

tion and "life." Obviously aware of a problem in the description, he offers a reading of this "woman" as "an image of remote ethnic exotica from an old travelogue or a *National Geographic*," but immediately recuperates Gordimer's political and literary method of description by reading into the image "a unique, powerful, richly complex, and sophisticated individual who is female, African, black" (62). One of the reasons for such a revisionist reading is that Ettin refuses to situate Gordimer's literary technique and strategies within their contexts; they are ahistorical. Committed to what he perceives as her moral vision—consistent and stable over time—he is unable to perceive limitations and must read her literary strategies as analogues of, or methods leading to, the moral good.

In the context of contemporary critical discourse, it is somewhat disconcerting to read *Betrayals of the Body Politic*, but perhaps it is an unsurprising sign of Western times. Perhaps the conjunction of the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Gordimer—a writer who has long assumed the role of interpreter of South Africa to the liberal West—and the electoral triumph of the struggle against apartheid can be read as sanctioning the desire to leave political and theoretical struggles out of literary criticism and to reach towards the universal brotherhood of man; if only we could connect.

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Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek. *The Social Dimensions of Fiction: On the Rhetoric and Function of Prefacing Novels in the Nineteenth-Century Canadas*. Ed. Achim Barsch. Wiesbaden: Vieweg, 1993. pp. xi, 188.

The literary preface, an often-overlooked and certainly underrated text, can provide much valuable information about an author's relation to his or her reading public, about the author's poetics, and about the expectations and conventions of contemporary readers and publishers. However, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek's study does not use the preface as a source for this kind of information. Tötösy's enterprise is described succinctly by Clément Moisan of the Centre de recherche en littérature québécoise (CRELIQ) at the Université Laval, who notes in his introduction to *The Social Dimensions of Fiction: On the Rhetoric and Function of Prefacing Novels in the Nineteenth-Century Canadas* that Tötösy has "with great care not only gathered and inventoried all the prefaces in English and in French in Canada during the nineteenth century, but has also categorized and made them accessible to systemic and systematic analysis" (ix). Tötösy categorizes the prefaces according to

type (apologetic, critical, explanatory, and so on), length, and the kind of "systemic data" (for instance, allusions to other literary texts or genres) included. The study was conducted using the resources of the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM), located in Ottawa. (Unfortunately, the acronym CIHM is defined nowhere in Tötösy's text. Although the index refers to page 36 of the text, this turns out to be a blank page between chapters.)

Tötösy has unearthed an impressive array of facts and statistics concerning nineteenth-century Canadian literary prefaces, and his data may well serve as a useful foundation for further studies. However, the limitations of this approach are marked, as Tötösy himself admits. Although Moisan claims that this study "is closer in feeling to the essay than to any single-minded application of a 'scientific' method" (x), I suspect that most readers, like myself, will find Tötösy's array of statistics and graphs notably more "scientific" than most works of literary criticism or theory. Tötösy sets out to prove a particular hypothesis—"that the preface to nineteenth-century English-Canadian and French-Canadian novels is a genre in its own right" (1)—and provides data to support his claim, his logic being that since these texts can be categorized and systematically analyzed, they must therefore constitute a genre. Incidentally, although Tötösy discusses English- and French-Canadian prefaces separately, he makes no attempt to explain or even summarize the differences between the two literary systems.

The Social Dimensions of Fiction: On the Rhetoric and Function of Prefacing Novels in the Nineteenth-Century Canadas could have benefited from more careful editing: words are repeated, misspelled, and misused. Words are omitted from sentences, and there are problems of agreement. Tötösy's prose style, although functional, is occasionally awkward or obscure. Moreover, on at least one occasion the title of a work is mis-cited: Tötösy cites the subtitle of Marie-Christine Leps's *Apprehending the Criminal* as "The Producing of Deviance in Nineteenth-Century Discourse," when the correct version is "The Production of Deviance."

Tötösy explains in the introduction that his work derives from the "Empirical Theory of Literature" (ETL) as propounded by Siegfried J. Schmidt in *Foundations for the Empirical Study of Literature: The Components of a Basic Theory* (1982). ETL proponents argue that "the empirical study of literature should follow the tenets of scientific inquiry" (2), but based on the evidence of Tötösy's study, the method is notably lacking in "scientific" rigour; terms such as "literary life" (the object of ETL, according to Tötösy) and "immanent meaning" (what ETL does not study, according to Moisan) are problematic, to say the least. Tötösy apparently intends an approach that goes beyond formalist analysis, a context "of social and literary relevance rather than . . . a one-dimensional aesthetically oriented one" (2). This is fair enough, but one hardly needs ETL to undertake this kind of study. More worrisome is Tötösy's own admission that

the analysis proper of the prefaces will be limited. The limitation is an unavoidable consequence of the large gaps existing in the secondary literature about the nineteenth-century Canadian literatures. As a successful application of the ETL is contingent upon the existence of a significant corpus of secondary literature, the lack of this corpus unavoidably curtails the success of the framework's application. (3)

Tötösy's comments ensure that the reader of this study will not fail to recognize its limitations.

Chapter One, "The Theoretical Foundations of the Study of Prefaces and the Corpus of the Nineteenth-Century Canadian Novel Prefaces," offers a useful survey of preface taxonomy and the secondary literature of the field. Chapter Two, "A Typology of Nineteenth-Century Canadian Novel Prefaces," consists largely of a survey of the typological categories used by Tötösy (Acknowledgement, Apologetic, Critical, Dedicatory, Ethical, and so on), with brief examples from the prefaces themselves. Complete bibliographical information for the prefaces examined is provided in an appendix that lists 239 English-Canadian and 52 French-Canadian novels with prefaces.

Tötösy provides some useful general observations about the prefaces he surveyed that will be useful to other scholars interested in prefatory strategies. For instance: "The concern with morality is a generally ubiquitous characteristic of English-Canadian prefaces. Usually, the prefacer assures the reader that the work is on safe moral ground" (66), and "[w]hen the author of the preface is not the author of the novel, but, for example, the publisher, the promotional character of the preface is most obvious" (69). These are not perhaps the most surprising conclusions, but they do provide an empirically grounded basis for comparison with prefaces from other literatures and time periods. The data presented is fairly straightforward, although one wonders whether "Category 6: Theme and/or Setting of the Novel" might not have been subdivided usefully. Tötösy comments that

to establish the theme of the novel one must adopt a reductionist approach. The theme(s) and/or setting of the novels with prefaces were grouped by geographic or national criteria. In other words, the setting of the novel, e.g., Acadia, determined that the theme of the novel was Canadian. Or, if the protagonists were Torontonians, the theme of the novel was again designated as Canadian. (41)

Surely a little more subtlety in the design of this category could have provided more useful information than the assertion that the theme of a Canadian novel is "Canadian." (Incidentally, what is a "Canadian" theme?) I suspect, for instance, that regional characteristics will affect the type or tone of the preface and may generate differing kinds of addresses to readers. However, Tötösy's rather broad definition of "setting" is unable to reveal any such differences in prefatory approach.

Chapter Three, "Systemic Data in the Canadian Novel Prefaces," surveys references in the prefaces to literary theory or genre, to literary

figures and texts, mention of other arts, and references or address to readership. Unfortunately, Tötösy's use of ETL tends to produce lamentably reductive conclusions. Referring to the frequent assurance of prefacers that the novel to follow is "based on 'facts' and 'truth'" (89), Tötösy summarizes this element of prefatorial discourse "in the following formula, Fact + Fiction = Novel (FFN)" (89). However interesting and insightful the various examples that illustrate this strategy may be, Tötösy does himself and ETL a disservice by relying on analytical devices such as this sophomoric formula.

Chapter Four, "Analysis of the Systemic Dimensions of the Preface Typologies and of the Systemic Data of the Prefaces," analyses the data provided in preceding chapters, based on four categories advanced by ETL: Production, Reception, Processing, and Post-production Processing of the literary text. Here Tötösy does offer a certain amount of what non-ETL critics would think of as "conventional" literary interpretation, although such explanations are provided as a mere explanation of the empirical data. For instance, Figure 1 tabulates in graph form "the age of the prefacers at the time of the publication" (105), demonstrating that "the French-Canadian prefacers were largely younger than the English-Canadian prefacers" (107). Tötösy speculates that this difference is due to "the prefacers' eagerness to speak to the readership or the feeling that some statement ought to be made" (107). He also finds that "the analysis of the length of prefaces offers some interesting results . . . the French-Canadian prefaces were significantly longer" than their English-Canadian counterparts. This, he suggests, is perhaps because "the English language is less verbose in comparison to French," an explanation that Tötösy judges to be "obviously exaggerated," or because "the French-Canadian prefacers felt a greater need to communicate directly with their readers because they felt that the aim of patriotism and morality can thus be better and more clearly served" (123).

Presumably, *The Social Dimensions of Fiction: On the Rhetoric and Function of Prefacing Novels in the Nineteenth-Century Canadas* (which is, incidentally, an overly vague and inappropriate title) is intended for one of three kinds of academic readers: specialists in Canadian Literature, scholars interested in the preface, and literary theorists interested in the ETL approach. I suspect that if this study is indeed "seminal," as Moisan claims, it is so for scholars of nineteenth-century Canadian literature who may be able to provide the complementary interpretive studies that the ETL approach demands. For other readers, the value of this work is more limited. As Tötösy himself observes, "at present, apart from the work of Tötösy no works have been published in North America in [sic] the specificity of the ETL applied to literary texts" (27n). It will be interesting to see whether the present study sparks a wider use of the ETL methodology, perhaps in conjunction with the kind of interpretive study that Tötösy claims is essential in order for

the approach to be most useful. In its present state, *The Social Dimensions of Fiction: On the Rhetoric and Function of Prefacing Novels in the Nineteenth-Century Canadas* is an awkward and perplexing study, at least to scholars unfamiliar with ETL ideology and methodology. However, even scholars such as myself who are handicapped in this way should be able to recognize the potential value of this study as a starting point for further research.

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John A. McClure. *Late Imperial Romance*. London: Verso, 1994. pp. viii, 187. CAN. \$87.95, hb.; \$25.95 pb.

"Imperialism" is a term used reluctantly by contemporary American cultural critics and historians, except when referring to empires past, such as Britain in the nineteenth century or Spain in the sixteenth, or to geopolitical rivals such as the Soviet Union, or, more recently and for a very brief period, to the ambitions of Saddam Hussein. An emerging field of interest in cultural and literary studies is the critique of Euro-American imperialism and the complex ways that hegemony is negotiated in multiple discourses (see, for instance, Kaplan and Pease). The novel and film, as well as educational and political institutions, are among the cultural forms that extend the more traditional analysis of economic, diplomatic, and military history in tracing world domination and control over markets, both economic and cultural. John McClure's *Late Imperial Romance* is a significant contribution to this emerging field, offering a study of relations between literary form and imperialism, and connecting late imperial Britain to what he posits, somewhat tentatively, as a decline in American world domination.

McClure traces a "crisis in romance" (149) dating from the end of the British Empire. This "crisis" is evident in such fictions as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1898), Kipling's *Kim* (1901), and Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). It also appears in American fiction of the late twentieth century: McClure discusses several novels by Joan Didion, Robert Stone, Don DeLillo, and Thomas Pynchon. In an intermediary and, to me, the most original and interesting chapter, McClure studies late imperial romance in three contexts of the mid-twentieth century: the liberation writings of Ché Guevara and Frantz Fanon, John F. Kennedy's Cold War calls for new frontiers of American development, and what McClure calls the "dark journey" of Anglo-American modernism. This last context is particularly important in bridging the late-nineteenth- and late-twentieth-century imperial contexts: Conrad, Forster, and Kipling in various ways exemplify the modernist quest for experiential authenticity by an individual lost in a world coming increasingly under the anonymous yoke of imperialist rationalization; the four American