

History isn't a closed text, and these days the historical text of the Renaissance has been so thoroughly re-opened that even its title (the Renaissance? the early modern period?) is up for grabs. And a good thing too. As Raymond Williams says, the "strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is the immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products." Cox cites Williams as a formative influence on his own work, many disagreements notwithstanding. This seems to me a legitimate citation, which is another way of saying that *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power* is a timely and valuable contribution to current debates.

EDWARD PECHTER

Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1989. pp. ix, 271. \$29.95.

In a recent Canadian literature class on Cree dramatist Tomson Highway, one of my students made a revealing slip of the tongue, conflating, I believe, the author's name and the name of Longfellow's legendary Native literary creation Hiawatha. He referred to Highway as "Hiaway." Hi(gh)awa(y)tha. This incongruous superimposition of literary on 'real' provides one more illustration of Terry Goldie's thesis in "Fear and Temptation" of the power and circumscription of the semiotic field associated with the Native or, as Goldie prefers, the Indigene.

Goldie's book is a study of what he, following Edward Said, terms the "standard commodities" (15) discovered within the semiotic field of the Indigene, in the literatures of Canada, Australia, and to a lesser degree New Zealand: sex, violence, orality, mysticism, and the prehistoric. Each commodity is devoted a chapter, and there are in addition chapters on the Indigene as "natural," on form or genre in its interconnections with Native content, on theatre and the peculiar ramifications of staging, actors, and audience, and on the specific cases of Rudy Wiebe and Patrick White. Particularly in the instances of sex and violence, Goldie examines the positive and negative spin given images of the Indigene by the opposing poles of temptation and fear, with Indigene as reification of passion that whites envy and deplore. He argues that literary attention to Native peoples is part of a white process of "indigenization," a neologism conveying "the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous" (13) either by erasing and replacing the Indigenes (fear) or by incorporating and acquiring them (temptation).

*Fear and Temptation* is dense, thoughtful, critically sophisticated and self-conscious. Citing such thinkers as Todorov, Bakhtin, Man-

noni, Levi-Strauss, Fanon, Eliade, Derrida, and Foucault, it draws freely on the resources of structuralist and post-structuralist criticism. As a consequence, Goldie is aware of the problematics of his own reading position as a white Canadian male. Questioning the right of anyone to judge another's representation of his or her own culture, he chooses to allude only in passing to Native writers. (As he points out in another context, though, about creative writers confronting their failure thus far to liberate the Indigene as subject, silence too — even respectful silence — can become a form of erasure.) He acknowledges the synchronic and potentially ahistoric nature of his generalizations. And, with only occasional lapses, he resists temptations to measure representations against 'reality' or to indulge in what Foucault, as Goldie points out, labels the progressivist *hubris* of assuming a teleological advance from past failures to present successes. This ideological alertness — as Goldie examines how guilty introspection functions as a convention in the contemporary lyric or how recent literary condemnations of past white violence "imply the superiority of the liberal white text over the history of white society and suggest that the invasion could have been other than violent" (100) — is one of the pleasures of the study.

Even excluding American material, which Goldie omits because of its mass and extensive previous analysis, the number of texts surveyed here (several hundred) can be overwhelming. The terms "Indian," "Aboriginal," and "Maori" quickly become orienting markers for the three national literatures. Goldie has undertaken a difficult balancing act between the specifics necessary to ward off glibness and the larger theoretical argument. Occasionally, the index cards (instances of canoe imagery, say) and lists (of realist plays of miscegenation or assimilation, using family groupings) take over. And, as an examination of the sign system, the study rarely permits extended analysis of particular texts or authors. But the individual insights generated in passing are often as provocative as the overall arguments. Of the troubling case of W. P. Kinsella, for instance, Goldie suggests that the absence of introspection permits Kinsella "the paradox of an Indian narrator and no Indian consciousness" (52), and he also speculates on the power of "the imprimatur of the 'serious' publisher" (53) to give Kinsella's texts a credibility denied their New Zealand counterparts. Of drama, he raises the question of whether the ironic subtext created by white actors playing Indigene male roles permitted more interracial sexual byplay than in other nineteenth-century Australian genres. He theorizes too about the likelihood that Indigene actors, such as Chief Dan George in *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, may function to validate and so to reinforce the "fences" of the narrow semiotic field. In the discussion of white fascination with Indigene mysticism, he argues that the mysticism is devalued by its very incor-

poration into the white text: "if the rabbit's foot were lucky it would still be on the rabbit" (147).

Goldie's potential resolution to the seemingly intractable power of the white semiotic field lies in the direction of self-referentiality, a direction he would be quick to acknowledge is itself temporally and culturally specific. In place of arguments for the referentiality of at least the less stereotypic white texts or alternatively surrender to "our semiotic snare" (79), he argues for a foregrounding of the problematics of representation of the Indigene. Thus we have the quite unexpected defence of Duncan Campbell Scott's choice of the ostensibly inappropriate form of the sonnet for his Indian poems. It is a choice, Goldie suggests, which, by contrast with the aims of verisimilitude, more clearly "shows the manipulation of the signifier and thus represents the manipulation of the referent" (62). Goldie's apparent preference for Patrick White's approach over Rudy Wiebe's (though he pulls his punches with Wiebe) lies in his sense that Wiebe enacts rather more than he highlights the white pursuit of indigenization. Without underestimating the vulnerability of even his own text to the semiotic force field, Goldie argues for the impossible necessity of resistance and provides us with some of the self-awareness essential to it.

HELEN HOY

E. D. Blodgett, *Alice Munro*. Boston: Twayne Publishers. 1988. pp. xii, 179. \$19.95.

Initially, my expectations of pleasure or instruction from this critical survey of Alice Munro's fiction were mitigated by two kinds of misgiving, one arising from a rather outmoded understanding of Twayne's mandate, the other from my sense that commentary on Munro has not evolved beyond the rudimentary stages of thematic inquiry or plot summary. Twayne's books, I remembered, were read furtively by graduate students preparing for their comprehensive examinations, who spoke of them only to complain that very little analysis was contained between those familiar red covers. So, I feared, the constraints of the medium would preclude any genuine critical progression.

Such negative preconceptions are dismantled — in a clever, self-conscious manner — from the very outset of E. D. Blodgett's sophisticated and articulate reading of Munro's strategies of "reading" and reconstructing the fictional life. Generally, the accomplishments of this book are twofold: Blodgett manages to work within the confines of the chronological survey of Munro's canon, thus satisfying the publisher's agenda, while focusing his argument usefully on recurring