

ticular. They inquire, politely, "Has there really been anyone else besides Lillian Hellman?" Both the plays and the Introduction in Moore's anthology should provide an answer to that question.

by Lois Gottlieb
University of Guelph

NOTES

1. A number of documented cases of women helping other women in the American theatre would support Moore's belief that a tradition of women's literature may be discerned in the links established to encourage and facilitate the production of women's plays. In the case of Hellman, specifically, there is evidence that as a play reader for Herman Shumlin, she "discovered" Vicki Baum's Grand Hotel.
2. See Jane Marcus, "Transatlantic Sisterhood: Labor and Suffrage Links in the Letters of Elizabeth Robins and Emmeline Pankhurst," Signs 3 (Spring 1978): pp. 745-57; and Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 22-23.
3. Some current plans for studies of women and drama prove the exceptions to this generalization. Rota Lister, editor of The Canadian Drama Review is preparing a special women's issue for Fall 1979; two collections of essays on women and the American theatre are currently being prepared, one to be edited by Helen Krich Chinoy, the second to be co-edited by Rosemary Curb and Phyllis Mael, but publication of either volume is unlikely before 1980. Three papers on Canadian women dramatists, presented at the Inter-American Conference on Women Writers, Ottawa, May 1978, have been reprinted in Atlantis, 4 (Fall 1978).

Elizabeth Bowen: Portrait of a Writer. VICTORIA GLENDINNING,
London: Weiden and Nicholson, 1978, Pp. 331

Elizabeth Bowen who is the subject of Victoria Glendinning's autobiography is probably not as well known to present-day readers as are some other novelists

of her time such as Graham Greene or Evelyn Waugh. However, in the forties and fifties her novels with titles like The House in Paris, The Death of the Heart, The Heat of the Day, or A Time in Rome were best-sellers and Elizabeth Bowen had as much of a following as any of the other major writers of the period. Indeed her novels and short stories were translated into a variety of languages and she was well thought of in literary circles in France, Germany and Italy as well as in the English speaking world. It well may be that her present lack of notoriety is attributable to the tyranny of the cinema since, unlike the novels of a writer like Graham Greene, none of Elizabeth Bowen's novels or stories were ever chosen for cinematic presentation. However this biography should invite many readers to take up the work of a most readable and rewarding writer.

Literary biography is both the most difficult and the most rewarding of writing: it is most difficult because the writer of the biography of a literary person must deal not simply with a single character but with an amazing variety of persona through which and frequently in which that single character lives and is manifested. It is most rewarding, or, one should say, it can be most rewarding, when the presentation achieves the sense of the rounded integration of being which the literary artist was attempting in both life and work. Victoria Glendinning's

biography of Elizabeth Bowen achieves the sort of completeness which one rarely sees in this most difficult species of writing.

The sub title of the work is "Portrait of a writer" and the book is the equivalent of an inspired representation in paint. The sketch of Elizabeth Bowen we are given neglects no facet of this most fascinating woman's life. It reveals how her life entered her fiction and how, indeed, like her compatriot Oscar Wilde, the fictional existence affected the non-fictional, and life imitated art. One would be quite satisfied- were that all Glendinning achieved, however her biography of Elizabeth Bowen also presents us with the feeling of the era in which the writer lived and provides a sketch of the period of the thirties, forties and fifties. Elizabeth Bowen's life certainly made it necessary to add this latter dimension. A remarkable set of circumstances resulted in this Irishwoman from established, but not altogether promising, social background touching on and, in a sense integrating in her existence, the social, intellectual, and political life of the last days of the British Empire. Elizabeth Bowen's fiction evoked, in language of lyrical beauty, a world which was either passed or passing and yet did so with a saving irony which serves to balance and keep the writing from being sentimental. This fictional achievement is directly related to Elizabeth Bowen's background.

Certainly she was out of that Ireland which Brendan Behan brilliantly summed up with his witty description of the Anglo-Irishman as "a Protestant with a horse," but yet she, like many of her class, were "hiberniores quam ipsis hiberniis" and possessed the Irish talent for being romantic and other-worldly while retaining a sense of the mundane that would make a businessman blush.

Elizabeth Bowen's marriage to Alan Cameron at Oxford was chiefly responsible for her meeting and becoming friends with some of the most imposing figures of the middle years of this century. There is hardly a literary, diplomatic or social "somebody" of the years between the two wars whom she did not know on terms of varying degrees of intimacy. As her biographer subtly suggests, she was a thoroughly engaging, warm and intelligent person.

Curiously enough Canada played a very large part in Elizabeth Bowen's existence. Her earliest friends at Oxford were the Buchans--a family friendship which lasted all her life. John Buchan, of course, became Governor-General of Canada in 1932 and is better known here by his title of Lord Tweedsmuir. Her most important association with a Canadian was her deep and intimate friendship with the diplomat Charles Ritchie of Halifax. Their devotion to one another over the course of thirty years is one of the beautiful aspects of Elizabeth Bowen's life story. But

aside from the Buchans and Charles Ritchie there were people like T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolfe, Edmund Wilson, Lady Ottoline Morrell, Evelyn Waugh and a plethora of other figures some well, some not so well-known who were friends of this fascinating woman.

Probably the most important key to Elizabeth Bowen's character and to her achievement was her Anglo-Irish birth and the strength she drew from her rooted love of place. Bowen's Court, her family seat in County Cork, seems to have been central to her preception of the world. We find her continually going back to it as a place of refuge. Childhood, Bowen's Court, and the sweet remembrance of its ghostly past gave her both matter for her writing and character to her life. When she was dying of cancer of the lungs in 1973 she was barely able to whisper. This made it almost impossible for her to communicate with her life-long friends and cousin of her childhood, Audrey Finnes, who was now deaf. Yet it was Bowen's Court and the world of childhood which obliterated any barrier of communication:

Audrey spoke to Elizabeth of the roses that had grown at each side of the steps at Bowen's Court. Their faint scent was always associated in Audrey's mind with Elizabeth's "Welcome home, darling", as they drew up inexpertly at the front door. Now she said, "Does the smell of those roses

haunt you as it does me?" and Elizabeth's face came to life. They spoke of the two sisters who were their mothers; and they were close to one another.

It is in this ending of both the biography and of Elizabeth Bowen as a figure in it, that the intertwining comes full circle.

Cyril Byrne
St. Mary's University

Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her. SUSAN GRIFFIN, New York: Harper and Row, 1978, Pp. 263

In her book "Woman and Nature" Susan Griffin is concerned to explore and to name the specificity of women's unique place in the world, a specificity which all women, feminist and non-feminist alike, have sensed instinctively but which has only in the last few years begun to be acknowledged and explored systematically in feminist philosophy. Griffin's poetic vision represents to us, in loving detail, women's lives as they are lived and shaped differently than men's. In it she speaks equally to our inchoate yet