

Mirko Jurak, Igor Maver (Eds.), *Essays on Australian and Canadian Literature* (Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, Ljubljana, 2000), 238 pages. ISBN 86-7207-120-4.

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Australian and Canadian literature have been a definite part of the syllabus at the Department of English, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, for many years. This was also one of the main reasons why Prof. Mirko Jurak and Prof. Maver decided to prepare a collection of essays for their students that would be representative of both literatures. *Essays on Australian and Canadian Literature* are not only intended for those studying Literatures in English spoken nations, but also for those who are in search for a good critical introduction into the literatures of Canada and Australia. The editors have decided to choose essays that throw light on some of the greatest artistic achievements, such as the works of Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Michael Ondaatje, Northrop Frye, Miles Franklin, A. D. Hope, Douglas Stewart, D. Green, David Malouf, and many other excellent writers, critics and literary historians. One will also find essays on literature written by Slovene immigrants in Canada and in Australia, such as Ivan Kobal, Ivan Dolenc, John Krizanc, Michelle Leber, Danijela Hliš, Jože Žohar, Pavla Gruden, Bert Pribac and Marcela Bole. These works by Slovene immigrants were written either in Slovene or in English, or both.

In the first part of the book one can find 12 essays written by 6 authors on Australian literature. Igor Maver looks at contemporary "new" aboriginal poetry in English; Bernard Hickey gives a re-reading of Miles Franklin; Karin Hansson focuses on Patrick White's Australia and examines David Malouf and the issue of identity; Mirko Jurak closely looks at Richard Flanagan's Novel on Slovene immigrants in Australia and Dorothy Green's three volumes of poetry; Adi Wimmer shows interest for the Australian New Wave Theatre, and Werner Senn is interested in the theme of fragmentation, loss of self, and possibilities of reconstruction in the novels of Patrick White and Randolph Stow.

In the second part of the book one can find 11 essays, all by different authors, on Canadian literature. Aleksander Kustec examines the contemporary Canadian short story from a historical viewpoint; Bernice Shrank explores the disappointed romantics and disconcerted characters in the selected short stories by Mavis Gallant; Tom Ložar gives us a reading of Alice Munro's *Friend of My Youth*; Joan Coldwell is interested in the rich mythology and the voices of Canada's west coast Indians in the stories of native story-tellers of British Columbia; Alden R. Turner throws light on Margaret Atwood's recreation of fiction and history in *The Handmaid's Tale*; Mirko Jurak deals with the question of Canadian national and cultural independence by comparing the views of Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood; Branko Gorjup studies the fictional reflection of the North American experience in John Richardson's *Wacousta*; Irma M. Ožbalt gives an analysis of Margaret Laurence's beliefs in *The Stone Angel*; Ann Saddlemyer speaks about the new minimalism and sensitivity in the plays of Sharon Pollock and Margaret Hollingsworth; Sonia Wild Bičanić argues about dependence and resolution in the novels of Margaret Atwood; and Bernard Hickey examines the idea of the return in Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family*.

In the third part of the book Mirko Jurak and Igor Maver in five essays throw light on the high aesthetic level and literary creativity of Slovene immigrants in Canada and in Australia.

We can fully agree with the editors that both literatures have established themselves as independent forms of art and that many valuable works of literature continue to originate from both countries. *Essays on Australian and Canadian Literature* is a valuable compendium and offers a helpful set of possible perspectives, but is open also to other interpretations. Each of the essays gives a steady working-out of detailed arguments. Most of them succeed at developing their own dialogue and are a fine example of contemporary literary criticism. On the whole, *Essays on Australian and Canadian Literature* is an excellent contribution to a greater understanding of the development of Australian and Canadian literature in the period since 1945.