

declares that "The God of process theology is the cosmic lover" (29). "Is there sex after death?" becomes a major question for the afterlife. Bernard realizes, "For my parishioners, I was a kind of travel agent, issuing tickets, insurance, brochures, guaranteeing them ultimate happiness," for "The Good News is news of eternal life, Paradise news" (153).

Bernard, the Progressive Pilgrim or errant knight, reaches his sacred shrine and discovers his holy grail, and his quest is well worth following in the pages of this entertaining novel, for in *Paradise News* David Lodge brings us *the good news*.

Elizabeth Thompson

*The Pioneer Woman: A Canadian Character Type*

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. Pp 199. \$34.00

Reviewed by Axel Knoenagel

In 1972, Margaret Atwood's *Survival* attempted to demonstrate the relevance of Northrop Frye's "garrison mentality" concept for carefully selected Canadian texts. Thompson's study uses the same thematic approach to the literary material, but the text attempts to show that the fight for survival in the inhospitable Canadian environment produced not only the victims and partially mutilated survivors Atwood focuses on. On the contrary, the pioneer woman that Thompson describes in her study as the product of the successful fight for survival in the Canadian wilderness is a positive creation, "a self-assured, confident woman, one who adapts cheerfully to adverse circumstances, one who is capable and active in an emergency, one who plays a vital role in pioneering" (4). To prove her point, Thompson has selected examples from 150 years of Canadian literature, but her selection--writings of Catherine Parr Traill, Sara Jeannett Duncan, Ralph Connor, and Margaret Laurence--raises doubts about the suggested general validity of this "Canadian character type."

In Thompson's presentation, this typical Canadian character is the consequence of the English lady's adaptation to the requirements of the Canadian frontier. Thompson identifies Catherine Parr Traill's self-created bush lady of *The Backwoods of Canada* as the literary prototype of this figure. Surprisingly, Thompson ignores the wider cultural and national implications of her suggestion. When she argues that "what Traill has done in essence is to rewrite and revise the definition of a feminine ideal so that it becomes compatible with a backwoods Canadian setting" (24) and calls this figure "unique to Canada" (3), she overlooks that the forces shaping this figure are the same that Frederick Jackson Turner named as those of the frontier, "the line of most rapid and effective Americanization." Thompson thus undercuts a significant aspect of her argument, but this should not lead one to overlook Thompson's achievement in identifying the modernizing aspects of Traill's writing.