before the Committee, Hill's story would have remained a painful but private memory. Following the inquiry, the FBI investigated Hill as the prime suspect of the press leak; however, despite a truckload of mail, phone, and fax receipts no connection between Hill and the press was ever established.

Conspiracy theories continue to circulate in many quarters of the U.S., including Hill's home state of Oklahoma, and the University of Oklahoma's Law School from which Hill recently resigned. The stigma and trauma of sexual harassment do not easily abate, especially when those allegations implicate the highest levels of American government and judiciary. A virtual recluse since the internationally broadcast Hill-Thomas hearing, Professor Hill's autobiography is a welcome and authoritative voice on what many view as the Senate's colossal mishandling of the Thomas appointment, and the awakening of the American public to the reality of sexual harassment in the workplace.

On the specifics of harassment, Hill neither embellishes nor recants. She simply repeats the salient portions of her testimony from the Senate hearing. While the strategy of sticking to the facts as they were presented in 1991 keeps her story well out of the reach of any defamation suit, Hill's approach achieves something greater. She wrests her story from its infinitely titillating spin-offs during six years of journalistic reporting, and from a public primed for the salacious and sordid. Firmly and with dignity, Hill sets the record straight and exemplifies how an experience of sexual harassment can be told in a manner that escapes voyeurism and victimhood.

Anita Hill changed the course of American history. Immediately following the senate hearing, public demonstrations against the Senate's action took place all over the U.S. including Capitol Hill. Eventually the senators most hostile to Hill would apologize to the American public for the way they treated her. In the years following the Hill-Thomas hearing the number of sexual harassment claims sky-rocketed in the U.S. Hill's very public ordeal legitimated what many women were feeling and experiencing in the workplace.

Was she a woman scorned, an erotomaniac, a lesbian, or a sexual prude? Each of these accusations was leveled against Hill by the senators who sought to discredit her. Hill's experience typifies the relentless sexualization of victims of sexual harassment. That she recently left the University of Oklahoma further demonstrates the all-too-typical fate of women who complain about workplace sexual harassment. As Hill documents, with startling regularity, women who sound the warning bell eventually find themselves out of a job or on an alternate career path.

Impeccably written and edited, *Speaking Truth to Power* hits its stride when Hill addresses the wider social implications of her experience and the fact that professional status does not insulate women from sexual harassment, it merely raises the stakes. Hill's analysis of several prominent American sexual harassment cases is especially provocative, as is her calling to account in the post-script "An Open Letter to the 1991 Senate Judiciary Committee."

Race is the other theme of Hill's text, a dynamic played out in both the hearing and the black community. Except for Ted Kennedy's plea for impartiality, the Democrats who might have been her allies sat speechless throughout the hearing; in part, Hill speculates, they were simply "unwilling to place any value in the word of a black woman or to pursue the statements of the white male colleagues who supported her."

As to Thomas' electrifying claim that the hearing was a "high-tech lynching," Hill summarizes that the Democrats were uniformly stupefied because "none of the senators appeared sure enough in his own perspective on race to address such a charge." The combined race and gender homogeneity of the Senate loomed large as a barrier to due process and any substantive understanding of the claims of a black woman against a black man.

Particularly painful to Hill was the schism that developed in the black community over what some viewed was her betrayal of the African American community and their hope for representation on America's highest court. In this, *Speaking Truth to Power* is a compelling example of how minority women are often forced to choose between gender and race relations.

Ultimately, Hill's text is about community at every level—about the enduring faith of the Hill family, of colleagues Susan Hoerchner and Joel Paul who incurred great personal risk in their public support of Hill, and of the power brokers who held allegiance only to their own success. Part political intrigue, part treatise on the rights of women, *Speaking Truth to Power* stakes its place in the annals of women's history.

SELF BEYOND SELF

Anjali Bhelande. Bombay: SNDT Women's University.

by Shelagh Wilkinson

> A condition of complete
> simplicity
> (costing not less than everything)
> —T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

T. S. Eliot's lines from "Little Gidding" occur to me every time that I read, and teach, Ethel Wilson's *Swamp Angel.* There is a profound sense of self-knowledge and spiritual awareness that sustains and anchors the central character Maggie Lloyd. In fact in many of her stories Wilson creates her protagonists as essentially pragmatic while simultaneously revealing them as women who operate from an epistemology that allows them to transcend the practical, the mundane, and become almost "otherworldly." They are characters who, as one student explained, are "entirely comprehensible—but inexplicable."

It is easy enough to spot Wilson's reliance on Donne or Eliot but her philosophic sources go beyond such writers. For instance, in none of my classes could I, nor any of the students, trace the source of Maggie's inherent calm, her surety, her equanimity. We all sensed that it came from Wilson's profound acceptance of deeply-held mystical beliefs. Native Canadian? Christian? We did not know, but time and time again we questioned the origins of Wilson's philosophy.

Imagine my delight when I read this book by Dr. Bhelande and had opened to me the possibilities that her research has uncovered: that by approaching Wilson's work from the great Indian philosophical tradition one may indeed gain the insight that was elusive before. As Bhelande says, "an Indian perspective promises to shed light on certain mystifying aspects of Wilson's work" and this new criticism does just that—especially shedding light on the appeal in all of Wilson's work to comprehend and approach the other as an intrinsic part of the self. Western thought is often zealous in its proclamation of individuality, careful to honour and name differences, but in all of Wilson's stories the "grace of recognition" occurs and is celebrated. Ethel Wilson's writing never abandons the real for the mystical, instead it creates interstices in which transformation between the two occur. Dr. Bhelande is able to demonstrate how Indian philosophic traditions help us to understand this aspect of Wilson's writing. The plurality that is always obvious in Wilson's work makes it appealing across cultural and disciplinary divisions—and this must have been enticing to a scholar such as Dr. Bhelande.

Self Beyond Self is an original—even audacious—critique. It dares to search out influences and connections that are subtextual and yet having established these it makes clear a concept (for instance Wilson's use of the avatar) in passages that defy textual interpretation in any other way. Perhaps what most impresses in this book is the refusal by the author to make undue claims of direct and indisputable connections between the Indian philosophic tradition and Canadian fiction. Instead Bhelande demonstrates how passages could have been influenced by Eastern thought and draws parallels that open the fiction in a new way. There is much careful textual analysis that a reader will find illuminating as Bhelande analyzes the changes that Wilson has made to the text as she readies it for publication. And by comparing various drafts of the text Bhelande is often able to demonstrate the ways in which Wilson's knowledge of the *Bhagvad Gita* has influenced and guided the writing—introducing new philosophic perspectives that the altered text reveals.

Dr. Bhelande has been exhaustive in her research and provides for us a wealth of resource material that Wilson students will find seductive. She also includes evidence of her scholastic integrity as she publishes the advice of current writers, friends of Wilson's, who may—may not—be able to corroborate the direct influence of the Indian texts on the novels.

I must admit when I read the title of the book I was concerned that my ignorance of philosophic research (and especially of the great Indian sacred texts) would make this a tough read. But it is not necessary to be a philosopher (or an Indianist) in order to read this book. It is completely accessible, in fact it invites the reader and is hard to put down.

This is a critique that emphasizes the richness of cross-cultural studies and allows students a new approach to Wilson's work. (As Dorothy Livesay reminded us, Wilson is one of the most neglected and least understood of Canadian women writers.)

This new research not only leads us into a new awareness of Wilson by demonstrating the subtle connections in the fiction to the sacred text *Bhagvad Gita*, it also provides us with a close textual reading of many of Wilson's titles; it is an analysis that has not been available previously. Bhelande's research, alongside the republication of the Wilson canon by McClelland and Stewart, will allow a unique critical access to the complete work of Ethel Wilson—something that has been long overdue.

COLETTE, M'ENTENDS-TU?

nathalie stephens. Montreal: Éditions Trois, 1997

by John Stout

Nathalie stephens's *Colette, m'entends-tu?* is a brilliant new work by a young writer who has already published a poetic text in French, *Hivernale* (1995), and one in English, *This Imagined Permanence* (1996). Stephens's muse and mentor in her new book is the French writer Colette, whose *Le pur et l'impur* (1932) marked the emergence of lesbian literature in twentieth-century France. *Colette, m'entends-tu?* opens with a quote from *Le pur et l'impur* in which the opacity and unintelligibility of language are acknowledged, but set aside in favour of an appreciation of its beauty. The beauty of Colette's words leads stephens's narrator to "les sites imaginaires retranches, hors d'atteinte, au sein d'un épais cristal." The "imaginary site" that is repeatedly named in stephens's text in order to give the book a symbolic centre is "le jardin de mes rêves" ("the garden of my dreams"): "Dans le jardin de mes rêves, je t'ai convoitée, lieu d'interdits et de refus," the narrator states at the outset of her journey, linking the garden to desire and transgression.

Desire and transgression orient the narrator's imaginings. In *Colette, m'entends-tu?* stephens creates a space for lesbian identity and lesbian desire; it is a space that does not (yet) exist. Like the lesbian textual utopias of Monique Wittig and Nicole Brossard, stephens's idealized lesbian "garden" is brought into existence in, and as, an *écriture au feminin*. A boldly experimental work, *Colette, m'entends-tu?* pushes beyond the boundaries of conventional narrative.