

domination, yet another post of coloniality inasmuch as it emanates from the mythos of a colonialist template, that is, the discourse of the Enlightenment and its program of progress and modernization.

In this sense, far from being a counter-discourse, Bolívar's ends by being homologous to the discourse of empire, really a transfer of the structures of domination from an outmoded colonial system, Spain's, to an updated version that evolved from the Age of Reason among those European countries and the United States who bought, or perforce were bought, into its program. In a self-declared postmodern era, the vicissitudes of a theoretical construct called post-colonialism might suggest that we too, along with our discourses, may still be, despite our myriad posts, under the aegis of modernity and its colonialisms.

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Towards the Greening of Literary Studies

The grace that is the health of creatures can only be held in common. In healing the scattered members come together.

In health the flesh is graced, the holy enters the world.

... The most creative works are all strategies of this health. (Wendell Berry, "Healing")

The transformative rhetoric of the ecology movement is characterized by therapeutic metaphors, such as healing the wounds, reclaiming the earth, saving the planet. In *Building the Green Movement* (1986), Rudolf Bahro asks a poignant question: how is it that a broken people expect to heal the planet? "Transformations" after all, "can come only from the transformed" (34). What are the implications of such metaphors of healing for the institutions of Literature and Criticism? How does (or might) the writing and reading of books contribute to ecological harmony in the psychological, social and natural spheres? The term "greening" is generally used to refer to the healing process of transforming the sensibilities of the peoples of industrialized societies (Berleant 137-38; Lahar 197). What might "the greening of literary studies" mean? The daunting problem we now face is how to bring about *voluntary* personal and social change. As Malcolm MacEwen writes in *The Greening of a Red* (1991): "history has no precedent for carrying through such a profound change, one that challenges so many established and selfish habits and interests, in a short time and in a global economy" (292). As a specialist in literary studies, I am most interested in the problematics of ecological rhetoric. What do phrases, such as "at home with nature" or "in harmony with nature" mean? What political agendas do they carry? What behaviours do they generate? What is meant by an "ecological sensibility"? How is it to be created and sustained? And, in general, now that we are entering the age of ecology, what role should literature and criticism play in effecting good changes in the structure of human psychology and society?

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) provides a good starting point to raise such questions. Thirty years have passed since the publication of Carson's classic *Silent Spring*, a once controversial study of the dire consequences of our society's production and use of toxic chemicals. Since then, ecology has become a prestigious field of scientific and philosophical research. As a field of literary study, ecological criticism is slowly emerging.¹ This paper will interpret Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* as an important pioneering text in Green stylistics. Carson aims not only to expose the ecological crimes of science and technology, but also to generate a cultural shift away from the values that make such crimes systemic. *Silent Spring* is remarkable for its early deployment of a stylistics which aims to cultivate in its readers an ecologically responsible subjectivity. That is to say, it is an example of "greening," a strategic effort to bring about a voluntary transformation of the sensibilities and habits of humanity in light of ecological knowledge.

Rachel Carson begins *Silent Spring* with "A Fable for Tomorrow," which is designed to foster sympathetic feelings for the earth (1-3). The fable is about a small town in America, which was once prosperous, beautiful and teeming with joyous life. Suddenly, "a strange blight" and stillness descends on the town. The fish, the chicks, the babies are mysteriously dying. What has silenced the voices of spring? The rest of the book will go on to answer that question in considerable technical detail, but the fable puts it simply: "the people had done it themselves." The fable of the silent spring not only dramatizes a pattern of physical degradation going on in countless towns in America, but frames the reader within that pattern. "We have met the enemy," a Pogo cartoon on pollution said in the early 1960s, "And they is us." Carson's strategy of story-telling works in two ways: first, the general pattern of the fable arouses in the reader a longing for a *specific* landscape, perhaps from one's childhood. At the same time, the reader recognizes the personal relevance of the pattern: the sacred place of one's youth has become stricken by the same sorts of mindless enterprizes that have blighted the rest of the land. Carson's strategy is a straight-forward illustration of what Stanley Fish calls "affective stylistics" (383). That is to say, Carson aims not only to inform but to transform her readers. *Silent Spring*, as a whole, is designed to work in a two-fold way: intellectually, the reader is convinced by Carson's extensive documentation of both the reality and severity of the crisis; and emotionally, the reader is moved to care enough to act on this knowledge.

Yet, it must be said, Carson's portrait of an American countryside — where European settlers "raised their houses, sank their wells, and built their barns" (Carson 2) without threatening the abundance and variety of the wildlife around them — is a deliberate romanticization of the past. No disturbing details — for

example, the displacement of the original human and non-human inhabitants — disrupt this idyllic and generic image of small-town America "where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings" (1). The fable wins over the reader by appealing to one of the most pervasive and suspect phenomena in Western culture today — nostalgia. Nostalgia is suspect because it is so widely and potentially manipulated by the media and the marketplace "to debase sacred values into commodities" (Lowenthal 23). It lets us indulge our fantasies, while the world we seem to escape continues its earth-destroying ways. Taken as a whole, however, *Silent Spring* avoids the nostalgia trap. This is because the debilitating effects of nostalgia generated by the fable are dispelled by the radical rage that energizes the rest of the book. On page after page, Carson relentlessly documents and denounces the toxic practices rooted in the values of modern America.

Those of us who are interested in the project of greening literary studies need to be cautioned by Raymond Williams's critique of nostalgia in *The Country and the City* (1973). Williams acknowledges the potential healing power of nostalgia for the lost home of one's childhood or one's cultural past. Such fond reminiscences of place allow one to perceive and to affirm "a world in which one is not necessarily a stranger and an agent, but can be a member, a discoverer, in a shared source of life" (298). And yet, these feelings are often based on an uncritical fantasy about the existence in the preindustrial past of a holistic, harmonic alternative to our present ills: "Take first the idealization of a 'natural' or 'moral' economy on which so many have relied, as a contrast to the thrusting ruthlessness of the new capitalism. There was very little that was moral or natural about it" (Williams 36-37). Nostalgic energies, warns Williams, become easily misguided and displaced into fantasies unless they are grounded in a historical understanding of the social processes of alienation which deform communal life.

Raymond Williams's negative critique of nostalgia is developed in an important collection of essays, *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (1989), edited by Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase. In the opening essay, "The Dimensions of Nostalgia," Chase and Shaw start from a "combative" understanding of nostalgia as a regressive, falsifying phenomenon. The lost natural home, on which nostalgia is based, is "no longer a geographically defined place but rather a state of mind" generated by the manipulations of the media and marketplace (1). What disturbs Shaw and Chase is not only the inauthenticity of nostalgia, but also its pervasiveness. Although Shaw and Chase's analysis is of a general nature, its applicability to nostalgia in the Green movement is clear. Green consumerism abounds with fantasies about country life. Popular nostalgia seems to Shaw and Chase to signal a lack of political will: "we have lost faith in the possibility of changing our public life and have retreated into the private enclaves of family, and the consumption of 'retro' styles" (3). Despite the

1 Two introductions to the field of ecological criticism are Waage and Glotfelty.

brilliance of their topology of nostalgia, Shaw and Chase overlook, or perhaps would deny, its transformative potential. Yet, as Adrian Atkinson points out in *The Principles of Political Ecology*, the greening of consumer culture is a hopeful sign even if its appropriations of environmental concerns are shallow and exploitative: "the surface cannot be captured or laid still without first sowing the seeds of an alternative vision within the machinery which generates it, as it were colonizing and reworking the machine from within" (206). Even so, it must be granted, if our political energies are not to be misguided, that a radical critique of the nostalgic mode is a fundamental precondition to the greening of cultural sensibilities.

In *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, Arne Naess argues that we need to understand much more about how the underlying structure of our feelings affects our behaviour as individuals and communities. We need, says Arne Naess, "to investigate just what feelings we can accept as guiding 'stars' to justify our actions, and how to perceive these lights in a coherent system that articulates and explains our beliefs so as to translate them to action" (67). My essay argues that we need to take critical note of the ways in which a literary text (re)produces in the reader a certain structure of feeling towards nature. The feeling that Carson's fable evokes is nostalgia, the fond reminiscence of the place of one's childhood, the home we have lost. For Greens, such a feeling is primal and healthy; it makes the reader wiser and more attentive to the sacred value of place. Yet, we need to ask: how do we connect these refined feelings to political action? How does the healing of the individual connect to the healing of the planet?

In *Only One Earth* (1972), an early Green classic, Barbara Ward and René Dubos warn that, in order for the planet to survive, we human beings must recover a sustainable balance between our two worlds — the biosphere which we inherit, and the technosphere, which we create (47). What is needed, write Ward and Dubos, is a realignment of our loyalties: "our single, beautiful and vulnerable Planet Earth" must become for all humanity "a centre of rational loyalty" (298). Greening is the deliberate project to effect just such a shift in "rational loyalty" to the earth as the sacred home. And this must be done in practice as well as in theory. Think globally, act locally. In *Turtle Talk: Voices for a Sustainable Future* (1990), poet and bioregionalist Gary Snyder writes:

The bioregional undertaking, for us here and now, is to learn our region; to declare that we are going to stay here and be at home in it.... What we are saying is regenerate culture! Grow back knowledges that are fundamental to being more at home in your language. Be more at home in your self. (14-15)

The greening of culture requires relearning not only the skills needed to live on the land as home, but also the ecological sensibilities that make a sustainable way of knowing and living possible and pleasurable.

According to Green principles, in a good society, the individual is nurtured by and nurtures a specific place. The process of greening, therefore, aims to rehabilitate the structure of feeling that attaches an individual to a homeplace. The greening of culture marks, as Gary Snyder writes, "the entry of place" into the dialectic of history:

We are no longer simply talking about class. We're also talking about place. Marx missed that ... locality will never be outmoded. Plants grow specifically to place.... The knowledge of how to grow those plants is the knowledge that is handed down through the people. It is very difficult to teach it in books; you have to grow up with it. (19)

It is not just a case of adding "place" to the other categories of analysis already deployed in cultural studies — race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and so on. "Place" fundamentally challenges the way we think about the other categories. Our sense of place becomes complicated, inscribed as it is by various configurations and transformations of social relationships.

There is in the Green movement a strong voice that says the solution to the crisis is obvious: we should just go off and live the lives we dream of. Penny Kemp and Derek Wall advise in their epigraph to *Green Manifesto for the 1990s*: "How to be green? Many people have asked us this important question. It is really very simple and requires no expert knowledge or complex skills. Here's the answer: Consume less. Share more. Enjoy life."

Oh! How well do fond memories and longings for an idyllic place refresh us as we live out our days in an industrial and commercial wasteland! We dream of our cottage, our tent, our getaway. And yet, a self-reflexive critique lets us see that the so-called Green alternatives are often, to some extent, luxury products of the very culture we deplore. Most of us in the industrial West no longer live on the land nor do we know how to. And even if we did, "country life" is not what we imagine it to be. The country and the city are one economy, as Raymond Williams has shown. The "wilderness" in the Americas is a highly politicized landscape, defended by eco-tourists, while the locals fight to develop it to get their daily bread. Anyone who has tried to move "back to land" knows there is no "home in the country" separate from the city. To survive in the macro-economy, farms must be agri-businesses. We are told that this is the inevitable direction of progressive economies. The effects are clear on my road in rural Ontario. Here and there, an old-fashioned farm, with a pond and ducks, thrives. This indicates that it is most likely the home of someone like me with a city job or of a retired farmer, who has sold off a lot or two to support a "hobby farm." The real farms, the ones that make enough to feed the family, keep their animals in factory barns, producing according to the computerized time-tables of the marketing boards. "Pork-producing" is a leading business of my road and, in the fourteen years I have lived there, I have yet to see a pig outside in a pen. "From the desperate city you go to the desperate country" (Thoreau 3).

The point I am arguing is that nostalgic energies can easily become misguided and displaced into fantasies unless they are grounded in a historical understanding of the social processes of alienation which deform communal life. As Allan Pred argues, place is a "historically contingent process" (5). No matter how free, spontaneous and unique our creations and uses of the landscape may seem to us, nevertheless, our sense of place is connected to, and participates in the already existing symbolic order and its "underlying power relations" (21). Since the publication of Lynn White Jr.'s classic essay "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," and of many other essays in the same vein, Westerners have learned to mistrust our own cultural heritage. White argued that Christianity shares the burden of guilt for the ecologically disastrous effects of science and technology because both science and technology emerged historically as extrapolations of a theological system which gives the Earth to man to subdue.² All institutions in the West are now under scrutiny by those who seek to change the attitudes and practices that continue to implicate us in ecological imperialism.³ Literature is one such Western institution. If we really want to change the way we live, whether we are in the city or the country, we have yet to do the slow and serious work — both physically and intellectually.

Once greening is expressed in these problematic terms, it becomes clear that what is called for is a fundamental shift in our society's paradigm of what constitutes "nature" or "culture." There is a good consensus among Greens on the point that greening aims to transform the sensibilities of the people of modern culture (Berleant 137-38; Lahar 197). In *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, Arne Naess cites the example of the conservationist who thinks the developer is blind to the beauty and true value of the forest, but the developer thinks the conservationist is just letting his feelings get the better of him. The developer, says Naess, is unaware that his own positive attitude towards development is rooted in feelings. Because the developer's feelings replicate those valorized by the dominant culture, he need not be aware of them. *His* feelings are just common sense. It is precisely because the developer has no need to be passionate in his own utterances that his opponents seem to him to be so emotional (66-67). The

hidden structure of our feelings toward land affects our behaviour as individuals and communities. We need to make this structure visible.

As I wrote in my opening remarks, my primary interest is in the problematics of ecological rhetoric. What do phrases, such as "in harmony with nature," or "ecological sensibility" mean? What interests and values do they serve? What subtle cultural resonances do they already necessarily carry? What behaviours do they generate? In general, what are the appropriate psychological and cultural technologies for such a massive undertaking as the voluntary and collective transformation of institutions, language, community and self in light of ecological values — values which are themselves not yet clearly understood?⁴

One thing that Green intellectuals are beginning to understand is that, in order for writers, artists and critics to cultivate an "ecological sensibility" in themselves, let alone others, they must repudiate modern aesthetics, together with its emphasis on the autonomous genius and on precious, elite art objects. Of pointed relevance here is Pierre Bourdieu's critique of Kantian aesthetics in his essay "Towards a 'Vulgar' Critique of 'Pure' Critiques." He argues that modern aesthetics negates and seeks to transcend all that is "inferior, coarse, vulgar, mercenary, venal, servile, in a word, natural" (1984, 491). "Taste" in modern art is based on a contempt for the domestic arts and the provincial tastes and feelings of ordinary people — in short, all that matters to Greens. As Bourdieu writes: "The pure aesthetic is rooted in an ethic, or rather, an ethos of elective distance from the necessities of the natural and social world" (5). In direct contrast, the emergent Green aesthetic is rooted in an ethos of elective connectivity to the necessities of the natural and social world. It privileges earthy joys and affirms the creativity of ordinary people, especially in its celebration of handicraft, architecture and other arts that are created, used and enjoyed in their own communities. In *The Aesthetics of Environment*, Arnold Berleant poses a revolutionary question: "Often officially discouraged, aesthetic sensibility appears nonetheless in many groups in our society, often hidden among those with little power, like craftspeople, small farmers, children, women. What would happen if these interests were to be developed and enter into public view?" (181). The

- 4 I am using the phrase "cultural technologies" to suggest that the strategies needed to transform our culture require the modification of all aspects of human attitudes and activities in light of the "ecological wisdom" which we are in the process of defining. Foucault identifies four types of cultural technologies: 1) technologies of production, which manipulate and change things; 2) technologies of sign systems, which permit humans to use signs and to make meanings; 3) technologies of power which objectify the subject and submit individuals to domination; (4) technologies of the self, "which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (18). Of particular relevance for me, as a literary specialist, are the interconnections between the manipulations of the sign systems which are signified by "nature" and the operations of self transformation.

2 Some would argue that the Christian system in its mediaeval form was not imperialist; Koyré writes: "Modern man seeks the domination of nature, whereas mediaeval or ancient man attempted above all its contemplation" (5-7). Leading Green theorist, Rudolf Bahro argues that we have much to learn from monasticism as a model for Green community building; see Bahro and Porritt.

3 Sean McDonagh notes that the Vatican has been slow to react to the environmental crisis and, in general, continues to perpetuate a theology of dominion that subjects the natural world to man's rule. One Papal statement, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1988), does warn, however, that dominion is not absolute: "when it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws, but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity" (McDonagh 188).

primary function of Green art would be to reinforce the ties of the artist to a community and to the specific land that nurtures her/him. A Green artist would be famous for fifteen miles.

If we want to change our ways, we need to turn away from the imperial centre to learn how to live in our own places. How might we set about to do this? What guidance can we find? Despite the deformations caused by the global economy, there are still thriving some traditional and exemplary ways of living on the land. For example, as Vandana Shiva argues, in *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (1989), one of the most important resources we have left is the wisdom of third world women:

The intellectual heritage for ecological survival lies with those who are experts in survival. They have the knowledge and experience to extricate us from the ecological cul-de-sac that the western masculinist mind has manoeuvred us into. And while Third World women have privileged access to survival expertise, their knowledge is inclusive, not exclusive.... (224)

The crucial question for Westerners is: to what extent is it possible to transplant such wisdom onto our cultural soil? In the grassroots Green movement there is much good and bad experimentation with "alternative" selves and communities, constructed out of bits and pieces taken from diverse cultural sources, including, for example, Eastern religions, especially Buddhism and Taoism; the earth religion of the Goddess; and the tribal spirituality of Native Americans. And yet, the very notion that we can elect to cultivate the ecological sensibility of another culture without actually living that way — *in that place* — is a directly inherited and suspect assumption of Western imperialism. I would ask: How is this recent good-willed, if selective, appropriation of values distinct from the appropriation of lands and resources in the past? Examples of media and market manipulation of appropriated wisdom abound — even in Green publications. In "The Greening of Religion," Roderick Fraser Nash cites the example of a popular poster of the 1960s, which featured "a Native American contemplating the degraded condition of the continent after only a few centuries of white occupation. A single tear trickled down the man's cheek" (117). (One of my students calls such images "eco-porn.") To what good action do such posters lead? They make us cry. They certainly raise funds. But Pascal Bruckner's warning about the contempt underlying "the tears of the white man" should make us pause.

It is obvious that other cultures have much to teach modern Westerners, but are we ready to listen? As Terry Doxtater, a member of the Oneida tribe and President of the National Association of Indian Friendship Centres (in Canada), says, "When you know who you are, then we can talk." Ultimately, Euro-Americans must face our troubled history. It is inscribed in our selves and on our

landscapes. Okanagan writer Jeannette Armstrong of the Pentiction band describes the ecological crisis in terms of an illness of the human spirit:

The sickness of us as human beings has become evident in the destruction of our atmosphere and other life forms, and our rivers, and our lakes! And it's not a natural occurrence, it's not a natural outgrowth. And what I see happening is the disease of man, not a disease of the Earth! It's a disease of our spirit, a disease that's killing us. (Lutz 31)

As the crisis is one of the spirit, says Armstrong, it calls for radical transformations in the way we live and think. For Armstrong, that means that the time has come for Euro-Americans to learn from the very peoples they thought they had conquered. The time has come to learn appropriate cultural strategies for living on the land: "And it's here that Native people's words, and their thinking, and their process, and their system, their philosophy, world view or whatever, need to be understood, and assimilated by other people" (Lutz 32).

In this essay, I am arguing that we need to strive to overcome the demarcation between, what James Hillman calls, the two ideologies of Western society: economics and therapy (98). We need to abandon metaphors of healing that are depoliticized and restricted to self-improvement. We need to understand more about which non-European ideas and practices will take root in our cultural soil. We need to critique the urgent call to planetary action that is so typical of Green rhetoric. For Greens, the claim to speak in the name of "nature" or "the planet" is an overt strategy to separate ourselves from the other addicts of technological luxury, to gain the higher rhetorical ground, and even — in some cases — to change the way we live. And yet, there is something distinctly arrogant, indeed ludicrous, about the popular Green slogans: "Save the planet." "It's a matter of survival." "We must live in harmony with nature." These slogans are indeed effective in mobilizing public sentiment and funding. But what do they mean in practice? To what good changes do they lead? In "Word and Flesh," Wendell Berry argues that it makes no sense to claim to be healing the whole planet, but it makes good sense to care for one's own human and natural home: "Our understandable wish to preserve the planet must somehow be reduced to the scale of our competence — that is, to the wish to preserve all of its humble households and neighbourhoods" (200).

As a literary specialist, I notice that one of the ancient strategies of survival found in all cultures is story-telling. We need to reclaim this art so that we tell tales that are sacred to the health and well-being of our local human and non-human communities. First Nations story-teller, Louise Profeit-LeBlanc still preserves the healing art of stories because she grounds them in her intimate knowledge and connection with her homeplace in the Yukon near a beautiful lake called Kwan Mun:

All the trees know the story of the people. They suffered with the people when the fish were not plentiful. They rejoiced in the birthing of new babies, the people coming in with meat, the harvesting of the land and the great sharing of stories. (*Telling It* 113)

The greening of literature and art makes it the responsibility of writers, artists and everyone else to engender due reverence and appropriate knowledge for living in one's homeplace. As poet Gary Snyder puts it in *The Practice of the Wild*: "The lessons we learn from the wild become the etiquette of freedom.... The wild requires that we learn the terrain, nod to all the plants and animals and birds, ford the streams and cross the ridges, and tell a good story when we get back home" (24).

The problem with "nature" is that it is a protean and slippery abstraction, as A.O. Lovejoy long ago pointed out. There are competing discourses of nature vying for ascendancy at any one time. I do not mean to be relativistic here, nor to suggest that we are able to define "nature" freely as if we operated in a social and physical vacuum. The underlying argument of this essay is that the greening of literary studies is at once a personal and a political project. In "Social Space and Symbolic Power," Pierre Bourdieu points out that, in all societies, there are struggles over who is to wield symbolic power, or world-making power (22). Greening is just such a struggle over symbolic power, over the authority to produce and to impose a legitimate vision of the social world.⁵ As individuals and as communities, we negotiate our relationships with nature by means of discourses, or mediating structures, which we inevitably call "nature." It is not just a question of who will speak for nature, but what "nature" will we speak for? What kind of home will we long for? What sorts of lives will we live? What sorts of stories will we tell each other?

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5 Harper and Buttel both identify the greening in terms of a struggle to gain symbolic power. For Harper, greening is "the internalization of environmental symbols in many aspects of life" (Harper 4). For Buttel, greening is the process "by which modern environmentally-related symbols have become increasingly prominent in social discourse" (Buttel 12).

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WENDY WARING

Is This Your Book? Wrapping Postcolonial Fiction for the Global Market

What I propose to do is read through the edges of a few texts from Canada and Australia: Canadian writer Daphne Marlatt's novel, *Anahistoric*; Australian Aboriginal writer Ruby Langford (Ginibi)'s autobiographical novel *Don't Take your Love to Town*; and a collection of short stories published in 1987 by Indo-Canadian Rohinton Mistry, entitled *Tales from Firozsha Baag*. I am interested in the traces which render the processes of cultural production intelligible, as a means of getting at issues of feminism and imperialism in reading. I concentrate on what could loosely be called the paratextual: titles, back cover blurbs, glossary notes, and some italicised quotations.

In his rather hyperstructuralist work *Seuils* (1987) Gérard Genette distinguishes between varieties of paratexts according to the degree of control the author exercises over their inscription. He classes these threshold textual phenomena as either *péritextes* or *épitextes*. To give two brief examples: titles would be peritextual, back cover blurbs epitextual. Linda Hutcheon's comments on paratextuality in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) with respect to historiographic metafiction are also instructive here, specifically with regard to Daphne Marlatt's novel. She notes that the "postmodern use of paratextuality as a formal mode of overt intertextuality both works within and subverts that apparatus of realism still typical of the novel genre, even in its more metafictional forms" (89). I will not enter the debate here over how best to delineate paratextual practices; my concern at this time is to focus on the relations of cultural production inscribed through the paratexts of these three texts.

In Daphne Marlatt's experimental novel, *Anahistoric*, the paratextual use of quotations in italics relates to us the narrative's struggle with authority. The narrator, the wife of a history professor, is trying to write historical research on the colony of British Columbia. Increasingly her writing is sidetracked by the unverifiable story of Mrs. Richards, a school teacher in the early colony. In a complex series of parallels the characters come to echo each other: nineteenth-century Mrs. Ana Richards and the twentieth century narrator, Annie and Richard's wife and the narrator's very traditional mother, Ina, yet another British immigrant.