

Ethnic literature exists because it was forced to exist. It exists because it survives the attacks it has had to endure. Mainstream culture accepts into its ranks only a handful of token ethnic writers. The rest are silenced. It is this silence that must be analyzed. Ethnic literature makes sense only if we see it as the most radical expression of modern literature and culture. To reduce this voice to content, to pin pretty labels onto it, is to denaturalize it. Ethnic literature is centrifugal in spirit. It moves away from all nationalisms and national cultures. The only way to analyze it is by studying the works individually, very much as Roland Barthes did in *S/Z*. Tamburri's work is significant in that it points to the limitations of group studies when it comes to literature, ethnic or not. Better to study ethnic writers individually. Then we will realize that ethnic literature is the joyful expression of a person's free mind.

ANTONIO D'ALONSO

~

Ronald Reichertz. *The Making of the Alice Books: Lewis Carroll's Use of Earlier Children's Literature*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1997. Pp. x, 251. \$55.00.

In *The Making of the Alice Books*, Ronald Reichertz sets out to show how three different "general literary topoi and forms" (4) influenced the form and content of the Alice books. They are the "world upside down books," didactic "looking-glass books," and the dream vision, all genres found in children's literature by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Reichertz' text itself is rather short, a mere 78 pages. The rest is given over to an interesting selection of excerpts from many of the sources referred to in the text.

The first two chapters are mainly introductory: they review previous Carroll criticism and provide a general discussion of the "specific sources and analogues" (13). Reichertz' premise, that the critic can find analogues of his three topoi in the Alice books, is based on what we might call the "rag-bag" or "litter" (recollections, readings, etc.) of Carroll's mind and the ingenious uses to which he put the "common stock of thematic and formal codes and conventions" (4). In the introduction to *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll coined the portmanteau word "litterature" (emphasis mine) to reflect this. This premise obviates the need to prove that Carroll knew specific works; however, Reichertz does provide suggestive connections in most cases. In the third chapter, Reichertz discusses the didactic and imaginative conflict of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This background places Carroll within the controversy, but it does not necessarily further the argument.

The last three chapters, somewhat more than half of Reichertz' text, deal with specific evidence of the three topoi. The "world upside down" topos is found mainly in *Alice in Wonderland*, where it enables

"Carroll to work out the structural 'logic'" (33). Reichertz connects the inversions (animal/man, youth/age) of the topos to structural unity and social commentary. His prime example is Alice's inadvertent pun on Antipodes/Antipathies. The Antipodes had been associated with upside-down worlds since at least the fourteenth century; in *The Voyages of Sir John de Mandeville*, the Antipodes are described as a place where the "inhabitants walked heads downwards . . ." (37). Reichertz goes to considerable lengths to situate Wonderland in the imaginative Antipodes. He explains that in the published version of *Wonderland*, "dry leaves" replace the "shavings" Alice lands on in *Alice's Adventures Underground*. For Reichertz, this passage, along with Alice's comment that "the fall was over," places the time of year for the underground story, not in May as in the original story, but at the beginning of November, which accounts for the six-month difference in seasons between north and south hemispheres. However, the beginning of *Alice in Wonderland* refers not to May, but merely to a hot day; in England, the normal term for "fall" is "autumn"; and at the end of the story, the cards turn into real-world, autumnal "dead leaves." As further proof of "the centrality of the inversion and its 180-degree shift" (36), the author cites Alice's use of the palindrome, "ma'am."

Chapter five deals with the looking-glass book, which had long been in use for didactic purposes. The looking glass showed up the bad (for example, the sulky kitten who won't imitate the Red Queen) and in its reversal provided a positive model. Structurally, this particular topos causes Carroll to alter his methods in the second book. Imaginative literature is not parodied here as it is in *Wonderland*. The examples remain in their real-world form, and because literal didacticism is not reversed as Alice enters the looking glass world, she herself is able to provide the "lessons." Thus, she finds it difficult to enjoy, or even comprehend, Humpty Dumpty's nonsense and the sound-over-sense speech of other nursery rhyme characters.

Next, Reichertz uses this topos to connect the two books structurally. *Wonderland* begins in May; Alice follows a rabbit passively, escaping a book without pictures or dialogue (a book, therefore, that is probably didactic); and, at the end, she is carefree as she runs off to tea. *Through the Looking Glass* begins in November with an active, didactic game involving a mirror, and at the end Alice mulls over some perplexing questions about reality and dreams. As well, the role of the cards is opposite to that of the chess game. There are no recognizable card game rules in *Wonderland*, and the cards provide no structure for the text. In contrast, the chess game establishes structure as the rules of the real world game carry over into the looking glass world.

Reichertz' concluding chapter, on the dream vision, is, for me, the least convincing, in that this topos is rarely found in previous children's literature. Notwithstanding this, both Alice books follow

the general structure of the dream vision. Dream visions usually occur in May, involve human or animal guides, and present a problem which is resolved; the protagonist is often the dreamer, who finds him/herself in a world of "personified abstractions" (63), and who undergoes a series of frightening physical and/or psychological anxieties, in a story involving several genres. *Alice in Wonderland* moves "from anxiety to the cessation of anxiety" (74), and provides a more traditional example of the framed dream vision. *Through the Looking Glass* is more complex in that Alice's problems about identity and dreams are not resolved. At the end, she is not even sure whose dream it was. But dream worlds frequently involve reversals, and this point necessitates some reworking of the material in the previous two chapters. It also, however, enables Reichertz to underline his point that the two volumes are reversals of each other, "two sides of a complete vision, one that holds opposites together to create a curious unity" (77).

There are appendices for five of the six chapters, items "that have never been brought together in relation to Carroll's fantasies" (81). Reichertz' claim not to have included "works readily available" (81) is not entirely valid. However, the Queen of Hearts material is of interest, as is the didactic material. The 148 pages devoted to the appendices are valuable, not only for their interesting and varied connections to the Alice books, but also as resources for the instructor who wants to go beyond "The Star" and "Against Idleness and Mischief." The final appendix also includes excerpts from texts that Carroll had listed as "Alice type" books.

Reichertz presents his case with an enthusiasm that sometimes leads him to push the evidence too hard. Nonetheless, *The Making of the Alice Books* enlarges the reader's perspective by linking a wide range of hitherto unsuspected material to the writing of these books.

JOAN DOLPHIN

~

Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly, eds. *L. M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1999. Pp. xv, 267. \$25.00.

- Q. What do red braids and a straw bonnet signify to you?
- The heroine of an internationally best-selling book series
 - A symbol of Canadian national identity
 - A logo for the Prince Edward Island tourist board
 - A Japanese theme park in Hokkaido

If none of the above options makes any sense to you, it is highly probable that you have never read *Anne of Green Gables*, nor visited Prince Edward Island. There is also a good chance that you are male, and that English is not your first language. Canadian patriots who eagerly chose (b), please read on. Ditto curious cultural geographers who se-