

anticipate the later analysis of role-playing in transactional psychoanalysis. However, the theory of community really proves its worth in the analysis of Shepherd's three novels *The Quarry Wood* (1928), *The Weatherhouse* (1930), and *A Pass in the Grampians* (1933), works that emphatically "validate communal life rather than repudiate it" (222).

Imagined Worlds is full of perceptive close-reading of authors who have been unfairly neglected because of both their national (or regional) position and their gender. Of particular value is Freeman's recovery of local intellectual traditions. Although references to John Macmurray, R. D. Laing, and others are now de rigueur in Scottish literary criticism, Freeman was a leader in this area—his monograph develops and elaborates research first set down in his 1992 doctoral thesis. The sheer difficulty in publishing books on Scottish literature accounts for the unfortunate delay by which a pioneer like Freeman may be misunderstood as a follower.

The only reservations that I have about *Imagined Worlds* concern its poor editing and unacceptable typographic presentation. There are a great many errors of many different types, including missing or misplaced full stops, variations in leading, unindented paragraphs, typos, uneven font sizes, and homophones ("there's a twist in the tail," 103). I direct this criticism not at the author, but at the editorial processes behind the production of this book. The series of which it is a part, *Scottish Studies International*, is well established, but is in danger of losing its credibility because of simple problems such as the ones noted above. The editors of *Scottish Studies International* would be well advised to consider the competition that their series faces.

John Clement Ball

Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Pp. 295. \$45.00

Reviewed by Justin D. Edwards

Recent work on postcolonialism and urban space has identified the city as part of a place-based struggle to express a sense of self. This self, of course, is tied to the desire for a space that constitutes a unique "home" (be it the local neighborhood or the national home, an indigenous home or one recently adopted). This development in postcolonial studies reminds us that the politics produced by places in the process of being articulated as "home" is also tied to a politics of identity in which ideas of nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, class, and community are formed. Indeed, the politics of identity and place are not simply built around structures of power internal to the local place or even to the globally linked processes of power and homogenization. For a "sense of self" is always a politics that is concerned with the nation; a politics constituted by a national

history and geography that has composed narratives of self and home into the dominant discourses of belonging within a nation.

A range of cultural processes have contributed to this sense of belonging. These include, among other things, the social constructs of natural and urban spaces, which, as binary oppositions, have provided the fundamental building blocks for an imagined citizenry in settler nations such as Canada and Australia. These processes mark out the very categories of difference that have come to be the positively or negatively ascribed spaces of national identity and the dominant structures of power. But the very making and remaking of identity occurs through representational and discursive spheres, both official and literary, material and ideological. And it is on this terrain that John Clement Ball's *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis* offers us a significant signpost pointing to the nuances and complexities of reading London in the context of postcolonialism and questions of identity.

Ball's book is comparative in scope and theoretically sophisticated, bypassing conventional readings by challenging our ideas about cohesive national literatures. Indeed, Ball's movements from Mordecai Richler's *St. Urbain's Horseman* to George Lamming's *The Emigrants* to Kamala Markandaya's *Possession* to Hanif Kureishi's *Buddha of Suburbia* are as breathtaking as they are stimulating. For the diversity of Ball's corpus is decidedly urbane, and he consistently directs the reader to transnational intersections and cosmopolitan roundabouts. The result is a series of textual analyses that focus on London as literary center, and Ball illustrates how this center has generated cross-pollinations and cross-fertilizations in postcolonial fiction. In fact, the four chapters following the introduction move from a discussion of Canadian texts about London to a consideration of Caribbean writing on the metropolis to Indian fiction set in the city to Black British writing about the capital. Each of these chapters begins with an excellent contextual and theoretical consideration of the specific national or regional literatures and their relationships to the (post)imperial center.

What is so crucial to Ball's book is that it illustrates how London cannot be categorically placed "outside" the discourses that work to contract postcolonial identities; nor can London define itself outside of a postcolonial context. For, as Ball suggests in his chapter "Black British Writing," the postcolonial moment has engendered a radical disruption of the spatial ordering of London, a reterritorialization of the city along heterogeneous racial, ethnic, and national lines. The incorporation of the city and the postcolonial, then, eradicates the mythic domain and the cultural logic of London, unsettling the ordered zoning of discrete spaces seen on the transparent mapping of "Britishness." Ball's readings, then, propose a new cognitive map that highlights the disordered geographies of London's multicultural urban present. As a result, his approach is unique and inspiring, and he offers us new stories of London. Not just the stories

of a homogeneous colonial center, but the stories of London as a complex and diverse postcolonial space that moves from the local to the global, the authentic to the inauthentic, and from cultural specificity to cosmopolitanism.

Robert Walser

The Robber

Trans. and introd. by Susan Bernofsky

Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000. Pp. 141. US \$15.00

Reviewed by Josef Schmidt

In an informative introduction, the translator Bernofsky sets out the pragmatic context of this writer and his work: a novel published posthumously in 1972, written by an author secretly during the twenties, his years in Bern (Switzerland). She analyzes why “for us Walser still inhabits the fringes of the European canon” (ix). But she very clearly places him as an equal to the likes of Kafka, Joyce, or Mann in terms of “modernist writing.” In fact, she implicitly adheres to the label that has been applied to this very enigmatic writer: that of a “serene version of Kafka.”

“Der Räuber” is a peculiar love story, reflecting the somewhat bizarre behavior of Walser towards the fair sex prior to being institutionalized permanently—first at his own request, later by the authority of outside agencies (in the mental asylum of Herisau, Switzerland). However, there is also a disturbing historical feature: Walther Rathenau (1867–1922)—the Weimar Republic minister responsible for reconstruction (and later foreign affairs) and murdered by a nationalist with whom he was personally acquainted (13)—features prominently in this “novel.” But the dominant theme is that of a latter-day “Good-for-Nothing”; and Eichendorff’s charming hero has become a very sophisticated twentieth-century figure. Throughout the novel, the narrator maintains an imbalance between himself and the object of his tale. Very early we get the following thumbnail sketch of the robber: *Nicht alle Menschen sind von der Natur bestimmt, sich nützlich zu machen. Du bildest eine Ausnahme. Diese Worte bildeten für mich eine Möglichkeit der Weiterexistenz, ohne daß ich etwas leistete* (“Not all human beings are destined by nature to be useful. You constitute an exception. These words constituted for me the possibility of continued existence without the performance of work,” 3). In other words: we are dealing with an anti-bildungsroman!

It was an acrobatic act to translate this novel for Walser spares his silent reader no effort to follow his dazzling train of thought. He is a *causeur* par excellence, and, like his illustrious intellectual cousin Walter Benjamin, he describes the perfect “flaneur.” Down to the last page, he treats his reader to very unique word uses and creations (in olden times called “apax legomena”): *Wurstigkeit, Schnupprigkeit von Fußgängern auf Straßen irritiert Automobilisten* (“The