Book Reviews

Enlightenment Against Empire. By Sankar Muthu. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003. xiv, 348 pages. $19.95 US paper.

During the enlightenment, the principal standard for political and moral critique was the concept of a fundamentally natural and as yet uncorrupted human being: "natural man." Authors such as Rousseau criticized the corruption they saw in European societies by contrasting it with the uncorrupted life of natural man. However, because it ignored the fundamental cultural agency of the human being, the concept of natural man was an inadequate moral and political standard. Thus the critical theory of Rousseau degenerated into theoretical confusion and failed to develop into a sustained critical analysis of the evils of contemporary imperialism. The latter was developed by three late enlightenment era theorists—Diderot, Kant, and Herder—who correctly understood human beings not as varieties of natural man, but rather as fundamentally cultural agents. This is Sankar Muthu's major claim in *Enlightenment Against Empire.* Those critical theorists who were in the natural man tradition could not develop sustained critiques of imperialism *because* they were in the natural man tradition. Only by explicitly understanding human beings as cultural agents would they have been able to seriously criticize imperialism.

Muthu demonstrates that Diderot, Kant, and Herder were anti-imperialist, while Rousseau wasn't. But if Muthu also convinces his readers that the first three developed foundational theories of cultural agency, and Rousseau did not, it doesn't follow that there was a theoretical connection between anti-imperialism and a theory of cultural agency.

Muthu goes on to claim that this connection between cultural theory and anti-imperialism provides grounds for the view "that 'the enlightenment' *as such* and the notion of an overarching 'enlightenment project' simply do not exist" (264). Because Diderot, Kant, and Herder's basic premises, and the conclusions they drew from those premises, are at odds with traditional accounts of the enlightenment as such, the latter category should be considered suspect. Muthu further argues that the views of cultural agency developed by Diderot, Kant, and Herder contain philosophical resources that will help us today to conceptualise cultural pluralism without having to give up robust moral judgment.

Muthu's view of cultural agency is informed by "significant contemporary gains in our knowledge of humans' biological inheritance and its complex relationship to environmental factors .... We now know that humans ... are dependent upon extragenetic mechanisms. Cultural norms and expectations ... provide humans with information without which they could not function" (68–69). Muthu's term "cultural agency" indicates (i) that humans are fundamentally social; (ii) that the various practices of any particular human society necessarily involve artifice; and (iii) that practices may,

to a significant degree, be changed intentionally by humans themselves. All human beings are necessarily cultural beings, whereas each human exists within a distinct regional culture that is the product of human artifice (and so is changeable). The view that humans are fundamentally cultural agents, when it is augmented by the further view that there is no a-cultural standard according to which particular cultures can be genuinely ranked with respect to each other, establishes the ground for anti-imperialism, for it rules out judgements of the inferiority or superiority of one culture with respect to another. However, any practices within a culture which have the effect of destroying the grounds of universal cultural agency—i.e., the grounds of what it is to be human—are subject to legitimate moral judgement.

Muthu's argumentative task is most challenging with respect to Kant, who was a formalist when it came to moral matters, but Muthu argues that Kant understood morality as necessarily involving a cultural agency grounded in freedom and reason. In opposition to the typical Kant, the typical Herder is taken to be a "counter-enlightenment" historicist, but Muthu argues that Herder's historicism is intertwined with a universalism such that he defends cultural specificity against those practices that would threaten the universal grounds of cultural agency itself. From these grounds Herder rejected imperialism as did Kant and Diderot before him.

Enlightenment Against Empire is an ambitious and provocative book. It is clear that it delivers a promise to raise brows and perhaps to open eyes to a culture of enlightened diversity.

John Duncan — University of King's College

After Theory. By Terry Eagleton. London: Allen Lane, 2003. viii, 225 pages. $40.00.

Terry Eagleton is at the top of his form in his latest intervention in ongoing debates about art and politics, academicism and social activism. This means there is lots here to laugh about, as well as much to ponder in terms of one's own intellectual and broader citizenship and the predicaments and prospects of English Studies. It also means, for this reader, that the Eagleton wit gets a little wearing about halfway through, while the desire intensifies for a more constructive vision of possible futures—a desire somewhat accommodated in the book's final chapters, a meditation on mortality perhaps stimulated by the passing of the author's mother to whose memory the book is dedicated. There is a moving solemnity at times, as well as passionate anger and periodically cool or cavorting invective.

Eagleton does not use the expression 'post-theory,' in part because 'after' can accommodate elements of emulation (and hence continuity) as well as sequence and/or rupture. And, despite his persistent attacks on what he sees as (American) theory's political feebleness and needless obscurity, and on the gleefully Laputan activities of postmodernism, even Eagleton distinguishes between serious and faddish uses of

theory, and concludes by re-affirming that theory itself is inescapable, so that we need all the more to escape from its current orthodoxies by re-engaging with what it too often and too smugly derides: including Truth, Virtue and Objectivity, religious faith, and forms of foundationalism.

The eight chapters move along at a briskly aphoristic pace, after striking an elegiac, if not a fatalistic opening note: The golden age of cultural theory is long past. Eagleton sees a sad decline recently from the accomplishments of high theory to the trivial and the pseudo-profound. Popular cultural studies mark the further commodification of knowledge and the further compromising of critique, but also a worsening of inter-generational academic politics so that the old fogies who work on classical allusions in Milton look askance on the young turks who are deep in incest and cyber-feminism. This is amusing caricature but it seems likely to lessen public esteem for scholarship while giving our students a very distorted impression of relations among those who teach them. Overdrawn oppositions (and they are everywhere in this book) do little to support dialectical transformation. They ignore the fact that junior faculty can be far more conservative than their seniors. And such oppositions can be carelessly read as evidence that a notorious leftie has made a belated turn towards maturity, the canon, and the self-improving pursuit of the literary mysteries. If Eagleton has seen the folly of his ways, despite departing immovable Oxford for a chair in Cultural Theory at Manchester University, then maybe things will turn out alright after all.

Eagleton regularly courts such misunderstanding, but only to spurn it in the interests of real and much needed social change. Capitalism comes in for appropriately rough treatment as the real source of "disinterested[ness]," as does the nauseating cant of US Evangelists, the joyous cries of bomb-happy militarists washed in the blood of the Lamb, and the suburban respectability of fraudsters and wife-beaters. Islamic fundamentalists are no more immune to his anger than the Christian right in America. This is not *just* a literary scholar raging against the dying of his version of the light, but an example of someone who desires and deserves to be read and warily followed. It is a vulnerable, excessive but necessary reminder that culture matters and that those who study and make it have opportunity and responsibility aplenty in the current conjuncture. There is a heart-felt yearning here for a moral economy beyond the logic of the market, and for a re-affirmation of human imagination that captures the promise and vagaries of human goodness. But there is a warning too. We need to move beyond campus schism to public engagement, opening our disciplinary orthodoxies and fiefdoms to that which we most fear or despise in order to keep faith with the open-ended nature of humanity. This book has something to annoy or even outrage every sort of reader, but it also offers grounds for modest hope and critical intervention in and beyond, the classroom, the monograph, the review.

L.M. Findlay University of Saskatchewan

Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays. By David Lodge. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2002, 320 pp. $24.95.

The first chapter entitled "Consciousness and the Novel" offers a thoughtful survey of the relation of neuroscientific consciousness studies to literary creation. The subsequent "connected essays" are interesting comments on the art and technique of fiction, but they are not often directly concerned with the question of consciousness. Other chapters include reprints of reviews of works by a variety of authors, and essays on literary criticism and creation, on Kierkegaard, and on the author's novels *Therapy* and *Thinks* ....

His chapter on Waugh makes the point that his novels tend to stay on the surface, giving the reader almost no access to the characters' thoughts and feelings (176–77), while the chapter on Forster turns out to be more about conscience than consciousness (136). Lodge invokes the names and techniques of modernist writers such as James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence, who often "sought to represent the world as experienced in the individual consciousness or unconscious" (154), but he doesn't discuss their novels at any length. Lodge claims that Dickens is "arguably the greatest of all writers in the English language after Shakespeare" (114) but that his work ran against the literary trend of his time towards "greater realism in the rendering of the social world and individual psychology" (132–33). George Eliot, he claims, is "much more representative"; it is surprising that George Eliot does not get a chapter of her own.

But then, in this book, no woman writer does. Frances Burney, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Anne Michaels are all treated briefly in the first chapter's general survey. The "connected essays" are all about male writers (including Lodge himself). By devoting only two paragraphs to Jane Austen's use of free indirect discourse, Lodge misses the opportunity to explore in detail one of the best examples of the novelistic representation of consciousness. His exploration of Henry James's technique, however, is extensive and excellent.

Lodge is at his best when in the first chapter he uses a combination of reflection on his own writing in *Thinks ...*, and critical analysis of *The Wings of the Dove*. Drawing from *Thinks ...*, Lodge gives the example of a conversation about the opening paragraph of James's novel. In order to illustrate the cognitive neuroscientist V.S. Ramachandran's point that the "need to reconcile the first person and third person accounts of the universe ... is the single most important problem in science" (28), Lodge shows his own character Helen quoting James's paragraph after she says to Ralph that novelists have been giving third person accounts of first person phenomena for the last two hundred years. From here, Lodge moves in his criticism to an analysis of the paragraph recast into the first person, and then into the present tense, to show how these don't work as well as the original because James "had perfected a fictional method which allowed him to combine the eloquence of a literary, authorial narrative voice with the intimacy and immediacy of the first-person phenomenon of consciousness" (36). He suggests that "we read novels like *The Wings of the Dove* because they give us a convincing sense of what the consciousness of people other than ourselves is like" (30).

The thesis of "Consciousness and the Novel" is that while the recent scientific study of consciousness is intriguing, it is important to remind ourselves that the novel is also a guide to consciousness. Lodge does not risk saying that the novel is a better guide. He concludes "Literature constitutes a kind of knowledge about consciousness which is *complementary* to scientific knowledge" (16). This amicable resolution is too hasty. Lodge appears torn, knowing that the novel gets at consciousness, but suspecting that science might do it better. He is equally ambivalent about the relation of consciousness and the soul. He shows how the idea of "the soul or spirit ... is seen as intimately connected with the more secular idea of the self" (4-5), and he says that "many people with no religious belief find the words 'soul' and 'spirit' useful, if not indispensable, to signify some uniquely valuable quality in human life and human awareness" (5). Lodge has described himself as "a Catholic agnostic," which perhaps explains why he defends the idea of the soul as useful if not entirely believable. As a practicing novelist and literary critic, however, he might be expected to argue more strongly for the power of the novel, rather than cognitive neuroscience, to represent consciousness.

Sarah Emsley Harvard University

The Talk in Jane Austen. Edited by Bruce Stovel and Lynn Weinlos Gregg. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 2002. 269pp. xxiii. $29.95 paper.

In an ideal conversation, according to Samuel Johnson, and cited by Jeffrey Herrle in his essay in *The Talk in Jane Austen,* "there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm quiet interchange of sentiments" (quoted in Herrle, 251). Herrle suggests that Jane Austen inherited Johnson's ideal, and points to the example from *Northanger Abbey* of Mrs. Allen spending the day "by the side of Mrs. Thorpe, in what they called conversation, but in which there was scarcely ever any exchange of opinion, and not often any resemblance of subject" (quoted in Herrie, 251). Bruce Stovel makes the excellent point in his essay on "Asking Versus Telling: One Aspect of Jane Austen's Idea of Conversation" that "Question-and-answer is ... the core element in conversation, which is, precisely, an exchange, a mutual creation by two or more people" (25). Conversation involves give and take, exchange, asking and answering, ideally without competition or vanity. Stovel cites Johnson's definition in his 1755 *Dictionary* of 'to converse': "To convey the thoughts reciprocally in talk." "When Boswell asks him if there was good conversation at a dinner, Johnson replies, 'No, Sir, we had *talk* enough, but no *conversation;* there was nothing *discussed*'" (25).

Given these careful distinctions between true conversation and mere talk, the title of this collection appears limiting, as several of the essays cover so much more than just "talk." Austen herself was alert to the distinction, and the editors point to her observation about John Thorpe's "conversation, or rather talk, [which] began and ended with himself and his own concerns" (xvii). Fortunately, Stovel and Gregg have included essays about the conversationalists as well as the talkers in Austen's novels. The fifteen essays collected here are organized under the headings "Categories and

Analysis," "Aggression and Power," "Subtexts and Ironies," and "Speculations and Possibilities," but the distinction between conversation and talk is a useful alternative method of classifying them.

This distinction is addressed directly in the essays by Isobel Grundy, Herrle, Steven D. Scott, Lesley Willis Smith, and Juliet McMaster. Characters Grundy calls "excessive talkers" (41) have no idea how to participate in a conversation. The essays discuss how Austen represents characters who bore their hearers without boring readers of the novels (Grundy), how an excessive talker and a person capable of genuine conversational exchange can possibly communicate (Smith), and Mary Bennet's "ponderously formal" talk (Scott, 234). Jocelyn Harris's essay is about silence rather than talk or conversation. Elizabeth Newark's essay, imagining dialogue that never happens in the novels is amusing, but adds little to our understanding of the novels.

In discussions of the pleasures of conversational intimacy in marriage (Kay Young), sexual consummation and belonging (Linda Bree), the importance in communication of listening (Ronald Hall), dialogue in civil society (Gary Kelly), men's moral education as exhibited in the dialogue of proposal scenes (Sarah S.G. Frantz), and Elizabeth Bennet's responses to Darcy (Nora Stovel), contributors shift their focus to conversational interchange, which Austen clearly values much more highly than talk. As Hall points out, "dialogue—if we are to take the prefix *dia* seriously—is not mere talk, but communication involving the silence of listening. Without this, so-called dialogue becomes merely a series of alternating monologues" (148).

Young's essay on marriage and conversation is particularly good, as she shows how dialogue between Elizabeth and Darcy creates the kind of community that makes intimacy possible. She describes dialogue as "interactive, mutually made moments of a partnered story that function to mark off 'our story' (63), but concludes that while in order to love or to know, one must talk, in the case of Darcy and Elizabeth when conversation "changes to understanding, the novel must soon end" because "that conversation—the declaration that 'we' are now 'us'—takes place silently, somewhere outside the confines of the narrative's final pages" (69).

Jane Austen repeatedly satirizes those who talk without engaging with their listeners. The talkers are amusing to read about, but tedious to know. It is a good thing, therefore, that this collection, like Austen's novels, addresses the subject of conversation as well as the subject of talk, because, as the editors declare in the introduction, "Conversation is all important in Jane Austen's novels" (xvii).

Sarah Emsley Harvard University

Mad Madge: The Extraordinary Life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, the First Woman to Live by her Pen. By Katie Whitaker. New York: Basic Books, 2002. $34.00 paper.

Katie Whitaker's popular biography *Mad Madge* is a well-researched and clearly presented contribution to the study of Margaret Cavendish, a figure known for her writings on

early science, utopian fiction plays and fictional letters. While some of the material the biography covers has been available for a while, Whitaker does add several useful archival finds and does a good job of telling Cavendish's story, starting with her elite royalist family circle in the 1630s. Written in an engaging, lively style, the biography might provide an accessible entrance point into seventeenth-century studies for someone new to the period, especially since Whitaker does such an effective job of filling in historical events, the biographies of the people in the Cavendish circle, the habitus of the court, and quotidian details such as what the Cavendishes ate and wore. Whitaker names many of her chapter titles after the various roles Margaret Cavendish played during her life—from 'A Lady at Court' to 'Poet and Petitioner' to 'Queen of Philosophers.' The biography therefore sheds light on both the cycle of Cavendish's life and her rise to literary and cultural prominence. The overall impression—one entirely consistent with current critical opinion—is of a women of substantial literary talent who benefited from her elevated social status, her husband's support, and the lively intellectual cross-currants that surrounded her.

The prose style of the book is breezily chatty as befits a popular biography. Witness among many examples Whitaker's portrait of the duchess's protégé Richard Flecknoe: "After his religion, the great love of his life was conversation and good company, especially that of the ladies. His attentive courtliness, his care in picking up their dropped fans, gloves, and handkerchiefs or finding their lost lapdogs, won him their friendship" (120). In keeping with the popular feel of the text is a variety of photographic plates that add to the visual interest of the book, especially the portraits of Cavendish that she commissioned as frontispieces for her books.

Whitaker is to be commended for her ability to interrogate the historical veracity behind Cavendish's powerful autobiographical assertions. For example, Cavendish spoke of her esteem that the people of Colchester felt for her family, but Whitaker finds clear evidence that in the tense 1630s the Cavendish family was considered imperious and hostile by their less affluent neighbours in Colchester. These assertions represent some particularly useful archival work. The book will appeal to Cavendish scholars but also the growing audience in the general public for women writers before the nineteenth century.

Carrie Mintz Queens College/CUNY

Women, Property, and the Letters of the Law in Early Modern England. Edited by Nancy E. Wright, Margaret W. Ferguson & A.R. Buck. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004. x, 316 pages. $65.00.

This volume of thirteen essays grew out of an interdisciplinary colloquium held in Canberra in 2000. It is an ambitious and innovative attempt to examine competing narratives of women and property in a wide array of early modern legal, literary and dramatic sources, from Shakespeare plays to wills, court records and family correspondence. The contributors, who have backgrounds in literature, history, law and sociol-

ogy, explore a number of common themes including the general shift from lineal to patrilineal inheritance, the status of women's writing, and the complex ways in which lived experience conformed to, or just as often defied, legal theory and societal expectation. The result is a volume brimming with ideas about women's changing attitudes and relationships to different forms of property, drawn from narratives extracted from a giddying range of sources.

The volume has three sections, examining 'Credit, commerce and women's property relationships,' 'Women, social reproduction, and patrilineal inheritance' and 'Women's authorship and ownership: matrices for emergent ideas of intellectual property,' but space permits mention of only some of the chapters. In a stunning essay Natasha Korda reveals how attitudes to single women underpin *Measure for Measure,* and why Shakespeare chose to explore post-Reformation anxiety about masterless and propertyless women in a preReformation setting. The use she makes of the history of the 'poor Clares' and of the historiography of single women is a model of how history can inform literary analysis. Eleanor Shevlin's examination of 'the titular claims of female surnames in eighteenth-century fiction' melds historical knowledge about name changes with a close analysis of the relationship between names and identity in eighteenth century novels. Laura Rosenthal uses narratives of a famous prostitute's life to show the instability of reputation and status in the increasingly commercial world of eighteenth century London. Christine Churches' examination of women's rights in Whitehaven offers a disturbing demonstration of how court records can conceal the real causes, agents and motivations that lay behind civil lawsuits. David Lemmings sheds light on litigation patterns in the church courts in the eighteenth century. He demonstrates the loss of this forum to middling and lower status women and sets it into a broader story of the slow exclusion of ordinary people from the processes of law. Andrew Buck compares Shakespeare's and Nahum Tate's versions of King Lear to chart dramatic changes in aristocratic inheritance and power over the seventeenth century. Mary Chan and Nancy Wright find Anne Clifford and Elizabeth Wiseman resisting the commodification of specific types of rights and property.

There is much to praise in this volume, but a number of essays reveal the pitfalls, as well as the benefits, of crossing disciplinary boundaries, especially when it comes to fully articulating complex issues of law and inheritance. Mary Murray, for example, provides a provocative and brilliant analysis of inheritance as a form of rebirth in social and family terms, a 'resurrective practice' that softened the blow of death by linking past, present and future generations together in the life of their property. However, her attempts to discern this process from English practice are marred somewhat by her characterization of primogeniture and the common law as being at odds, and in her unhelpful use of the label 'primogenitive practices' for patrilineal devices designed as much to evade as to perpetuate primogeniture. Her essay brings a fresh vision to an old topic, but work remains to be done on the fine details, as it does for many of the essays here. With the exception of Buck, the authors largely ignore the role uses played in inheritance practice. Similarly, in their desire to tell a cogent story of changes in inheritance practice over time, the contributors fail to explore the tensions and paradoxes within the aristocracy revealed in their use of legal and equitably instruments

alternately to evade primogeniture *and* to enforce it. Surprisingly, reflections on gender in the larger sense are missing from most essays; the the tight focus on issues concerning women seems to have prevented most authors from considering equivalent male experience and from making use of the burgeoning secondary literature in this field.

These criticisms should be taken as a mark of the originality of these essays. The editors of the volume have set out to push back the boundaries of their subject, not to have the final word, and in that they have succeeded, producing a volume of essays that will both inspire future scholarship and lead to further forays across disciplinary boundaries.

Tim Stretton Saint Mary's University

The 'Conquest' of Acadia, 1710: Imperial, Colonial, and Aboriginal Constructions. By John G. Reid et al. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004. xxxi, 297 pages. $63.00 cloth, $32.95 paper.

Most people who know anything at all about early Canadian history would associate the word 'conquest' with the battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 and not with the siege of Port Royal in 1710. The inverted commas used in the title of the book (but not in the text) suggest ambiguity. As the six authors of this work indicate in various ways and from very different points of view, the capture of the capital of Acadia was not a clear-cut victory. Even the famous Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 that followed the event did not delineate the territory that had been conquered nor did it provide enforceable stipulations regarding the Acadians. From 1710 to 1744, many British government documents referred to the colony as 'Nova Scotia' or 'Acadia,' thus ignoring 'Mi'kma'ki' (the land of the Mi'kmaq), but acknowledging an entity that was neither fish nor fowl.

The nine chapters of this book are grouped into three parts: The Event, Precursors, and Agencies. John Reid offers what might be considered the definitive description of the historical event itself, i.e. the siege of Port Royal. The remaining chapters explore the decades that directly precede and follow the conquest from imperial, colonial and aboriginal perspectives. Since there is less material devoted to the multilayered reality of France's efforts as an imperial power in Acadia, the British narrative tends to dominate the imperial constructions as explored by both John Reid and Elizabeth Mancke.

In his chapters Maurice Basque examines individual cases that nuance the traditional statements regarding the homogeneity and the neutrality of the Acadians. Basque's very readable analysis puts human faces on conflicts and allegiances. Using examples of specific Acadian men, he shows that signing an oath did not necessarily provide protection. His examination of the family ties between Nova Scotian Acadians and the inhabitants of Île Royale is particularly significant since most historians ignore or dismiss the Acadian presence in Louisbourg and its outports during the French regime.

William Wicken's chapter entitled "Mi'kmaq Decisions: Antoine Tecouenemac, the Conquest and the Treaty of Utrecht" reflects the amazing quantity of inductive

reasoning and lateral research required for reconstructing non-written and unrecorded history. He discusses how the migrations of wildlife dictated the activities of the Mi'kmaq in time and space, and how the extension of British sovereignty and the increased presence of the French altered the world of the Mi'kmaq and placed them in a defensive position.

Throughout his chapter on "Making a British Nova Scotia," Barry Moody stresses the inertia and inefficiency of the British government. The Acadians regarded the fall of Port Royal as just another in a series of temporary conquests, since their new masters made no serious effort to colonize or to fortify Nova Scotia until the founding of Halifax in 1749. Until then, the tiny garrison town of Annapolis Royal and the fishing station of Canso were the only English settlements. If 20,000–30,000 Protestants had settled in Nova Scotia between 1710 and 1750, argues Moody, the attitude and action of the Acadians would have been of little consequence in the thinking of British officials.

In the chapter "New England and the Conquest," Geoffrey Plank explores various realities of Acadia s most populated neighbour, including the interests of the military leaders who lead the siege of 1710 and the political influence of the New England fishermen and ocean-going merchants. His comments regarding the role of different Protestant denominations are particularly revealing. The recruitment of troops for the siege of Port Royal, for example, met with considerable success in Boston and New York, but failed in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania thanks to the pacifism of the Quakers. Warfare for the Congregationalists, on the other hand, was a tool of righteous vengeance and a way of serving God.

The book is an important synthesis written by six prominent academic historians that covers approximately five crucial decades of Acadian history. An excellent index and a 22-page bibliography make it an extremely useful research tool. It is an enriching study based on a unique juxtaposition of Mi'kmaq, Acadian, New England, British, and French perspectives.

Sally Ross Tantallon, Nova Scotia

Breathing Fire 2: Canada's New Poets. Edited by Lorna Crozier and Patrick Lane. Nightwood Editions, B.C. 2004. 200 pages. $24.95 paper.

Readers need only to spot the title of this book and the names of the two editors to recognize *Breathing Fire 2*'s intrinsic value as part of their home library. Lorna Crozier has written more than ten books of poetry, including the Governor General's Award-winning *The Hawk*. Patrick Lane is author of over twenty-five poetry collections, including the Governor General's Award-winning *Poems, New and Selected.* Nearly a decade ago, Crozier and Lane put out the first volume of *Breathing Fire*. Arriving to an appreciative audience and enthusiastic reviews, the book presented many up-and-coming poets who have since gone on to develop captivating writing careers of their own, including

Stephanie Bolster, Evelyn Lau, Sue Goyette, Michael Crummey and Tim Bowling.

This anthology is Crozier and Lane's latest collection of Canada's young generation of promising poets. Many of the thirty-three writers in this volume, including Tammy Armstrong, Sheri Benning, Adam Dickinson, George Murray, Alison Pick, Shane Rhodes, Laisha Rosnau and Nathalie Stephens, have already published books of their own, and have received or been shortlisted for awards. The poets that grace these pages come from across Canada and present a wide range of geographical location, education, careers, years of writing experience and publications, and race. The only boundary decided upon by the editors is that the poets be born between 1970 and 1980.

No matter who some of your favorite poets are, fairly recent or well established, Breathing Fire 2 is an anthology worthy of praise, an eclectic collection of Canada's newest generation of poets.

Donna M. Hill — Vernon, British Columbia

One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema. By George Melnyk. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004. x, 361 pages. $35.00 paper, $70.00 cloth.

There has been a great deal of book-length activity on Canadian cinema of late. Edited editions and monographs are more numerous than they have ever been, and there has also been a great deal of hand-wringing in Canadian periodicals over the way that these books reflect the fate of the country's national cinema (or the nation-state's national cinemas). George Melnyk's book *One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema* is of particular interest during this cine-historical moment because of the way that it both reflects and steers clear of these arguments.

The book is an exemplary narrative history, moving linearly through filmmaking within the borders of Canada from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st. Melnyk's writing style is smooth and readable. He avoids overly complex formulations and internecine theoretical battles. Of the early NFB he writes "[t]he British documentary during the second World War pales in comparison to that of the NFB, but after the war the British got right back into making feature films. In Canada, however, the NFB came to monopolize and symbolize Canadian film identity" (67). Elsewhere he endorses Don Owen's assertion that there was no English-speaking filmmaking in Canada. "He was right. He was leading the rebirth" (102). These are debatable opinions that are to a certain extent contradicted by Melnyk's himself who devotes an entire chapter to Crawley Films, the underestimated privately-owned alternative to the NFB that was quite active in the 1960s. But these polemic judgements are argued for clearly, and, more often than not, convincingly.

Canadian cinema is, like most small national cinemas, embattled both on the world stage and at home. The un-winnable battle against Hollywood that every non-American filmmaker must fight has lead to a lot of hand-wringing on the part of both filmmakers and critics, often to the exclusion of sustained consideration of the film

history itself. But Canadian cinema is, unlike most small national cinemas, very much a fragmented entity. Disagreements about whether French-language and English-language filmmaking constitute a shared or distinctive traditions, or whether such old fashioned splits should be abandoned in favour of seeing Canadian cinema as an infinitely diverse set of fragments, often threaten to overwhelm considerations of the film history itself. I admit falling into these sorts of traps in my own work. I can appreciate, then, how admirable it is that Melnyk both acknowledges this kind of fragmentation and is able to get beyond it. He remains fascinated by the by the films made in Canada over the course of the last 100 years or so. This sort of fascination is infectious, and this sense combined with his admirable aspirations towards the comprehensive make this a very good entry-level introduction to Canadian cinema in addition to being a highly readable analysis of a fairly large and highly complex piece of film history.

Jerry White University of Alberta

The Sunday Philosophy Club. By Alexander McCall Smith. Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2003. 256 pages. $29.95.

"She was a blonde. A blonde that could make a bishop kick a hole in a stained glass window." No, that's not from the book under review. That's from Raymond Chandler's classic *Farewell My Lovely*. The book I'm talking about is also a detective novel, but it's of an entirely different subspecies: soft-boiled. *The Sunday Philosophy Club* contains passages like "Zeugmata, [Fowler] explained, were a bad thing and incorrect—unlike syllepses, with which they were commonly confused" (208). You don't find Philip Marlowe expressing dainty dissatisfaction when he notices on the programme of a concert he's attending that there's to be Stockhausen in the second half. *The Sunday Philosophy Club* is so much the opposite of Chandler's books that if you put one of them and this on in a bookshelf touching each other, there would be an explosion and both would disappear.

Alexander McCall Smith is already well known for several best-sellers, including five in *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series, whose protagonist is a jolly warm Botswanese woman who solves gentle mysteries involving matters of the heart. In this novel, we're transported to Edinburgh, but again the detective is female. Isabel Dalhousie (no relation!) is an unmarried, independently wealthy, fastidious woman of taste and culture. She works part-time as editor of *The Review of Applied Ethics*. Very part-time: most of every day remains available for strolling around art galleries, dawdling in coffee shops, doing crossword puzzles, visiting friends, and solving crime. (I was hoping to find out how a journal editor can get away with so little work, but this was never revealed.) She's very polite and correct, somewhat moralistic, and a trifle smug. At a concert she witnesses a death, and out of curiosity, tracks down, eventually, what happened, mostly by accident, or by talking to people. But the detecting part of this novel is secondary to frequent tiny extraneous philosophical/moral essays dictated in her thoughts, and a lot of talk about extraneous past and present relationships, hers and others'. It's all very slow, cosy, charming and sweet. Not Chandler, right?

Writers all are aware that it's dangerous to write about a profession you're not in. Smith is not a philosopher, and although he doesn't exactly embarrass himself in speaking in the voice of the editor of a philosophy journal, it doesn't really ring true. Isabel's little philosophical thoughts are not quite what one would expect of a journal editor. They sound more like those of a talented undergraduate philosophy student, which I'd guess the author once was. On the other hand, for all I can tell, Smith appears to do a pretty good job of speaking in a woman's voice. Anyway, so I'm told by a female informant who's read scores of talky, relationshippy novels by female British writers.

As a murder mystery, this book is really rather feeble. The mystery and its solution provide little more than an unobtrusive framework for a collection of Isabel's thoughts and chats about morality and relationships. Very little detecting is actually done. A red herring tracked through most of the book is disposed of very suddenly, in a perfunctory manner, very near the end, and the real murderer, to whom nothing had pointed, turns up in the last few pages, a diabolus ex machina. I'm afraid that this breaks Rule 1 of murder mysteries. Chandler's complaint, apropos here, is: "At least half the mystery novels published violate the law that the solution, once revealed, must seem to be inevitable."

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