

Going through the texts decade by decade, sometimes comparing between English-Canadian and Quebecois novels, other times dividing them into separate chapters, Quigley manages to show that Canadian novels indeed present a negative picture of childhood. One obvious question comes to mind here, a question that Quigley never seems to have asked: Since happiness has hardly ever been a topic for good literature, why should the novelistic treatment of childhood differ from this rule? Even in the most positive portrayal of childhood, *Who Has Seen the Wind*, interest is evoked through conflict and problems. Quigley seems surprised at the obvious. The reason may be that she puts her discussion of literature into a nonliterary context: studying childhood as presented in fiction is intended to "provide insight and, hopefully, a better understanding of this very important period in the life of every individual" (7). Quigley reads the texts as representative portraits of actual childhood. She is thus forced to disregard—admittedly—the artistic quality of the texts under consideration. In addition, she has to combine her literary criticism with the discourses of sociology and psychology, which she attempts by relying quite heavily—but rarely successfully—on Neil Postman (*The Disappearance of Childhood*) and Alice Miller (*Thou Shalt Not Be Aware*).

Something else is remarkable about *The Child Hero in the Canadian Novel* in a negative sense. Quigley cites interpretations by other scholars to support almost every major point she makes. Eventually one wonders whether Quigley's book really makes any new contribution to the study of Canadian literature.

Anthea Trodd

A Reader's Guide to Edwardian Literature

Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991. Pp. 144

Reviewed by Camille R. La Bossière

This volume with neither "preface" nor "acknowledgments" has the look of reader's guide. Subheadings such as "Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*," "Kipling: *Kim*," "Bennett: *Clayhanger*," "Wells: *Ann Veronica*," and "James: *The Wings of the Dove*" give the impression of a book designed to allay whatever anxieties unseasoned travelers might experience as they approach regions Edwardian. The "summary" of "Edwardian writers and books" (125-33) provided in appendix points the way to contiguous sites worth exploring, and there is a list of "suggestions for further reading" (134-39) which will certainly be useful to students unfamiliar with some of the better-known recent studies of the period.

But appearances are somewhat deceiving in this case: *A Reader's Guide to Edwardian Literature* is misleadingly titled. There are in fact no potted summaries in this book, nor is its organization merely serial. Trodd has an integrating thesis, which is developed in a measured Marxist-feminist narrative, clearly, vigorously, evenhandedly. Her gathering of texts focuses attention on what is arguably the central complication in Edwardian literary culture—"the breakdown," more or less explicitly recognized, "about what English literature was, and who produced it for whom" (112). Brief yet eloquent readings—those from *Heart of Darkness*;

Howards End; *Tono-Bungay*; and *The Man of Property* are especially telling—illustrate the partial successes and failures in Edwardian attempts to grapple, to come to terms, with the recognition of a society in deep transition. As Trodd suggests, the modernist aesthetic embodied in *The Prussian Officer* and *Dubliners* (both published in 1914) represents an exfoliation out of those unresolving travails.

A Reader's Guide to Edwardian Literature is well worth the candle for the discriminating attention it pays to individual cases. Trodd's commentary, for example, on *The Secret Agent* in the light of the Aliens Act of 1904-1905 is genuinely instructive, as is the corrective she offers to the contextualizing of Conrad in Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*: "Critically accepted as part of the avant-garde of consciously aesthetic fiction," Conrad's tales "still sought to recreate a more traditional and popular story-telling situation" (109). The reading of *Heart of Darkness* as a "narrative of imperialism . . . told within an English context" (22) yet uncertain of its public nicely prepares an analysis of Woolf's *The Voyage Out* as an "attack on the contemporary male as enlightened colonist" (78). Students of Forster are likewise well served. His attempt in *Howards End* "to invoke a community distinct from the gendered exclusiveness of imperialism," as Trodd responsibly suggests, "founders on the uncertainties of the nature of his audience" (36). Like Galsworthy and Bennett, the Forster of *Howards End* is "restless within the confines of [Victorian] realism, but unable to abandon it" (57). In short, there is food for thought in *A Reader's Guide to Edwardian Literature*, which is not for tyros only.

Bernth Lindfors, ed.

Approaches to Teaching Achebe's Things Fall Apart

New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1991. Pp. 145. \$15.00

Reviewed by Christopher Metress

This collection of essays is the thirty-seventh volume in the Modern Language Association's "Approaches to Teaching World Literature Series." Edited by Bernth Lindfors, who has written five studies on Black African and Nigerian literature, the collection is divided into two sections. The first section, which takes up the first ten pages, is written by Lindfors himself and contains a valuable listing of reference works, background studies, critical commentaries, and other aids to teaching the novel (including a listing of film versions of *Things Fall Apart* and videotaped interviews with Achebe). The second section begins with an original essay by Achebe, "Teaching *Things Fall Apart*," in which Achebe discusses how readers have responded to his novel in the last thirty years. At the end of his brief essay, Achebe notes that the intention of his novel is best summarized not by himself but by the American scholar Jules Chametzky. "Obviously," Chametzky writes of *Things Fall Apart*, the novel "forces us to confront the 'Rashomon' aspect of experience—that things look different to different observers, and that one's very perceptions are shaped by the social and cultural context out of which one operates" (23-24). According to Achebe, "That about sums up the mission of *Things Fall Apart*, if a novel could be said to have a mission" (24).