

REVIEWS

Literary Historiography of Canada

Jennifer Blair, Daniel Coleman, Kate Higginson, and Lorraine York, ed. *ReCalling Early Canada: Reading the Political in Literary and Cultural Production*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2005. xlvi + 412 pp.

Thirty years ago Carl Berger offered what has become a standard definition of historiography in Canada. “Written history,” he asserted,

represents a self-conscious effort to establish the meaning of experience for the present and is subtly and unpredictably coloured by the milieu in which the historian lives. The concerns and preconceptions of his own world constantly interject themselves into the complex dialogue between the living and the dead. History, therefore, is not an olympian record of past activity; it reveals a good deal about the intellectual climate in which it was composed. (ix)

History, in other words, is the discipline of examining a past that shapes and is shaped by the present, one that is neither a fiction nor the mere repository of verifiable fact. Berger presents the example of early twentieth-century historian A.R.M. Lower to illustrate his point. Writing after World War I, Lower wanted to find in Canadian history a “nationalist creed” and a “homogeneous community” (112) with a “fixed [national] culture” very different from the Canada of his own day, which included waves of ethnically diverse new immigrants and a declining Anglo-Saxon birth rate (130). In the past, he saw the foundations of the ethnically and economically unified society that he desired in the present.

Perhaps today the temptation is to see in Canada's past a proto-modern heterogeneity that foretells the country's contemporary multiculturalism. *Recalling Early Canada: Reading the Political in Literary and Cultural Production* avoids this trap. Instead, this collection of essays merges the contributors' contemporary interpretations of texts that circulated in “early Canada” with their attention to the initial production, circulation, and reception of these texts.

This approach attempts to counteract the bias to the present that Berger identifies as unavoidable in historiography. To the editors, an important

strategy of this counteraction involves maintaining an awareness of the past reader as a crucial component of “historical context”:

When we do the work of recalling early Canada, . . . we are, in part, reading a set of texts that were written with a particular set of readers in mind—a set of people for whom identifying as “readers” meant something in particular, something *different* from what it means to identify as readers now. . . . *ReCalling Early Canada* expresses a wariness of a “recalling” activity that is somehow neutral and simply “discovers” our antecedents in the details of the past. . . . [We advocate] a continued focus on reading and readers, yet we do so in order to increase our understanding of the differences inherent in this uneven reciprocity between past readers and ourselves. (Introduction xxxiii-xxxiv)

Keeping the early reader in mind brings an ethical imperative to historiographical criticism by compelling the contemporary critic to admit that a full recuperation of historical context, and the confident interpretation that would accompany it, is impossible. The editors underline a particular danger here: Unlike speculations about “historical context,” those made about readers are rarely verifiable. To refer to the readers of a certain time, rather than simply to the “historical context” of that time, implies a parallel between the reception of a text “then” and that reception “now,” collapsing rather than confirming the gap between the two. Contemporary readers have to resist the temptation of that potential collapse by keeping the early reader’s unknowability in mind.

Whither such caution in terms of historiographical approaches like the ones in this volume? The first essay, Paul Hjartarson’s, attacks the survival of “olympian” historiography in the work of Lower’s strident intellectual heir, J.L. Granatstein. In his notorious polemic *Who Killed Canadian History?* (1998), Granatstein laments contemporary scholarship that foregrounds the histories of labour, women, particular ethnicities, and multiculturalism, which he believes have destroyed Canadians’ sense of their shared national past as captured in the chronology of the country’s official formation in 1867, its identity-building participation in various wars, and its overcoming of threats to the federation.

Teachers of early Canadian writing have a practical reason for rejecting Granatstein’s claims. If they adhered to Granatstein’s priorities for the teaching of the Canadian past, it would be impossible for them to teach much of this writing. Few texts present only the master narrative of settlers overcoming numerous hardships through sheer willpower. It is there, right enough, and it constitutes one element of the early Canadian literature cur-

riculum. But who could teach Alexander McLachlan's *The Emigrant*, published just shy of Confederation in 1861, without recognizing the labouring classes that give readers the narrative poem's main speakers? Does anyone read Alexander Morris's *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* without noticing the terminological ambiguity that marks his discussion of Native peoples, to whom he refers as both wards and subjects of the Crown? Could any teacher today bring Samuel Hearne's account of his journey to the Coppermine before his or her class exclusively as a surveying trip that helped map the Northwest or seek out new resources?

Ultimately this is the problem with Granatstein's argument for teachers and researchers of early Canadian literatures: early Canadian documents interweave many stories. The inevitable conclusion drawn from our own research and even more plainly from our teaching is that at different times among different readers, some of these stories come to the fore while others recede into the background. This conclusion helps turn the term "reading" into a caveat emphasizing the individuality of an interpretation over its claims to authority. Being aware of the temporal differences between readers means conceding that no matter how contemporary readers contextualize the early text, these multiple possibilities remain in it, and picking one to foreground is always the present reader's decision. Literary historiography reveals which of these stories are important in the "now."

Adam Carter makes this point in his contribution to the volume, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the National Ode." Examining the representation of the nation as a human subject in Charles G.D. Roberts' poems "Canada" and "An Ode for the Canadian Confederacy," he argues that the "specific kind of singular subject" into which these poems make the nation "enacts a violence that is both linguistic and historical" on the nation's citizens (119), "falsely cover[ing] over historical contradictions and discontinuities as well as the structural inequalities and differences of race, gender, and class" (127). Using Paul de Man's assertion that "[a]nthropomorphism is not just a trope but an identification on the level of substance" (*Rhetoric* 241, qtd. in Carter 129-30), he affirms that the human face of the nation in "Canada" and "An Ode for the Canadian Confederacy" is gendered male and raced white; in the latter, "Métis and First Nations peoples of 1885" are specifically suppressed as the speaker quests for this idealized citizen-as-nation (134). But Carter adds that the poems' anthropomorphic tropes also leave them open to an ongoing reinterpretation and critique because the nation-as-subject idea involves prosopopeia, the speaker's "apostrophe to an absent, deceased or voiceless entity [in

this case the nation] which posits the possibility of the latter's reply and confers upon it the power of speech" (de Man, *Rhetoric* 76 qtd. in Carter 136). Such an apostrophe subtly reminds readers that the nation is not a subject—that anthropomorphism is a fiction in which they have chosen to participate. For in the end, it is impossible to conceive of the nation as a single human subject without becoming more aware that its "voice" is never fully identical with readers' own, the citizens whose desires it supposedly articulates. Nor can readers conceive of the nation as such a subject without being haunted by an awareness of the subjects suppressed, excluded, or violated in the making of this idealized national "person."

A related point Carter's argument makes is that even the most canonical of early Canadian texts—works that seem overdetermined by their era's bygone literary tastes and rose-tinted views of country, king, and empire now usually regarded as antithetical to aesthetic value—continue to present new dimensions of themselves. It is easy to dismiss Confederation-era odes as uninspired examples of the form that sound only the single monotonous note of national boosterism. For the articulateness with which Carter illuminates the race and gender implications in these two poems' constructions of Canadian nationhood, it would be difficult to equal his essay. Many chapters in this volume do so, however, and choosing to discuss Carter's essay first merely reflects my own idiosyncratic interests.

This essay is not a stand-alone argument. It shares concerns with other essays in the volume about a number of issues related to early Canadian texts. In the remainder of this review, I will summarize each of the essays to suggest that by echoing each others' questions and methods, they draw attention (though they do not restrict themselves) to three main and sometimes linked foci: the impact of literary form on cultural analysis, the discourse of nationhood as it develops through particular historicizations of First Nations, French, and English relations in Canada past, and the challenge of interpreting irony and innuendo in writing produced and circulated at times so far away from the time of present-day critics.

As it does Carter's essay, an interest in form characterizes Robert Stacey's "Romance, Pastoral Romance, and the Nation in History: William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* and Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé's *Les Anciens Canadiens*." Stacey discusses the romance and the pastoral as "modes" rather than "genres," defining "mode" after Paul Alpers as a literary form that dictates the writer's treatment of his or her content. In adopting the romance or the pastoral modes, he argues, a writer adopts a particular kind of resolution to the narrative conflict between good and evil. If the writer chooses the romance mode, then the story ends in "heroic

transcendence” (94). If he or she chooses the pastoral mode, then the ending is more complicated because “[w]hile romance is ‘about’ the triumph of good over evil, right over wrong, pastoral rejects such clear-cut distinctions, opposing heroic transcendence with unresolved conflict” (94). In Stacey’s view, Kirby’s novel is a historical romance whereas de Gaspé’s operates within the pastoral mode. *The Golden Dog* treats the fall of New France as the end of French history in Canada, and the French inhabitants of the colony as “radically ‘other’” to the English cultural present and future of the Canadian nation (114), while *Les Anciens Canadiens*, with its organization around the pastoral device of the double plot, favours a more complicated relationship between the French and English characters in the narrative. As an allegory of French-English relations in early Canada, this historical pastoral grapples with the differences between the two cultures instead of consigning one of them to the past.

Like Stacey, Andrea Cabajsky takes as her departure point a historical novel set in French North America, the one she chooses being devoted to the 1755 expulsion of the Acadians. Presenting (also like Stacey) an illuminating analysis of how a nineteenth-century historical novel in French imagines a past national identity for one of Canada’s oldest French populations, she calls attention to Canadian literary criticism’s ongoing failure to analyze the early literatures of French and English Canada comparatively, a practice that she believes would expose a common “combined treatment of intercultural contest and rapprochement” (74) between the two settler societies. Together, Cabajsky’s and Stacey’s chapters depict the historical novel as “a genre... inextricably linked to the rise of literary nationalism in early Canada” (Cabajsky 76), and more precisely to the rise of competing and complementary literary nationalisms in French and English. In “Historiographical Revision and Colonial Agency: Napoléon Bourassa’s *Jacques et Marie*,” Cabajsky asserts that Bourassa’s novel imagines the past as a “violent” site of “intercultural conflict” (78) between the soon-to-be-dispossessed Acadians and their British expellers. This violence is epitomized in the figure of hero Jacques’ mother, who dies during the journey out of Acadia and whose buried body a pack of wolves subsequently unearths and dismembers. Borrowing a concept from Srinivas Aravamudan, Cabajsky interprets the trope of the ravaged maternal body as an instance of “excessive” signification (80), for this body takes on new meanings relative to the specific history being novelized as it discards the figure’s more familiar positive associations. Far from symbolizing national prosperity and prospects, the mother here represents Acadia’s diasporic fragmentation, marking a breaking point between its past and its future.

This work of historical fiction, then, challenges imperial history by unexpectedly encoding references to the community's dismemberment in the common domestic metonymy of mother and nation. In doing so, it warns of the ways in which the expulsion haunts history. First, the violence of the expulsion haunts later Acadians' attempts to reconstitute themselves as a community from their positions in the diaspora. Second, this expelled population haunts the British Empire, which can never fully eradicate all traces of the displaced other.

Carter's, Stacey's, and Cabajsky's essays, along with many others in the volume, employ a common method, the close reading of one or two literary texts, to explore a common theme, nationalism in Confederation-era literature. Each shows how a credible cultural analysis can evolve from approaching the text as a specifically literary document, a method that workers in cultural studies have sometimes regarded skeptically. But where nations and nationalism are the focus, cultural studies' preferred method of arguing through whole genres of writing rather than individual texts often fails to move beyond a reductive *contra* stance that vilifies rather than critiques nationalist sentiments. Several contributors investigate the cultural differences of the colonial period prior to the advent of the nation. Others, careful not to identify the terms "culture" and "nation" as Granatstein does, examine the placement of these different cultures within various narratives of the new nation, noting frequent efforts to naturalize the dominant British settler culture as the national culture and the resistance to such attempts.

Kathleen Venema's "Letitia Mactavish Hargrave and Hudson's Bay Company Domestic Politics: Negotiating Kinship in Letters from the Canadian North-West" also foregrounds form, in this case the epistolary form, as a revealing register of colonial dynamics in the wake of the merger between the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies in 1821. After the amalgamation, taking a British wife became a way for Company employees to secure their prospects in the enlarged corporation. This new practice replaced the company's previous endorsement of employees' kinship ties with the indigenous population through "country marriages" as a means of improving trade relations with Native peoples. The arrival of Company wives like Hargrave in North America signaled the beginning of a new domestic politics that made the Caucasian wife the symbol of corporate stability as well as the strong tie between Company leaders and the mother country. Reading Hargrave's letters through a diverse range of critical work on epistolary discourse, Venema argues that Hargrave, who had her own and her family's socio-economic status to elevate, jealously patrolled

the borders of her own identity as the white European guardian of the domestic sphere. In the process, she inadvertently but “radically reconfigured the world all fur-trade women [European *and* Native] would subsequently be required to negotiate” (169). In addition, Hargrave’s letters “ventriloquize” the voices of persons connected with fur trade society that might otherwise not have been preserved for posterity in any form, persons such as Hargrave’s socially ambitious maid, Mary Clarke, and the “mixed-blood” wife of another Company officer, Harriet Vincent Gladman (165).

An important part of Hargrave’s task as a letter-writer, Venema observes, is the careful control of the information she provides those to whom she writes. In order to protect her husband’s, uncle’s, and two brothers’ career prospects, she censored the news she reported. In “The Knowledge of ‘Sex’ and the Lattice of the Confessional,” Jennifer Blair examines a complex version of “not saying” in the genre of the nun’s tale. A type of narrative promoted, circulated, and sometimes (as in the case of Blair’s focus text, *Awful Disclosures*) ghost-written by Protestants (184), these tales feature what purport to be nuns’ accounts of priests using the confessional box to manipulate confessants into sexual relations with them. Such accounts portray nuns as particularly vulnerable to that corruption owing to their sexual innocence and consequent ignorance of the line separating sexual purity from sexual transgression. The tales also suggest that Catholic confession fails to maintain another important boundary—the one around the enclosed space of the Catholic confessional. Although that enclosed space supposedly protects the privacy of those who have to confess sinful sexual desires, it in fact facilitates a slippage between private and public discourse on sex. Confessing to another person, especially to someone of the opposite sex as women must do, turns sex from a strictly private matter into a potentially public one. The Protestant redefinition of confession as an act between God and the confessant alone was intended to eliminate the risk to the public-private divide, but the tales themselves blur that divide by publishing lurid insinuations of Catholic sexual corruption, thereby bringing sex before the public. In order to preserve the credibility of the narrating nuns whose sexual violation signaled not only the Catholic church’s moral bankruptcy but their own loss of social respectability, the tales depict the women as unable to name the violations they witnessed. Only innuendo suggests the sexual acts at the heart of the story. Blair argues that this strategy reveals as much about Protestant anxiety over its repression of sex from discourse as it does the “deviancy” of the Catholic confession. When a text can imply the sexual deeds crucial to the plot but cannot name them, everything in that text becomes a potential carrier of

sexual meaning; ironically, public discourse becomes saturated with sexual significance.

Like Blair, Kate Higginson examines the effects of a narrative strategy that relies on the female narrator's implying but never naming the sexual incidents crucial to the account. As in Blair's study, such incidents, if named, would identify a type of sexual experience that would contaminate the speaker and threaten to make her unacceptable to a society that would not protect the "fallen" woman even if her "fall" was not her fault. In "Feminine Vulnerability, (neo)Colonial Captivities, and Rape Scares: Theresa Gowanlock, Theresa Delaney and Jessica Lynch," Higginson argues that the captivity narratives of North-West Rebellion survivors Delaney and Gowanlock hint at sexual violations that they cannot admit, whether because they are unable to do so or, as Higginson speculates, because they are determined to win the protection of the Canadian public in the form of pensions from the federal government. Gowanlock pens "a text that underscores the threat of rape without ever detailing or confirming its fulfillment" (60), while Delaney represents herself as a "Domestic Instructress" (62) who teaches valuable skills to the females in her "captor" band. Scripting themselves as respectable types of womanhood, both rely (if in different degrees) on an idealized feminine vulnerability to claim the right to recompense from the nation. Higginson emphasizes the longevity of these types, pointing to the recent story of Jessica Lynch, the U.S. Army private who American troops dramatically "rescued" from her Iraqi "captors" in 2003, as an example of the same narrative foregrounding of a "politically useful sensation" (70); between 1885 and 2003, Higginson suggests, the narrative formula remains essentially unchanged in its elliptical suggestion of a racialized enemy other raping a white woman (69).

A fourth essay that looks at the role of the "not-said," Janice Fiamengo's "'Baptized with Tears and Sighs': Sara Jeannette Duncan and the Rhetoric of Feminism," analyses what its author calls Duncan's "multiple positioning" in her early career as a journalist vis à vis the women's movement. Duncan, "the first Canadian woman to declare in print her support for woman suffrage" (258), was as opinionated a reporter as she was an entertaining one on the many political and social subjects that interested her, and her early journalism reflects many opinions on these subjects. Fiamengo argues that through her disinclination to commit to any one position, Duncan crafted "a multi-voiced persona" (259) that could examine social questions from a variety of different perspectives, from the supportive to the deeply critical. As Fiamengo shows, she sometimes adopted contradictory stances on the women's movement within the same article; her

rhetorical skill and famous gift for satire suggests that her doing so was a strategy, not an accident. Duncan's refusal to chant a single mantra on these issues frees her to maintain a critical distance from the feminist rhetoric of the day, a rhetoric she viewed as plagued by exaggeration, emotionalism, and vagueness.

Fiamengo leans toward the view that Duncan was well aware of the many distinct audiences to which her various rhetorical stances appealed. Like Blair, however, she sees a problem with reading a whole body of texts like Duncan's early journalism as asserting something other or more than it says explicitly. The picture that such an interpretation paints of Duncan is the impossible one of a writer always in control of her speaking voice and unremittingly conscious of her own intentions. Significantly, however, Fiamengo's discussion of this work identifies the current absence of any heuristic that would enable an analysis of Duncan's rhetorical practices as pursuing a consistent goal, and it points out that without one, contemporary readers are pushed towards an either/or assessment of the writer as either totally ironic or totally inconsistent in her commentary.

As other essays do with literary texts, Venema's, Higginson's, and Fiamengo's arguments apply the tools of literary and rhetorical analysis to prose non-fiction in order to read it in terms of cultural and/or political difference. Anne Milne follows suit in her brilliant discussion of "the relationship between genetics and culture" (213) in "Writing (Canada) on the Body: Isolating the Gene for 'Canadian' in *le petit cheval du fer?*," which examines the meaning of "inheritance" in its overlapping biological and cultural senses. The particular instance of "inheritance" that interests Milne is the passage into law of Bill S-22, *The National Horse of Canada Act* (2002), and its establishment of a breed nicknamed "the little iron horse," brought to New France in the mid-seventeenth century, as "Canada's national horse." Noting the prominence that the campaign for this legislation gave to DNA as the authoritative marker of traits passed from generation to generation, she objects that proving the genetic consistency of this horse over generations is practically impossible to do; the science that supposedly proves Canada *has* a national horse to preserve overreaches itself by positing the inheritability of "ephemeral qualities—toughness and gentleness" (215)—that cannot be passed on biologically. Not only do the proponents of the national horse legislation graft these uninherited traits onto the horse's DNA but also onto Canadians themselves, a fanciful trans-species extension of qualities that turns the horse into an unlikely figure for the idealized national personality. Milne finds a parallel to this contemporary construction of the "little iron horse" in Cor-

nelius Krieghoff's mid-nineteenth-century paintings of the horse's alleged ancestors in Québec. These popular depictions of *habitant* life represent owners and horses alike as hardy workers in a rustic domestic environment that bears little resemblance either to the province or to the horses' actual place in it.

If Milne's study of the Canadian horse exposes a fantastic and ethically problematic contemporary effort to legislate an intangible national identity through breeding technology, Nick Mount returns early Canadian literary scholars to the more familiar territory of early Canadian concern with establishing a distinct national literature. Mount approaches this subject through the community of Canadian writers who lived in New York City, a community that included some members still well-known today but that consisted primarily of now-forgotten popular fiction writers. The expatriate group on which his essay sheds light facilitated the establishment of the major criterion for inclusion in the *fin-de-siècle* Canadian canon, which was the presence of geographical and/or cultural "Canadian colour" in the work. The idea that there is an expatriate base to the canon's superstructure raises new questions, as Milne's essay does, about the invention of a "national culture." The required inclusion of local manners or a recognizable northern landscape in "Canadian" texts relegated many writers who moved to the United States to obscurity in the country they left behind. Mount's assertion that expatriate writers' reinventions of themselves helped generate the topocentric criteria for a distinct national literature suggests that Canadian critics should consider more carefully the impact of southward migration on a canon that they frequently regard as having developed in response to internal pressures (like the impact of the landscape on the writer) more than external ones. The numbers that Mount cites in support of these contentions are impressive—he notes, for instance, that the Canadian publisher William Briggs's nine "decisive best-sellers" in the *fin-de-siècle* years feature six by expatriate authors (252). The present obscurity of many of these writers sustains the myth of an organically-evolved, autonomous early national literature. It also provides material for those who, like Mount, would dispute that myth.

Placed near Mount's chapter on decidedly un-canonical Canadian writing is an argument that takes another look at one of the best-known early Canadian texts, Isabella Valancy Crawford's *Malcolm's Katie*. In "The Search for a Livable Past: Frye, Crawford, and the Healing Link," Cecily Devereux reviews the publication history of the poem, emphasizing the early date at which its canonization began. A canonization motivated by the widespread recognition of the poem "as a nation-building text and an

English Canadian narrative of origin” (285), the source of the poem's importance is its attempt to “‘integrate’ colonial society with an indigenous, pre-colonial past... within the cultural memory of the settlers” (284). Northrop Frye, Devereux argues, regarded this attempt as the key to the poem's cultural significance, its mythopoeic element providing a “healing link” between uprooted Native peoples and cultures and the settler ones that displaced them. This element, particularly as manifested in the poem's second section, anthropomorphizes the natural world and assigns to it an aboriginal identity to which it then also aligns settlers. In this way, the poem's mythopoeic component vests European settlers with the identity of a people indigenous to the land. Yet, Devereux asserts, Crawford's mythopoesis does not “heal” a link between Native and settler peoples so much as create the illusion of a link between settlers and an imagined prehistory that identifies them with the place where they have just arrived, alleging a deep connection to a more “primitive” life on this land and an entitlement to the land itself.

That certain representations of the First Nations seem never to go away is a fact foregrounded by the organization of *ReCalling Early Canada*, which begins and ends with chapters on settler-invader depictions of Native peoples. In “Wedding ‘Native’ Culture to the Modern State: National Culture, Selective Tradition and the Politics of Recalling Early Canada,” Paul Hjartarson examines the incorporation of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Tsimshian artist Frederick Alexcee's work into the master narrative of Canada's nationhood, a narrative that he argues is perpetuated in the present-day work of philosopher John Ralston Saul. While Saul proclaims that First Nations peoples constitute one third of the “tripartite foundation” that underwrites Canada's statehood and its much-vaunted multicultural tolerance, Hjartarson posits that his real interest lies only in the convergence of the other two “founding” cultures, the English and the French, as the “real” origin of Canadian nationhood. Saul's discussion of the 1995 Quebec referendum on sovereignty, and in particular his analysis of what he regards as the rapprochement between the two settler cultures, omits First Nations peoples from the national story. The inconsistency between Saul's thesis and his argument effectively erases the Native presence in the “tripartite foundation.” Hjartarson sees a parallel between the reading of the nation's history that Saul presents in the wake of the referendum and the 1927 *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art-Native and Modern* put on by the National Gallery of Canada and the Victoria Memorial Museum. This exhibition introduced Alexcee's work to the country, but it is remembered mainly as the event that secured Emily Carr's reputation

as the painter who brought West Coast Native images into the national imaginary. When Saul reproduces this received interpretation of the event, he too relegates the Tsimshian First Nation to the mere source and inspiration for some of Carr's most recognizable images, which were then and are now perceived as embodying a kind of national essence. The exhibition and its recall as the event that bestowed iconic Canadian status on Carr's art predicated "national" art on the perceived primitiveness of the First Nations. Defined as artefact rather than as art, Alexcee's work is denied the same status and the same involvement in a national Canadian identity as Carr's.

Like Hjartarson and Devereux, Julia Emberley believes that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Euro-settler discourse in Canada situates Native peoples as part of a myth that explains the nation's origins, a myth that the settler community appropriates as part of its own prehistory. In "Colonial Phantasms: Aboriginality and 'The Family' in the Photographic Archive," she examines that discourse as she finds it expressed in early twentieth-century photographs of the Aboriginal family in Western Canada. She makes part of her case by analyzing travel writer Mary T. Schäffer's portraits of Sampson, Leah, and Frances Louise Beaver, a trio presented in Schäffer's photographs as both "primitive" and attractively similar to the bourgeois nuclear family. By "self-consciously follow[ing] the Rousseauian ideal of the noble savage as head of the First Family," Schäffer creates the visual image of the myth and associates it with "European civilization's unidentified past time" (326). Along with denying Native peoples any real place in the history of North America, this mythologization helps turn the bourgeois family into a "transcultural model" of the family, an apparent universal that in fact embodies "a mode of colonial power and governance" (327). In this "transcultural model," the differences between the European and the Aboriginal family are not transcended but defined in hierarchical terms; the Aboriginal mother in these photographs, for instance, does not share in the material prosperity so central to bourgeois domesticity, nor in the "respectable" white femininity of her colonial counterpart. Moreover, the production of meaning in these photographs and their rationalization of specific ideas of the family evaluates both bourgeois and Aboriginal families in terms of their proximity to a patriarchal ideal. Making the colonial and power dynamics of these photographs visible, Emberley argues, demands an acknowledgement of "'the family' during this period of time as an institutional apparatus within which and through which colonial power amassed both knowledge and representation in the North American context" (328).

As the above summaries indicate, *ReCalling Early Canada* is internally coherent, its essays examining the same phenomena that other essays in the volume do from different perspectives and in relation to different texts. By implication, they convey an idea of scholarship itself as the same kind of discussion, as opposed to a search for an unassailable thesis about early Canadian writing. While such a complementarity of interests might only have generated a text that was greater as a whole than in its individual parts, this is not true of the many finely-written essays in *ReCalling Early Canada*.

I was not fully persuaded by every argument. The assertion that Lucy Lippard's "experience of *disalienation* with the image" of Sampson, Leah, and Frances Louise Beaver expresses "an historical blindness to the reality of colonization as a radically violent event that obliterated one history by creating another" (Emberley 326, emphasis in original) prompted me to reread Lippard's account. In the end, I decided to retain my original understanding of this passage—that Lippard acknowledges that her reading of Schäffer's portrait as a work in which "some of the barriers" between the colonized and the colonizer "are down, or invisible" involves the "*illusion*" (emphasis added) that she is looking at the "real" Beaver family, and that she realizes that Schäffer's "colonial lens" always filters her interpretation of the image (Lippard 43). Impressed as I am by the flexibility added to the idea of the pastoral when it is defined as a mode rather than a genre, I wonder whether characterizing *The Golden Dog* as an historical romance rather than a pastoral one orients the interpretation of the narrative toward its ending more than its gothic elements suggest readers should. By making haunting a prominent theme, those gothic elements in Kirby's novel hint that something in the past of New France *will* survive into the "national" future to disturb the apparent harmony between the ruling and subordinated populations of early Québec. I also find the concept of "early Canada" used in the introduction and some of the arguments unclear. Judging from the essays included, it embraces all of pre- and post-Confederation Canada. At the same time, two thirds of these essays focus on texts produced and/or published between 1880 and 1920, the literary period closest to modernism. But these are minor reservations; the collection clearly offers useful paradigms for the consideration of Canada's literary and cultural past.

Readers with a background in academia, and particularly in Canadian studies, will appreciate *ReCalling Early Canada* most. The presentation of a single common bibliography at the end of the book instead of individual ones for each chapter results in the inevitable omissions that people already

familiar with the field negotiate best. Of the four entries in the Bibliography for Carole Gerson, for instance, most Canadianists will know that it is “Nobler Savages: Representations of Native Women in the Writings of Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill” to which Venema refers when she speaks of Hargrave as “[u]ncertain, like Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill, of her position as a colonial woman within normative patriarchal power relations (Gerson 10)” (158), but readers less well acquainted with the field will have to surmise from the other information in those entries. It is not clear from which of D.M.R. Bentley’s four entries Milne quotes when she writes that he “notes little or no reference to ‘the hardships and loneliness of the pioneer experience’ in poems with a romantic aesthetic that unrelentingly refuses to admit the existence of oppression in its drive to preserve beauty and reveal sublimity” (224). Hjartarson’s reference to Raymond Williams’s argument that “[t]o ‘recall’ any person, event, or object from the past... is inherently a political act” (4) may refer either to *Marxism and Literature* or to his essay “The Future of Cultural Studies.”

In a Western academic community that worships the monograph, specialists in Canadian literature have long respected the essay collection as a forum for important scholarship. The past forty years have produced many that have had a lasting impact on criticism: *A Mazing Space*, *Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, *Essays on the Canadian Imagination*, *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, and the entire *Reappraisals: Canadian Writers* series from the University of Ottawa Press, to name a few. The form is as vibrant as ever, with *Is Canada Postcolonial?*, *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism*, *Creating Community: A Roundtable on Canadian Aboriginal Literatures*, and now *ReCalling Early Canada* a few of the more recent gatherings of scholarship on writing in the nation. The popularity of this “unity-in-diversity” approach is seductively easy to attribute to some kind of essential Canadian mentality, a “Canadian” taste for variety as an organizing principle. But in the case of *ReCalling Early Canada*, employing different textual interpretations to recuperate a Canadian past acknowledges that careful research into the text never eliminates differences such as those outlined in the divide between readers past and present or implied in the distinction between culture and nation. The resulting essays do not tell readers what Canada was; instead, they reveal which of many stories currently appear to readers to occupy the foreground of these texts. To borrow from Berger again, their repetition-with-difference makes them a wonderfully “elaborative” discussion of the national identity question.

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