

## Book Reviews

Leonard E. Doucette. *Theatre in French Canada: Laying the Foundations 1606-1867*. Toronto. U of Toronto P, 1984. pp. x, 290. \$30.00.

This is the first book-length study, in English, of French-Canadian theatre, covering the seminal period from the staging of Marc Les-carbot's aquatic pageant, *Théâtre de Neptune en la Nouvelle-France*, at the mouth of the Annapolis River, within view of Champlain's habitation at Port Royal, in November 1606, until the consolidation, against all odds, of a kind of theatrical tradition by the time of Confederation in 1867. Professor Doucette draws extensively from the previous work of scholars writing mostly in French (e.g., Baudoin Burger's ground-breaking *L'Activité théâtrale au Québec [1765-1825]*; Jacques Cotnam's *Le Théâtre québécois, instrument de contestation sociale et politique*; and *L'Eglise et le théâtre au Québec* by Jean Laflamme and Rémi Tourangeau) as well as from a number of important doctoral theses (e.g., David Gardner's "An Analytical History of the Theatre in Canada: The European Beginnings to 1760" and Marjorie Ann Fitzpatrick's "The Fortunes of Molière in French Canada," both for the University of Toronto). In providing such a concise and readable summary of the existing literature for those without an easy command of French, Professor Doucette is helping to ensure that the two cultural solitudes of Canada will continue to talk to each other, despite misguided political strategies keeping them apart. Not content with mere summary, he has undertaken a good deal of his own research and makes a number of original and intelligent observations about the recurring questions. What was the Church's fundamental attitude towards the theatre? How long, in what ways, and to what effect, did Québec remain culturally dependent upon the parent culture of France? Did the continuing amateurism of Québec theatre retard or accelerate its development? And, most importantly, what were the obstacles to the establishment of a repertoire of Québec plays as opposed to "foreign" imports?

He distinguishes three kinds of dramatic forms — (1) religious-pedagogic: *actions* (often dealing with biblical themes), dramatic sketches, dramatized debates, end-of-term recitations and so on, prepared for both religious and secular kinds of instruction in the Catholic-controlled schools and colleges; (2) political: lively dialogues about contemporary social issues (e.g., whether or not to join Confederation) published serially in the newspapers (e.g., *Le Canadien* of Québec City, and *The Montreal Gazette / La Gazette de Montréal*) which were essentially examples of paradramatic journalism, along with more traditional political dramas which were printed and circulated and sometimes performed before select audiences; and (3) social (or “profane”) theatre: plays by Corneille, Molière, Voltaire, for example, general entertainments intended to provide unalloyed pleasure for the general public. These three forms could in fact support one another: the religious-pedagogic, for instance, established a continuous tradition which “would, time and again, serve as the wellspring for a resurgence of public theatre” (7). Despite their interaction, the various forms are sufficiently autonomous to warrant separate investigation, and together they shed light on the full complexity of French-Canadian society, from the early days of exploration to the protracted trauma of the 1759 Conquest, the upheavals of the 1837-38 Rebellion, and the hotly debated decision to participate in the “experiment” of nation-building in 1867.

The book's main preoccupation “is *written* theatre: the composition of the plays, the history of each text, and (for those eventually staged) the record of public reaction to its performance” (vii). Evidence is often scanty, newspaper reports can be unreliable, maddeningly terse, or non-existent, many dramatic texts are irretrievably lost or incomplete, and church and government reports, particularly those opposed to theatrical practice, are often so discreet as to be cryptic. Rightly wary of idle speculation, Professor Doucette emphasizes the factual record and is always scrupulously fair in outlining the various scholarly theories which have tried to make sense of problematic issues. His account of the conflict between Governor Frontenac and Bishop Saint-Vallier in the *affaire Tartuffe* of 1694 is a masterly treatment of a complex subject. Qualifying some of the traditional interpretations of this scandal, he argues that Governor Frontenac *might* never have intended to stage the play, but was in fact intent on embarrassing the Bishop while increasing civil authority in the colony at the expense of the Catholic Church. Similarly, in going over the shop-worn controversy of the Durham Report, Professor Doucette has much of interest to add, arguing that Durham, with his penchant for British cultural imperialism, was blind to the fact that Québec theatre, in 1838, was “at least as vigorous as its anglophone counterpart, despite appearances; and its prognosis was better” (125). Through the

creation of original works, such as the Status Quo Comedies, it had succeeded, however tentatively, in laying the groundwork for "the slow evolution of a local tradition" (124).

This evolution was often deferred: many people took little pleasure in the prospect of writing their own plays on indigenous themes and instead were content to restage classic French texts, particularly Molière who accounts for "over a third of all the plays performed in Canada between 1765 and 1825" (49). When so-called "native" plays finally got written, they often borrowed extensively from French generic conventions, themes, and locales. Joseph Quesnel's operetta *Colas and Colinette; or The Bailiff Confounded*, the first play to be "written and published here" (55), is set in France, and borrows its plot from Favart's *Annette et Lubin* (1762). Yet it at least gave rise to the first piece of dramatic criticism ever published in Canada, in *The Montreal Gazette / La Gazette de Montréal* on 21 January 1790, and it helped to update the repertoire of Montréal's Théâtre de Société where Quesnel and another transplanted Frenchman, Louis Dulongpré, were the animating spirits. Quesnel went on to write *L'Anglomanie, ou Dîner à l'anglaise*, a topical play which possibly derives its characters "from well-known originals in the little society of Boucherville" (66). Thus, as Professor Doucette concludes, Quesnel's growing interest in Canadian subject matter makes him "a microcosmic model of the direction the evolution of French-Canadian theatre would take" (66). He was the prototype of other immigrant-artists, including Napoléon Aubin, Firmin Prud'homme, and Hyacinthe Leblanc de Marconnay, who all tried, in various ways, to create culture in the New World, by extensively adapting older texts or by merely restaging existing French works as standard-bearers of cultivated taste.

Even native-born playwrights were not immune to the phenomenon of living in Canada while taking their cultural bearings from the mother country. Pierre Pétclair's three-act situation comedy, *Grifphon; or a Valet's Revenge* relies on Destouches, Regnard, and of course Molière, and although its setting is ostensibly Québec City, as Professor Doucette wryly observes, "the plot could just as well have been situated in francophone Patagonia" (120). However, his second play, *La Donation*, first performed by Napoléon Aubin's Amateurs Typographes in Montréal in 1842, shows improvement in dramatic technique, and with its touches of local colour and topical commentary, is more credibly set in Québec City. It has the honour of being "the first play by a native French Canadian to have been written, published, and performed in Lower Canada" (116). His third play, *A Country Outing* (1856), is also "specifically Canadian in focus" (182) and makes one of the earliest claims for the preservation of Québec's (unique) cultural heritage. Pétclair's example helped to

inspire young authors to look to their own society for appropriate dramatic themes. Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, for example, was first introduced to the theatre during his studies at Collège de Nicolet where he wrote and staged his important play, *Young Latour*, in 1844. Set in the Acadian outpost of Cape Sable in 1829-30, it dramatizes the courage of the young Latour of the play's title, as he successfully withstands a British invasion. The historical incident on which it is based, which Gérin-Lajoie took from Michel Bibaud's *Histoire du Canada sous la domination française*, has been discredited, but the play none the less succeeds as an (enduring) emotional appeal to patriotic glory.

Received opinion has it that the Church, as in the *affaire Tartuffe*, was utterly opposed to theatrical performances of any kind. But Professor Doucette reveals that this is a misleading assumption. Both the Jesuits and the Ursuline nuns made use of selected dramatic passages for instruction in their classes, and despite Bishop Saint-Vallier's interdiction, the nuns continued presenting "gentpastorals, concerts, and *réceptions*" (34). The Jansenists, on the other hand, considered the theatre "in any of its forms, as a work of the Devil" (23), and in their campaign to censor it, they in fact got indirect (though of course unintentional) support from the Jesuits who "were certainly never *interested* in dramatic performances — at least, in those not offered under their auspices" (15). Tolerant of dramatized debates and similar pedagogic exercises, the Church's main opposition (arising from moral and sometimes doctrinal reasons) was to *public* performances. Yet, by 1840, the Church had become somewhat flexible in applying its strictures, having learned that, in some cases, the best strategy was not to condemn the theatre but rather to ignore it. In his succinct conclusion, Professor Doucette is at pains to stress the essential point that except for two short periods (the 1760s to the late 1780s; and the 1820s to 1830s), "*there were no overt confrontations between stage and pulpit*" (203); moreover, "at no time, in the entire period here examined, was there any sign of opposition by the Church to native dramaturgy" (207). Paradoxically, the Catholic Church had both a bad and a good effect on the development of French-Canadian theatre: bad, in that it remained intractable in the face of values which it couldn't countenance; but good, in that it kept theatre alive through its own curricular practices, often in periods when political and public forms of theatre were quiescent. As well, by opposing the degenerate themes of imported Parisian *théâtre de boulevard*, the Church "was in effect taking a strong stand against cultural colonialism" (205), if only unwittingly. This discerning analysis puts a number of easy assumptions to rest, perhaps forever, and makes it clear that we need a good monograph on the full

history of the religious influences of various kinds on the development of theatre in *both* French and English Canada.

The book has an excellent bibliography, helpfully divided by manuscript sources, newspapers, dramatic texts, books and monographs, articles and chapters, and finally theses. The 56 pages of extensive notes, together with a thorough and accurate index, are a treasure-trove of recondite information and extended commentary.

*McGill University*

DENIS SALTER

James Wieland. *The Ensphering Mind: History, Myth and Fictions in the Poetry of Allen Curnow, Nissim Ezekiel, A. D. Hope, A. M. Klein, Christopher Okigbo, and Derek Walcott*. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents, 1988. pp. xx, 317. \$26.00; \$16.00 pb.

There are few books comparing the new English literatures and this is so far the only one devoted exclusively to poetry. Although it is not well written or argued, it offers large ideas about international English literature and its better-known poets, contributes significantly to the on-going discussion of the new literatures and is likely to become a standard work to which we refer. Wieland sees the Commonwealth writer as conflicted by the opposing pulls of centre and circumference. Alienation is reflected in what Wieland terms History; History is either felt to be fractured by the colonial experience or is essentially useless, a non-history of various peoples lost in new political states with no common heritage. Lacking an acceptable History, the poets turn to myth, attempting to find a supreme body of beliefs rooted in the local, such as the American myth of the New World as an Eden, a refuge from a fallen Europe. Alas, this is not possible for the Commonwealth writer. Local circumstances and the colonial past prevent the creation of such myths. The Australian is aware of the convict origins of the colony; the New Zealander feels isolated, alone, abandoned in Eden; the African is conscious that an English-language education separates him or her from the tribal past.

Although the circumstances vary, each of the six poets is unable to establish an unqualified relationship to a body of myth. Failing to achieve harmonization of self and myth, or body and spirit, of one's actual life and the great patterns of life, the poets create lesser fictions to explain circumstances and give order to reality. These, Wieland claims, are surprisingly similar in tendency although not in detail. Each of the six poets accepts or moves towards accepting a provisional or open-ended reality, in which the present keeps altering without disrupting the continuity of past and future. Thus from the existential a kind of transcendence is found. This is essentially the modern condition; but because of the disruptive colonial and historical experi-

ence, Commonwealth poets articulate the contemporary world consciously in relation to national circumstances.

While I have tried to summarize Wieland's views, the chapters are so cluttered with detail and quotations that it is sometimes impossible to know what is intended. Besides weak exposition of argument, the book suffers from structural imbalances, long-winded chapters (three of which must be 16,000 to 20,000 words each!) and the vague syntax of many sentences. There are several instances of getting the facts wrong, as, for example, the notion that Ezekiel is returning to the Marathi language. As Wieland is good when tracing themes, noticing puns, word play and other nuances of meaning, he should have devoted more space to practical criticism and explication. However, his interest in poetry seems limited. He pays little attention to kinds of English, form, rhythm, poetic modes, or poetics. He goes carefully through the poets' work for meaning as far as it bears on his own concerns, and he sometimes examines criticism and sources. For Klein there are many references to the Klein papers at the Public Library in Ottawa; some comments reflect Wieland's correspondence with Ezekiel. Although *The Enspiring Mind* takes its title from an early poem of Derek Walcott's, Wieland says little that is new about the Caribbean poet, or about Okigbo. He does, however, present interesting views of Hope, Curnow and possibly Klein. I think he is wrong in Hinduizing the religious side of Ezekiel.

Except for two pieces published in 1977 and 1978, all critical works cited appeared in 1976 or earlier. The argument builds on an earlier period of Commonwealth literature and criticism, when conservative views of cultural production were dominant along with questions concerning bi-culturalism and dependency on great traditions. Recent assertions of living in a post-colonial, post-modern age may be facile, but they reflect different circumstances from those when the new nations were still uncertain of their independence, were not yet fully part of international cultural, economic, communication and transportation networks and were unused to standing on their own without teenage assertions of selfhood. Modernism came to the Commonwealth late, where it had a complex relationship to nationalism. Wieland's preoccupations continue the period of national literary modernisms by White, Stow, McAuley and Hope.

The themes Wieland finds in poetry are, however, as much a reflection of his critical assumptions as of the texts he handles. The way he pieces together long chains of quotations rather than discussing specific poems is the method of theologians with a commitment. The approach is somewhat naïve. As all pasts are fictions, the traditions Wieland assumes are the usable pasts created by nationalists for political purposes. And what kind of myths and fictions did he expect the writers to discover about the modern world except that

it goes on and when you look for links of continuity from the past you can find them? What else can the modern mind celebrate? What other cosmology have we? We accept no master myths — except for those who still believe in Marx. Although Wieland gestures towards distinguishing between the views of his poets, he offers a blurred perspective in which T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams and his six writers share the same concerns, reach similar conclusions and disappear into the same critical metaphors.

*Ben-Gurion University of the Negev*

BRUCE KING

Allen Curnow. *Look Back Harder: Critical Writings 1935-1984*. Ed. Peter Simpson. Auckland: Auckland Univ. Press, 1987. pp. xxvi, 332. NZ\$29.95 pb.

Lawrence Jones. *Barbed Wire and Mirrors: Essays on New Zealand Prose*. Dunedin: Univ. of Otago Press, 1987. pp. 278. NZ\$27.95 pb.

Since collections of the critical writings of Bill Pearson (1974), James K. Baxter (1978), Charles Brasch (1981), C. K. Stead (1891) and Frank Sargeson (1983) have been published in New Zealand over the last fourteen years, a collection of Allen Curnow's criticism has been for some time overdue; the lack of one perhaps struck Peter Simpson in the course of his own work on the several articles on Curnow's poetry that he has published in recent years. At all events, he is to be congratulated on having conceived the idea for *Look Back Harder* (as Curnow in his "Author's Note" says he did) and brought it to fruition with the author's co-operation. Curnow himself remarks that he first considered a collection in 1970, which "then or since, it might have seemed a simple enough task for me to complete, had I wished, but it was not." It was not because just at that time Curnow embarked upon, or perhaps was overtaken by, that astonishing resurgence of poetic vitality which he has evidenced since 1972 when *Trees, Effigies, Moving Objects* appeared after some fifteen years with scarce a poem from him, and has been followed by several more collections of poetry. Now, at the age of seventy-eight, after a lifetime's involvement as poet and critic in the literary culture of New Zealand, Curnow is surely the doyen of his country's writers, and *Look Back Harder* is both evidence and appreciation of that fact. His continued vitality on the literary scene would be remarkable anywhere, but is especially so in New Zealand where to be a poet seems positively hazardous to longevity.

*Look Back Harder* is in part the record of virtually half a century of his engagement with literary and other kinds of culture. Curnow's

particular concerns are New Zealand and poetry in New Zealand; about these he writes with passionate involvement, not as a mere nationalist but as a man who cares deeply about the quality of intellectual life in his native land. Thus, he writes about the problems of painters in New Zealand (in "Painting in Canterbury," 1950) and puzzles over the significance for New Zealand, and of New Zealand for her, of the painter Frances Hodgkins, who achieved a measure of fame in the U.K. but very little in her own country (in "E. H. McCormick: *The Expatriate*," 1955). He is interested, too, in Frank Sargeson's endeavours as a dramatist (in "Frank Sargeson: *A Time for Sowing*," 1961) and in two reviews, thirteen years apart, in the quality and significance of Bill Pearson's novel, *Coal Flat* (in "*Coal Flat Revisited*," 1963, 1976). He also pays tribute to the New Zealand composer, Douglas Lilburn, "my closest and best example of . . . purpose and achievement in art" (in "Douglas Lilburn," 1980). Such essays and reviews exemplify Curnow's broader commitment to New Zealand in areas outside his own special interest, poetry.

Just as Curnow has not confined his criticism of New Zealand to its poetry, so in his criticism of poetry he has not confined himself to New Zealand. In this volume there are essays on Australian (in "Modern Australian Poetry," 1974) and American (in "Olson as Oracle: 'Projective Verse' Thirty Years On," 1982) verse, and several on poets and poetry in the U.K. (in "Prophets of Their Time," 1940; "The Last of Yeats," 1940; and "About Dylan Thomas," 1982). It is, however, for the writings on New Zealand poetry that this volume of Curnow's criticism is likely to be most valued and consulted. He was, after all, crucially involved in the evolution of that view of the course of New Zealand poetry which seems most persistent in historical discussions and considerations of the country's verse. The basic critical texts seem all to be here; they range from "Aspects of New Zealand Poetry," published in 1943 ostensibly for Australian consumption in what became *Meanjin*, through the "Introduction to *A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-45*" (1945) with the "Note on the Second Edition" (1951), "Introduction to *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*" (1960) — "lengthy and controversial" as Peter Simpson has elsewhere called it (*Ariel* 16:4, 17), "New Zealand Literature: the Case for a Working Definition" (1964), to "Distraction and Definition: Centripetal Directions in New Zealand Poetry" (1970). Besides these there are discussions, variously in essays and introductions at various times, of the poetry of Mason (1941), Fairburn (1947), Brasch, Baxter and Hart-Smith (1948), Baxter again (1949), Mason again (1962), and Glover (1981). In addition, there are the prefaces to Curnow's own *Four Plays* (1972) and *Collected Poems 1933-73* (1974), and two of his conversations, one with Ngaio Marsh (1945) and another with MacDonald P. Jackson (1973). In all, abundant

material for the literary historian and critic both of New Zealand poetry and of Allen Curnow.

If there are any regrets to be expressed about *Look Back Harder*, they must be that it does not contain all of Curnow's critical prose to date, nor a useful piece of work by Peter Simpson himself, the checklist of Curnow's criticism which he published in the *Journal of New Zealand Literature* (4 [1986], 48-55) and which would have been a useful inclusion in this volume. That checklist reveals what of Curnow's critical writings have been omitted from *Look Back Harder*, and the omissions must be cause for some regret to overseas readers interested in Curnow or his topics; after all, what hope have we of finding *The Press* (from Christchurch) or some of the other journals in which Curnow published, in our national, regional, local or academic libraries? No doubt the economies of publishing precluded completeness, and in any case Curnow is still happily productive. What is in *Look Back Harder* will be eminently useful in any consideration of Curnow and of New Zealand's literature more generally.

Between *Look Back Harder* and Lawrence Jones's *Barbed Wire and Mirrors: Essays on New Zealand Prose* there seem affinities in the quality of the concerned attention which both display towards their objects. Lawrence Jones is American in his origins and formal education, but for the last twenty-five years or so he has taught in the Department of English at the University of Otago. During that time he has interested himself evidently in New Zealand writing, particularly as a critic and reviewer of fiction, and lately of literary autobiography. His book brings together the fruits of that interest, not merely as the collected essays of L. Jones, but as a quite detailed literary history of the forms and authors he discusses. He has escaped the randomness of the customary "collected essays" type of volume by setting aside the chronological order of his essays in favour of sections in which they are grouped, as he says, "historically and thematically." The result, considering the way it has originated, is a volume of surprising and gratifying coherence as literary history. It is, in addition, as Jones observes, the record of a literary education — his own in New Zealand literature, that is — and to allow a sense of that he has appended the dates of original publication to the various pieces.

As organized, Jones's book has three parts: the first and longest, about two-thirds of the whole, deals with "the realist tradition of 'barbed wire and cowpats' (the phrase is Robin Dudding's)," noting its persistence and its progress from Sargeson through major and lesser authors right up to the 1980s. The second part, some forty pages, deals with "the 'other' tradition," largely a subjective, impressionist one in which women writers predominate. This Jones characterizes as the tradition of "'mirrors and interiors' (to take two of the favourite metaphors of Helen Shaw and Janet Frame)," and it includes besides

these two authors, Katherine Mansfield, Robin Hyde, Marilyn Duckworth, Patricia Grace, Russell Haley, Michael Morissey, and so on up to the recent work of Keri Hulme and C. K. Stead. The third, final, section of *Barbed Wire and Mirrors* deals, in thirty-odd pages, "with writers of both these traditions in relation to the Man (and Woman) Alone theme," and includes discussions of a number of the significant New Zealand literary biographies of recent years.

*Barbed Wire and Mirrors* is not so much a literary history, although it covers a lot of twentieth-century New Zealand fiction and autobiography, as a sequence of sharply focused and often detailed discussions of thematically related groups of stories and novels. This makes for interesting encounters for the reader, as also does the sense of the progressive intensity of the analyses that Jones offers. This effect, presumably, results from the literary-education-in-progress that he writes of in his preface, which perhaps would not be so noticeable if he had not so ingenuously dated the component essays of the book. Most of these component essays derive from the decade 1976-86, but there are a few earlier ones, even as far back as 1965. The later pieces tend to be the more engaging and involving, but they also tend to deal with the more recent New Zealand writing, which may explain my preference for them. Especially noteworthy are Jones's discussion from 1984 of Maurice Gee's Plumb trilogy (125-45), and the last section of the book, from 1985, "Man Alone, the Artist, and Literary History," of which the concluding section on literary autobiography was originally published in the New Zealand number of *Ariel* in October 1985 (16:4).

In its overall coherence and the way in which it discerns and explores motifs and relations in twentieth-century New Zealand fiction and literary autobiography, *Barbed Wire and Mirrors* is an astutely acute and informative exercise in criticism. It is also a tribute to Lawrence Jones himself, not to speak of his literary mentors at UCLA, that in the course of his residence in New Zealand he has turned his reading of New Zealand writing to such good purpose for his adopted country. As in the case of *Look Back Harder*, it is especially a blessing to the overseas reader to have Lawrence Jones's periodical criticism gathered into one volume, and the admirable coherence of the collection gives an added dimension to his work.

*University of Alberta*

ROLAND F. ANDERSON

## Books Received

- CARPENTIER, ALEJO. *Concierto Barrico*. Trans. Asa Zatz. Tulsa, OK: Council Oak Books, 1988. pp. 135. \$11.50 pb.
- PAZ, OCTAVIO. *Sor Juana or, The Traps of Faith*. Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1988. pp. xii, 547. \$29.95.
- SPENDER, DALE. *Writing a New World: Two Centuries of Australian Women Writers*. London: Pandora, 1988. pp. xviii, 326. £9.95 pb.
- VAN WYK SMITH, M., ed. *Shades of Adamastor: Africa and the Portuguese Connection, An Anthology of Poetry*. Grahamstown: Institute for the Study of English in Africa, Rhodes U, 1988. pp. xviii, 214. Unpriced pb.
- TWIGG, ALAN, ed. *Strong Voices: Conversations with 50 Canadian Authors*. Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1988. pp. 320. \$29.95; \$16.95 pb.
- BAGCHEE, SHYAMAL, ed. *Perspectives on O'Neill: New Essays*. ELS Monograph Series. Victoria, B.C.: U of Victoria, 1988. pp. 112. Unpriced pb.
- MCCULLOCH, MARGERY. *The Novels of Neil M. Gunn: A Critical Study*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987. pp. 192. \$18.75.
- ALEXANDER, MEENA. *House of a Thousand Doors: Poems and Prose Pieces*. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents, 1988. pp. 122. \$15.00; \$8.00 pb.
- NELSON, ROBERT J. *Willa Cather and France: In Search of the Lost Language*. Champaign, IL: U of Illinois P, 1988. pp. xii, 173. \$22.50.
- LECLAIR, TOM. *In the Loop: Don DeLillo and the Systems Novel*. Champaign, IL: U of Illinois P, 1988. pp. xiv, 244. \$24.95.
- CONOLLY, L. W., ed. *Canadian Drama and the Critics*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987. pp. 320. \$14.95 pb.
- STONE, JAMES S. *George Meredith's Politics: As Seen in His Life, Friendships and Works*. Port Credit, Ont.: P. D. Meany, 1986. pp. 199. \$45.00.
- SINGH, KIRPAL, ed. *The Writer's Sense of the Past: Essays on Southeast Asian and Australasian Literature*. Singapore: Singapore UP, 1988. pp. xvi, 233. \$28.00 pb.