

The Four-Gated City, and Atwood's *Surfacing*, Rigney shows in separate chapters how women's madness in literature is frequently a response to repressive social conditions. The book's fertile introduction provides a brief but rich overview of theories about mental illness among women. In it Rigney reminds us that from Freud onward behavior "which is considered normal and desirable . . . for men is thought to be neurotic or even psychotic for women" (p. 3). Culminating with R. D. Laing's remarks on madness, Rigney notes comments made by others on the topic: Germaine Greer ("Freud is the father of psychoanalysis. It had no mother"), Phyllis Chesler (our society's view of the ideal woman is the passive housewife with "limited authenticity"), Karen Horney (her refutation of Freud's penis envy theories is a classic on the topic), Clara Thompson, Ruth Moulton, Alexandra Symonds, Jean Baker Miller, Simone de Beauvoir, Shulamith Firestone, Betty Friedan, Kate Millet, Adrienne Rich, and Juliet Mitchell. Rigney sees Laing's theories as applicable to feminist issues, especially his most well-known that psychosis may be a "sane" response to an insane society.

In her examination of each novel, Rigney uses Laing's theories as her critical focus. Chapter 1, "The Frenzied Moment Sex and Insanity in *Jane Eyre*," discusses Bertha, a character typically described as "the mad woman [who] represents the evil in Rochester's soul" (p. 15) or as the "evil-mother figure who prevents Jane's sexual union with the fatherlike Rochester," (p. 16). Echoing Laing's view of social madness, Rigney describes Bertha as embodying "the moral example which is the core of Bronte's novel—in a society which itself exhibits a form of psychosis in its oppression of women" (p. 16). In Chapter 2, "The 'Sane and the Insane': Psychosis and Mysticism in *Mrs. Dalloway*," Rigney shows that the line separating sanity and insanity is most delicately drawn. According to Rigney, *Mrs. Dalloway* confirms Laing's statement in *The Politics of Experience* that society is composed of "'sane-schizoids,' people alienated from their own inner selves and therefore isolated from each other as well" (p. 42). In the novel sane and insane are juxtaposed; Clarissa Dalloway representing the former, Septimus Smith the latter. Gradually, however, the lines that separate the two blur and fade, each character becoming a part of, a mirror image of

the other. Chapter 3, "'A Rehearsal for Madness': Hysteria as Sanity in *The Four-Gated City*," illustrates Laing's remark in *The Politics of Experience* that "only by the most outrageous violation of ourselves have we achieved our capacity to live in relative adjustment to a civilization apparently driven to its own destruction" (p. 69). Martha Quest in Lessing's novel learns that to adjust to society one must become alienated, disjointed: schizophrenic. In her fourth chapter, "'After the Failure of Logic': Descent and Return in *Surfacing*," Rigney notes that Atwood's narrator describes herself as cut apart, fragmented, much as do Laing's patients in *The Divided Self*. *Surfacing* presents its narrator's attempts to journey home, "beyond logic" (p. 93), to put herself together again. The society that has caused her fragmentation seems momentarily far away as she crawls about her childhood, island home.

The protagonists whom Rigney describes in her book manage to survive in worlds where women are often cast as "victims and lunatics" (p. 119)—beyond the pale of power. As survivors these characters provide role models for readers who seek psychological growth and wholeness. Barbara Hill Rigney skillfully leads her readers on this literary journey toward women's spiritual health. At journey's end, readers, like the novels' protagonists, can affirm "a superior sanity based on personal order and the discovery of at least the potential for an authentic and integrated self" (p. 127).

ANDREW FIELD

Nabokov: His Life in Part
Penguin Books, 1978 (originally published 1977). Pp. 285.

Although Nabokov supervised the writing of this book, we are warned that it comes without his recommendation. Nabokov called biographies "psychoplagiarisms" and approved of them—or so he told Andrew Field—only for their documentation. As an example of "the sort of biography Nabokov much favors," Field gives us this tidbit: ". . . on June 3,

1918, Nabokov was on the summit of Ai Petri, where he captured a specimen of *Cupido minimus*." Calling it the "fat of irrelevant fact," Field generally avoids this kind of data. He also avoids digressing into commentary on Nabokov's work, which had been the subject of his earlier study, *Nabokov: His Life in Art*. The note on the back of the Penguin edition of *Nabokov: His Life in Part* classifying it as "literary criticism" is misleading. The few critical comments deal mainly with influences and suggestions of possible sources for characters or incidents that show up in Nabokov's later fiction.

Judged solely as biography, *His Life in Part* is lopsided. Field begins with an over-long—and inconclusive—look at Nabokov's forebearers and then concentrates on his youth and career as an émigré writer in Berlin between the wars. Readers who are unfamiliar with the émigré figures of the 20's and 30's could find this tedious; and readers who are interested in Nabokov primarily as an English writer could be disappointed by the comparatively short account given of his stay in the United States. Only the last chapter deals with Nabokov's twenty years in America, the period during which he made the transition to English writing. Then the biography comes to an early end with the success of Nabokov's most famous book, and we are left with a picture of him following the best seller lists as Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago* (a novel he considered overrated and sentimental) crept up on his own *Lolita*.

It is in portraying incidents such as this (and the strange friendship and enmity between Nabokov and Edmund Wilson) that Field excels. Writers seldom lead exciting lives, but they often have interesting personalities; Field's success is in conveying an impression of Nabokov's personality.

There is, however, a difficulty in presenting an objective portrait of a man when he keeps looking over one's shoulder to see what is being written. Field solves this by printing Nabokov's comments (and the comments of his wife) in boldface type. While at first this is disconcertingly like a red-letter New Testament, once the reader gets accustomed to it, the effect is to give him a feeling for what Field calls Nabokov's game, the "lifelong character part" he performed. "The person he usually imitates at the Montreux Palace is the way

he [Nabokov] puts it." Regardless of how serious this "role" is, it is a delightful one to encounter.

Richard Bryan McDaniel

PATRICIA MORLEY, ED.
Selected Stories of Ernest Thompson Seton

Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1977. Pp. 168.

This volume is the latest addition to the Canadian Short Story Library published by the University of Ottawa Press. It has been preceded by collections of nineteenth and twentieth-century authors, both well known and obscure: Duncan Campbell Scott, Raymond Knister, E. W. Thompson, Desmond Pacey, Isobella Valancy Crawford, Douglas Spettigue, Leo Simpson, and Robert Barr. Ernest Thompson Seton is, of course, a widely popular writer, whose many collections of animal stories are readily available. The chief advantage of this collection, then, is not to focus attention on a previously ignored or out-of-print author but rather to provide a representative sampling of Seton's contribution to what is a distinctively Canadian subgenre.

Patricia Morley's informative introduction stresses that "the formation of a new and unique genre, the realistic animal story," occurred in Canada from the late 1880s to the 1920s and beyond as a result of "the impact of the Canadian wilderness upon sensibilities which were by education largely British or European. . . . The wilderness and the forms of life found there impressed Canadian Writers as something to be feared, respected and loved. . . . Wilderness conditions reinforced the evolutionary concept of the common origin of man and beast." Seton and the other eminent Canadian writer in this field, Charles G. D. Roberts, both saw their work as a development from the evolutionists "who preached that the animals are not simply our spiritual brethren but actually our bloodkin." Seton's stories illustrate the doctrine of survival of the fittest, nature red in tooth and claw. His animal