

she is and why she has chosen to write this book; throughout the rest of the text her voice mediates between other voices, both written and oral, Native and non-Native. Although she has a useful and extensive bibliography that she uses judiciously throughout her text, her main sources are not books but people. The text is based on interviews with forty Native women from across Canada, and the conclusion is framed as a dialogue between Anderson and Bonita Lawrence, a Mi'kmaq/European woman who teaches Women's Studies at Queen's University. Anderson weaves together these women's stories and experiences to provide both compelling illustrations and a feeling of community. The fact that all are community leaders – including writers, artists, educators, administrators, matriarchs, healers and elders – allows Anderson to present them as positive role models to counteract the stereotypes against which they are fighting. The women come from a variety of First Nations and thus their stories prevent the homogenization of "Native womanhood" that is always a danger in such texts; at the same time, the similarities between their experiences do point the way to possible pan-Native connections.

Anderson's text is specifically written for an indigenous female audience, to help them recognize their own being, and for this audience it is excellent and highly recommended. The text's reconstruction of Native womanhood could also lead non-Native feminists to re-cast feminist theory, although it is sometimes difficult for the Western feminist reader to accept what can seem to the outsider as essentialist arguments, ones that extol the importance of motherhood, menstruation, and wearing skirts. Anderson is, however, aware of these problems, and makes sure to complicate her discussion by showing disagreement among her sources. *A Recognition of Being* is a useful addition to a growing body of theoretical texts exploring Native female identity, and a good starting point for those looking at this theory for the first time.

Judith Leggatt
Lakehead University

Designing Women: Gender and the Architectural Profession. Annmarie Adams and Peta Tancred. Toronto, Ont: University of Toronto Press, 2000; photographs, tables, appendices; 190 pages; ISBN 0-8020-4417-4 (cloth) 0-8020-8219-X (paper); \$19.95.

Why is the title for this book *Designing Women*, as opposed to *Canadian Women Architects*, for example? Well, as soon as one dives into this most interesting book one discovers (along with the authors) that of the women who have left the profession of architecture proper, many have moved into planning, architectural journalism, teaching and even real estate. This has forced a redefinition of "the architect" and is, perhaps, one of the intriguing aspects of the book: how these professional women have succeeded in working in and around the restrictions of the profession. It came as a great relief to me that the book is not the story of marginalization of women in architecture; on the contrary, it is the story of innovation and success in finding ways to deal with the masculinist world of architecture.

Because the book is a collaboration between an historian of architecture (Adams), and a sociologist (Tancred), the subject of architecture is brought out from the confines of architectural history and makes this study comparable to other work done on professional women and women in the work force. The contribution of the social sciences brings a rigour to the study, which is extremely valuable. Unfortunately, it also makes the writing a little heavy-handed in places. The premise of the book is a study of all women who have remained in the shades of history, as opposed to the singling out of some of the great women architects and the telling of their stories as heroes. This is admirable and should be commended. It results in a very thorough study of women in the architectural profession which I understand through my conversations with Dr. Adams has now inspired similar studies in other countries such as Australia.

For me, one of the most interesting chapters was dedicated to the representation of women in the RAIC journal (the journal distributed to members of the profession) both in advertisements and in the types of buildings designed by women that are reviewed in the

articles. This is where the deep work of minimising women's contribution to the field is being carefully reproduced through association with bathrooms and kitchen, role-playing (women as interior designers) and the use of nudity and sensuality common to advertisement strategies in general. The review articles tend to focus on accepted building categories such as housing and interior design for women architects.

What makes this chapter so important is the contrast it provides with the analysis of work actually done by many Canadian women architects. Eva Vecsei, for example, was a leading designer for Place Bonaventure in the mid 1960s and La Cite in the 1970s, both huge multipurpose projects in downtown Montreal. These are very large commissions, a far cry from the gist of articles provided by the RAIC journal.

If we compare this book to existing ones on women architects (such as those by Hayden, Favro, Berkeley, or Attfield) certain aspects stand out. First, it is a collaborative project between an architectural historian and a sociologist. Second, it is a very complete survey of all 1,500 women who were registered at one point in time in Canada - and this will remain as an important contribution to the field. Lastly, it rigorously avoids singling out certain women and turning them into heroes. We could say that it is a fundamentally democratic look at the issue of gender in the profession. In the end, Quebec women architects emerge as distinct in a number of ways: the unusually high number of them who practise in the province, and the fact that they mothered a relatively large number of children as they kept their practices going. One is left wondering why is that so. There is no doubt that this book has opened many important questions concerning both architectural practice and the particularity of the Canadian experience - and that is a great contribution to us all.

Sarah Bonnemaïson
Dalhousie University

Writing a Politics of Perception: Memory, Holography, and Women Writers in Canada.

Dawn Thompson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000; ISBN 0802043658; 143 pages; \$35.00 (cloth).

Women's Movement: Escape as Transgression in North American Feminist Fiction. Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000; ISBN 9042013621; 262 pages; \$36.00 US (paper).

Women's fiction in North America is increasingly characterized by forms of narrative experimentation, which are, at least in part, engagements with postmodern practices of fragmentation, intertextuality, and disruptions of generic categories. Both Dawn Thompson's *Writing a Politics of Perception: Memory, Holography, and Women Writers in Canada* and Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson's *Women's Movement: Escape as Transgression in North American Feminist Fiction* participate in the debates surrounding this relation between feminist and materialist politics and contemporary fictional practice.

Dawn Thompson's *Writing a Politics of Perception* is based on an intriguing and timely idea. Thompson uses Nicole Brossard's theory of the holographic memory to read five Canadian women's texts: Brossard's *Picture Theory*, Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, Marlene Nourbese Philip's *Looking for Livingstone*, Beatrice Culleton's *In Search of April Raintree*, and Régine Robin's *La Québécoise*. The introduction of holography beyond the bounds of Brossard's fictional/theoretical *Picture Theory* opens up a space for a discussion of Canadian women's writing which accounts for the politics of form as well as of content.

The early chapters of *Writing a Politics of Perception* outline the theory of holography and the holographic memory. Brossard's theory describes literature as a virtual world much like the illusory three-dimensional world of the hologram. Holography, she suggests, foregrounds the process of creating and re-creating illusions by fracturing an image and re-presenting it. This idea theorizes, as Thompson points out, not the process of representing the object, but the process of *perceiving* it. Thompson's rearticulation of holography is heavy with mathematical and