

Editorial

IN THE MIDDLE of this issue, under the heading "Positions," you will find a debate about some of the political and ethical issues that might arise if Quebec were to secede from Canada. Kai Nielsen begins this debate by arguing, in "Against Partition," that the citizens of Quebec must be able to decide, by simple majority vote, whether to withdraw from or to remain within the Canadian federation, but that a smaller group within Quebec (a designated anglophone community, for example) should not have the similar right to decide whether or not to remain part of a newly constituted sovereign Quebec. This position may not seem self-evidently true to many anglophone Canadians, and that presumably is why Nielsen has taken the trouble to spell it out for us and to support it with subtle and persuasive reasoning. Robert M. Martin remains unconvinced, as he shows in the rebuttal of Nielsen's position which follows, "In Spite of All Temptations to Belong to Other Nations." As Martin points out, Nielsen's argument rests on the assumption that there's a definitive difference between groups that are *nations* and groups that aren't. Martin challenges Nielsen's use of the idea of the *nation*, and argues that in the wrong hands the promotion of nationalism can lead to injustices of many kinds. Martin ends by declaring his allegiance, not to national identity, but to social pluralism, which he believes to be a far higher good. Nielsen then replies to Martin in a brief statement, "So What's so Scary?" He assures us that Quebec nationalism isn't a force of repression or exclusion, that Quebec is a liberal society—a society hospitable to great cultural diversity. Nielsen accuses Martin of perpetuating an anglophone myth about the putative intolerance of the Quebec society that might emerge if Quebec were to become a sovereign state, and urges us to learn to live as neighbours, respecting whatever democratic choices the people of Quebec may eventually make.

I am calling attention to this debate in particular because it represents a new initiative for *The Dalhousie Review*. Under the rubric “Positions” the *Review* proposes to publish arguments and expressions of opinion that don’t necessarily conform to the usual standards of a fully researched article. These will usually be shorter essays (like those in the present debate) on controversial subjects. So the initiative taken here by Nielsen, and the challenge taken up by Martin, should be more than isolated cases of intellectual argument. I hope this exchange will be a provocation to readers of the *Review* to take on the more active role of being writers as well. I am therefore inviting submissions from readers who wish to continue the debate on partition, who wish to comment on issues raised by any of the materials published in this journal, or who wish to initiate discussion of other questions of interest. I propose that submissions of this kind be published as “Positions” in future numbers of the *Review*. It should be understood, of course, that contributions of this kind must seek to persuade by means of reasonable discourse and argument, that not all contributions received will merit publication, and that the staff of the *Review* reserves the right to edit comments in such a way as to ensure that principles of fair play are respected. Contributions should be sent to “Positions” at either of these addresses:

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Readers of new fiction will find two short stories in this issue: “Soup-Bone Bucolic” by Tamas Dobozsy and “Ice” by Greg Garrett. “Soup-Bone Bucolic” is a bizarre and enigmatic fantasia in which a naïve and youthful narrator encounters an innocence far greater than his own. “Ice” is by contrast a realistic narrative, but a narrative in which the speaker’s naïve interpretation of events is also put to the test. Among the pleasures of “Ice,” for Canadian

readers, is the chance to observe an American representation of one of our national stereotypes. Readers of poetry will find a diversity of styles and subjects, ranging from the spare technical precision of R.L. Cook's "Youth and Age" to the confessional intimacy of Ruth Panofsky's "Evidence" to the ironic interplay of perspectives in Peter Richardson's "Crow Discomfiture." The first of Laverne Frith's three poems about art is accompanied by an illustration, a photograph of *Café Concert* by Georges Seurat. For permission to reproduce this photograph I am grateful to the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Much of the critical and scholarly writing in this issue is concerned with early modern literature and culture, some of it explicitly with particular works by Shakespeare. Sheldon P. Zitner's review of Helen Vendler's new edition of and commentary on Shakespeare's sonnets is both an appreciative tribute to an exceptional reader and a demonstration that reading poetry is itself an art that still matters. Ian McAdam's review article addresses some of the issues that have arisen in recent critical debates about the interpretation of early modern texts; in particular, he warns that the tendency to demystify the metaphysical claims of early modern writers may itself lead to mystifications within current critical practice. Greg Bak's article on Moorishness offers some ways of historicizing the cultural otherness represented in early modern texts; if Bak is right, then the colour prejudice and religious intolerance of the early modern period are not identical with and shouldn't be conflated with the modern phenomenon of racism. Derek Cohen is also concerned with otherness in "The Culture of Slavery: Caliban and Ariel." Cohen writes within a now well-established tradition that endorses Caliban's aboriginal rights to the island on which the action of *The Tempest* takes place and celebrates his fierce desire for freedom; more surprisingly, he identifies Ariel as the perfect slave, the creature whose very identity has been sacrificed to Prospero's desire for mastery. David Lucking points out that telling a story can be a way of asserting mastery, and he takes this thought as his point of departure in "'Each Word Made True and Good': Narrativity in *Hamlet*." In his dealings with the Ghost, in his interpretation of the play-within-the-play, and even in his dying words to Horatio, Hamlet wants to be in control of the narrative. In isolating this pattern Lucking has given a persuasive explanation for the extraordinary

authority that Hamlet exerts not so much over the events of the play as over its readers and spectators. Lucking's essay has already appeared in Italy as a chapter in *Plays Upon the Word: Shakespeare's Drama of Language* (Lecce: Edizione Milella, 1997); it is printed here, with the author's permission, in the hope that it may reach the wider audience which it certainly deserves.

During the months in which the materials for this issue were assembled, I was engaged in teaching Shakespeare to a group of some fifty undergraduate students. While this was no more than a coincidence, it was nonetheless a happy one in which the gratifications of two quite different kinds of work were mutually supportive. I mention my own pleasures in the hope that they will be shared in various ways by readers of the texts presented here.

R.H.