his cult is heading today? Surely Emerson, with her Bakhtinian suspicion of "the easy reflex of flipping the sign" (124) will not insist that the best and only alternative to Marxist pan-politicization is its total opposite?

ROLF HELLEBUST

Barry Rutland, ed. *Gender and Narrativity.* Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1997. Pp. 259. $29.95.

Gender and Narrativity examines the link between gender and narrativity from a variety of perspectives. The nine essays in the book are only very loosely connected—a strength or a weakness, depending on one's reading. The conjunction "and" in the title is apt, for the collection includes both stories *of* gender and how gender figures *in* various stories. There are limitations, however, inherent in the term "gender," ones that *Gender and Narrative* refracts. The concept of gender is sociological; "gender" is regarded as a social construction and contrasted with "sex," which is considered a biological given. The problem, of course, is that there are no biological "givens;" what constitutes a biological given, *that* we regard something as a biological "fact," is already social (and historical and cultural and linguistic). Many theorists prefer the term sexual difference, which emphasizes that femininity and masculinity are constructed *against* one another and *in* language, rather than *on* biology.

The problematic conception of a material biological body that gender grids (Introduction 2) impairs the first essay. Nevertheless John Verdon's "Toward an Epistemology of Gender," in spite of its overly scientistic, system theory language, does contain the important question of why differences between the sexes came to be salient. Verdon links the emergence of gender to the story of the human evolutionary process. Despite the many significant differences between individuals, sexual difference becomes so significant, he argues, because it is the key factor in reproduction. Given that two sexes are required for reproduction, each sex is expected to make a different contribution, and the sexes come to be regarded as complementary or even as oppositional. This is where gender emerges, Verdon explains; he then goes on to argue that there is an "inevitable association of the womb with the lifeworld" (28) and that males, in order to become male, strive to differentiate themselves from the mother and the lifeworld, while females tend to identify with both. Verdon believes he detects support for his position in theorists such as Gilligan who criticize accounts of moral development that privilege a male quest for autonomy over a female concern with intersubjective relations. Verdon concludes that there is a sex-specific perceptual relation to the world, which eman-

ates from biological differences between the sexes; he assures us, however, that these perceptual differences should not be regarded as prescriptive.

Robert Richard's charged article "Telling the Feminine" seems to take an approach opposite to that of Verdon. Richard looks at the way in which Lacanian theory bars finite nature and opens us up to the infinitude of language. The continuity between nature and culture supported by liberal theorists and denied by social contract theory is also, Richard points out, denied by Lacan's notion of the law, which asserts that desire emerges in language. Jouissance, especially female jouissance—which is of the body but only of the body that has been named—involves the dissolution of the conscious ego and an encounter with otherness. Richard is interested in the concept of femininity, which he argues represents otherness for both men and women and is intrinsically linked to art and literature. Both femininity and art are products of the signifier (47) and involve an openness to the other, which transcends the finite, natural world. Femininity is not something women have, but what both sexes seek; it is linked to woman, Richard insists, because women can be penetrated by / open themselves to the "other" and, more importantly, because they can bear children: literally embody an "other." More problematic than Richard's link between femininity and this "very simple fact" (68) of biology—as if it were not already an interpretation—is where he takes his argument. Richard proclaims that a refusal of interpenetration and otherness, of femininity and art, lies behind both Canadian protectionism and political correctness. While Richard's connection between the Lacanian law and the Kantian categorical imperative is plausible, his leap from Lacanian law to NAFTA is rather difficult to swallow. Furthermore, political correctness may be less a refusal to be open to otherness than a rejection of the leveling logic of the same; Richard's version of Lacan's theory makes Irigaray's critical response to it seem all too mild.

While Rutland sees the first two papers as framing the remainder, I am more inclined to read the texts that follow as reacting against the sweeping claims and overly assured tone of the first two. The subsequent papers do not provide an answer to the broad theoretical question of an inherent link between gender and narrative; but they do provide innovative readings of sexual difference in specific narratives, and they raise important theoretical issues about male and female subjectivity in relation to narrative construction.

Impressive papers by Barbara Gabriel and Barbara Godard explore the relationship between gender and genre, especially in the case of mysteries and detective fiction. Gabriel shows how Timothy Findlay's *The Telling of Lies*, although not lacking a dead body and a murderer, reveals the deeper mystery to lie in the complexities of subjectivity, sexual identity, sexual orientation, and the unconscious. Furthermore, the novel is less concerned with apprehending a criminal who has bro-

ken the law than with illustrating the inherently transgressive nature of desire and with supporting an alternative feminine form of justice. Godard's paper argues for the ineluctable connection between narrative and ideology, showing how ideology informs narratives and how narratives interpellate readers as ideological and *simultaneously* as sexed subjects. Examining various sub-genres, Godard illustrates how successful attacks on traditional notions of female subjectivity must assail form as well as content, challenge the *way* in which women are depicted as well as what constitutes these depictions. Godard pays special attention to Carol Shields *Swann: A Literary Mystery* (even less a traditional mystery than Findlay's novel) resourcefully reading it as a radical exposure of the ideology of the free individual. She explicates the novel's illustration of how the construction and production of character takes place through textual traces—invariably interpreted in terms of the very poetics of identity that literary texts should work to dispel.

The next essay focuses on innovative possibilities in reading, the following one on such possibilities in writing. G. A. Woods points out that subversive elements in a text may, nevertheless, be *read* as affirming the dominant ideology and that textual—or for that matter readerly—resistance is never unambiguous. Examining the passing into womanhood in Lucy Maud Montgomery's renowned *Emily* novels, Woods convincingly shows how Montgomery's romantic rendering of a girl's transition into a sexual being contains a sub-text of terror, trauma, and potential violence. This sub-text, however, may be read *either* as deconstructing superficial and romantic depictions of the enchanting and beautiful experience of becoming a woman *or* as suggesting that straying from the sanctioned female role leads to undesirable sexual encounters. Woods shows that Montgomery's subtle subversion can just as easily be read as supporting conventional constraints on female identity. Ben Jones looks at a woman's attempt to *write* herself into subjectivity. He interprets Frances Gregg's unfinished autobiographical work *The Mystic Leeway* as an attempt to use her life-writing to (re)discover herself. A leeway is an absence, Jones explains, but also a protected space in which someone might gather and embrace her subjectivity. Gregg, friend and lover of major figures in the modernist movement (H. D. Pound, John Cowper Powys) was abandoned by all of them. Her writing is a struggle both to understand how she got where she is, her absence from the scene, her margininalization, and an attempt to resist her betrayal as a woman, to make herself present, to centre her subjectivity.

The last three essays explore male subjectivity. Against Lévi-Strauss's structuralist reading of the *Parsifal* myth as an inversion of the Oedipal story, J. Iain Prattis's essay provides a Jungian interpretation of the myth in which the route to male transcendent consciousness is through the female archetype. Focusing on the figure of Blanche Fleur, Prattis shows how the story delineates the difficulty the male has

in integrating female aspects. He sees the need for a union of male and female energies expressed in Sybeberg's filming of Wagner's opera—which has the Parsifal role played by both a male and a female actor—and effusively and uncritically praises both Sybeberg and Wagner. Arnd Bohm analyzes a little known short story by Kleist, contending that "harmonization through androgyny"—the integration of male and female aspects advocated in the Prattis's article—was not a viable alternative for a man of Kleist's time, social circumstances and national context. Instead, both plot and narrative of Kleist's story—translated as "Saint Cecelia or the Power [I would have used the word 'Force' in order convey the violence contained in the word 'Gewalt'] of Music (A Legend)"—are shown to link the feminine to something incomprehensible to, and destructive of, male consciousness. Kleist's story relates how four brothers become deranged through an encounter with feminine music; more significantly, the authority of the ostensibly masculine narrative voice is increasingly undermined as the narrator is shown incapable of making sense of inexplicable, non-realistic elements in the story. Within a literary and cultural context in which the force and clarity of realism was regarded as an expression of masculine identity, Bohm sees Kleist's inclusion of non-realistic elements as indicative of a crisis of gender. Barry Rutland's essay calls for a re-evaluation of the work of the Arthur Hugh Clough as equal in stature to that of his contemporary and friend, Matthew Arnold. Rutland argues for Clough's openness to contemporary questions of sexual difference in contrast with Arnold's apprehension of gender as a given. He elaborates the very similar class and social background of the two poets and their overlapping biographies, then goes on to show how their textual productions nevertheless represent the intertwining of class, gender, and subjectivity in very different ways. His detailed (and sometimes confusing) analysis of Clough's *Amours de Voyage* and Arnold's "Switzerland" (written the same year) compares how the two (intertextual) works contend with the power dynamics present in conceptions of sexuality, aesthetics, and culture.

Clearly, narratives persistently and relentlessly both reflect and construct sexual difference. *Gender and Narrativity* involves an interplay with sexual difference insofar as it provides, sometimes more successfully, sometimes less successfully, new and original narratives of how this occurs.

LORRAINE MARKOTIC

Judith Still. *Feminine Economies: Thinking Against the Market in the Enlightenment and the Late Twentieth Century.* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997. Pp. 240. £40.

In this provocative study, for the first time, Judith Still offers a systematic interrogation of the intricate relationship between the feminine