

drama, with elements of myth, dance, and song carried along by muscular vocal rhythms. The works included here achieve Highway's ambition, stated in the highly informative Notes on Authors, that being to "show and to celebrate what funky folk Canada's Indian people really are" (375).

Of the many fine samplings of poetry I would like to single out the Archie Belaney sequence by the Ojibway poet Armand Garnet Ruffo. The sequence is from his unpublished work *Grey Owl: The Mystery of Archie Belaney*. It is a moving yet unsentimental exploration of the strange life of that famous Canadian Indian whose existence was in reality a masquerade. Ruffo indelibly captures the fear of unmasking that must have been Grey Owl's constant companion in "Archie Belaney, 1935":

Helpless, I fall to the knees. And above me, there she is, Ivy,
the young actress Belaney once loved and abandoned.
And beside her, all his old Hastings Grammar School class mates
laughing at odd-ball Archie who's still playing Indian
after all these years. (322)

Rather impressive are two recent stories contributed by writers associated with this province: Thomas King, part Cherokee, who has taught for ten years in the Native Studies program at the University of Lethbridge, and Emma Lee Warrior, a member of the North Peigan (Blackfoot) band. King uses coyote in an amusing fashion and reworks the role of the trickster figure within a contemporary idiom. Warrior provides an adept take on the meaning of authenticity in relation to Indian culture.

There are other compelling works from Indian, Inuit, and Métis writers that bode well for the future of Native writing in Canada. The last word should go to one of the writers included in this fine book, a famous one in her time, Pauline Johnson: "There are those who think they pay me a compliment in saying that I am just like a white woman. My aim, my joy, my pride is to sing the glories of my own people" (378).

ROBERT J. NORMEY

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992. pp. xix, 199. \$19.95 pb.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s *Loose Canons* is a book of miscellaneous essays, most of which were published between 1989 and 1991 in weeklies and journals as diverse as the *New York Times Book Review* and *Newsweek*, *Critical Enquiry* and *Dissent*, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *PMLA*, and *American Literary History*. "Integrating the American Mind" and "The Big Picture" are first publications, while "Writing, 'Race,' and the Difference It Makes" dates back to 1985.

Although the ten essays are thematically related by variously discussing the urgent need and the critical and institutional potentialities of establishing a black canon as part of a comprehensive multicultural

American Studies concept without, however, erasing the discreteness of an African-American canon, their textual performance differs widely. This is, no doubt, due to the differing audiences Gates is addressing and, as he himself concedes, "the occasion that produced them" (xvii). Besides, as their titles might already suggest, "Canon Confidential: A Sam Slade Caper" and "The Big Picture" testify to Gates's power of satirizing the American critical scene and the publishing industry. Both texts are gems of black [sic!] humour and wit and demonstrate a deep insight into the mechanisms of post-industrialized and capitalist culture practices and a sharp eye for the intellectual profile and personal vagaries of contemporary American high culture representatives. The majority of texts, however, are serious contributions to the current debate on ethnic differences, multiculturalism, and literary studies in the United States and are meant to examine "the implications of nationalistic eruptions and the politics of identity for the future of American society and culture, for our university and public school curricula, and, to be sure, for literary and cultural studies themselves" (xii).

Turning in the first section of this collection to "Literature" (and later to "The Profession" and "Society"), Gates castigates as essentialist any attempt at grounding cultural and literary studies in a concept of 'national identity' which rests on a one-sided presuppositioning of either nationality or ethnicity, race, class, or gender. Rather, as these divisions mark our world, they should be transcended through an "education that seeks to comprehend the diversity of human culture . . . to forge, for once, a civic culture that respects both differences and commonalities" (xv).

After pointing out the—basically "essentialist"—adversaries of the contemporary "culture wars in the academy" (xvi) as "the new cultural right" and "the cultural left" (17), Gates, in what is perhaps the central piece of this collection ("Trading on the Margin: Notes on the Culture of Criticism") rejects both camps and advocates instead a "humanist" (174) and, more important, a "liberal pluralist" approach (175) to culture, which to him as a black scholar is informed by the experience of "African-American culture . . . [as] a model of multiculturalism and plurality" (xvii). However, as Gates is obviously not satisfied with merely ascribing a model function to African-American culture but maintains that it is a *discrete* black cultural practice and tradition, the question naturally arises of how both a pluralist approach to culture (and culture studies) in general and the discreteness of a long-silenced voice might relate to each other within the purview of a concept of American studies.

There can be no doubt that Gates, on the one hand, in "The Master Pieces: On Canon Formation and the African-American Tradition," "Writing, 'Race', and the Difference It Makes," and "Talking Black: Critical Signs of the Time" is primarily concerned with the existence of

an African-American canon which valorizes the discreteness of the black voice, or the black race and its experience as represented in black culture and tradition. And by recapitulating the development of African-American literary studies in the United States in "Tell Me, Sir . . . What Is 'Black' Literature?", Gates underpins his view of the existence of a black literary canon by substantiating the history of critical and educational practices which have "come a long way since the early twenties . . ." (90) and have arrived now at the understanding "that critiques of 'essentialism' are inadequate to explain the complex social dynamism of marginalized cultures" (103).

On the other hand, "race" is the central category which links method and object, the pluralist approach and the discrete black culture (or, for that matter, any discrete culture). Now race, or to put it differently, "the concepts of 'black' and 'white' . . . [are not] preconstituted; rather, they are mutually constitutive and socially produced" (102). "Race," accordingly, "is a text, (an array of discursive practices), not an essence" (79). The question for the black cultural and literary critic then is not one of altogether discarding white critical theories and of establishing a discrete black theory but rather making them function as integral parts within a black critical tradition. And this is the basis from which Gates deduces his arguments in "African-American Studies in the 21st Century" to contribute, as he feels, towards ending "the culture wars" in the academy. Logically, this essay is followed by "What's in a Name? Some Meanings of Blackness," where the idea of race as a text is given shape by outlining the literary practice of signifying "blackness," which, after all, contributes to and forms an essential part of the African-American cultural tradition.

By way of conclusion, two points should be raised here. First, the determination of "blackness" in the language used—"the black language of black texts, that expresses the distinctive quality of our literary tradition" (79)—is not such an easy task to perform in a multicultural world which after all is characterized by "[m]ixing and hybridity" (xvi), and it remains to be seen how the reading of "race" as a text is being practiced in culture criticism. And second, to argue against the centre-periphery model by merely suggesting that "transnational capital, transnational labor, and transnational culture" (190) have superseded (or is in the process of superseding) this dichotomy rather naively occludes the continuing existence of asymmetrical political, economic, and cultural power relations in the world for the sake of preaching a concept of American studies as the site of "both the globalization of America and the Americanization of the globe" (192). What Gates, quoting Arjun Appadurai, loosely refers to as "the new global cultural economy . . . as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models" (191), requires precise analyses based on empirical research of individual culture "cases" before sweeping generalizations can claim some sense of

truth. However, in spite of this excursion into a kind of an American critic's dream, *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* offers thought-provoking interventions into the ongoing debate on multiculturalism and the reading of black culture—interventions which incorporate contemporary theorizing in a critically balanced manner.

DIETER RIEMENSCHNEIDER

Emmanuel S. Nelson. *Reworlding: The Literature of the Indian Diaspora*. NY: Greenwood Press, 1992. pp. xvi, 184. \$45.00.

Migration brings with it questions of identity and rootlessness, cultural difference and assimilation. Expatriate writers deal with the exile's dilemma about self and home, and the psychological and political effects of alienation. Expatriates are, to use Salman Rushdie's term, in between; their works are interstitial, capturing the texture of their lives at the very crack between cultures.

Reworlding: The Literature of the Indian Diaspora, which is a compendium of critical analyses of writers of the diaspora, is one of a kind. Explicitly designed to study the writers of the diaspora together, and encompassing an exhaustive bibliography, it explores the contiguous and variant themes of identity, community, home, and homelessness. One knows of Sam Selvon, V. S. Naipaul, Bharati Mukherjee, and Salman Rushdie as simply writers of Indian origin. But only recently have scholars seen in these and other writers of subcontinental origin "a common diasporic experience." Emmanuel Nelson, in his Introduction to *Reworlding: The Literature of the Indian Diaspora*, argues that the writers of the diaspora living in different parts of the world share a common experience of colonial dislocation. Therefore, the experiences of Indian indentured workers who left India to work in the sugar industries of Fiji and Trinidad are comparable to the recent professional émigrés, for example, in Europe and the United States.

What is striking about *Reworlding: The Literature of the Indian Diaspora* is its organicism; the shape of the diaspora, the grain of expatriate experiences in different cultures, and the similarity of motifs, such as the journey, are the contours of this book. Vijay Mishra analyzes the writings of Subramani, Raymond Pillai, Satendra Nandan, and Sudesh Mishra, who explore the beginnings of the Indian experience in Fiji, from the indentured workers to the present day Fiji-Indian population. He finds that central to their works is the "Girmit consciousness" (a vernacular form meaning "agreement"), the fossilization of the diaspora through its refusal to merge with the native population. Not only did this fossilization of the past breed insularity, but it also trapped the Indian émigrés in a linguistic vacuum, thus making them vulnerable to exploitation by the colonizers. Elsewhere in the book, Helen Tiffin picks up the subject of Fiji-Indian literature and provides a broad historical sweep, from indenture writing to the hybridized present. She ends her