of dewy-eyed fandom in the reflection pieces; but as a reader who, though not a "kindred spirit," cried her way through *Rilla of Ingleside*, I have some empathy for the sentiment that Montgomery arouses in her predominantly female audience. Despite the critical side-stepping of "the popular," this is a wide-ranging collection and a useful contribution to Canadian and literary studies. Having already tried it out on a heterogeneous group of Europeans, I can also testify to its accessibility for undergraduate students. I would add that this is a handsomely produced volume, featuring some fabulous archival photographs of P.E.I. life in the 1920s and 1930s. The high production values and relatively low price suggest, along with the mixture of "scholarly" and "personal" essays, that the intended audience reaches well beyond the academy. In fact, in its location within the marketplace, its content, and physical form, *L. M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture* neatly encapsulates the longing of a certain red-braided, straw bonnet-wearing heroine, for both institutional acceptability and popular approval.

DANIELLE FULLER

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Avery F. Gordon and Christopher Newfield, eds. *Mapping Multiculturalism.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996. Pp. X, 491. $62.95, $24.95 pb.

A major limitation of this book, for a Canadian reader, is that Canada is absent from the various discussions of the theory and practice of multiculturalism. Admittedly, the focus of the book is the United States, but it is strange that the editors did not think it necessary to recognize that the situation in Canada is an important one, and that the work done by Canadian critics on issues of history, race, gender and class, might serve as a useful comparison with the American version of multiculturalism. That said, as a collection of essays on multiculturalism in general and the specific cultural realities of the United States in particular, the book is probably one of the best of its kind. Growing out of a conference, the book brings together twenty-five essays that cover an impressive range of topics.

The introduction by the editors, and their own essay, taken together, provide most of the signposting that the reader requires. This is crucial for a book that runs to 500 pages. They establish, in broad outline, the difficulties of trying to keep pluralism and assimilationism apart. Despite the tendency to see these two principles as oppositional, in reality, the two intersect in curious ways and multiculturalism, in the process, becomes far more ambiguous than was ever intended. The editors are more concerned with raising questions than projecting a point of view, and that turns out to be a major strength of the book.

Each contributor brings to the discussion his or her own perspective and there is no attempt on the part of the editors to prevent differences of opinion among them. Some essays tend to be heavily theoretical, others are more empirical, but they all have the virtue of being accessible. If there is a single consensus, it concerns the fragility of the very term, and the need to deconstruct the concept of "multiculturalism" in meticulous detail in order to weed out its more harmful aspects, while preserving the more productive ones.

In the last three decades, particularly since the civil rights movement, there has been a much greater acceptance of the "Other." Active racialization has provided a niche for all minority groups and a strong sense of collective identity — a point from which to articulate their concerns. But groups tend to be precisely that: bodies flaunting their homogeneity in order to achieve certain concessions. Such gatherings do not always take into account the multiplicity within themselves, an oversight that constitutes a chink in their armour, thus enabling structures of power to retain their hegemony.

Furthermore, as several authors point out, the current trend towards globalization has altered the position of minority groups in very subtle ways. On the one hand, the movement of capital out of the country forces an awareness of other cultures. Thus the East, for instance, is much closer than it was a few decades ago. On the other hand, the same movement of capital has caused a depletion of jobs locally and has consequently diminished the state's capacity to spend on keeping multiculturalism afloat.

Neil Gotanda's essay explores the complexity of multiculturalism even further by considering the notion of a model minority. Gotanda discusses a legal case involving a Korean woman and an African-American girl, to demonstrate how mainstream ideology, despite assertions of complete neutrality, often has its own pecking order. By drawing attention to stereotypes, mainstream culture not only establishes its own norms, but also makes more difficult the task of achieving solidarity among minority groups. The initial fallacy, according to Gotanda, is that of assuming that terms such as "multiculturalism" and "minority" encompass all groups and erase all differences.

Several essays deal with topics that are tangentially related to multiculturalism, such as the ones devoted to the garment industry, both in the United States and in various parts of the world where cheap labor is exploited by major Western companies. These essays serve as a salutary reminder that economic colonization cannot be divorced from any discussion of cultural pluralism.

It is impossible in a review of this brevity to indicate the richness these essays bring to the many facets of the discourse of multiculturalism. The book is a useful reminder that the burgeoning of multicultural presence in literature, popular culture, media, and

the work force, is cause for celebration. Such acceptance on the basis of a shared humanity is necessary and valuable. But to see this process as fair representation may well mask major disparities in the exercise of power. Multiculturalism as a form of ethnotourism is not merely wrong-headed; it is potentially destructive. This collection of essays repeatedly emphasizes the need for a holistic and interdisciplinary approach towards multiculturalism. The extensive and annotated bibliography constitutes yet another reason to purchase the book, which succeeds in providing a balanced, informative and persuasive discussion of multiculturalism.

CHELVA KANAGANAYAKAM

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Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, eds. *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader.* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998. Pp. xi, 526. $65.00; $29.95 pb.

For those academics desiring to introduce the diverse field of women's autobiography to the "perplexed, the skeptical, the uninitiated, the jaded" (Smith and Watson 4), *Women, Autobiography, Theory* will serve as an effective guide to the "unruly heterogeneity" of the subject (110). Indeed, the very subtitle, which labels this text a *Reader,* lends an air of critical legitimacy, for, as a recent article on ecocriticism in Canada remarks, there is a "contemporary code in humanities publishing that measures the viability of a new critical area by the production of a reader" (O'Brien 17). According to Smith and Watson, the study and theorization of women's autobiography gained recognition as a field as recently as 1980 (5). Even so, the need to assert the field's official "coming-of-age" (O'Brien 17) through the publication of a single reader seems to ignore the considerable "viability" already achieved by the production, in the last twenty years, of a plethora of full-length studies, anthologies, and individual articles. Surely a critical field initiated by (primarily) female academics who sought to focus attention on texts and theoretical issues often relegated to the margins of academic consideration, should resist the temptation to adhere to a "contemporary code" in anything. There is a terrible finality in the assumption of "viability," as though all who participate in the field can now relax, settle back with a collective sigh of relief, and enjoy the pretense of unquestioned self-knowledge.

This latest collection by Smith and Watson (who have previously collaborated on two other texts)[1] is, however, anything but complacent . The editors seek to provide more than simply "an overview of" the "ferment of activity" (3) which has characterized the field in the past two decades; indeed, they eschew the very notion of a historical, or "settled," narrative, preferring instead to create "a book necessarily