

prairie on a young farmer's wife, and secondly in the longing of a shrewdly deceived farmer for his lost Northland fields. Contrary to the gripping intensity of some of these texts there are others which portray only rather thin insights into life with little Canadian flavour like Mordecai Richler's "Bambinger" or Don Bailey's "A Bauble for Bernice." Adhering to his own criteria for this prose selection Riedel could well have chosen different samples by Richler, Bailey or say Hugh Garner: compared to for example "The Yellow Sweater," although well known as the title story of Garner's first collection of stories, "The Conversion of Willie Heaps," the highlight of this book and winner of the Northern Review Prize in 1951, lacks the stereotyped clichéd plot of the former text and is, in fact, a much more original and skilfully ambitious piece of writing. Even Garner's "One-two-three little Indians" might have been a preferable choice, providing a gruesome insight into the often degrading and hopeless living conditions of the poverty stricken Indians on this continent.

Although for instance Margaret Atwood, Pierre Berton, Marie-Claire Blais, Leonard Cohen or Robertson Davies who are all well known to have greatly contributed to the literary establishment of a Canadian identity could not have been included in this anthology, since it is strictly limited to short stories only, Riedel's book can be readily recommended to the German-speaking reader seeking a quick overall orientation. Furthermore, the editor has provided a helpful biographical index of the authors, although its usefulness is somewhat impaired by certain omissions in both the publication dates of the texts chosen and the birthdates. All in all, Walter Riedel has presented us with an interesting, well translated and very readable anthology that vividly captures for the German-

speaking public the social, cultural, political and climatic spirit of the Canadian literary scene.

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DISCONNECTING

MICHEL FOUCAULT, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Cornell University Press, \$12.50.

ROBERT MELANCON, ed., *Le Lieu Commun (Études françaises, 13, 1-2, April 1977)*, \$6.00.

JEAN-PIERRE ROY, *Bachelard, ou le concept contre l'image*. Les Presses de L'Université de Montréal, \$14.00.

JEAN FISETTE, *Le Texte Automatiste: Essai de théorie/pratique de sémiotique textuelle*. Les Presses de L'Université du Québec.

DARKO SUVIN, *Pour une Poétique de la Science-Fiction*. Les Presses de L'Université du Québec.

INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN THE ENGLISH speaking world has been less dominated by universalizing, totalizing thought than the French or German. For Anglophones, Forster's "only connect" seems a somewhat plaintive exhortation, almost a predictive reproach for not having made enough connections between different ideas. Hence the force of Michel Foucault's project of breaking links, scattering clustered associations of ideas and creating gaps instead of filling them, is likely to be felt less strongly than in milieux where totalizing systems of thought like Marxism are part of the air intellectuals breathe. Just as one must know the great line of German philosophers from Kant to Schopenhauer and Marx to fully savour Nietzsche's radicalism, one must have felt the power of dialectics in order to relish Foucault.

Even so, we should welcome Donald Bouchard's translation into English of a

ing the birth of literature in the modern sense. Here the Book takes on the ambition to rival and abolish the World it should represent. The authority of God's book was scattered among all books and is now to be recollected first of all into a Library and then into "a book which tells of all the others." This is the limit ambition of the modern novel from *Don Quixote* to *Ulysses* and the dreamed Book of Mallarmé; but Foucault takes Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint Antoine* as his exemplar. Repeatedly rewritten, this text is repressed beneath all his others; "the entire work of Flaubert is dedicated to the conflagration of this primary discourse: its precious ashes, its black, unmalleable coal." Foucault reads the *Temptation* as a "Fantasia of the Library": its allusive erudition "recovers other books; it hides and displays them and, in a single movement causes them to glitter and disappear." As a book of books, it becomes self-sufficient, purely literature, a world in itself, with infinite recession into its depths through the series of visions within visions Foucault follows. The death of God, "the limit of the Limitless," has condemned us to a literature of infinite length and infinite depth, corresponding to language's alienation from the world, which in God's day was known as the Book of Nature: Language, by folding over onto itself, becomes Literature: a world of its own, a world without end.

Though they rarely attempt Foucault's more visionary flights, the four other books under review amply demonstrate the vigorous presence in Canada of the "new French criticism." The special issue of the Université de Montréal's *Etudes Françaises* devoted to "Le Lieu Commun" posits a rupture of recognizably Foucaultian character between the Classical-Medieval use of commonplaces as necessary and productive instruments of thought, and their modern degeneration into cliché, stereotype, and stock response.

Jean-Pierre Roy's *Bachelard* offers us a "non-Bachelardian" reading of his subject aimed at deconstructing the dualism between his epistemology of the scientific concept and his poetics of the literary image. Roy sees this disjunction as symptomatic of much modern thinking about literature, and as an obstacle to the development of criticism into a science. What that development might produce in practice could be something like Jean Fissette's *Le Texte Automatiste*, which elaborates a theory of semiotic text analysis and applies it to works by Borduas, Giguère, and Lapointe. Scientific criticism might seem especially appropriate for science fiction, but Darko Suvin's *Pour une Poétique de la Science-Fiction*, despite its use of diagrams and numbered propositions, falls to a great extent within the more traditional field of genre theory. As such, it is greatly needed, and the theoretical section leads well into separate studies of Wells, Verne, Capek, and Russian science fiction. In addition to his knowledge of Slavic sources, Suvin shows a fine synthesis of both French and Anglo-Saxon literary methods and ideas. For Canadian criticism this is a consummation, or rather connection, devoutly to be wished! And appropriately enough, Yale University Press has now published an English version: *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*.

GRAHAM GOOD

ISLAND ROMANCE

TREVOR FERGUSON, *High Water Chants*. Macmillan, \$9.95.

THOUGH ONE OF THE PRIMARY AIMS of the novel is to create and sustain an imaginary world, some novels pretend to give us an immediate vision of the real world, while others do not. This distinction is