

## Book Reviews

***A Nest of Singing Birds.* By Susan Charlotte Haley. Edmonton: Nuwest Publishers, 1984. Pp. 227. \$15.95. Paper, \$7.95.**

Not long ago a writer in *The New York Review of Books* praised David Lodge's novels of academic life for revitalizing what had been a moribund genre. In its own modest way, Susan Charlotte Haley's first novel *A Nest of Singing Birds* could be praised for much the same reason, though Haley focuses on a provincial Canadian academic scene, whereas Lodge treats the international scene. *A Nest of Singing Birds* presents a year (an academic year, naturally) in the life of Anna Callaghan, a Philosophy Ph.D. who at "the verge of thirty" finds herself in "the third little western city and the third little provincial university since the inception of her career." In short, like Susan Haley herself, Anna belongs to the flock of academic migrant workers that proliferated in the late seventies. The biographical note informs us that Haley obtained a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Alberta, and then taught briefly at the Universities of Calgary and Saskatchewan before flying from academic life altogether to live a truly migratory life operating a small charter airline in the Northwest Territories.

Haley's title, taken from Dr. Samuel Johnson's remark about Pembroke College, Oxford, is ironic yet not wholly so. Sometimes the academic "birds of a feather" she depicts do in fact "sing" with vivacity and good spirits at least, if they rarely sing in harmony with each other. Academic life as Haley presents it is not without its pleasures as well as its pains. The pleasures for a woman with the amiable temperament and genial sense of humor exhibited by her heroine Anna include meeting romance—and a bottle of Scotch—in the library stacks. Here, in the Russian section, secretly glutting herself on a "good read" of fiction in the form of *Swann's Way* before a penitential hour poring over Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, Anna scents the "odour of Scotch whiskey passing like a zephyr" and looks up to encounter MacGregor, the chairman of the English Department, a "tall sandy Scotsman" wearing the inevitable "shabby tweed jacket." MacGregor offers her a drink from the flask he evidently always carries with him, and their romance begins.

Other sources of enjoyment for Anna include the absurdities of departmental and faculty meetings, witty chat (Anna confesses she would do almost anything for a good chat, even go to bed with a man she dislikes) and "gossip of the right sort." But mixed in with these pleasures, there are the inevitable pains of academic life: the sheer follies and vacuous boredom of the meetings, the unrelenting job insecurity, the pressure to publish, and gossip of the wrong sort—malice incarnate. Sometimes the "nest" is a pleasant place to be, but more often it is not—especially for those perched on the edges when the pecking order is routinely and brutally reasserted. "How can you be a member of the Tenure Committee unless you can stand the sight of blood?", one faculty member asks. The pecking order extends beyond the faculty members too, as we are reminded when a position in the History and Political Science Department of Anna's university simply disappears when the Dean discovers that different factions in the same Department cannot agree on the same candidate. So the Dean "went straight to the Vice-President, and they took away the funds," the embittered temporary incumbent of the position—a hypertense young man named Michie—remarks to Anna.

There is often an edge to Haley's satire of academe in *A Nest of Singing Birds*, a satire that is remarkably comprehensive considering that the novel is not a long one. Most notably, Haley finely sketches the dissension and collective anxiety produced by the external review of Anna's Department. In response to the reviewer's criticism of the Departmental publication record, one of Anna's colleagues argues that the combined total of 33 publications would be "quite respectable" if it were divided equally among the 6 members of the Department. But, of course, it isn't divided in that way, his colleagues promptly remind him, and furthermore the grand total of 33 includes reprints and a note published in the *Proceedings of the New Guinea Philosophical Association*. The meetings of the faculty over their new contract, with the inevitable conflicts over parking and pensions, and the joys of guest lecturers furnish other subjects for Haley's satire. In one of the novel's finer touches, Haley describes Anna's effort to pay attention at one of these guest lectures. "Like someone on a swing, she would pump all her force into a massive burst of intellectual effort, then sink back into a private low . . . succeeded by the backswing, or negative side of the parabola she was describing, in which she was subject to a fertile field of visions, imaginings, and daydreams."

Many of Haley's minor characters never develop beyond satiric caricatures of stereotypical academics: Professor James, the Marxist philosopher who turns out publications with a machine-like regularity; Eddie, who plumes himself on his teaching rather than his research; Emily Dowell, a spinster "school-marm" type in the English Department; Jimson, the unscrupulous young "professor-on-the-make" who also tries, unsuccessfully, to "make" Anna. But in her treatment of her two major characters and the ups and downs of their relationship, Haley moves beyond satire into a comedy of manners and morals at times reminiscent of Jane Austen in its skilful use of narrative counterpoint and in its moral

vision. Thus Jimson serves as a foil to MacGregor's warm humanity, and ironically we encounter his female counterpart in MacGregor's wife Judith. Judith left MacGregor and her three children to run away to Harvard apparently to live with a professor of religious studies but more importantly, as we discover subsequently, to pursue further studies and an academic career herself. The parallels between Jimson and Judith become especially apparent when both go after the same job in the History and Political Science Department and adopt similar tactics to promote their eligibility. Jimson, an American, courts and ardently intends to marry a young woman in the French Department in order to become a Canadian citizen; and Judith returns to MacGregor and her children after several years away, hoping to take up where she left off, but out of disturbingly mixed motives.

The resemblance between Jimson and Judith, who alike attempt to exploit others in order to advance their own careers, make it clear that Haley's female perspective does not blind her to the ethical lapses and follies of her own sex. At the same time, however, she wittily portrays the blindnesses of the other dominant sex. As a woman and a temporary lecturer in an otherwise all-male department, Anna has a doubly marginal status. She receives the usual invitations addressed to new faculty stating "wives are invited", and endures the usual nudge-nudge mock apologies from her male colleagues for their habitual references to "men" instead of to "persons". Haley also touches upon, though she does not attempt to resolve, some of the serious conflicts produced by Anna's own status as an itinerant academic who has fallen in love with another settled academic with three children (one of the most endearing aspects of MacGregor when we first meet him is that he always, in his words, "has an appointment with a child.") He is a man, moreover, with rather conservative ideas about women and childbearing. Judith may have had her reasons for feeling trapped in her marriage to him, we begin to realize. MacGregor would like Anna to marry him and place her career second. Will she or won't she? The answer to the question is less interesting than the exploration of the question itself.

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***Structure and Society in Literary History.* By Robert Weimann. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984, pp. x 330. \$8.85.**

This book can be regarded as a significant landmark in Marxist literary criticism. In fact, one may well consider Robert Weimann to be the most important Marxist literary critic after Lukacs on the basis of this book. It is an expanded edition of essays on literary history first published mostly in *New Literary History* and presents a connected, coherent and critical

argument which deserves to be discussed seriously if only for the reason that it presents an accurate diagnosis of the state of literary history in the English-speaking world today. I shall present the argument in some detail and conclude with a few observations on Weimann's programme for a Marxist literary history.

Weimann points out that the modern Anglo-American critical tradition is formalist. However, he also notes, that there was a time when it was progressive and had a sense of history. The retreat from history has its proto-type in mid-nineteenth century France and Germany in the fields of history and philosophy respectively, and can also be observed later in American literary history. The main development which triggered off this retreat, according to Weimann, was the rise of the proletariat as a class that with the revolutions of 1848 both threatened the supremacy of the bourgeoisie and undermined its self-confidence. The ideological exponent of this reaction was Nietzsche.

Believing that the working class posed a threat to "our life and culture," Nietzsche turned away from the materialistic conception of history, and considered the concept of history as a science with laws of its own to be a worthless notion. He went on to say that "insofar as there are laws in history, the laws are worthless and so is history." If history cannot be a science, it could at least be the subject of poetry, thought Spengler. Edward Spranger denied that one could discover a sense of the whole. He also believed it was not necessary to relate an historical phenomenon to the existing historical process in order to understand it and that it was more important to relate it to the inner experience of the observer, to "the forms of life of man"—timeless, ideal types of structures. Thus history came to be banished from history and Hegel-baiting became a popular philosophical sport.

The Nietzschean ideology supplies the basis of formalist literary history, whose strategies of analysis, perception and suppression can best be studied in modern American historiography. In contrast to the progressive literary history of Tyler, who adopted a progressive view of literature, displayed a positive attitude towards America's cultural heritage, related the past works to the present, and looked upon the past as leading to the present, the formalist history moves away from the historical point of view. The revisionist retreat from history assumes the following forms: Firstly, there are literary histories which evaluate the past in terms of the past: (Dissertations and scholarly monographs illustrate this pseudo-historical approach.) Secondly, there are histories oriented towards the present which distort the past by employing the standards of the present. (Randall Stewart, *American Literature and Christian Doctrine*, 1958.) Thirdly, there are histories which offer anti-democratic reinterpretations. (Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson*; 1948, *The Genius of American Politics*, 1953; *The Americans: The Colonial Experience*, 1958). Finally, there are histories which are based on mythology or anthropology or Freud or Jung. (R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam*,

1955; and Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land; The American West as Symbol and Myth*, 1950.)

What all the four revisionist types have in common is that they do not relate the past works to the present and thus fail to take an integrated view of history. They either emphasize the past at the expense of the present or the present at the expense of the past. Or they simply interpret the past out of existence, when they do not transcend time and history on the viewless wings of poetry—i.e. myths and symbols. That is how they keep history out of literary history. Thus history is deodorized and furnished with fig-leaves in appropriate places, and the human psyche is universalized by not relating literature to praxis or labour or man's socio-economic activity which first transformed anthropoid apes into humanoids and the latter into *homo sapiens*.

The battle-lines, one can see, are clearly drawn. On the one hand the formalists, committed to disregarding time, denying the concept of law, and rejecting the possibility of studying history as a discipline with a methodology of its own. On the other hand the Marxists, who want to restore to literary history the sense of history, and therefore study phenomena not under the aspect of eternity but that of time, and for the purpose of discovering not archetypes or myths or symbols but regularities in the affairs of men.

The most important plank of the programme for a Marxist literary history, therefore, is that literary history be concrete—i.e. it should be related to social activity. The history of literature, Weimann says, cannot be studied "beyond the relations of labour to the processes of production and circulation." The other related demand is that literary history needs to study past significance and present meaning in relation to each other. Just as a study of past significance makes no sense without an awareness of present meaning, an awareness of present meaning is incoherent without a study of past significance.

Stated baldly like this, the two demands may seem to be quite innocuous. In fact, what they imply is a study of literature as a detail in a total pattern of socio-economic-cultural activity, as also a study of the reception of a work of art down the ages for the insights it can offer to the critic and the historian. Both a concrete analysis of literature that relates it to all the social mechanisms which mediate the economic processes Weimann refers to, and a study of the past and the present in relation to each other, would prevent literary history from degenerating into an individual's idiosyncratic perspective based on a subjective perception of values. Literary history would also acquire a genuine social function which is alive to the needs and pressures, aspirations and frustrations, triumphs and defeats of contemporary society. This would render Leavis's *Great Tradition* irrelevant and replace it with works in the mould of Lukac's *Historical Novel*. The historian would be a historian and a critic, not by turn but at the same time. Indeed, it would be impossible to know the one from the other, just as the dancer cannot be known from the dance. And that would spell the end of the current dichotomy between the social and

the aesthetic approaches to literary history and mark the coming of age of a total, integrated, and Marxist history of literature.

Hyderabad

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***The Aesthetics of New Criticism.* By J.N. Patnaik. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1983. Pp. viii, 96. \$10.75.**

This little book attempts a thorough and systematic account of the New Criticism as an aesthetic philosophy, in the broadest sense. At a time when most literary theorists seek in the New Criticism an anticipation of the verbal analysis of structuralism and deconstruction, it is useful to be reminded that the New Critics were equally concerned with cultural values, tradition and sensibility, and that they rejected all "utilitarian" and scientific approaches to the study of literature. For Patnaik, critics such as Ransom, Tate, Brooks and (to a lesser extent) Richards have more in common with T.S. Eliot, or with Kant and Schopenhauer, than with their immediate successors, Krieger, Miller or de Man. To a remarkable degree, the New Criticism is an aesthetic of intrinsic values, poetic autonomy, formal unity and disinterestedness. The question is: what is the critical value of such an aesthetic?

The weakness of this book lies in its failure to address this question. In New Critical terms, the book is a heresy, for it consists of little more than paraphrases of various New Critical arguments. It reads, for the most part, like a diligent, highly articulate thesis, filling in the details and competently summarizing the "premises" of the New Criticism. But whenever a contradiction of interpretive difficulty occurs, Patnaik simply stretches an aesthetic principle to accommodate it. Inevitably, as the scope widens, the paraphrase becomes less and less intelligible. By the end of the book, we have moved from local aesthetic topics to a fully blown "ontology of form," which comprehends humanistic values, organic structure, personal "experience," and which gives poetry a "reality" equivalent to that of a physical object. To the degree form is thus totalized, the book makes less sense.

The problem is a delicate one. Patnaik is subtle in revealing false totalizations, or "mystical experiences," which occur "when there ceases a relationship, a betweenness" that keeps apart humanistic values and some objectified, normative poetic form, even as they are drawn together. This mediation must never lapse into some false "identity." Ransom or Brooks provide better analysis than Richards, for example, because they seem better able to juggle these lofty concerns without either reducing the poem to mere communication or inflating it into something mysterious. But this juggling soon becomes cumbersome, or tautological, as when we read that "all knowledge is ultimately a kind of ordering of experience" (64) or "Form . . . has definite implications in terms of reality" (65).

Is there any way out of this impasse? Perhaps not, if one wants an aesthetic. But the New Critics were also close readers, and close reading is now proving to be their most distinctive legacy. Patnaik does not offer a single example of or commentary on a New Critical reading. Close readings have their impasses, tensions and paradoxes too; unlike aesthetic formulations, in a close reading the values, poetic structures and phenomena never totalize, never reach full understanding. So the task of interpretation must begin anew. It is this repetition that marks the endurance of the New Criticism beyond its aesthetic phase.

The Humanities Press is to be commended for publishing literary criticism that rarely reaches a North American audience. Patnaik's work provides only a glimpse of what is really a very large corpus of Indian literary theory. Unfortunately, the book, which was printed in India, contains an unusually large number of misprints, spelling errors and poorly set lines.

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***The Hermeneutic Mode: Essays on Time in Literature and Literary Theory.* By W. Wolfgang Holdheim. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984. Pp. 274. \$25 (U.S.).**

This volume of essays is dedicated to the memory of Eric Auerbach, and Holdheim strives with some success to match Auerbach's range and sensitivity, as well as paying sustained tribute to that scholar's most famous work in "Auerbach's *Mimesis*: Aesthetics as Historical Understanding." We encounter in Holdheim's essays a high level of analysis and some provocative theorising designed to reveal the connections between temporality and interpretation in Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Constant, Hugo, Flaubert, Gide, Worringer and Auerbach. Consistent with his view of himself as "one who denies the primacy of method," Holdheim begins with six chapters of "Criticism," before giving us six chapters of theory. These essays, previously published in French, German and English, are flanked by an Introduction and concluding reflection written especially for this collection. This arrangement, combined with a predominantly vigorous and forthright prose style, makes for clarity and complementarity in works "written over a period of ten years." A number of challenging critical questions come into focus as Holdheim moves towards his most recent exercise in exploration and summing up.

Holdheim makes a fine start with his "Introduction: The Essay as Knowledge in Progress." This piece of enabling "self-interpretation" uses Montaigne to make its point about "active deconstruction in a genuine sense: a clearing away of rubbish, of reified sedimentations, so that issues may once again be laid bare in their concreteness." Holdheim's concern

with the provisional and the processive does not throw him into the abyss of infinite difference but, instead, prompts him to attempt a recuperation of "reality, *les choses*." Committed to irony and the "essentialized occasionality" of the essay form, Holdheim can reconstitute enduring substance and presence as temporal pattern, "the inherent rhythm of the essayistic project itself," dissolving "exact and literal recurrence [into] accretive repetition." The ensuing essays engage with the enigmas of duration, desire, transcendence, as those notions are discoverable in the language of *Notes from the Underground*, *Adolphe*, *Paludes*, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, *War and Peace*, and *Salammbô*. There is particularly effective reading of Hugo and Flaubert, the essay on the latter (entitled "Description and Cliché") insisting powerfully on the inevitability of interpretation. This essay will cause many of its readers to question their habitual assumptions about what is important in a literary text, and will do so by virtue of memorable close reading and passages of candid generalization such as this: Fraubert "tr[ies] to dissolve reality into a contiguity of decontextualized objects. This disemboweled reality is snatched up by the pseudosubstantiality of mere language, itself a reifying contraction of discourse into an autonomous linguistic object. The Word, in a petrified and shrunken form destructive of its essential creativity, has moved from the beginning to the end. Creation has been stood on its head." And the stage has been set for polemical theorizing of a more sustained kind.

Holdheim's theoretical essays continue to try to hold in ironic solution, as it were, defensible versions of essence, discourse, purposeful life. It is, in the main, an admirable endeavour honestly essayed. Holdheim is as well read in current critical theory as befits a Cornell comparatist. (His essays are in fact rich in bibliographical information not readily available elsewhere.) However, his considerable "openness to the discourse of the text" still leaves him outside the folds (or the unfoldings) of structuralism and deconstruction: his *figura* is not de Man's; his *plaisir de texte* is definitely not Barthesian; his hermeneutic play is persistently anti-Derridean. Moreover, when he writes of time and history, he takes regular issue with Hayden White. Holdheim's spirited scholarship is only occasionally marred by footnotes whose tone is regrettably self-satisfied: "realizing that his [the Romantic's] Rousseauistic nostalgia for total immediacy cannot be satisfied, he takes a flying leap into the black mass of total alienation . . . From the fact that there is such a reality effect, created by literary and linguistic procedures that can be investigated, he [Barthes] seems to conclude that there is no knowable and identifiable reality. Naturally, his argument involves a non sequitur. Linguistics is neither epistemology nor metaphysics, however hard its lay admirers may try to make it all those things." The ruthlessness of the rhetoric here is perhaps explained, but certainly not excused, by its marginal location and "coy theology." More typically, Holdheim reflects on being and time as "a formalist in quest of history," with much that is worthwhile to say about "the hermeneutic investigation, the main alternative to all aestheticism



and scientism." "Narrativity as Knowledge" is an especially important contribution to literary theory; and, if one wishes that Holdheim could live up more amiably than he does to the implications of his ideology, one must also register respect for his learning and acumen, and gratitude for his having shared with us an apposite epigram by the Dutch writer Multatuli: "Nothing is wholly true, and perhaps not even that."

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*Yale French Studies, 65. The Language of Difference: Writing in QUEBEC (ois). Edited by Ralph Sarkonak, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983. Pp. vi, 299. \$10.95.*

The majority of the contributions in this collection emanate from Québec and Ontario and are translations of articles written in French. The contributors are all working within the framework of French studies and, in many cases, are inspired by the French critics Barthes and Genette. With a few notable exceptions, the Québec texts are examined as an integral part of the Francophone tradition. The distinguishing feature of writing in Québec—namely the language—is thus seen from within; consequently the intrinsic North American aspect of Québec writing is rarely explored. As the polysemic title of the collection suggests, the accent is placed on QUEBEC (the socio-political entity, written in its bilingual form) and to a lesser extent (in brackets) on the uniqueness of the language in Québec.

In his introduction to "A Brief Chronology of French Canada, 1534-1982", the editor, Ralph Sarkonak, states that the "very *raison d'être*" of this special issue of *Yale French Studies* is "the blossoming of Québécois literature in the sixties". Thus most of the articles focus on texts published prior to or during the Quiet Revolution. The obvious danger of this limiting framework is that one falls into the "déjà vu" or the "déjà dit". The impact of the collection will vary according to one's familiarity with the works from this period—which is, after all, the best known in Québec literature.

The seventeen contributions (excluding a chronology and a bibliography) have been grouped into four sections. The first, entitled "For a Study of Writing in QUEBEC(ois)", includes an eminently readable article by Lise Gauvin published originally in French by Leméac in 1981. The author gives an excellent diachronic analysis of the language of literature from Octave Crémazie to Victor-Lévy Beaulieu. Her comments on the political usage of *joual* and its effects on literary discourse are particularly enlightening. Lise Gauvin's contribution is very important, especially in the context of this collection since it is one of the few that deals with recent (i.e. post sixties) literary developments in Québec.

The second section, "Different Intertextualities", includes a series of articles examining either sub-genres or relationships between the major genres. The section opens with a structural analysis of the language of the manifesto *Refus global* (1948). Michel Van Schendal adds a new and concrete dimension to the theme of continuity and rupture often associated with this text.

In the third section, devoted to the novel, Janet M. Paterson offers a similar re-reading of another seminal text, Anne Hébert's *Les Chambres de bois* (1958), in an attempt to show how the narrative discourse shifts from the real to the unreal. Although Hébert's language is more personal and lyrical (the same is noted elsewhere with regard to Aquin, Godbout and Bessette), the techniques exploited resemble those used in the early *nouveau roman*. Guy Laflèche offers a less convincing re-examination of an old classic: *Trente arpents* (1938). Despite the addition of diagrams linking narrative tempo to extratextual economic curves, his temporal break-down of Ringuet's novel provides few new insights (cf. "*La Terre*" de Zola et "*Trente arpents*" de Ringuet, Jacques Viens, 1970). However, in his effort to tone down "québécoïcité" while stressing universality, he raises an important issue. But surely the real significance of *Trente arpents* is only attained within a regional perspective? On the other hand, some profoundly regional works, like the plays of Michel Tremblay or the novels of Antonine Maillet, do attain a universality which cannot be equated with banality.

Mary Jean Green's contribution on female autobiography is noteworthy in that it represents the only article devoted to the feminist perspective. Except for a few stimulating but elliptic comments on Nicole Brossard's works which Pierre Nepveu makes in his conclusion, references to feminist writers are minimal. (One might even add that the strongest emphasis is placed on Gérard Bessette, Hubert Aquin, Réjean Ducharme and Jacques Godbout—in that order). In her examination of novels by Marie-Claire Blais and Claire Martin, Green explores the dialectic of fiction/autobiography, stressing the themes of rejection and individual autonomy and comparing them to socio-political trends of the Quiet Revolution, Valerie Raoul makes similar observations pertaining to the transformation of self-perception as seen in three diary novels.

In his very inspiring article entitled "Michel Tremblay: An Interweave of Prose and Drama", Pierre Gobin shows how autobiographical elements are cunningly and playfully transposed by means of a complex series of artifices, substitutions and mythic reinforcements that subvert referentiality. The elaborate intermingling of the "realistic" and the fantastic from one play to another and from the plays to the novels generates a coherent and ever-expanding universe in what Gobin calls Tremblay's "pursuit of totality".

The playful, yet subversive, nature of Réjean Ducharme's writing is particularly well analysed in Renée Leduc-Park's study of the novel *Hiver de force* (1973). Of all the texts examined in the collection, this work best reflects the North American cultural and linguistic space of Québécois

writing. The novel is so anchored in the Québec of the seventies and the evanescent world of consumer goods that it becomes a fascinating and paradoxical study of textual obsolescence. The only stable element in the life of the protagonists (described by Leduc-Park in the context of Nietzschean nihilism) is Father Marie-Victorin's botanical treatise, *Flore laurentienne* (1925). While Leduc-Park interprets the use of this work from the point of view of the protagonists, it should be noted that Ducharme has chosen as a central literary *leitmotiv* a scholarly and artistic masterpiece which still constitutes the very antithesis of obsolescence.

The fourth section of this special issue is devoted entirely to Gérard Bessette. At first one might be surprised by the privileged position given to an elder statesman of Québécois literature—not only in this section but elsewhere. However, the words of the editor are self-explanatory: "... a small token of my gratitude for all that M. Bessette gave to Yale during his semester here". The various articles on Bessette's novels delineate very clearly his kinship with the aesthetics of the *nouveau roman* (cf. Fredric Jameson) and his allegiance to Freudian and Sartrean perspectives (cf. Valerie Raoul, Paul Perron and Jadwiga Seliwoniuk). The introspective and self-reflective writing characteristic of Bessette reaches a dazzling level in his latest novel *Le Semestre* (1979). An extract, along with the translation by Fredric Jameson, concludes the section. If this special issue of *Yale French Studies* can be regarded as a metatext, then this conclusion is ironically appropriate: *Le Semestre* offers the vision of an ageing professor of French Canadian literature in the throes of writing a novel based on a psychoanalytic examination of his previous works!

To the extent that the aim of the collection is to reflect the "vitality and variety" of Québécois literature, all the contributions are successful despite a considerable variation in quality. From a critical point of view the choice of the Quiet Revolution as a temporal framework is conservative, but fortunately not rigid—the most informative and original articles are those which examine later, more recent texts. The difficulty in giving an overall appraisal of the collection stems from the lack of clarity or even consistency concerning the readers for whom the articles are written. Some appear to address an American anglophone public, while others address specialists in French studies. The response can only be mixed.

Tantallon, N.S.

Sally Ross

***The Fortunate Fall of Sir Gawain: The Typology of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.*** By Victor Yelverton Haines, Washington: University Press of America, 1982. Pp. vii, 232. \$23.00. Paper, \$11.25.

*The Fortunate Fall of Sir Gawain* is a typological reading of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a recapitulation of the *felix culpa*, the Fall of

Adam, grievous *as* a fall, but fortunate as being a necessary prerequisite for the following redemption: of Camelot, later of Gawain, and finally of the reader. Haines relies on a very close reading of certain passages in the poem, deriving his conclusions on reader response and on the moral positions of the characters from alleged syntactic and semantic ambiguities in the lines. But he misunderstands the Middle English. Let me make one example stand for several. MS Cotton Nero Ax contains the line

For non may hyden his harme bot vnhap ne may hit.

(*Gawain*, v. 2511)

In modern English, this line would run "For no one can hide his injury [that is, the spiritual injury inflicted by the central sin of the poem], but he cannot unfasten it." As given, the syntax does not make sense. Editors therefore sensibly emend to

For mon may hyden his harme bot vnhap ne may hit.

That is, "For a person can hide his injury, but cannot unfasten it." The scribe presumably made the common mistake of leaving out one stroke of the pen. The line as emended makes sense grammatically, and in context. But Haines has the mistaken idea that the emendation is made "to suit a modern objection to double negatives" (p. 214, n. 14). The interpretation of the line in its impossible form is important: on it depend his arguments that Gawain at the end of the poem has not yet accepted the grace of God's forgiveness; that Gawain "almost" (p. 97) feels his sin as a matter of external shame rather than internal guilt, acknowledging it to the world by wearing the green girdle only because he cannot hide it; that the moral that Gawain draws is ironically inadequate; and that the courtiers laugh because they perceive a superior Christian moral. The typological relevance to the Fall becomes clearer with an alleged pun in the line (see pp. 97-8), but that pun depends on ignoring the "ne" and twisting the "may." In other words, the structure of interpretation has no foundation.

That individual passages, however crucial, are misinterpreted may not be a fatal flaw in a book: the principal argument, after all, is that the poem can be read as a type of the Fall. But the value of such an argument depends on two things. First, is it true? And its truth depends not only on whether such an allegory is probable in historical and cultural context (as Haines most usefully shows it is in his first and third chapters), but also whether *Gawain* can be demonstrated to be such an allegory by evidence in the poem (and Haines' reading of that evidence is sometimes far from convincing, as in the case of v. 2511). Second, is it useful? Its usefulness depends in part on originality (by his own account, Haines was not the first to point out the likeness of Gawain's fall to Adam's, but certainly his analysis is the most explicit and detailed), and partly on the degree to which it enriches his reading of the poem. I think it *is* useful to see in *Gawain* the paradox of the *felix culpa*: that a sin can be both profoundly evil and a fortunately necessary (but not sufficient) cause of redemption.

But the application of the paradox to the poem, as in the interpretation stemming from Haines' reading of v.2511, unfortunately falls short of convincing.

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***Socrates and the State.* By Richard Kraut. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984. Pp. xii, 338. \$22.00.**

Richard Kraut claims to have two aims in writing *Socrates and the State*:

the first is to understand the political theory Socrates adopts when he refuses, in Plato's *Crito*, to escape from jail. The second is to put this dialogue into a broader context, by examining the general political orientation ascribed to Socrates not only in the *Crito* but throughout Plato's early works.

Chapters II through VI are devoted to accomplishing the first of these aims. His focus here is the speech of the Laws, which he considers to be "the philosophical heart of the dialogue"; and he is concerned to address two issues: a) the contention that the political philosophy of the *Crito* is "offensively authoritarian", and b) the charge that the argument against escape put forward by the Laws is primarily emotional and rhetorical, and lacks "philosophic rigor". Kraut feels that a close examination of the text reveals that neither of the accusations is well-founded.

Kraut responds to the second of these charges by conducting a detailed analysis of the structure of the argument put forward by the Laws. In Chapter II he first discusses the principles to which Socrates declares he must conform, viz. (i) never act unjustly (even if treated unjustly), and (ii) provided (i) is not violated in so doing, always carry out one's just agreements. He then shows that the argument the Laws advance is two-fold, each part of which addresses one of these Socratic principles. Having established this he proceeds in Chapters IV and V to examine the part of the argument he refers to as the argument from the parent/city analogy, wherein the Laws claim that, as in the case of one's parents, to show disrespect or to do violence to one's city is to act unjustly. In Chapter VI he looks at the argument the Laws advance that Socrates has entered into a just agreement with them. In these chapters Kraut argues convincingly for his claim that there is rigor and sophistication in the Laws' argument, although in the final analysis he does not find it persuasive.

Kraut addresses the charge that the position of the Laws is "offensively authoritarian" in Chapter III. In examining this issue he focusses on the central doctrine which underlies the various formulations of the Laws' argument, viz. Socrates has an obligation to obey or persuade the Laws. It is because escape completely ignores this obligation that the Laws would

find fault with him. An authoritarian reading of this 'persuade or obey' doctrine allows no room for disobedience; if one cannot persuade then one obeys. Kraut argues that this doctrine can be understood to permit disobedience provided one justifies that disobedience. Furthermore, even if one is unsuccessful in persuading that the disobedience is justified, one can still refuse to obey, or to accept punishment, if it would require one to act unjustly. This must be the case, Kraut argues, for Socrates applauds the Laws, and he could not support a position that would require him to act unjustly. Given the above, Kraut concludes that the political philosophy of the *Crito* is not "offensively authoritarian" for it permits justified disobedience.

In Chapters VII and VIII Kraut turns to the second of his aims, viz. to examine the general political outlook ascribed to Socrates in the other early dialogues. In Chapter VII he concentrates on Socrates' attitude toward democracy, and inquires how we can reconcile the satisfaction he expresses in the *Crito* for the extremely democratic laws of Athens with his conviction, expressed in the *Crito* and elsewhere, that in all matters we should be guided by the expert rather than by the opinion of the many. Kraut argues that Socrates is a moral authoritarian, and no friend of democracy. His satisfaction with the laws of Athens stems from two sources: a) a pessimism with regard to the possibility of moral expertise, and b) a recognition that the atmosphere of intellectual freedom and controversy which Athens provides is beneficial to the critical inquiry necessary to move toward such expertise. In other words, if we can't have rule by moral experts, democracy is as good a form of government as any, especially as it provides intellectual freedom. He supports this interpretation of Socrates' political outlook by proceeding in Chapter VIII to argue that Socrates is indeed a pessimist with respect to moral expertise. Socrates, he contends, is entirely sincere, both when he claims not to have knowledge of the things he inquires into, and when he argues that virtue cannot be taught.

The weakest part of this book is, unfortunately, Kraut's treatment of the 'persuade or obey' doctrine. In his effort to make room in the authoritarian reading for justified disobedience, he pays too little attention to the actual nature and purpose of the doctrine itself. He is correct that it represents a commitment to dialogue; but even in its most unauthoritarian rendering (viz. 51e7—where a literal translation would be "persuade or be persuaded") it is also a commitment to resolution. In a careful discussion of its role, and the tension between the active and passive voices of the verb, A.P.D. Mourelatos describes *peithô* as "the spirit of agreement, bargain, contract, consensus, exchange, and negotiation in a free polis" (*The Route of Parmenides* p. 139). That a commitment to resolution lies at the basis of the 'persuade or obey' doctrine, and indeed is essential to the existence of the state, should be obvious from the central role and authority given to the courts by the people to act on their behalf in arbitrating cases where the parties involved (including the state) are not able to resolve the issue themselves. In short, there is no room for

disobedience, justified or not, as an autonomous third option within the context of this doctrine. Although one may refuse to act unjustly, if one is unsuccessful in persuading, one is ultimately committed, as Socrates recognised, to accept the authority of one's arbitrators—if only by submitting to punishment. To deny this authority is to renege on one's commitment to resolution, which destroys the very basis of the state itself.

Despite this somewhat central flaw, Kraut's book must still be regarded as an important and insightful contribution to the development of a coherent view of Socrates as he is presented to us in Plato's early dialogues.

*University of Guelph*

*James M. Queen*

***Law, Morality, and the Relations of States.* By Terry Nardin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. Pp. xii, 350. \$35.00 (U.S.). Paper, \$14.00 (U.S.).**

Nardin conceives the primary task of the philosopher of international law to be that of providing a conceptual framework within which international law can be understood and from which it can be morally evaluated. Of course, providing such a framework assumes that there is something to be understood and evaluated. But many have doubted that international law exists at all (and hence have held that there is nothing on which to pass moral judgment). Legal positivists doubt the existence of international law because of the lack of any mechanism to enforce its rules or because of the lack of any means for (non-arbitrarily) determining what those rules actually say. Natural law theorists have doubted the existence of international law because the (supposedly law-governed) behaviour between modern nation states does not appear to exhibit sufficient moral content to deserve the honourific title of law. On both views the philosopher of international law is really the philosopher of nothing legal, but simply one who misrepresents various causal relations as legal ones. Nardin, however, rejects this view. Thankfully, he does not merely assume that there is a legal phenomenon which is properly called international law. Rather, he argues, and argues very effectively, that the behaviour between contemporary states does resemble paradigm cases of law closely enough to be properly called law. This part of the book, Part II, will be of interest to all philosophers of law, for it provides the most effective argument I know of for thinking that international law really exists and deserves our attention. (This part of the book also serves as an easy way to learn a great deal about the content of international law.)

Granting, then, that there is such a thing as international law, how should we conceive of it? What conceptual framework is most appropriate for grasping the nature of international legal relations? Nardin opts for a

particular form of natural law theory, that species of natural law theory provided by Hobbes and Michael Oakeshott. (He cites Oakeshott's work as the inspiration for this book.) Nardin distinguishes between two models of association: the purposive conception, according to which associations arise to aid those engaged in shared ends to attain their goals, and the practical conception, according to which associations arise to regulate the behaviour of those with diverse ends to each attain their various goals. He carefully develops the practical conception (in Part I) and argues (in Part II) that this conception best serves as a framework for understanding and evaluating legal relations between states. Nardin, in effect, sees international relations as cases of noncooperative games and international law as a means contemporary nation states have adopted for avoiding the otherwise negative outcomes of such games. A similar approach has been used recently, most notably by Kurt Baier and David Gauthier, to account for and justify morality. Unfortunately, Nardin seems to be unfamiliar with this work. (Baier's *The Moral Point of View* is included in the bibliography, but no use of his insights can be found in the text. Gauthier and other contemporary thinkers of similar bent are not mentioned.) But even without the benefit of these guides, Nardin does a good job of characterizing this conception of interaction and of applying it to the case of international law.

Nardin also attempts the task of morally evaluating various types of interaction between states on the basis of the practical conception of interaction. These studies are the weakest part of the book. His account of international justice is really little more than a prolegomenon to the subject. I hope he will develop his work on these matters in the future. He has provided us with an interesting model with which to raise questions about international morality, but has told us very little about the content of such a moral code. The book contains a good bibliography and helpful index. Nardin writes very clearly and his arguments are always easy to grasp. I recommend the book to all those who have even the slightest interest in the philosophy of international law; I know of no better introduction to the subject.

North Carolina State University

Sheldon Wein

***In Defence of Open-mindedness.* By William Hare. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985. Pp. xiii, 117. \$17.95. Paper, \$8.95.**

This slim monograph is a sequel to the author's interesting and important *Open-mindedness and Education* (1979). A Dalhousie professor and a leading Canadian philosopher of education, Hare sees the open-minded person as "one who is able and willing to form an opinion, or revise it, in



the light of evidence and argument." His aim in this volume is "to advance the study of open-mindedness and related concepts by showing what the attitude requires in a variety of contexts, and by demonstrating that it does not succumb to the many objections raised" against it by those who are wary of it, those who undervalue it, and those who, while claiming to be its defenders, promote dangerous confusions about its precise nature. Hare sees himself as engaged in conceptual analysis of a kind that will have immediate as well as long-term practical value for philosophers, social scientists, and particularly educational theorists, administrators, and others involved in the promotion of a highly important but often misunderstood disposition.

Hare discusses open-mindedness with reference to a wide variety of contexts. In the sphere of educational theory, he considers, for example, why an appreciation of "standards" does not really threaten the ideal of open-mindedness, why open-mindedness must be promoted even at the earliest stages of education, and why open-mindedness is possible and desirable in administration (despite superficial arguments that it involves indecisiveness and weakness). On a wider front, Hare relates the subject of open-mindedness to meta-ethical theories concerning commitment to moral principles, to issues in the philosophy of science, and to the question of censorship.

This volume is based on several occasional pieces that Hare appears to have written in response to interest in its predecessor. Though the volume is unified by its theme and approach, it does not treat the specific issues with which it deals in much depth, and much of the discussion will strike certain specialists as shallow and one-dimensional. For example, Hare's discussion of open-mindedness in science, with its emphasis on Thomas Kuhn's work, will leave most philosophers of science cold; and Hare's comments on liberalism and censorship hardly shed significant light on extremely complex and much-discussed issues. Hare is understandably more impressive when he deals with issues in education. As in his first book, he does a good job of putting the boot into some all too fashionable but rather mischievous educational theories. Hence, the middle chapters of the book make for the most useful reading, although an earlier philosophical discussion of G. E. Moore and R. M. Hare, while quite abbreviated, is a nice little contribution to philosophical ethics.

Though Hare sees himself as engaged primarily in conceptual clarification, he is actually doing a good deal of model-building here; and occasionally he seems to recognize that he is not so much explaining how "open-mindedness" is conceived by ordinary speakers of ordinary language as he is philosophizing in the grand manner about an ideal that he (rightly) believes to have been given too little attention in the past by philosophers and educators. The new volume is somewhat more polemical in tone than Hare's first, but there are fewer concrete illustrations in it; and on the whole, Hare does not convince the reader that open-mindedness is generally as negatively viewed as he would have us believe. It is clearer from this volume than its predecessor that Hare is using the

ideal of open-mindedness as the point of departure for an original approach to a wide range of ethical, epistemological, and ethical issues; and while this approach is provocative and often illuminating, it leads Hare to ignore seminal questions generated by other approaches. For example, Hare seems wholly unaffected by the sophisticated discussions of warrantability of belief and psychological certitude in recent analytical epistemological literature, and he pays no attention to profound discussions of faith and commitment in recent phenomenology of religion. He does a good job of contrasting open-mindedness with prejudice, but a rather less convincing job of contrasting it with the opposite vice of inconstancy.

Yet, one can scarcely fail to be impressed by the remarkable clarity and conciseness with which Hare more than occasionally sheds light on important matters concerning healthy belief-commitments and their promotion, establishment, and maintenance. An earnest and highly professional scholar with a refreshingly synoptic approach to these topics, Hare elevates the tone of recent philosophy of education in a provocative and readable little work that will be valuable to philosophers, social scientists, and particularly to educational theorists.

*University of Guelph*

*Jay Newman*

***The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History.* By Donald Harman Akenson, Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1984 xi + 404 pages. ISBN 0-7735-0430-3. \$15.95 Hard.**

***Being Had: Historians, Evidence & The Irish in North America.* By Donald Harman Akenson, Port Credit: Meany, 1984. ISBN 0-88835-014. \$37.50 Hard.**

The Irish in Canada have been the subject of a good deal of interest and research over the past twenty years. Publications as diverse in scope and detail as John Mannion's *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada* (U of T Press, 1974), Terrence M. Punch's *The Irish in Halifax: The Emigrant Generation, 1815-1859*, (St. Mary's IEC, 1981), Marianna O'Gallagher's *Grosse Ile*, (Carrig Books, 1984) and my own *Gentlemen-Bishops and Faction Fighters* (Jespersion, 1984) manifest a growing interest in and awareness of Canada's second largest (after the French) founding ethnic group, a fact which continues to surprise those who ought to be cognizant of it. Indeed there has been about the history of the Irish in Canada and North America generally an almost complete lack of scholarly writing. In place of reliable information has been substituted a mythology ironically based upon the fragmentary nature of Irish culture and experience whether in the homeland or outside it—Joyce's "cracked lookingglass of a servant." But as Akenson's *The Irish in Ontario* and *Being Had* show, the

myths about the Irish in Canada result from the failure of those who have written on the subject to do their homework as much as from any innate myth-making capacity of the Irish.

Akenson's two volumes tackle the dark bog of ignorance about the Irish and go a good deal of the distance toward dispelling for good a number of prevalent myths about the Irish in Canada and North America which are the results of both vincible and invincible ignorance. The myths are numerous: that the Irish came to this continent following the Great Famine of the mid-nineteenth century; that they were poverty-stricken peasants whose ignorance of the techniques known to most other European peasantries made it impossible for them to adopt a farming life and turned them into the denizens of the big cities of industrial-America, and, probably the most pervasive myth of all, that those Irish who came were almost totally Catholic; hence Irish equals Catholic.

Akenson's thoroughly researched and wittily argued books dispel these pieces of pseudo-history by presenting basic primary research about the Irish which was never done, was done badly or even done with malice aforethought by people wishing to, as the French would say, *prêcher pour son saint*.

In his study of the two Ontario counties of Leeds and Landsdowne, somewhat misleadingly titled *The Irish in Ontario*, Akenson demonstrates that not only were the Irish present in those countries before the Famine, but that they were there in both Protestant and Catholic varieties making their way into and taking over existing political compacts, and that the Catholics were successfully engaged in agriculture, in many instances with more success than their Protestant fellow countrymen. All of which, of course, runs in the face of the generally accepted historical "knowledge" about the Irish in Canada. By showing that Irish Protestants emigrated and sometimes in numbers larger than did Irish Catholics and that these Protestants were in the main Anglican and not Presbyterian, Akenson razes another piece of deadwood from the structure of Irish-Canadian and American history in which the so-called Scotch-Irish (Ulster Presbyterians) were the only breed of immigrant Irish Protestants and who, though, like Wellington, born in a stable (Ireland) have not always been seen to be of the breed of horses, or counted as such. Having used solid research to back up his conclusions *vis à vis* the Irish in Ontario/Canada, Akenson towards the end of *The Irish in Ontario* innocently poses the central question of both his studies:

Is it possible that those explanations of Irish-Catholic behaviour in America which posit certain inherent technological, cultural, and therefore economic limits on the behaviour of Irish Catholics in the nineteenth century are wrong? (p. 346)

Professor Akenson's second book, *Being Had*, takes up the intellectual cudgel to do some skelping of the practitioners of his own profession who have been the purveyors of a lot of totally unfounded notions about the

Irish in Canada. The title, *Being Had*, says it all—historians, academia, Irish-Canadians have all “been had” because no one before Akenson had the gumption—checked in readily accessible statistics—to disprove the writing of the important social historian Clare Pentland whose work *Labour & Capital in Canada: 1650-1860* is shown by Akenson to contain absurd racist nonsense about the Irish akin to that about the Jews in *Mein Kampf*. Akenson by substituting “women” for “Irish” in many of Pentland’s generalities demonstrates how easily racism is written, but also how an acute and attentive mind can just as easily demolish it.

Akenson points out how racism of the sort perpetuated by Pentland about Irish Catholics results from deeply held prejudices which, in Pentland’s case, were transmitted and survived in Canada for over a hundred years following migration from their origins in eighteenth-century Ireland. The point Akenson makes is not simply that a writer such as Pentland got away with saying outrageously prejudicial things about Irish Catholics but that the academic community conspired in it through either laziness, or dormancy of mind or both.

The research for both books is impressive. Of the two *Being Had* is the better in that its exposé of academic weakness and laziness of mind is brilliantly made, unhindered by the density of statistics and charts required by *The Irish in Ontario*. The latter title is misleading, as pointed out earlier, since the work is a study of the Irish in two counties of Ontario and not in the whole province. However, that is small chaff where there is so much wheat.

*Saint Mary’s University*

Cyril Byrne

***Main Currents in Caribbean Thought, 1492-1900.* By Gordon K. Lewis. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983. Pp.x, 375. \$25.00 (U.S.)**

G.K. Lewis’s new book is an affirmative action to demonstrate the existence of ideological development in the Caribbean and banish the spectre of intellectual nullity. Lewis aligns himself with a distinguished predecessor, the Guyanese historian Elsa V. Goveia, whose *Historiography of the British West Indies* (1956) laid the foundation for systematic study of Caribbean intellectuals. This work reflects both the developments in Caribbean studies and the political changes which have taken place in the intervening thirty years. Goveia was a West Indian nationalist, determined to destroy “the lie white people spread ‘pon we”’: Lewis, a Caribbeanised Welshman, heir to the extensive literature on slave and peasant life produced since the 1960’s, is an internationalist, determined to demonstrate that the commonality of Caribbean development is more significant than the region’s political and linguistic diversity.

What does Lewis identify as the main currents in Caribbean intellectual development? Four chapters, dealing with 16th and 17th century beginnings, pro- and anti-slavery ideology and nationalist thought, heap together manuscript sources and multi-lingual scholarly works in history, anthropology, and sociology; from these Lewis extracts not only ruling class ideology, but also the ideology of the oppressed. Lewis, like Ken Post in his massive study of the 1938 rebellion in Jamaica, restores the "common people" to a creative role in their own historical formation.

The Indian layer of Caribbean culture is brought into focus; Lewis adumbrates, with the assistance of Inca records, the immanent nationalist feelings of the first generation creole aristocracy and exposes the cultural basis of persistent Carib resistance. Indian slavery, the foundation for black slavery, emerges in massive reality.

The need to justify slavery impelled the articulation of ruling class ideology. While some Spanish churchmen fought a rearguard action in defence of humanism, in the British territories commercial values reigned unchallenged. Class hatred for white indentured servants easily congealed into racism, decked out by a sequence of settler historians with professions of faith in England's manifest destiny or, in the more sophisticated work of Long and Edwards and their counterparts in the French and Spanish islands, with concern for white colonial liberties.

The slaves' key role in anti-slavery struggles, is reflected in their religion, culture and political action. Lewis highlights for example, systems of "illicit bargaining" with, and verbal violence against the ruling class, work-place struggles to dislodge immediate oppressors (the overseers) as well as their definitions of freedom.

The ideology of slave resistance, as Lewis correctly emphasises, underwent transformations in the 400 years of slave plantation history. Slave rebellions reached their apogee in Haiti where the slaves took over the land and established a new black nation. Subsequent defeat of such attempts, plus the development of the abolition movement led, Lewis argues, to the loss of the black nationalist concept. This point, like many others, is, of course, wide open to debate. Defeated in their fight for land, the slaves focussed, arguably, on the fight for wages and citizen status which opened an alternative route to nationhood.

The achievement of nationhood and, more particularly, of Caribbean nationhood was retarded by the confinement of intellectuals and potential political leaders within their metropolitan imposed linguistic-political enclaves and actively discouraged by metropolitan based ideology. This is vividly reflected, for example, in the work of the self-educated Trinidadian schoolmaster, J.J. Thomas, one of the new, thin layer of British West Indian writers to emerge in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Thomas wrote an immensely spirited answer to Froude's reactionary polemic, *The English in the West Indies* (1888). His case was built, in part, on differentiating between the "free mixed community" of Trinidad and its important "coloured element" from Haiti, characterised according to Froude, by cannibalism and devil worship. Writing in 1889 Thomas was,

evidently, unable to question from his own reading the Haiti Froude presented. He did not know that Haitian intellectuals like himself were busy combatting this vilification of their country which sections of European writers had made an article of faith.

Lewis has made an important contribution to breaking down these barriers in a work which can be criticised for its lack of a theoretical framework and internal coherence, its random definitions and bewildering shifts of focus. The book is a monument to old English eclecticism powered by populist convictions; but the writer's immensely fertile intelligence, bold use of material and commitment to the field make it compelling to read. It is also timely; when the Caribbean's current imperial master is attempting to procure the death and contain the influence of new Haitis, it is a record of and tribute to the generations of chattel slaves, wages slaves and their allies who struggled to shape their own destinies.

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*Mary Turner*

***The Nova Scotia Post: Its Offices, Masters and Marks—1700-1867.* By J.J. Macdonald. Toronto: Unitrade Press, 1985. Pp. iv, 295. \$29.95. Deluxe Edition \$49.95.**

In 1964 (Dalhousie Review, Vol. 45-4, Winter 1965-66, p. 547-549), I wrote a foreword to *The Postal History of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, 1754-1867*, by Dr. Jephcott and Messrs. Greene and Young. I concluded by stating,

“While experience in philatelic writing and research shows that no book of this kind can claim to be definitive, *The Postal History of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick 1754-1867* will long remain the standard reference work in this highly interesting field.”

Now, twenty years later, we have in Dr. John J. MacDonald's book, a study which adds a great deal to the Jephcott, Greene and Young book, and brings their data on the postal markings of Nova Scotia to a much improved state. Dr. MacDonald appears to have located and assigned to its proper post office virtually every postal marking used in Nova Scotia. Furthermore, he has calculated (with great accuracy, I believe) the number of examples in existence of all the scarcer markings. A summary of his findings is tabulated in Appendix II of this volume.

It provides an admirable and accurate indication of the scarcity, and hence the value, of these markings. This is a valuable and easily readable account of Nova Scotia's postal markings and, together with the other books on the postal history of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick that have appeared in the last twenty-five years — Nicholas Argenti's, *The Postage Stamps of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia* (1962), Jephcott, Greene and

Young's, *The Postal History of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick* (1964), and Volume one of L. B. Macpherson's *Nova Scotia Postal History*, (1982) — gives us a more complete record of the postal history of Nova Scotia than I believe exists for any other country.

Furthermore, Dr. MacDonald's book contains a wealth of general and historical information which will be of interest, not only to the philatelist, but to the general reader concerned with the history and geography of Nova Scotia.

*Ottawa*

*Henry D. Hicks*