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Russell McDougall and Gillian Whitlock (Eds.), *Australian/Canadian Literatures in English: Comparative Perspectives*, North Ryde: Methuen, 1987, 247pp.

This collection of twelve essays offers an important contribution to a rapidly developing area of comparative criticism within Commonwealth literary studies. With equal attention to Australian and Canadian literatures, featuring many of the participants of the 1986 Calgary Badlands Conference and including one of the contributors to the special 1988 Australian/Canadian number of *Ariel*, *Australian/Canadian Literatures in English* spotlights the kind and high quality of critical engagement in this area. Most essays examine pairs of texts, though more interesting than particular readings are the methodological questions that are raised: this volume suggests that at last a theoretical framework for post-colonial literary studies is being constructed. It has long been recognised that studies of new literatures in English are closely linked with nationalist and post-colonialist ideologies, though it has not been generally recognised that critical ideologies like post-structuralism and feminism are equally influential in the development of new post-colonial perspectives. These essays which consider a range of materials from nineteenth-century texts to contemporary novels are aware of contemporary theory as they engage with issues of representation in colonial and post-colonial discourse and with problems of revisionism. The Introduction sets these inquiries in context by outlining the long and disrupted history of Australian/Canadian comparative studies. Despite the predominance of essays on novels there is variety here: one essay draws its materials from turn of the century poetry; another presents a comparative survey of the publication and critical reception of women's fiction between 1970 and 1979; and the final essay with its binary reading of basic structural metaphors of cultural consciousness draws on poetry, fiction, literary criticism, architecture and history. Framing the collection and complementing the introductory essay, is a comparative Australian/Canadian literary studies bibliography of over ninety items.

Though the essays are very diverse in their choice of texts, a certain unity and rationale for the comparative exercise emerges through different writers' considerations of similar theoretical and methodological questions. Thus Gillian Whitlock's essay on Marcus Clarke and John Richardson, with its discussion of concepts of colonial space and colonial writers' location toward European literary traditions shares the same territory as Bruce Nesbitt's essay on Patrick White and Sheila Watson, John Matthews's essay on Duncan Campbell Scott and Christopher Brennan, and G.D. Killam's essay on Rudy Wiebe and Xavier Herbert. They are all concerned with the difficulty of siting figures in a ground, or as Matthews says, 'with the imaginative restructuring of reality in a different place [rather, two different places]' (p.189). The historical spread indicates the dimensions of the problem and the variety of examples suggests the range of creative writers' responses to it. Nesbitt has chosen perhaps the most idiosyncratic

examples in his illuminating discussion of White's and Watson's use of musical and mythic structures to give formal inevitability to stories of displacement, while Whitlock's essay raises interesting questions about ways in which her nineteenth-century texts contradict the ideology of colonialism within which they were constructed. It is a characteristic of this collection that every essay sparks off other related questions in the reader's mind, so that the effect is one of proliferating possibilities in a field where so much remains to be explored.

The gems of the collection for me are J.J. Healy's essay on the textual representation of the Indian and the Aborigine, and Helen Tiffin's essay on Atwood's *Bodily Harm* and D'Alpuget's *Turtle Beach*, which is also about problems of representation in cross-cultural fictions. Healy's brilliantly insightful essay considers the problems of history as text and the different ideological discourses of the two cultural traditions through which indigenous peoples have been given visibility. When Healy says of Wiebe that he is 'uninventing the grammar that fixes Big Bear forever in margins and absence' (p.80), he is stating succinctly what so many post-colonial literary and critical efforts are really about. Tiffin's essay is another of her excellent explorations into the hidden dynamics of post-colonial fictions, where she exposes the possibilities and the limits of revisionism. Here, by insisting on the importance of making clear conceptual distinctions in order to engage with cultural differences, she offers a reading which challenges our critical responses not only to *Bodily Harm* and *Turtle Beach* but to the whole English literary tradition of cross-cultural fictional encounters.

Jennifer Strauss's essay on Atwood and D'Alpuget and Diana Brydon's essay on ethnicity engage with related issues from the different angle of feminist analysis, focusing on women's 'struggle with experiencing themselves simultaneously as central and peripheral' (p.114). Both consider the problems that women writers face when trying to speak from doubly or trebly marginalised positions. The issue of marginality is the one that Beryl Donaldson Langer investigates in her essay on 'Women and Literary Production', which offers an analysis of the publishing history of Australian and Canadian women's novels between 1970 and 1979. I suspect that the essay raises more questions than it can possibly answer, though it is pleasing to find that Langer has based her research on the excellent annual bibliographies compiled by the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*.

Russell McDougall's final essay on 'Sprawl and the Vertical' is a wonderfully capacious piece of work which carries intuitive conviction to anyone who knows the difference between Canadian town-planning and Australian suburbia (see Bruce Clunies Ross's essay 'The Paradise Tram' in *Kunapipi*, VI, 3, 1984). not to mention wide Australian verandahs and Canada's more enclosed domestic architecture. Certainly such a semiotics as McDougall offers is bound to evoke specific contradictory instances, though it accommodates many voices and manages to suggest that out of diversity, perspectives for seeing more clearly may be constructed. It seems a fittingly optimistic ending to this very stimulating collection, which provokes ever more questions: why not investigate the work of

expatriate writers, or writers like Janette Turner Hospital and Audrey Thomas whose fictions inhabit borderland territory?

One carping note of a purely technical nature: proof readers in both Australia and Canada failed to notice that the bottom lines on pages 49 and 95 were left out, and that the top line on p. 194 was a repeat of the bottom line on p. 193.

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Donald Harman Akenson, *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922: An International Perspective*, Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988, xiii + 236pp.

Bruce S. Elliot, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach*, Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988, xxviii + 372pp.

These two books are very different in their scope and style. Donald Akenson, Canada's leading historian of Ireland, has written a provocative essay on the religious divide in Irish life at 'home' and abroad, whereas Bruce Elliot has produced an imposing monograph on several hundred Irish Protestant migrant families in nineteenth-century Canada. Both, however, break new ground in their approach.

The clue to Akenson's interpretation is given by his title, for he attacks the dominant assumptions in Irish historiography that Irish Catholics and Protestants represent fundamentally different cultures, and he provides an account of why they have, in fact, polarised. In so doing, he has broadened the study of the Irish to include the diaspora experience and has subjected the conventional wisdom to systematic statistical tests. Whether or not one agrees with his conclusions, one must admire his elegant presentation, the clarity of his argument and his incisive surveys of the historical literature.

Akenson begins his task by formulating the conventional assumptions of Irish historians into a set of testable propositions. If cultural differences are causally significant, he argues, then one would expect them to be revealed in the groups' occupational profiles, in their family structures and sexual practices, and in their treatment of women. The evidence of nineteenth-century Ireland, he suggests, demonstrates the contrary, but, agreeing that it is difficult to select out such factors as political discrimination in explaining Irish social structures, he proposes the diaspora experience of Irish Catholics and Protestants as an adequate social laboratory.

Conveniently for Akenson, Irish American historiography already implies that Irish religious differences produce different socio-economic outcomes in the New

worlds: that Irish Catholics because of their backward communal culture will assemble in city ghettos, that Protestants, more individualistic and modern, will seek the challenge of rural frontiers, that Irish Catholics will have a lower occupational profile and lower rates of social mobility than their Protestant counterparts. Akenson shows, using evidence from Australia, New Zealand and Canada, that such claims are simply unsustainable. There are, he maintains, few measurable differences between the two groups.

But if then, as he puts it, 'in a real sense' Irish Catholics and Protestants constitute 'a nation' (p.108), what has kept them apart in modern Ireland? Akenson finds the answer in such practices as endogamy and segregated education. In his final chapter, he argues that this system of boundary-maintenance rests on real perceptions of religious differences, that intensified for psychological reasons when both communities faced the challenge of modernisation in the nineteenth century.

This, then, is a challenging interpretation that has several strengths. It adds and shows the need for a comparative dimension to the study of the Irish; it brings Irish Protestants into the centre of diaspora history; and it shows the value of a rigorous statistical analysis. In doing all these things, Akenson has succeeded in undermining many of the major assumptions of Irish American historiography, and made a strong claim for focusing on the Irish experience in Canada, because of Canada's unrivalled data bases.

Many students of ethnicity, however, will be less impressed by his statement that the basic socio-economic similarities of Irish Catholics and Protestants make them in 'a real sense' a nation, and by his psychological explanation of religious nationalism. Leaving aside the question of whether the evidence does confirm such similarities (and he admits that matters are at times ambiguous), Akenson may be criticised for a view of ethnicity that focuses on outcomes as 'more real' than styles and modes of organisation. For, as Lyons argues in *Culture and Anarchy* (p.145), the real differences between Catholics and Protestants on matters of education and morality are not so much about content but rather about *how* you decide policy in these areas. Why, we must wonder, should Akenson in considering the causal effects of religion have omitted the crucial realm of politics? Surely, if he were to examine the construction of the different states in Ireland after 1922, he would find marked differences between the two political communities.

These criticisms do not detract from Akenson's real achievement in charting new directions in Irish studies. His strictures on Irish American historiography are given support by the findings of Elliot's study of 775 Protestant migrant families in Canada between 1818 and 1855. This is an innovative work since it links emigration, settlement and subsequent internal migration patterns within Canada over several generations. It is based on an intensive examination of census, legal and land records on both sides of the Atlantic, from which Elliot has reconstructed family histories and individual biographies.

The book begins with an analysis of the Protestants of North Tipperary and

the tensions (demographic and political) that encouraged emigration by middling farmers facing a decline in status. The catalyst for emigration was a government-sponsored scheme of emigration which led to expeditions by Protestants to establish rural settlements in Canada. Once the initial settlements were in place, however, the patterns of migration was self-generating, lasting as long as land was available at affordable prices. (After 1850, Protestant emigration switched to Australis.) Elliot shows that Protestants continued to be a farming community throughout, but that kinship rather than land availability shaped the pattern of settlement. Indeed, he demonstrates that internal migration after settlement was largely undertaken by families who moved along specific 'corridors'. He explains the motives and timing of such migration primarily in terms of the desire of families to provide land or a living for their children.

This monograph, based on a doctoral thesis, is the result of exhaustive research in Ireland and Canada. It is not an easy read and will be of interest largely to specialists in the field. The author provides useful notes on his sources, and Akenson indicates in a foreword that it offers a model for scholars interested in the techniques of family reconstitution.

Although somewhat narrow, with its focus squarely on the family (which might be dictated by the sources), the book does have larger implications. It once again undermines the dichotomisation still found in Irish American historiography between Catholics, organised round the kinship structures of a fading 'traditional' society, and Protestants, who are rationalist and individualistic in their orientation. For it shows that kinship structures are fully compatible with an efficient commercialised agriculture, and that Protestants just as much as Catholics organised in such terms, regarded the family not only as a socio-economic but also as a moral unit.

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Claude Bissell, *The Imperial Canadian - Vincent Massey in Office*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.

Nationalism is a word that evokes different responses in Canada and Australia. Canadians balk at the idea - it presents images of a noisily over-confident southern neighbour or a conscience-pricking urge for an independent Quebec. Australians grasp the notion readily - it is a ticket to notoriety abroad and a comfort at home as a Western outpost at the wrong end of the world. Canadians speak easily of national *identities*, of a regionalism that enables many characters to take their time upon the stage. Australians demand one national *identity*, one image and character - in caricature the ocker male. Vincent Massey, always the actor, trod the boards of nationalism during the time of the Second World War and the reconstruction. This time of change was critical for both Canada and

Australia, and Bissell's fascinating biography poses questions of relevance for understanding the place of nationalism in both countries.

Bissell in the first volume of his biography, *The Young Vincent Massey*, gives Massey's pedigree as a player of national significance. The wealthy son of a wealthy father, personifying in his patronage the maturity of his fortune, Massey is *the* example of the Metropolitan Thesis of Maurice Careless: a man with money living in Toronto, but reaping the reward of supplying the harvesters and tractors needed in the wheatlands of the West. Like many sons of toil, Massey was less attracted to the business of business, and more to the affairs of state - like many sons of wealth the political powers were suspicious of his motives. For Massey, it was his appointment to London as High Commissioner that gave him his best chance to enjoy the limelight, and it is in this light that Bissell begins his second volume.

Bissell is careful to place Massey's anglophilia in context. A man with means, who could and did acquire culture, Massey knew that in being a British North American, he could claim the heritage of Albion or Columbia without being totally one or the other. This left open the question of Canadian identity, but allowed a middle course so critical in a time when war and peace meant a change in imperial allegiance. Canada, like Australia, was caught between ties to Britain and the reality that only the power of the United States could guarantee victory, and while Australians are familiar with Curtin's bold embrace of this reality, few realise that Canada had accepted it much earlier by adopting the Statute of Westminster in 1931. Massey's imperialism was thus more cultural than political - it sought for English Canada an accent that could be heard above that of New York or Washington.

In hindsight, Massey's war service was crucial to his role in post-war reconstruction. The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences was Massey's chance to set the scene for the fuller development of this Anglo-Canadian voice. Bissell is generous in his praise for Massey's efforts, but just in his acceptance of the importance of Father Georges-Henri Levesque on the Commission, and the impetus he gave for the French accent to claim its place. The Commission was impressive, in its scope, its recommendations, and its influence, and Bissell's last words on it strike a particularly Canadian chord:

But Massey knew that, cautiously and obscurely, changes had already begun, and that the function of the report was to bless and release the energies that awaited an authoritative summons. [p.236].

Thus a *Royal* Commission was needed to give authority to government support for the cultural expression of Canadian identity.

Massey's highest office was that of governor-general. He was the first Canadian to represent the monarch in Canada, and he did so with an eye to drama and full acceptance of a great honour. Australia had imposed an Australian-born governor-general on an unwilling King George V in 1931. For Scullin, it was a symbolic act of nationalism, a minor victory in a premiership

plagued by the economic imperialism of the Depression. For Canada, it was the letter of the law rather than the symbolic offices that were more important. The Act of Westminster was embraced, but governors-general remained British. Massey's appointment was thus symbolic, but by choosing such an ardent admirer of things English, the symbol did not strike a false note.

Massey as an Imperial Canadian was thus an Anglo-Canadian nationalist. He offered a middle path, not a compromise, between the political independence necessary for equal relations with the United States and the cultural independence necessary for national survival. A Massey in Australia would appear as a comical Colonel Blimp, because our proximity to Asia meant our cultural identity was hermetically sealed from external influence; we had no need for British symbols to remind us of our difference from our near neighbours. We did, however, have every need for political links, for we might yet be forgotten as an outpost at the wrong end of the world. Caught between empires in the crisis of the Second World War, Australia swapped allegiance without fear of losing a distinctive national voice, while for Canada the final shift in leadership from Britain to the United States gave her voice new timbre and potency.

Massey College at the University of Toronto, the final gift of Vincent Massey to his city, has in its basement a vast collection of Massey memorabilia. My personal favourite is a waxen effigy of Massey, seemingly appropriate to the starchy figure of oral tradition. Bissell by his careful research and clear insight has done much to bring that effigy to life. His Imperial Canadian is now rightly in place among the great figures of his time.

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Jane Errington, *The Lion, The Eagle, and Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987, 272pp.

This book examines the interplay of British and American ideas and practices upon the development of Upper Canada between 1791 and 1828. The subject is an important one, but while the author offers some significant insights, one finishes the book feeling that it has a potential that is not fully realised.

The theme of the book is that while Upper Canada was founded by conservative opponents of the American Revolution, who hoped to preserve British liberty in the northern half of north America, Upper Canadians could not, and did not deny their fundamental Americanness. Despite different attitudes and conscious efforts by leaders such as John Graves Simcoe to make Upper Canada thoroughly British, the lifestyles of Upper Canadians were essentially indistinguishable from their southern neighbours.

Before the War of 1812, the Americanness of Upper Canada was

pronounced: a majority of the population was American. The United States was, as in many ways it has remained, Upper Canada's window on the world, the source of overseas news, and a yardstick by which Upper Canadians measured themselves and their society.

Errington argues that the key to understanding Upper Canadian attitudes to the United States lay in the notion of an informal 'Federalist-Loyalist alliance'. She writes: 'Thus before the War of 1812 and indeed throughout the War, influential colonists not only considered themselves part of a North American community but specifically part of a conservative community' (p.39). Though Errington has written interestingly on this topic elsewhere, she does not effectively develop the point here. To be sure, she demonstrates that Canadian opinion makers admired the Federalists, but evidence that the Federalists reciprocated this admiration, which would suggest a genuine conservative community, is lacking.

Upper Canadian perspectives changed in the years following the War of 1812. Though American economic achievements were still much admired, Americans were also seen as threatening. At the same time, increasing evidence of British disinterest in Canada's future led Upper Canadians to attempt to define themselves as an independent community.

What was an Upper Canadian? The attempt to answer this question reached a climax in the debate over the Alien Question, which was resolved finally in the Naturalization Act of 1828. The Act granted Americans resident in Upper Canada before 1820 full citizenship rights; other Americans were eligible for naturalisation after seven years' residence.

The act was a commonsense compromise that recognised Upper Canadian reality. More importantly, Errington believes, it demonstrated 'the growing ideological split in Upper Canada' (p.183). It was, she argues, a struggle between court and country, but it was also a conflict about different views of the United States, Britain, and the proper role of these two nations in Canada's future. Fundamentally, the problem was Upper Canada's 'attempt to find a unique and special identity' (p.192).

There can be no quarrel with this last statement: the issues raised by Errington remain relevant today, a fact that may explain the book's failure to explain or define Upper Canada's 'developing ideology'. By the 1720s, Upper Canadians knew they were not Americans; nor were they British. Fearful of American influence, they recognised also that British institutions and practices were not really appropriate to their circumstances. But what they were and, indeed, what they have become, was, and is, unclear.

The ambiguity of the author's conclusions illustrates, perhaps unintentionally, more forcefully than any other explanation I have seen, the roots of Ontario's current hysteria about the United States-Canada free trade agreement.

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Garth Stevenson, *Rail Transport and Australian Federalism, Canberra, Centre for Research on Federal Financial Relations: Australian National University (Research Monograph No. 48), 1987.*

There can be few more attractive prospects than that of reviewing this new monograph on federalism and railways by Garth Stevenson. A decade ago, Stevenson wrote what was to become a very influential monograph on federalism and minerals in Australia and since then has written on railways in Canada, so this volume has considerable promise.

The book does not disappoint - at least not in any significant way. To be sure, it lacks a clear introduction (so the reader is never really sure where Stevenson's 'tracks' ultimately are heading) and it is spoiled by the use (unpardonable in the age of desk-top publishing) of a minuscule typewriter font, but it is an important contribution on an important subject - though it will probably not achieve the 'minor classic' status accorded his work on minerals. While Stevenson deals with the obvious issue related to federalism and railways in Australia - the hoary old chestnut of incompatible gauges - he does not become preoccupied with it, and neither does he take its importance for granted. As he points out, most of the traffic suited to rail (freight) went to the export ports from their own hinterlands, so that the incompatibility of gauges was less of a problem than many have supposed. Federalism, nevertheless, has shaped Australian railways and Stevenson examines this process in exhaustive detail.

It is difficult to make substantive criticisms of the work, but two (both of a relatively minor nature) spring to mind. The first relates to the competition between the emerging State rail systems and river transportation, but it highlights a slightly more important issue. Stevenson underrates the competition which river transportation posed for railways in the period leading up to Federation. Admittedly, the economic advantage of rail was compelling by the time of the conclusion of the River Murray Waters Agreement (which provided for locks to make the Murray navigable all year round), but river boat trade on both the Murray and the Darling was vital enough in the late nineteenth century to make the Murray question an important agenda item in the Federation debates. As well, South Australia saw considerable advantage in having wool continue to move down the river to Goolwa rather than be exported through Sydney or Melbourne. Thus, the matter of the Murray was an important one around the time of Federation, more so than the impression conveyed by Stevenson's one sentence dismissal: 'Unlike the United States, Australia had no internal waterways of any consequence for the movement of bulk commodities, although the Murray River was navigable for part of its length, (p.7). Except in times of drought, that 'part' was its greater part, and while the river trade proved to be no match for rail, it did well enough against the bullock.

The point is not without significance because Stevenson, in downplaying the significance of the gauge problem, indicates that rail traffic was overwhelmingly

from the country to the ports for export (unlike Canada, where the railway tied the provinces together like a string of pearls). In the case of New South Wales, such a rail system had to overcome the difficult and costly obstacle of the Great Dividing Range (less of an obstacle in Victoria), and it is not at all clear that it would not have been cheaper (at least initially) to have built the rail line in the general direction of the Murray, or south to Melbourne. A national government might have made such a decision - and it would have changed not only the history of railways in Australia, but probably also that of the three capital cities involved - but there was no way that the government of the Colony of New South Wales could countenance such a threat to its economic well-being.

This is important when one considers the attempts to resolve the gauge problem after Federation. With a federal constitution which prohibited the imposition of State tariffs, gauge incompatibility provided a convenient means of ensuring that trade (as much as possible) stayed within State boundaries until the point of export. As Stevenson notes, this problem was raised in 1945 when Clapp

referred to the tendency of freight rates to create artificial barriers to the movement of goods across state borders, noting that the agreement in principle to eradicate this problem had not been followed by any real effort to do so. [pp.18-19]

A dose of Blainey (not cited in the bibliography) would have informed Stevenson's historical perspective and provided more of an understanding of the transport situation of the Australian colonies around the time the rail system was being constructed. One gets the impression that Stevenson takes the ultimate outcome (in terms of river versus rail and the direction of rail freight) with rather more than a little dose of hindsight.

The other point concerns Stevenson's analysis of the difference federalism has made to the politics of closing redundant trackage. He (laudibly) uses the South Island of New Zealand as the basis for comparison, but public choice theory would lead us to expect that the politics of track closures should be a little more complex than Stevenson would have us believe with his statement that

the political costs of eliminating any particular service... would have been much lower for the Commonwealth government, because the persons directly affected would have comprised a much smaller proportion of the total population to which the Commonwealth government is responsible. [p.14]

While this is so when we consider only electoral politics, the incentives to organise in group politics to secure or retain benefits (such as an uneconomic branch line) *increase* as the size of the beneficiary group decreases relative to the size of the group (taxpayers) bearing the costs of providing the benefit. The conflict between these opposing tendencies needs exploring.

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