to be constituted by previously-existing modes of speech? Graham at one point credits Stanley Fish with sounding "the death knell of debates about stylistic plainness" (3), but if so, *The Performance of Conviction* resoundingly resurrects them. It is the most scholarly and wide-ranging analysis of plainness in the English Renaissance since Wesley Trimpi's 1962 study of *Ben Jonson's Poems*, and although unlike Trimpi (and before him, Morris Croll), it comes at the topic from the perspective of conviction rather than scepticism, it raises similarly fruitful questions about epistemology—and style.

Dalhousie University

John Baxter

***Dante's Vision and the Circle of Knowledge.* By Giuseppe Mazzotta. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993. Pp. xiv, 328. \$37.50.**

In the introduction of *Dante's Vision and the Circle of Knowledge*, Professor Mazzotta states plainly the chief aim of his book: "to explore Dante's radical claims about poetry as nothing less than the foundation of all possible knowledge" (3). His book is divided in three parts. The first part, chapters 1 to 5, "focuses on poetry and the arts of language. Together those chapters probe how Dante imaginatively engaged all the epistemological debates of his time and disclosed complicities in the apparently most divergent systems of thought" (7). The second part, chapters 6 to 8, "tackles the questions of what is knowledge, how it becomes experience, and how the self is both the locus of and the limit

of knowledge; the relationship between love and knowledge; how both love and knowledge are tied to vision" (13). The last three chapters

together retrieve Dante's faith in theological aesthetics. His poetry still recognizes the importance of rational theology such as Aquinas's, but this cannot mean, for Dante, poetry's subordination to a dominant theological structure other than the one he forges. On the contrary, Dante is engaged in a creative polemic with St. Thomas, who, in many ways, is his privileged interlocutor. (14)

Having set out clearly the aim and structure of his work, Professor Mazzotta proceeds to show the relation of Dante's poetry to the tradition of the liberal arts, in particular to the arts of the trivium, and of the *enkyklios paideia*. His analysis shows the wide range of his knowledge and brings out a thoughtful, serious consideration of the many intellectual debates in Dante's time. His desire, a legitimate desire indeed, to treat Dante's poetry as something other than simple ornamentation, which he sees done too often in earlier scholarly work, raises many fascinating questions. His last chapter, entitled "Theologia ludens," explores the field of the relationship between play (*ludus*) and theology and proposes new perspectives.

My chief criticism of this excellent book would be that, as far as I can see, the author tends to underestimate the agreement of Dante with Aquinas. One example must suffice. On p. 7, Mazzotta writes: "For Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas poetry, as Curtius reported long ago, was 'infima inter omnes doctrinas.'" And he adds: "Aquinas, as Curtius correctly reports, uses the phrase that poetry is the lowest of all sciences in his *Summa theologiae* I, 1, 9, objection." But Curtius takes care to point out that Aquinas, in this context, does not endorse the phrase, that he merely quotes it as an argument used by the supporters of an opinion he is going to refute. Aquinas goes on to say that poetry uses metaphors, because *repraesentatio* is naturally pleasant to man, whereas Holy Scripture uses metaphors *propter necessitatem et utilitatem*. Are we to conclude with Mazzotta that "Aquinas relegated poetry to the corner of the merely delightful and inconsequential" (14)? Aquinas says that all poetry uses metaphors *propter repraesentationem*; he would not have denied that *some* poetry uses them also *propter necessitatem et utilitatem*. When he, himself, wrote poetry and exhorted the Church to praise the

Savior *in hymnis et canticis*, he was not aiming at "the merely delightful and inconsequential."

Professor Mazzotta's book (which includes a very useful bibliography) is important not only to literary critics, but also to those interested in Dante's philosophical and theological thought.

University of King's College

Marguerite Bourbeau Kussmaul

***Britannia's Issue: The Rise of British Literature from Dryden to Ossian.* By Howard D. Weinbrot. New York: Cambridge UP, 1993. Pp. xvii, 625. \$49.55**

Britannia's Issue traces the growth of literary confidence in the period in which modern Britain took the essential form it now possesses, setting it in the context of an evolving political assurance as the initially precarious Revolutionary settlement took hold and paved the way for the development of a modern arrangement of constitutional monarchy and the two-party parliamentary system. With the union of Scotland and England in 1707, Great Britain embarked upon a century of increasing commercial and later imperial expansion that were to make it by the following century the dominant world power.

Weinbrot borrows his title from Gray's *The Bard* (1757), a poem in which a Welsh Bard hails a line of "genuine Kings, Britannia's Issue," who will ensure through Elizabeth I and her successors a glorious political future and "by simple extension," Weinbrot suggests, "the line of great letters made possible by those liberating British monarchs" (14). Although the conjunction of the political and the literary underpins the story that Weinbrot so ably outlines, he is at pains to point out that he has deliberately avoided teleological "methods of historical inquiry," such as "the Whig interpretation of history." His approach is empirical and historical: "an interdisciplinary, pluralistic method" (10) that eschews the determinism of New Historicism, Marxism, or literary theory in favor of an explanation that encompasses the Celtic, the Bardic, and the Jewish as well as the Greek and Roman and native English contributions to a rich and diversified poetic tradition: "So amiable and complex an amalgam exemplifies what *Britannia's Issue* is about" (14).

On the whole, the procedure works very well. The commodious structure encourages a stately progress as Weinbrot, like an immensely knowledgeable major domo, conducts his tour of the noble rooms of this great palace, indicating its ancient foundations and later additions in a variety of styles, glorying in its famous treasures, many of them brought from far away, and pointing out with pride the wonderful vistas of the extensive grounds that can be seen through its windows. Along the way he pauses from time to time to describe both individual works or the history of struggles and movements that have affected the history of the house. His discussions of works, such as Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*, benefit from this treatment since historical context is our tour guide's *forté*, as do large and complex issues, such as the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns, or what he calls "the rise and fall of the pindaric ode," which forms one of the central chapters.

Like all good *ciceroni*, he naturally has his enthusiasms and these are what will remain longest in the memory of his audience. Weinbrot's plenitude includes the Hebraic and the Celtic, major elements of Britannia's issue too often overlooked or neglected in favor of classical derivatives. His analysis of the significant Jewish component in the literature of the period, from the Old Testament political analogies underpinning the poetry of Dryden and others, through Handel's great biblical oratories and the mid-century poems of writers such as Christopher Smart, to the more than slightly dotty obsessions with the supposed Jewish origins of the ancient British people, reminds us of the persistent fascination with Anglo-Jewish parallels, an expression perhaps of the special place in god's plans for the British people. Equally stimulating is his account of the Celtic component, itself curiously linked to the Hebraic since, according to "a widely held theory, the great Celtic peoples were offspring of Noah's grandson Gomer." The Gomerians spoke Hebrew, which "gradually evolved into Celtic" (477). That aside, the Celtic element, like the Jewish, was the product of a non-classical tradition, an alternative to the dominant Greek-Latin-Romance line that began in the schoolboy's grammar books and was reinforced when he went on the Grand Tour.

Inclusiveness is one of the many strengths of Weinbrot's commanding sweep, as is his willingness to reject any concerns about the anxiety of influence. For him, illustrious predecessors, when they are emulated

rather than slavishly imitated, provide the liberating benevolence of influence. Given his emphasis upon inclusiveness, it is somewhat odd that he restricts himself to a few genres: "drama, epic, ode, certain kinds of satire, and Virgilian and Ovidian conventions" (5). The novelists, though they fit very neatly into the literary-political trajectory, are rarely mentioned and then often for works other than their novels. Defoe, not unnaturally, is cited as evidence that the *pax Britannica* was based on trade, unlike the *pax Romana*, based on conquest. His *General History of Trade* and his *History of the Principal Discoveries and Improvements* are discussed in five and nine pages respectively, but *Robinson Crusoe* is mentioned only in a discussion of the connection between trade and religion (269). *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* do not appear in the index, nor, for that matter, do *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, *Amelia*, *Tristram Shandy*, or *Roderick Random*. Weinbrot complains that the "eighteenth century has too often been thought an age of prose" and he is determined to redress the balance by showing that "the eighteenth-century lyric moment lasted for about 150 years" (331). He succeeds with a vengeance. Britannia issue turns out to be Britannia's poetic issue.

The organization of this book appears to have been Weinbrot's single greatest difficulty. Aware that "no one wishes this book longer" (5-6), the author narrows his focus to restrict the scope, but by his own admission he has to leave to others the task of extending his hypotheses to fields such as "architecture, gardening, historiography, music, and painting" (6). Granted that the inclusion of all these areas would swell the bulk of book intolerably, I cannot but regret that at least some of the many instances that Weinbrot cites to illustrate his points has been reduced to the brevity of notes. The anti-Achilles trope, for example, begins on page 216 and runs to a dozen instances before it runs out two pages later. Yet, paradoxically, it is the cataloguing instinct that imparts lasting usefulness to this book. The notes are a major work of scholarship in their own right, ample documentation for anyone interested in pursuing the topics that Weinbrot discusses in the text and happily placed at the foot of the page where they are most useful. The index, the key to all that precedes it, on the other hand, is only half as useful as it should be since it omits all secondary sources.

***The Truth about Postmodernism.* By Christopher Norris. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1993. Pp. 333. Paper, \$19.95.**

Encountering Norris for the first time can be dizzying, so packed and rapid, original and complex are his ideas. In the opening six pages of *What's Wrong with Postmodernism* (1990) he makes the following argument. England (and he sometimes refers to the United States) turned rightward in politics. The Thatcher government made a "full-scale assault" on the social gains engineered by socialist values and the British Labour Party—"welfare provision, educational policy, workers' rights, protection of minority cultures and viewpoints, freedom of speech, liberty of the unions to organise effective strike action, and so forth." This assault was promoted by denigration of "socialist utopianism" and by appeals to common sense and consensus values—"the plain facts of economic life—competition, market forces, structural unemployment, etc." The Labour Party itself was infected, as attested to by its "wholesale junking of principles"; for example, by its abandonment of its platform of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Complicit in this right turn was one branch of modern critical theory, the postmodernists/poststructuralists—Jean Baudrillard, Jean François Lyotard—and the neopragmatists—Stanley Fish and Richard Rorty. Complicit because they too undermined Enlightenment/left values, the "meta-narrative of progress, reason and truth," by their cynical, "dead level" "ultra-relativist or consensus-based thinking" and their "extreme epistemological scepticism," which encouraged political malaise and "acquiescence in the way things are" by intellectuals. That theory "has 'consequences' beyond the professional or academic sphere" which "affect the course of social and political events" is a reality all the more important at a time of increasing "manipulative pressures—always in the name of freedom, democracy, rational self-interest, etc.—whose effect is precisely to reinforce . . . uncritical consensus values." But not all theory or theorists support consensus and scepticism. The "critical," contestatory, emancipatory theorists "like Derrida, de Man, Roy Bhaskar and Jürgen Habermas" support Enlightenment belief in "progress, reason and truth"; for example, Roy Bhaskar's defense of "scientific realism."

Quite a project—exhilarating in its scope and urgent in its relevance to the world's future. All of his books of the 1980s and 1990s advance

several or all of these ideas, especially defending Enlightenment values against extreme modern relativism: *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (1982), *The Deconstructive Turn: Essays in the Rhetoric of Philosophy* (1984), *The Contest of Faculties: Philosophy and Theory after Deconstruction* (1985), *Derrida* (1987), *Paul de Man, Deconstruction and the Critique of Aesthetic Ideology* (1988), *What Is Deconstruction?* (1988), *Music and the Politics of Culture* (1989). His 1992 publication, *Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals, and the Gulf War*, puts a sharp edge on his humanist, rational critique of the postmodernists by confronting them with the brutal events and systematic deceit of the Gulf War. He opposes, for example, Noam Chomsky's reasoned analysis of information control in the United States and England against postmodernist language games, irony, and acquiescence to slaughter.

The Truth about Postmodernism continues this project with some additional perspectives. Chapter 1, "The 'End of Ideology' Again" contains four sections. The first opens characteristically with an attack upon contemporary politics, especially British Conservative government. Norris then summarizes *Uncritical Theory*, particularly to associate and condemn intellectuals' failure to oppose the Gulf War, postmodernists' and neopragmatists' reduction of "all truth-claims to a species of rhetorical imposition," and the Labour Party's "retreat from socialist principles" and abandonment of nuclear disarmament (2-3). The second section closely examines an article by Stuart Hall to emphasize Labour's compromises with "a better, more just or humane social order" (10). The third section attacks Lyotard on grounds already described—his "ultra-nominalist" (20) dilution of issues of truth into issues of textuality—, here pointing out his misconstrual of Kantian ethics, the defense of Kant and the Enlightenment through Kant a major sub-theme of his books. And the fourth section praises Robert Scholes's *Protocols of Reading*, for its clear argument against the postmodern "textualist approach to issues of class and gender politics" (27) which erodes rational grounds for opposing oppression. His one objection is to Scholes's inclusion of Derrida in the postmodernism he attacks, for Norris distinguishes between the deconstruction of Derrida and de Man and the postmodernism and neopragmatism he seeks to refute. In this opening chapter we glimpse the argument he has been developing for a decade.

For the remainder of the book he concentrates mainly upon sorting out the "misreadings of Kant," upon "getting Kant right on the relation between epistemology, ethics and aesthetics" (28). For Norris this is no abstract critique, nor restricted to "the specialized enclaves of cultural and critical theory," but closely relates to "the single most urgent question now confronting left thinkers in Britain and the United States: namely, what remains of the socialist project at a time when distorted consensus values" control political debate. Chapter 2 pursues the question "What Is Enlightenment?" as "raised in Foucault's late writings on the politics of knowledge." Chapter 3 explores William Empson's attempts "to reassert the values of reason and truth against the orthodox literary-critical fashions of his time." Chapter 4 discusses two more recent approaches to problems of Kantian epistemology, ethics, and political theory—those by the deconstructionist literary critic J. Hillis Miller and by the analytical philosopher Onora O'Neill. The final chapter examines the book *Torture and Truth* by Page duBois as one more way to explain the various postmodern schools in the context of Enlightenment values. I have space to discuss two chapters briefly.

The chapter on Foucault provides a brilliant survey of his thought and a close analysis of his arguments regarding the Enlightenment and Kant. Is Foucault another postmodernist ultra-sceptic, as is generally thought? In his early and middle periods undoubtedly he is, but in his late writings he is ambivalent, Norris argues. Both in the "archaeology" of *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and the "genealogy" of the essays collected under the title *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, the "subject"—the autonomous individual—is submerged and dissolved in determinate causes and effects and various discursive formations that constitute history; "truth, enlightenment, self-understanding or effective political agency" are excluded; and Kant is attacked for creating such a "transcendental illusion" in his three *Critiques* (29-30). But later, following vol. 1 of *The History of Sexuality* and in the posthumously published *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self* Foucault increasingly perceived "the moral and political bankruptcy entailed by a project that effectively renounced the principles of human agency and choice" (32). This is not to say he was a Kantian prodigal son returned from error, since all his later writings contain elements of his earlier; on the other hand, his later work makes no absolute break with the values

of Enlightenment thought, and he should be distinguished from doctrinaire postmodernists like Lyotard (97). Foucault never espoused the acquiescence enjoined by the postmodern ultra-sceptics and relativists, and he "kept faith" with the "enduring value of Enlightenment thought" (98).

Norris has had a long interest in William Empson—a book about him in 1978 (not mentioned in this chapter) and an edition of his writings in 1993. His admiration for Empson seems almost unbounded, and it derives from Empson's commitment to rational analysis, to his rejection of "emotivist, symbolist" or other severance of "poetic language and the language of plain-prose reason" (104-5), and to his complete difference from "the kinds of extreme cognitive scepticism or the varieties of relativist doctrine" current today (105). Chapter 3 provides a detailed sifting of the complexities in Empson's basic approach: for example, Empson's critique of A. J. Ayer's *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* and logical positivism (173-4), or his anticipation of the thinking of Paul de Man (174-6), or his attacks on Christian or philosophical "orthodox unreason" (177-9), or his rejection of "just about every movement of ideas in contemporary critical debate" (179). For Empson's book *The Structure of Complex Words* Norris offers this extraordinary tribute: it is "by far the most original and sustained effort of literary theory to have appeared in this country during the past hundred years" (181), for in it Empson kept the chief problems complexly in view.

Evidently, Norris is susceptible to extremely divergent interpretation. For example, Jerry Leonard in a review of *Deconstruction and the Interests of Theory* (1989) describes Norris as "another symptom of the logic by which the contemporary Left is infiltrated by the ideology of 'subtlety,'" because it has suppressed Marxist commitment to "social transformation as the emancipation and empowerment of the historically disenfranchised" (*College Literature* 18 [June 1991]: 150-51). I can see how Norris's preoccupation with the history of scepticism, epistemology, Kant, and contemporary critical schools might lead to a perception of a Norris lost in abstraction, but Norris never forgets Thatcher and Reagan. E. D. Hirsch in *The Deconstruction of Literature: Criticism after Auschwitz* lists Norris with "deconstructionist" apologists for Martin Heidegger, a Nazi sympathizer. But Norris (270-80) rejects Heidegger's irrationalist mode of hermeneutics and his endorsement of "the kind of

mystified organicist rhetoric, the potent mythology of 'blood and soil,' which played a large role in Nazi cultural propaganda" (273).

Contrary to these two erroneous derogations, Norris adheres to the Enlightenment tradition of rational discourse which he believes leads to emancipation.

University of Arkansas

James R. Bennett

***Constitutional Predicament: Canada after the Referendum of 1992.* Edited by Curtis Cook. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1994. Pp. viii, 295. \$49.95. Paper, \$17.95.**

Constitutional Predicament is a collection of essays drawn from papers presented at a colloquium on Canada's constitutional crisis that was held at Colorado College just three weeks after the nation-wide referendum, 26 October 1992, on the Charlottetown Accord. The range in approaches is stimulating and thought-provoking, as are some of the commentaries that follow some of the essays.

In their tightly-argued essays, Alan Cairns and F. L. Morton offer shrewd observations about the constitutional actors—and an apparent non-actor. As Morton points out, the Supreme Court of Canada managed to enter the fray on the language issue at a couple of decisive moments in the constitutional debate, and with the dubious result of convincing the Quebec government that the Charter of Rights of Freedoms is a threat to the province's aspirations, not an aid. Hence the government's controversial, defensive strategy—the distinct-society clause. Morton wants to emphasize the court's measure of responsibility for Canada's constitutional impasse because he knows that it could have reached different conclusions in the decisions in question, and because the analysis sheds light on the rationale of the Quebec government's position. Like Morton, Alan Cairns keeps his eye on the institutional ball, and as a result brings some much-needed clarity to the seemingly simple question: who is speaking to whom? He argues that Quebec nationalism, struggling to break out of the institutional mould of the "province," confronts an odd opponent in Canada. What Canada? The so-called "rest of Canada"

(ROC), as it has been dubbed, has no formal institutional voice, since the government of Canada cannot speak for a Canada-minus-Quebec. In the end, Cairns finds Canadian federalism dysfunctional in relation to the development of a multinational country.

Both Morton and Cairns understand the politics of interest, as does Janet Ajzenstat, who considers the political significance of constitutions that are regarded as ideologically-biased documents. Then there is the candid exchange between Barry Cooper and Alain Noel, who directly debate the Quebec question in no uncertain terms. By contrast, other essays in the collection leave the political world entirely. Examples include James Tully's romance with the idea of diversity as the constitutional holy grail, and Peter Emberley's view of the Charlottetown Accord as a postmodern affair. In short, there is something in this collection for everyone, much of it worthwhile indeed.

Dalhousie University

Jennifer Smith

***The Long Road Home.* By Eric Trethewey. Fredericton, NB: Goose lane, 1994. Pp. 121. Paper, \$12.95.**

The images and experiences of our early years are what shape us, what stay with us in some form or other all of our lives. In some ways they become the "home" we are always somehow seeking, yet never quite reach. As in his previous work (two poetry collections and two chap-books), Eric Trethewey focusses on the things we leave behind yet somehow carry with us. His persona is the traveller who constantly looks over his shoulder at what he has left, as if the perspective of "leaving" provides the only way of truly "seeing."

What is left behind for this traveller is often hard times—the "worn coats / and darned sweaters" and "icy kitchens" of the poet's boyhood in Ellershouse and Mount Uniacke; or the rough physical work of day laboring in Moncton, in New Orleans, or on ships near Suva. But "hard times / always comes home" the grandmother says in "Consolation From a Woman of the People," and there's the sense that the traveller is compelled to circle back again and again to these lost times.

Sometimes the past is revisited unwittingly, as when dreams wash up those lost worlds. In "Wait," one of the most powerful and poignant poems in the collection, the narrator / dreamer clings to a childhood scene, begging the dream figures to stay. In "Intercession at All Hallows," the dreamer watches as past scenes of disorder transform themselves into harmony and joy. In "The Cellar," the ghost of a murdered wife begs to be allowed in "one last time." It's as if the past has a life of its own; it continues, somehow, without us.

In this sense, then, everything we have been and experienced becomes a kind of independent, shadowy presence. In the title poem, the traveller says, "When I look up, always I seem to see / myself as another who walks beside me, / a stranger I almost recognize, almost / am able to touch. . . ." The past, like the self, is never wholly knowable, never wholly touchable, but it accompanies us as a kind of travel companion. In the end, the "road home" for this traveller becomes an acceptance and celebration of the journey itself.

Eric Trethewey grew up in rural Nova Scotia, and though he has lived a good part of his adult life in the United States, his voice is an important Canadian and Maritime voice. His poems are controlled, profound, sometimes ironic, and always deeply moving.

Virginia Tech University

Simone Poirier-Bures

***The Vagrants of the Barren and Other Stories.* By Charles G. D. Roberts. Edited by Martin Ware. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1992. Pp. xxviii, 174. \$26.95. Paper, \$11.95.**

This collection of animal stories represents a recent trend in Canadian literary criticism's reappraisal of Roberts's significance to Canadian literature, presenting him to a new generation of readers. Long out of vogue, particularly since the advent of the 1960s generation of literary critics, Roberts's animal stories are here made accessible for readers in the 1990s. With the public's interest in ecology growing more insistent by the day, a re-reading of Roberts can prove surprisingly fresh for readers of David Suzuki's day. The basics for such a reappraisal are well

provided by Ware, whose expertise is self-effacingly tucked away in the bibliography where we learn that his 1980 PhD thesis from Dalhousie, *Canadian Romanticism in Transition*, contains a discussion of the evolution of Roberts's vision, including his Darwinian ideas.

Ware says at the outset that his selection was "daunting" and that his choices represent

the best of the more than two hundred and thirty animal stories written by Roberts over a span of almost fifty years (1886-1935) . . . and that in the best of these [perhaps about five dozen, by Terry Whalen's calculations], we recognize a distinctive voice and a distinctive achievement.

Ware further points out that

recent readers have been more and more drawn to the best of [Roberts's] animal stories—for their story-telling and artistic power, for the modest precision of the representation of animals, and for the challenge offered by their interpretation of animal psychology.

This challenge is one addressed specifically in the "Critical Discussions" section of his bibliography: he delineates specifically the so-called (by US President Theodore Roosevelt) "Nature Fakir" controversy concerning the work of Roberts and his contemporary, Ernest Thompson Seton, by means of a sequence of relevant periodical titles. This is the sort of useful information to be found in the critical apparatus of Ware's book. Such bibliographical headings as "Early Discussions (before 1965)," "Recent Discussions (since 1964)," and "Scientific Discussions of the Kinship of Man and Animals" serve to produce a context for a contemporary appreciation of Roberts.

Ware's selections are judiciously chosen in that each represents an aspect of Roberts's work that is strikingly his own. For example, one of the shortest, "By the Winter Tide," is almost a version of "Tantramar Revisited" in focussing closely on the details of the area of one of the "Two Rivers" (the other being the St. John) Roberts had known, and been formed by, from childhood:

Had it been daylight, the chaotic icefield would have shown small beauty, every wave-beaten floe being soiled and streaked with rust-coloured Tantramar mud. But under the transfiguring touch of the moon the

unsightly levels changed to plains of infinite mystery—expanses of shattered, white granite, as it were, fretted and scrawled with blackness—reaches of loneliness older than time. So well is the mask of eternity assumed by the mutable moonlight and the ephemeral ice.

Such a passage does much to support Fred Cogswell's claim (in *Charles G. D. Roberts*, 1983) that Roberts's prose, in "the more imaginative portions of his animal stories, was as much a fulfilment of his poetic urges as it was a fulfilment of his drive towards freedom from convention." In the same volume, Cogswell says "the most serviceable tasks that can be performed for Roberts are the provision of an adequate biography" (this has now been done, by John Colwell Adams) "the publication of his letters, and the production of well-edited editions of his complete poems and the various volumes of his prose fictions." He notes "these events are not likely to occur rapidly unless more Canadian scholars are convinced that Roberts is worth such attention." The publication of Ware's collection is timely in hastening such conviction. His collection makes accessible to scholar and general reader alike an affordable and approachable number of Roberts's stories, culled by their editor's sure hand and given context by his Introduction and Notes.

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Books Received

(† Reviewed in this issue; * to be reviewed in a future issue.)

- Adèle Hugo: La Misérable.* By Leslie Smith Dow. Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane, 1993. Pp. 194. Paper, \$16.95.
- American Culture Between the Wars: Revisionary Modernism & Postmodern Critique.* By Walter Kalaidjian. New York: Columbia, 1993. Pp. xvi, 316. \$55.00. Paper, \$18.50.
- American Iconology.* Edited by David C. Miller. New Haven: Yale UP, 1993. Pp. 344. \$28.50.
- The Art of Walking Backwards.* By John B. Lee. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 88. Paper, \$10.95.
- The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics.* By Martha Woodmansee. The Social Foundations of Aesthetic Forms Series. Edited by Jonathan Arac. New York: Columbia, 1994. Pp. xv, 200. \$29.50.
- The Bachelor's Banquet.* Edited by Faith Gildenhuis. Ottawa, ON: Barnabe Riche Society vol. 2/Medieval Renaissance Texts & Studies vol. 109. (Dovehouse Editions, 1993. Pp. 153. \$22.00. Paper. \$9.00.
- Back Then: Voices of Memory 1915-45.* Edited by David Helwig. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 103. Paper, \$12.95.
- Barnabe Riche: His Farewell to the Military Profession.* Edited by Donald Beecher. Ottawa: Dovehouse vol. 1; Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies vol. 91, 1992. Paper, \$12.00.
- The Beaver Bites Back? American Popular Culture in Canada.* Edited by David H. Flaherty and Frank E. Manning. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1993. Pp. xxii, 356. \$49.95. Paper, \$19.95.
- 93: Best Canadian Stories.* Edited by David Helwig & Maggie Helwig. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 184. Paper, \$15.95.
- The Better to See You.* By Alfonso Quijada Urfas. Translated by Hugh Hazelton. Dunvegan, ON: Cormorant, 1993. Pp. 93. Paper, \$10.95.
- Blake and the Idea of the Book.* By Joseph S. Viscomi. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994. Pp. xxvi, 453. \$49.50.

- Blow Up the Trumpet in the New Moon.* By Douglas How. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 247. \$29.95. Paper, \$15.95.
- Blueberry Cliffs.* By David Helwig. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 70. \$23.95. Paper, \$11.95.
- Brutal Choreographies: Oppositional Strategies and Narrative Design in the Novels of Margaret Atwood.* By J. Brooks Bouson. Amherst, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1993. Pp. x, 204. \$27.50.
- Cantos from a Small Room.* By Robert Hilles. Toronto: Wolsak and Wynn, 1993. Pp. 88. Paper, \$10.00.
- Changing Voices: The Modern Quoting Poem.* By Leonard Diepeveen. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993. Pp. xx, 196. \$37.50.
- Children of the Earth: Literature, Politics and Nationhood.* By Marc Shell. New York: Oxford UP, 1993. Pp. 353. \$49.00.
- The Chinese Execution.* By Polly Fleck. Toronto: Wolsak and Wynn, 1993. Pp. 90. \$10.00.
- Clayoquot & Dissent.* By Tzeporah Berman et al. Edited by Veronica Hatch. Vanc., BC: Ronsdale (Cacanadadada), 1994. Pp. 219. Paper, \$9.95 ISBN 0-921870-29-9.
- Colonialism and Gender from Mary Wollstonecraft to Jamaica Kincaid.* By Moira Ferguson. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. Pp. x, 175. \$29.50.
- **The Columbia History of American Poetry.* Edited by Jay Parini and Brett C. Millier. New York: Columbia, 1994. Pp. xxxi, 894. \$59.95.
- The Columbia History of British Poetry.* Edited by Carl Woodring and James Shapiro. New York: Columbia, 1994. Pp. xi, 732. \$59.95.
- Coming Attractions 93.* Edited by Douglas Glover and Maggie Helwig. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 112. Paper, \$12.95.
- The Common But Less Frequent Loon and Other Essays.* By Keith Stewart Thomson. New Haven: Yale UP, 1993. Pp. xi, 186. \$22.50.
- Cut-Out.* By Wilma Riley. Regina, SK: Coteau, 1993. Pp. 256. Paper, \$14.95.
- The Crew.* By Don Dickinson. Regina, SK: Coteau, 1993. Pp. 256. Paper, \$14.95.
- The Debris of Planets.* By Clive Doucet. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 88. Paper, \$10.95.
- Dementia Americana.* By Keith Maillard. Vanc., BC: Ronsdale/Cacanadadada, 1994. Pp. 105. Paper, \$10.95 ISBN 0-921870-28-0.
- Dog Sleeps: Irritated Texts.* By Monty Reid. Edmonton, AB: NeWest, 1993. Pp. 89. Paper, \$12.95.

- Dogs Know About Parades.* By Ted Plantos. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 71. Paper, \$10.95.
- Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender and Political Economy in Revolution.* By Tom Furniss. New York: Cambridge UP, 1993. Pp. xiv, 306. \$59.95.
- The End of War.* By Jean-Guy Carrier. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 143. \$25.95. Paper, \$12.95.
- L'État et les minorités.* Edited by Jean Lafontant with André Fauchon, Marie-Christine Aubin and Hermann Duchesne. Saint-Boniface, MB: Les Éditions du Blé, 1993. Pp. xiv, 272. Paper, \$34.95.
- A Gentleman in the Outports: Gobeineau and Newfoundland.* Edited and translated by Michael Wilkshire. Carleton Library Series Number 177. Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1993. Pp. xlix, 250. Paper, \$17.95.
- Girl By the Water.* Poetry by Gary Geddes. Winnipeg: Turnstone P, 1993. Pp. 125. Paper, \$12.95.
- Going Downtown: Reflections on Urban Progress.* By David Lewis Stein. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 108. \$25.95. Paper, \$12.95.
- Henry James's Apprenticeship—The Tales: 1864-1882.* By W. R. Martin and Warren U. Ober. Streetsville, ON: Meany, 1994. xiv, 213. \$45.00.
- A History of Warfare.* By John Keegan. Toronto: Key Porter, 1993. Pp. xvi, 432. \$36.95.
- In the Era of Acid Rain.* By Karen Mulhallen. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 136. Paper, \$14.95.
- Inside Stories.* By M. Anne Mitton. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 88. Paper, \$14.95.
- The Irish Diaspora: A Primer.* By Donald H. Akenson. Belfast, N. Ireland: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1993. Pp. ix, 319. \$45.00.
- Jiggers.* By Todd Bruce. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1994. Pp. 66. Paper, \$9.95.
- Johnson and Boswell in Scotland: A Journey to the Hebrides.* Edited by Pat Rogers. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1993. Pp. xxii, 330. \$35.00.
- The Life Expectancy of Pantyhose and the Poems of Middle Age.* By Wilbur Topsail. South Bend, IN: Erstwhile, 1993. Pp. 76. Paper, \$7.95.
- Literary Transmission and Authority: Dryden and Other Writers.* Edited by Earl Miner and Jennifer Brady. New York: Cambridge UP, 1993. Pp. xii, 163. \$49.95.

- Llamas in the Snow*. By Cullene Bryant. Edmonton: River (Books Collective), 1993. Pp. 160. Paper, \$12.95.
- Logic and Other Nonsense: The Case of Anselm and His God*. By Ermanno Bencivenga. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1993. Pp. xii, 132. \$19.95.
- †*The Long Road Home*. By Eric Trethewey. Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane, 1994. Pp. 121. Paper, \$12.95.
- Mall*. By Anne Swannell. Edmonton: Rowan (Books Collective), 1993. Pp. 68. Paper, \$12.95.
- Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*. By Luce Irigaray. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. Pp. 190. Paper, \$14.50.
- Miss Autobody: A Play (Mademoiselle Autobody)*. By Les Folles Alliées. Translated by Linda Gaboriau. Charlottetown, PEI: gynergy, 1993. Pp. 120. Paper, \$10.95.
- Modernism, Mass Culture, and Professionalism*. By Thomas Strychacz. New York: Cambridge UP, 1993. Pp. vii, 228. \$49.95.
- Myth from the Ice Age to Mickey Mouse*. By Robert W. Brockway. Albany: State U of New York P, 1993. Pp. x, 187. \$49.50.
- Nicolette*. By Robert Zend. Vancouver, BC: Cacanadadada, 1993. Pp. 160. Paper, \$12.95.
- The Night You Called Me a Shadow*. By Barbara Klar. Regina, SK: Coteau, 1993. Pp. 72. Paper, \$9.95.
- Old Bank Notes*. By Raymond Souster. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 96. \$23.95. Paper, \$11.95.
- Out of the Interior*. By Harold Rhenisch. Vancouver, BC: Cacanadadada, 1993. Pp. 206. Paper, \$12.95.
- Out on Main Street & Other Stories*. By Shani Mootoo. Vancouver, BC: Press Gang, 1993. Pp. 128. Paper, \$12.95.
- Penelope Lively*. By Mary Hurley Moran. New York: Twayne (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan), 1993. Pp. xiv, 170. \$22.95.
- Phoenix Time*. By Hilda Kirkwood. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 71. \$23.95. Paper, \$11.95.
- Pioneer Policing in Southern Alberta: Deane of the Mounties 1888-1914*. Edited by William M. Baker. Calgary, AB: Historical Society of Alberta, 1993. Pp. xv, 269. Paper, \$22.95.
- Politics & Value in English Studies: A Discipline in Crisis?*. By Josephine M. Guy & Ian Small. New York: Cambridge UP, 1993. Pp. x, 195. \$39.95.
- Poor Player*. By Lesley Krueger. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 216. Paper, \$15.95.

- Proust and the Sense of Time.* By Julia Kristeva. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. Pp. xvi, 103. \$19.95.
- Raising of Voices.* By Robert Hilles. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 84. Paper, \$14.95.
- Representing War: Form and Ideology in First World War Narratives.* By Evelyn Cobley. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1993. Pp. xii, 261. \$45.00.
- Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism.* Edited by Karl Kroeber and Gene W. Ruoff. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1993. Pp. 508. \$48.00. Paper, \$17.00.
- Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France.* By Jann Matlock. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. Pp. xviii, 422. \$60.00. Paper, \$18.00.
- The Scorpions Dark Dance.* By Alfredo de Palchi. Translated by Sonia Raiziss. Riverside, CA: Xenos, 1993. Pp. xiii, 130. \$19.95. Paper, \$9.95.
- Selected Plays of Louis MacNeice.* Edited by Alan Heuser and Peter McDonald. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994. Pp. xv, 415. \$75.50.
- Sold As Seen: It's Not That Bad-It's Verse.* By G. D. Smith. Liverpool: Bookbound, 1993. Pp. 22. Paper, £1.00.
- Staging Politics: The Lasting Impact of Shakespeare's Histories.* By Wolfgang Iser. Translated by David Henry Wilson. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. Pp. xii, 224. \$39.50.
- Stendhal Revisited.* Edited by David O'Connell. Twayne's World Authors Series. New York: Twayne, 1993. Pp. xiv, 171. \$22.95.
- Summer's Idyll.* By Don Gutteridge. Ottawa: Oberon, 1993. Pp. 150. \$25.95. Paper, \$12.95.
- walkin' wounded.* By Judith Fitzgerald. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 61. Paper, \$10.95.
- The Walled Garden.* By Michael Dean. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 110. Paper, \$14.95.
- The Way It Was.* By Kenneth G. Roberts. Ottawa, ON: Conference of Defence Associations Institute, 1993. Pp. 35. Paper, \$5.00.
- Where Once Our Mothers Stood We Stand: Women's Suffrage in Newfoundland 1890-1925.* By Margot I. Duley. Charlottetown, PEI: gynergy, 1993. Pp. 160. Paper, \$12.95.
- Woman in the Rock.* By Claudia Gahlinger. Charlottetown, PEI: gynergy, 1993. Pp. 176. Paper, \$10.95.

Women and Social Location: Our Lives, Our Research/Nos Vies, Nos Recherches: Reflet de notre société. Edited by Marilyn Assheton-Smith & Barbara Spronk. Charlottetown, PEI: gynergy, 1993. Pp. 224. Paper, \$12.95.

Women's Writing and the Literary Institution/L'écriture au féminin et l'institution littéraire. Edited by C. Potvin and J. Williamson in collaboration with S. Tötösy de Zepetnek. Edmonton, AB: Research Institute for Comparative Literature, U of Alberta, 1992. Pp. viii, 235. Paper, \$20.00.

Yarrow. By Leonard Neufeldt. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1993. Pp. 55. Paper, \$10.95.