toric conditions which gave rise to the recent post-structural era. The Pendulum theory of revolution and reaction often applied to history does indeed appear to be at work in literary criticism. In a passage illustrative of her application of this theory, Todd posits that "To deny that the author lives in any way in the work is also a gesture in time, conditioned by our own historical moment of criticism in high reaction to the overt presence of the author in Romantic art." Read within a feminist framework, this issue of the "dead author" proves to be a clearly dangerous theory for Todd for, as she states sarcastically yet emphatically in her conclusion, "Feminist literary history finds signature important. The woman who wrote is no doubt in the end unknowable, but, at some level or in some gap, trope or choice, she was working to be known."

Todd's study also aims to resuscitate the question of aesthetics—an issue which is recently becoming significant (see Rita Felski's *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989). Entering into Bakhtinian territory, Todd specifically tackles generic considerations which seek to make "discernible hidden ideological constraints." This will prove to be extremely fruitful, according to Todd, because it situates the female author within her specific literary environment. The question arises, for example: Is the female author articulating ideological assumptions common to her day at certain moments in the text, or is she writing against the grain? Only through a thorough examination of the genre within which she is writing may such a question be best answered.

Feminist Literary History is, to extend a pun, a truly timely study. It is also a testament to Todd's prolificacy. Her often disarming language is a lethal weapon against esoteric, elitist, and even deliberately mystifying post-structural discourses. Coupled with coherent and clever argumentation, Todd's book marks a new era in feminist literary history. Especially for newcomers to women's studies, it is an excellent resource guide that will provide a sense of the current debate. (For introductory purposes, I would also suggest Rosemarie Tong's new *Feminist Thought* [Boulder and San Francisco: Westview Press, 1989]. It is the most comprehensive and coherent introduction around.) As for the weathered women's studies specialists, read Todd's book as a challenge and put your theories to the test. You have nothing to lose but your psycho-babble.

FEMINIST THEORY AND THE PHILOSOPHIES OF MAN

Andrea Nye. London: Croom Helm, 1988

Lorraine Code

"Does a practising feminist need theory?" Andrea Nye asks, or is it "a luxury that she cannot afford" in her preoccupation with the pressures just to survive in a patriarchal society? Faced with the conflicts a feminist practice inevitably creates, feminists are constantly trying to make sense of their experiences, and to devise theoretically sound strategies to inform their activism. They do, often, need theory. The problem is that the most innovative and promising social and political theories of the modern era are, indeed, "the philosophies of man:" "theories invented by men to rationalise and justify men's activities." The question Nye addresses throughout the book is whether these philosophies inevitably work against women's interests, or whether women can find in their tenets and categories any useful constructs for the creation of an emancipatory feminist practice. From her engagement with this question, Nye develops a series of interestingly nuanced readings of liberal political theory, Marxism, Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism, Freudian and post-Freudian theory, and modern and post-modernist theories of language. Each of these topics constitutes the subject of one chapter of the book. The exegetical part of each chapter is even-handed and lucidly written, especially in the chapters on psychoanalytic linguistic theory, where Nye is clearly in her element. Her conclusions are insightful and provocative.

Readers will be familiar with many aspects of Nye's treatment of liberal and Marxist theory, both of which have been amply discussed in feminist literature. Liberal political theory, social contract theory and utilitarianism are ill-equipped to provide economic or social equality for women, she argues. Although "rights talk" allegedly guarantees women the freedom to participate in all aspects of society, economic barriers and the relegation of women to lower-paid jobs ensure that the "equality" the rhetoric promises is more theoretical than real. Marxism too remains a "philosophy of man," for all the attention it pays to the political economy of the capitalist, patriarchal family. It offers no adequate analysis of the familial and sexual relations that do not relate directly to production; nor can it ascribe value to women's domestic labour. In short, neither liberalism nor Marxism can explain or eradicate sexism.

What is novel about Nye's book is its foregrounding of the contributions of women who have engaged with, criticized, sought enlightenment from, and contributed to the development of these theories, throughout their history. Citing Madame de Staël as a forerunner of Mary Wollstonecraft and Harriet Taylor, Nye notes de Staël's claim that there is no happiness in, and no escape from, the role women are expected to play in society. Her discussion of liberal theory highlights Taylor's contribution to its development both in her own works, and in her influence on Mills's work. It was Taylor who made the more radical proposals, arguing for women's full labour market participation, not just for their formal equality and their right to vote.

Feminists Alexandra Kollontai, Clara Zetkin and Emma Goldman figure prominently in Nye's account of the development of Marxist theory. Disillusioned with socialism's failure to deal with such specifically female problems as maternity, child care and housework, these women argued, variously, for radically transformed personal and sexual relationships; for a reshaping of family structures; and for such practical measures as paid maternity leave, and socialized child care and domestic work. Feminists of the "second wave," such as Alison Jaggar, Juliet Mitchell, and Christine Delphy have picked up many of these lines of argument in an attempt to reclaim Marxism for feminism. Nye concludes, however, that the theory remains, inescapably, a philosophy of man: "The human world theorised by Marx and projected back onto human history by Engels is a world that excludes women."

Reading the work of Simone de Beauvoir both for the advances it promises over liberal and Marxist theory, and as a forerunner to radical feminism both in the United States and in France, Nye claims that the theory of subjectivity de Beauvoir develops is tainted by its Hegelian and Sartrean origins. While de Beauvoir's

analysis of the relegation of women to Otherness in man's world is an unprecedented accomplishment, the solution she proposes, in the achievement of transcendent subjectivity, remains a masculine solution. Such a reading will again be familiar to many readers; but Nye's interweaving of Marxist and radical feminist themes with de Beauvoir's texts, and her discussion of the impact of *The Second Sex* on such American feminists as Millett, Atkinson, and Daly, are novel and interesting. Neither a reconceptualized feminine subjectivity, nor the separatist subjectivity of radical feminism, offers ontological possibilities that could alter the conflictual, alienated position of the warring consciousness of Sartrean philosophy, however.

The mixed reactions that Freudian theory has elicited among feminists will be well-known to Nye's readers. Again, it is her readings of women's contributions to psychoanalytic interpretation that constitute the innovative aspect of the chapter. From Millett's and Friedan's rejections of Freud's emphasis on sexuality, through Mitchell's reading of Freud as a "kind of corrective to Marxism," to Kristeva's and Irigaray's readings of Lacanian theory, Nye's discussion is sensitive and illuminating. The place of Horney and Deutsch as Freudian apologists is usefully detailed, and there is a good discussion of Flax's and Chodorow's ambivalent indebtedness to Freud in their contributions to object relations theory. Most insightful, I think, are her concluding references to Marie Balmary's *Psychoanalysing psychoanalysis*, a work which broaches the topic of Freud's unconscious motivations in the development of his theories. Such readings, in Nye's view, again point to the masculine specificity of the solutions proposed in purportedly global theories.

Saussure and Lacan are the traditional theorists of language with whom French feminist theorists most frequently engage in their efforts to understand the effects of language in constructing gender-identity. Derrida is the anarchistic figure of hope. Nye offers a witty analysis of attempts, particularly on the part of Irigaray and Cixous, to develop a woman's language that would emulate Derridean deconstructive practice, unbalancing and subverting the Lacanian order of the signifier, celebrating a "feminine 'style'," advocating *jouissance* over logocentrism. For all of the inventive, lucid promise she sees in these proposals – and in Kristeva's more direct engagement with male questions – Nye ends, again, on a note of caution. She argues: "Although a deconstruction of the text of patriarchy may be needed to clear the way for these new ideas, a feminine counter-text can only offer a mirror image of masculinist thought."

Nye's conclusions are by no means wholly pessimistic, nor do they suggest that her engagement with the "philosophies of man" has been a useless exercise. Yes, one must conclude, a practising feminist does need theory, but the "philosophies of man" do not serve her well. Feminist reworkings of men's theories reveal that they are indeed *men's*, derived out of men's gender-specific and historically-specific practices in order to offer solutions to their problems. Yet to understand the "conflictual and alienated sources of the philosophy of man" is to understand its contingency, and hence to refuse its totalizing effects. That refusal creates a space for the development of strongly affirmative feminist practices, out of which new theoretical positions can be constructed.

POETRY BY CANADIAN WOMEN

Rosemary Sullivan, ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989

Linda Lamont-Stewart

Rosemary Sullivan's *Poetry by Canadian Women* differs from other recent anthologies of Canadian women's poetry, such as Mary di Michele's *Anything Is Possible* (1984) and Judith Fitzgerald's *SP/ELLES* (1986), in that it is designed to provide an historical record of the development of Canadian women's poetry from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century. Sullivan begins her Introduction to the anthology with a quotation from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* on the importance of early women writers in establishing a foundation of women's writing upon which later writers could build. Sullivan's anthology, then, is to be read "as a cumulative work, a single long poem created over one and a half centuries by women poets writing in Canada. Behind the eclectic generation of contemporary women writers is a cumulative tradition of poets who might be thought of as facilitators, clearing a space for future voices." *Poetry by Canadian Women* thus seeks to establish a canon of Canadian women's poetry.

The first question that arises with regard to any collection of women's writing is whether segregating women's literary work from the national canon as a whole contributes to its marginalization. Canadian women poets have been surprisingly well represented in anthologies since E.H. Dewart published his pioneering *Selections From Canadian Poets* in 1864. It is true, however, that with the notable exception of Isabella Valancy Crawford, the nineteenth century poets whose work has remained in the canon are predominantly male. There is, therefore, good reason to re-examine the work of our early women poets, as Sullivan argues: "To those who, fearing ghettoization, resist the idea of collecting women's writing under a single cover, one can only respond with Virginia Woolf's insistence: we need the homage of memory, the catalytic power of the retrospective glance."

In glancing retrospectively at early Canadian women poets, Sullivan has not attempted merely to be historically representative. Rather, she has sought out "poems that could sustain a modern reader's attention," and she has discovered some gems, particularly the first poem in the collection, "Sir Walter Raleigh's Advice to His Son on the Subject of Matrimony" by Margaret Blennerhasset (alias A Lady). Blennerhasset's witty and cynical condemnation of male attitudes toward women, published in 1824, has obvious appeal for today's feminist reader. In restricting her selections to poetry she feels should be of interest to the modern reader, however, Sullivan excludes the work of a number of women who were well known as poets in their own day. She lists the names of some of the writers she chose not to include, but does not explain why she considers their poetry of little interest. If only to illustrate the extent to which women's interests and attitudes have changed over the past century, it would have been useful to include representative poems by such writers as Mrs. Leprohon or Agnes Maule Machar. (Machar's name is misspelled in Sullivan's Introduction, and there are a number of other typographical errors in the text. One