

and writing are of the same importance, are simultaneous, "lire" and "délire" are confused, brought together, intellectual discourse uses kisses for punctuation.

Where does all this take place? In the minds of women, of course, but also in the reality of the New York Barbizon Hotel for women, in its rooms, its narrow beds. The above list of names already made us understand that this truly québécois writer is not a nationalist, that Québec feminism became international quite some time ago (Brossard made with Luce Guilbault, in the seventies, the NFB film "Some American Feminists"), preparing the terrain for today's global movement.

The New York Barbizon Hotel for Women witnesses the lovers' encounter. The black and white images which accompany the text in its French edition, and which are unfortunately omitted in the English one, show the hotel rising like a clitoris in erection, against the geometrical map of the American city. The hotel is reality and myth or magic, at the same time, a place where the new witches meet to brew their magic potion of love and text, of the emotional and the cerebral, which they mix and stir with strength and joy.

To me, *Louhers* evokes the mandala of women's existence. A sacred space, with a sacred figure, woman (think of it: the French word "femme" does not include man!). In the rectangular building of the hotel, Brossard assembles four lovers into a circle, four women who constitute the four cardinal points of the universe. The sacred figure is female, of course, and she is represented here by her mouth, her mouth that forms words into speech and text, as well as into kisses, her lips which Brossard juxtaposes to the vulva.

Louhers becomes a re-calling of the ancient, the archimagic, as Daly would say, myth of Baubo. Baubo, who was either Persephone's or Demeter's nursemaid (the mostly male classicists have not yet managed to agree on one or the other) succeeded to make Demeter smile again, after Persephone had been abducted to her mother's despair. Demeter had long searched for her lost daughter. She meets Baubo, who lifts up her skirt and exposes her vulva and Demeter breaks out laughing and can finally accept food and drink again. For a long time, this myth was considered one of the obscenities of mythology, was silenced just like the thesmophoria, a woman's festival that included lesbian activities and was one of the most important festivities of Ancient Greece. Baubo, her symbolic gesture of female solidarity, and also the thesmophoria come to life again in Brossard's text. Brossard is

unaware of this "Greek connection." But clearly, it points to the universality of her writing.

Barbara Godard's preface to her translation of *Amantes* discusses with enthusiasm and clarity the difficulties encountered while rendering Brossard's text, with its frequent occurrences of ellipsis and parataxis, its neologisms and puns meant to liberate the French language from clichés and patriarchal customs. She calls Brossard's book "a study for the erotics of reading" (9), "a spiral of escalating desire and vertigo" (10), and reminds us that she started translating pages of this text in 1981, to be read in Toronto, at a "Writers in Dialogue" conference at York University, with Nicole Brossard and Adrienne Rich reading in counterpoint. It took Godard several years and many a working hour with Nicole, to be fully satisfied with her translation of the text and the "connotative wealth of each word on the page" (11). The result is according to this reviewer a work of art from which the reader will draw a lot of pleasure, a pleasure stimulated by thought, emotion and dream, again simultaneously. And her pleasure will be her own creation, for Brossard's frequent play with typography, with the spacing of her text on the white page, her interjections such as "turn the page" make the reader aware of the fact that, as Godard points out, "she is reading only black marks on a white page and that the meaning being produced is her own creation" (12). *Louhers* is intertextually at its best. Here, writer, translator, and reader are coming together in Brossard's "laboratory of emotions" to weave a feminist utopia in which to find a common strength and the inspiration to continue the feminist journey.

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Other Fires, Short Fiction by Latin American Women, Alberto Manguel, *Toronto: Lester and Orphen Dennys Limited, 1986. Pp. 221.*

To review an anthology of writers is a difficult task since the choice of authors on the anthologists' part may not coincide with our own; it is even more difficult when the material is in translation (in this case, Spanish to English) and it is written by women whose background and formation are quite unfamiliar to the average Canadian reader; it is finally next to impossible to review an anthology, presumably compiled for the purpose of making Latin American writing known in Canada which fails to offer that essential critical dimension on the authors it presents.

The first thing that strikes this reader is the selection criteria. While some authors are well recognized for their output in the short story genre (Silvina Ocampo, Clarice Lispector and Ines Arredondo), others are primarily known for their long fiction writing (Elena Poniatowska, Marta Lynch), others, still, for their poetry (Alyandra Pizarnik), or for their play (Elena Garro). One wonders, therefore, whether it would not have been more appropriate to make a selection of short fiction by Latin American Women much more representative by either eliminating the authors who are not "strictu sensu" short story writers, or else, by simply labelling the anthology as "Prose fiction by Latin American Women."

The subtitle of the book, *Short Fiction by Latin American Women* poses another problem, for it could be perceived as sexual discrimination in reverse. Had the collection contained only writings by male authors, I am certain that this fact would not have appeared in the title. By definition, an anthology is a "florilege," a collection of the most representative writings in a given genre or period, chosen for their literary excellence, without any specific reference to gender.

The above could be overlooked, however, if the anthology met certain standards in supplying information within a critical framework. The average length of the biographical notes given on each author is five lines; in one case, it reaches eight lines (Lydia Fagundes Telles), and in another, only three lines (Ines Arredondo). This, coupled with rather short, often anecdotal introductions to each of the selections, lends to the anthology an aura of imprecision which cannot be counteracted even if Isabel Allende, one of the most prominent writers in Latin American today, endorses the book.

We ask at this point what is the purpose of this anthology. The statement that "many of the best untranslated books from Latin American countries have been written by women" (Introduction, p.3) leads the reader to form certain expectations of what is to follow. Expectation turns into disappointment when very little is said regarding the reasons for such a statement. Again, this shortcoming would not be serious if the book were intended for a readership familiar—if not with the works themselves—at least with the cultural parameters from which they stem; it becomes quite serious, however, when the readers most likely to read this book are lacking the necessary information to contextualize the material within its authentic cultural framework.

In spite of its shortcomings, *Other Fires* has some positive aspects. Certainly the quality of the translations is impressive in that each selection faithfully reflects the original language. Another positive aspect is the felicitous choice of the title which becomes a double reference to the "fires the Spanish explorers had seen burning on the Coast of Patagonia and on what was to be known as Tierra del Fuego (Land of Fire), and also, to Roger Callois' enthusiasm on discovering the Great Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges, "a fire burning on the other side of the Atlantic," (both quotations from the "Introduction," p. 7).

The book, with its full colour detail of George Tooker's painting, "The Gypsy," on its cover and its clear, easy-to-read print presents well. Let us hope that it will serve as an introduction to other Latin American writings regardless of gender.

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Goodbye Harold, Good Luck. Audrey Thomas. *New York, NY: Viking Penguin Inc., 1986. Pp.222.*

I originally picked up *Goodbye Harold, Good Luck* in an airport bookstore hoping that it would demand just the right amount of concentration—accessible enough to disengage my usual fear of being airborne, challenging enough to engage my academic feminist tastes in women's literary productions. I was not disappointed—this is vintage Audrey Thomas, with her characteristic blend of humour and poetry, completely in command of the short story. The humour and the poetry, female in vision and voice, are encapsulated in the dedication and the epigraph, the former to a friend "who doesn't laugh (too hard) when I look for the iron in the fridge"—shades of fire and ice!—and the latter from an unorthodox Greek:

Adopt the character of the twisting octopus, which takes on the appearance of the nearby rock. Now follow in this direction, now turn a different hue.

The octopus shows up in many different understated guises in this collection, most notably and obviously in the waking adventures and nocturnal dreams of a prepubescent boy on a vacation in Greece. In Thomas' introduction to the volume, a seemingly casual meditation on correspondences, memories and images which fascinate the writer, the metaphorical octopus emerges as a "real" but "unsent" post-card conflating a bright red amaryllis