Found Goddesses: Asphalta to Viscera. (As revealed to) Morgan Grey and Julia Penelope, Illustrations by Alison Bechdel, *Norwich, Vermont: New Victoria Publishers, 1988, Pp. 122 paperback.*

While I was enjoying *Found Goddesses,* I experimented with reading sections of it to various people, starting with my class on lost goddesses. Immediately, the goddess Hilaria descended on the class, "with Her rib-tickling companions Chuckles, Chortles, Giggles and Guffaws." My class loved the book, and there is no doubt that their knowledge of lost goddesses immeasurably increased their enjoyment. On the other hand, while others thought the book charming, a few were unmoved, and one colleague even pronounced it adolescent humour. My own suspicion is that the latter critic does not like puns, for *Found Goddesses* is full of puns and other sorts of plays on words, as well as feminist etymologies.

Found goddesses, modern goddesses who watch over all areas and aspects of modern life, respond to being sought or invoked. For instance, during a particularly trying search for a space in a parking lot, the modern goddess of parking suggested herself to a group of lesbian feminists. As soon as one of them remarked on the need for such a goddess, a parking space came free. Shortly thereafter, Asphalta revealed her name and, from then on, other modern goddesses began revealing themselves regularly, starting with Pedestria, goddess of "the footsore," who made herself known during a "Blessing of the Shoes" ritual being performed by the Lincoln Womyn's Spirituality Group.

Written by a linguist and a witch, *Found Goddesses* is a marvelously funny book that parodies the recent flood of works about ancient goddesses. According to the introduction, the witch became disillusioned with "the focus among women's spirituality groups on 'lost goddesses,'" for she began to feel that they "had no immediate bearing on her life as a Lesbian in the latter part of the Twentieth Century." The book amply fulfills its other main purpose, that of feminist exploration of language and its uses, for the linguist was "into fun and nonsense ... and figuring out how we can use language to create a reality that's comfortable for us." The collaboration is exciting, since both linguists and witches, as the authors point out, "practice the way language creates and alters the world as we perceive it. What we conceive we name, and the naming makes it so." The discovery of modern goddesses is, as the writers say, "an active exploration." Thus they invite readers to report the names of found goddesses that reflect their own experience.

The modern goddesses whom we meet in this delightful book range from Anima, "She who watches over the connections Lesbians share with animals of all types" — this goddess's primary aspect is Felina — to Rotunda, "the Folded One," who "attends only to the weighty tread of the elegantly fat, and cherishes their bouncing breasts and generous flesh." They include goddesses such as Chemia, "goddess of the 'change through pleasure' principle"; Et Cetera, "She-Who-Takes-Much-For-Granted"; Fallopia, who supervises women's physical cycles; and Laborea, the goddess of shitwork. *Found Goddesses* records a goddess for most aspects of lesbian, and indeed feminist, life, including a goddess of bodily pleasure and one of lesbian sexuality. The book provides an account of each goddess's aspects and areas of influence; it details her temples and shrines and suggests possible incantations and chants for invoking and praising her.

Found Goddesses is primarily a book of humour that will provide the receptive reader with many laughs, yet it has a serious sub-theme — that of discrimination against lesbians and feminists and their experiences of the male-dominated, heterosexist society in which they have to live. Certain of the found goddesses speak particularly to such issues, for instance, Gettuffa, "Our-Goddess-of-Self-Defense"; we call on Gettuffa "when men harass us on the street or at work, in any circumstance in which we feel threatened with violence or harm, physical or emotional." Another such goddess is Anomia who "guards the secretive and the hidden" and of whom the goddess Marginalia is an aspect.

Anyone who wants to understand how lesbians and feminists live with discrimination from day to day should read this book. *Found Goddesses* makes clear how the lives of lesbians and feminists are made very difficult by sexism and heterosexism. It also makes clear that caring, loving, laughter and, above all, a sense of community, help women get through these experiences. Further, although the book's stated point of view is lesbian and it addresses lesbians throughout, many of the issues and concerns with which *Found Goddesses* deals are those of feminists in general, issues which in large degree concern all women.

Nonetheless, it is primarily as humour and as play with language that we should approach *Found Goddesses.* We meet the goddess Hilaria in almost every line. In addition, Alison Bechdel's excellent illustrations are a fitting complement to the subject matter, since they are not pictures of found goddesses, but of lesbians and feminists of a number of races and sizes in the process of finding them. The illustrations add enormously to the delightfulness of the

book. All in all, *Found Goddesses: Asphalta to Viscera* is a work that gives the lie to all who say that feminists have no sense of humour. It shows, furthermore, that feminists can and do laugh at themselves and, what is more, that laughter is an important survival mechanism. "Hail, Hilaria, do your bit,/Bring us laughter, soul of Wit!"

Johanna H. Stuckey
York University

Seismographs: Selected Essays and Reviews. Liliane Welch, *Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1988, Pp.120 paperback.*

My childhood was so painful I seldom speak of it. Consequently, it was with some surprise that I read an account by Liliane Welch which was almost identical to my own. The odyssey for the ethnic writer, moving from old culture to new, from country to country, begins with family memory and folk past. According to the editors of *Ethnicity and Canadian Literature*, it is the "golden age" of childhood which shapes the whole and contributes to the ideal of country and nation. Various writers, both in English and French Canada are responding, however unconsciously, to this national vision, with retrospective fictions (very often viewed through the eyes of a child) of regional and ethnic cultures, writers who are, in effect, in a sociological sense, reinventing the Canadian past to multicultural ends.[1]

So it is that this collection of prose by a poet and professor of French literature at Mount Allison University begins with a quotation about how childhood memories are recreated in later years. However, there was no "golden age" for the would-be émigrée who defines self not through social structures and the cultural milieu but without them. She rejected the patriarchal sexual and social order of class society in Europe, phallocratic, dominated by the Law/Catechism which her father/priest embodies. In this context, she must also discard the role models of lady/barbarian, Eve/Madonna, woman as uneducated, subservient to men, subordinate to the household.

The last words of her maternal grandmother, "Your father was not your friend. You speak like me," (p. 33) are true in part. The author exchanges the Roman Catholic religion for a belief system based on a passionate aestheticism. Furthermore, she adopts a belated mother tongue, English. Nevertheless, the implied comparison between rural and urban values, enacted in generational conflicts, reveals a family epic as forbidden, incomprehensible and ritualistic as a wilderness area (p. 20).

Richard Lemm observed in his introduction that Montana has not yet surfaced in Welch's poetry or prose despite the fact it was where she first attended university and read the works of Melville, Whitman, Faulkner, Steinbeck and Hemingway. He sounds puzzled by her patent disregard for the landscape of the Northwest. He fails to comprehend that the land patterns and myths of the United States exclude women authors and women's literary work. For the frontier, by definition, is the place which is far enough away to leave women behind.[2] This is possibly why the Tantramar region of New Brunswick, in which the pseudo-wilderness and its attendant freedoms are connected to the civilized, has been so agreeable for Welch, and not necessarily because of her European background. Also noteworthy is the fact that she annually returns to Europe, following a path similar to her grandfather (nomadic/outsider/urban) and grandmother (rooted/solitary/rural).

That she pursues, albeit unconsciously, a well-established pattern is interesting for two reasons. Her initial enthusiasm for the wilderness/freedom arose when she read the German author Karl May, who wrote romantic adventures about the American West, and *Globi's Adventures in America*. When she established the motivating and mediating ground in New Brunswick she was free to create an authentic fiction of her own. And, secondly, her art is based on place but a place recreated "where we stand, helping us to dwell poetically there" (p. 69).

Anne Ricard-Burke
University of Calgary

NOTES

1. Robert Kroetsch, Tamara J. Palmer, and Beverly J. Rasporich, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 14, No. 1 (1981), pp. 3-4.
2. Heather Murray, "Women in the Wilderness," in *Amazing Space: Writing Canadian/Women Writing*, Shirley Neuman and Smaro Kamboureli (eds.), Edmonton: Longspoon Press/NeWest Press, 1986, p. 77.

Carry on Bumping. John Metcalf (ed.), *ECW Press, 1988.*

Celebrated chauvanist John Metcalf's naively arrogant attempt to include women in *Carry on Bumping* is lightly energizing to skeptical feminist scholars. However, this ECW Press collection of literary essays has an ambitious market — third and fourth year English undergraduates. That means that more than fifty percent of its readers will