monstrous and the grotesque" (58). Although primarily concerned with the Gothic science fiction of the 1990s, Mousoutzanis briefly but effectively outlines previous historical stages or points of convergence between the genres at the end of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Although also attuned to the complexities of generic hybridity, other essays in this collection are perhaps more notable for their contribution to the study of particularly timely topics, such as biotechnologies of gene manipulation and cloning (Sara Wasson, Emily Alder), critically neglected but highly popular fictional figures such as zombies (Fred Botting, Gwyneth Peaty), and recent sub-genres and media that have only begun to attract critical attention, such as Steampunk (Laura Hilton) and trading card games (Nickianne Moody).

The worst that can be said of some of the less effective essays in this collection is that they seem overly concerned with proving that certain works qualify as instances of Gothic science fiction without paying sufficient attention to why such a hybrid status matters. Although insightful in their readings of individual works, such essays do not perform the same kinds of critical work that other essays are able to do by tackling larger critical concerns.

Overall, however, this is an admirable collection of essays that points to a renewed and refreshing critical focus while also attending to the varied pleasures and anxieties of living in what Angela Carter called "gothic times."

Stefania Forlini

Miriam Verena Richter. *Creating the National Mosaic: Multiculturalism in Canadian Children's Literature from 1950 to 1994*. Cross/Cultures 133 Readings in Post/Colonial Literatures and Cultures in English. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. Pp. xx, 354. US$101.

In *Creating the National Mosaic: Multiculturalism in Canadian Children's Literature from 1950 to 1994*, Miriam Verena Richter asserts that "multiculturalism is a . . . core component of Canadian national identity" (xiii). Believing that few would challenge this statement, Richter views the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act (CMA) as completing the "establishment of a multicultural way of life" (xiv). The subject of her study—presumably more controversial—is how Canadian multicultural children's literature has not merely reflected but has actively contributed to the construction of this identity. Nesting her analysis of seven novels in a thorough and valuable

examination of the particularities of Canadian national discourse and the development of government policy with regard to children's culture and literature, Richter proposes that children's literature published between 1950 and 1994—that is, shortly after the introduction of Canadian citizenship in 1947 and six years after the passing of the CMA—also proves that the "passing of the CMA was a recognition and confirmation of an already existent mode of life" (301). For most of her study, she restricts herself to examining the representation of multiculturalism in fiction and does not address the question of whether Canadian multiculturalism "'works' in everyday life" (xx). As she notes, a national mythology is different from reality. Nevertheless, when she refers to "an already existent mode of life" (301) and writes that "an overall national Canadian identity does exist" (31), it is easy to lose sight of her intended focus on the social construction of identity.

Richter invokes a definition of multicultural literature that allows her "to cover all novels that deal with racial or ethnic minority groups living in Canada and that were written either by members of the respective group . . . or by authors representing the mainstream of society" (51). However, her focus on seven novels by five authors makes her conclusions hard to assess, and her claim that a "literary genre" (xx) of Canadian multicultural children's fiction exists is further weakened by the absence of a comprehensive bibliography. The Primary Bibliography of 36 titles that she provides includes titles such as *Anne of Green Gables* that clearly exceed the boundaries of the "new genre" (303) that she is examining. As a result, when Richter claims that no Canadian children's novels on immigration were published in the 1960s (159), that "since the mid-1980s no new aspects were introduced into the literary treatment of immigrants" (159), and that multicultural fiction published in the 1980s most likely received fewer reviews than multicultural fiction published in the 1950s because there were more multicultural children's novels published in the 1980s than in the 1950s, the reader must take her word for it.

The ideology underpinning Canadian multiculturalism is foregrounded by Richter's numerous exclusions. She excludes children's fiction "featuring First Nation and Inuit protagonists . . . [because] these two groups are not immigrants" (160), concentrates on Anglo-Canadian books because "strong parallels between Anglo-Canadian and pan-Canadian identity exist" (34), and notes that while all of her novels are set in cities, she could find no children's fiction on immigration set further east than Ontario. Addressing the depiction of class, she sets aside issues of gender because "they are not central to the question of national identity" (52). This omission is admittedly puzzling given that six of the seven novels that she analyzes are authored by

women, depict female protagonists, and, in two instances, are narrated by daughters clearly distressed by the behavior of their mothers; yet like Richter's other exclusions, they reveal how Canadian multiculturalism is conventionally understood.

Paul Yee's *Breakaway* is exceptional in Richter's analysis, not only because it is written by a male, but also because it is written by a member of the ethnic community depicted in the novel. Despite the way *Breakaway* "deconstructs the notion of the CMA's social equality by revealing discrimination against visible minorities" (281), Richter nevertheless concludes that *Breakaway* reinforces aspects of Canadian national identity exemplified and established in Monica Hughes's *My Name is Paula Popowich!*. Her thesis, that after the mid-1980s there "is no longer a search for national identity . . . but instead its constant reinforcement and renegotiation" (101), highlights how Canadian multicultural discourse is still coming to terms with racial discrimination, but one wonders whether her thesis would still hold if she had chosen other novels. Concluding on the basis of only two novels (Frances Duncan's *Kap-Sung Ferris* and Yee's *Breakaway*) that immigrant fiction that depicts visible minorities is more attentive to the "flaws" (292) of multiculturalism than fiction about white ethnicities, her generalizations about the "picture-book multicultural life" (292) depicted in the latter may be affected by her choice of texts and the time range of her study. Excluding novels that focus on the experience leading to emigration (not just refugee stories that conclude with the immigrants' arrival in Canada, but also fiction such as Lillian Boraks-Nemetz's novels about adolescent immigrants dealing with their Holocaust memories), Richter examines novels in which, for the most part, protagonists initially know very little about their ethnic heritage—the heroine in *Kap-Sung Ferris* is adopted and knows nothing about her Korean parents; the heroine in *My Name is Paula Popowich!* similarly is initially ignorant that her father was Ukranian-Canadian; the heroine of Lyn Cook's *The Bells on Finland Street* basically learns about Finland when her grandfather visits. Viewing Canadian multiculturalism through Richter's choice of children's books suggests that if Canadian multiculturalism succeeds, it does so precisely because ethnic groups do not dwell on distressing aspects of the past.

In Richter's account, Lyn Cook, author of *The Bells on Finland Street* (1950) and *The Little Magic Fiddler: The Story of Donna Grescoe* (1951), is a groundbreaking figure not only because her fiction uncannily anticipates clauses of the CM, but also because she is a librarian offering multicultural children's programming in 1946. But while Cook was undoubtedly "ahead of her time," the argument that she "played a central part in shaping the country's multicultural discourse" (190) is undercut in two ways. The first

is that Cook's fiction is not mentioned in Sheila Egoff and Alvine Bélisle's *Notable Canadian Children's Books*, a catalogue published in 1973 to accompany an exhibit by that name at the National Library of Canada (127). Nor is it mentioned in Deirdre Baker and Ken Setterington's more recent *A Guide to Canadian Children's Books* (2003). If someone is not noticed, how can her work be formative? The second obstacle is Richter's assessment of Jean Little's *From Anna* (1972) and its sequel *Listen for the Singing* (1977) as "retrograde" (235) assimilationist texts in comparison to Cook's work. As Richter notes earlier in her study, the establishment of book awards for Canadian children's literature clearly demonstrates how children's fiction functions ideologically. Yet of the seven novels Richter analyzes, only one, Little's *Listen for the Singing*, received a Canada Council Children's Literature Prize. Granted, in 1978 Cook won the Vicky Metcalf Award for her body of work (as did Hughes in 1981), but if children's multicultural fiction has been so formative of Canadian national identity, then why did only one novel, one which Richter firmly states "cannot be said to have contributed to Canada's national multicultural discourse" (235), win a major national literary prize? At the end of her study, Richter proposes areas for further research, including a comprehensive survey of Canadian multicultural children's literature in English and a comparison with its depiction in adult fiction; one overlooked topic is the relationship between national literary awards and a seemingly uncontroversial multicultural national identity.

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