

to banish forever / the bloody ambivalences and smokescreens of the imagination" (*"Lingua Adamica"*). But such a project is also doomed by its utopian intensities, substituting verbiage for feeling: "I no longer see the tears I've read about / in verses and dirges." The scopic metaphors return in lines such as these to remind Czerniawski's readers of the inescapably mediated character of all language, especially when it so openly aspires to the immediacy of the lived. Monumentality withers in Czerniawski, but he converts that painful and painstaking atrophy into a basis for poetic craft. Czerniawski inhabits a verbal culture in which the death of the author, to borrow Roland Barthes's overused formula, is a given and self-expression is doomed before the attempt; but instead of falling into some posthumously ironic form of verbal play, the poet suspends, for a page or two, the very moment when poetic subjectivity gives up its ghost.

A compact disc included with the volume presents in a kind of audio vérité (that sounds at times as if it were recorded with a lo-fi microphone in someone's living room) readings of poems and translations by Czerniawski and Higgins, as well as by Irena Czerniawska-Edgumbe, a recording that seems to emphasize the fragility and fleetingness of the voice, as well as its complex plurality: both poets read their own work, but also the work of another. This duplicity presents Czerniawski, finally, with a means of shedding the tautology of reflection, of an obsessive self-consciousness of the failure of self-consciousness, and allows his poetry to produce what I think might best be called friendship. Czerniawski's verse, thoroughly aware of its derivative and epigone nature, acknowledges itself repeatedly not as original creation but as translation, as composite, as iterative, as haunted by voices. It gestures, even in its nostalgia for stability or closure, toward an inevitably open and unfinished business, as

the poetic subject invites a conversation across the fabric of language. Translation, as Higgins so thoughtfully and carefully attests, becomes a means of honouring that invitation.

Performing the Queerly Personal

Peter Dickinson

Here is Queer: Nationalisms, Sexualities and the Literatures of Canada. U Toronto P np

Reviewed by Andrew Lesk

Peter Dickinson's bold and exciting work ends with "a declaration that it's about time." Indeed, *Here is Queer* is a comprehensive and compelling examination of queer Canadian literature which simultaneously foregrounds the notion of how queer criticism itself has suffered suppression and neglect. Though Dickinson is certainly not a pioneer in queer lit crit, he underlines the need for *more* of it. The result is bracing and, as he says, past due.

Dickinson manages to fuse the personal with literary politics without falling into the trap of pedantry and didacticism. His approach never detracts from the book's overriding concerns with "an alternative politics, one propelled by questions of sexuality and, more often than not, homosexuality." As a result, his discussions of authors as different as Dionne Brand, Nicole Brossard, Timothy Findley and Tomson Highway reveal both an incisive understanding of Canada's many literatures and an eager intellectual curiosity.

Dickinson melds the theoretical apparatuses of postcolonial and queer theories in order to interrogate "the (hetero)normative assumption that 'nation' and 'sexuality' are somehow discrete, autonomous, historically transcendent, and socially uninflected categories of identity." Quite correctly, he asserts that "what gets *counted* as literature in this country is contingent upon certain

supplementary socio-political discourses, such as nationalism and sexuality." The abundance of queer sexuality in Canada's literatures—and especially in the rarefied precincts of the canon—depends, he continues, on the paradoxical dependence of critics on maintaining there is no queer "here."

In locating that often ephemeral Canadian socio-literary "here" as one suffused with counter-normative sexuality, Dickinson focuses on a host of authors: Patrick Anderson, Scott Symons, Michel Tremblay, René-Daniel Dubois, Michel Marc Bouchard, and Daphne Marlatt, in addition to those listed above, with nods to John Richardson, Sinclair Ross, and Leonard Cohen, among others. Dickinson wishes to locate and thereby embody the often-denied queerness in these authors. As Dickinson incisively notes, "the Canadian literary canon seems to have no trouble incorporating homosexuality into its rarefied textual precincts, so long, that is, as it functions primarily as a means of re-eroticizing readers' fundamentally heterosexual love for their country."

Dickinson is by no means naive, however; he refuses to replace Canlit's prior prohibitions and failures at inclusion with a (faulty) dynamic of institutionalized queerness. As a result, the text makes demands on its readers, primarily in its tacit insistence that the reader supplement the meaning of "queer" with personal understandings of the term. The genius of this is that the reader of Dickinson's text also comes to a greater awareness of her or his own personal investment in what is largely the heteronormative nature of the Canadian literary critical practise. Not only does Dickinson demonstrate that the performance (in all senses of Judith Butler's meaning of the term) of the personal critique is invariably political but he obliges the reader to do so as well. It is as though Dickinson had anticipated a likely resis-

tance to his project and tears down such opposition as part of his project.

As a queer critic, I felt initially uneasy about his procedure because I still think that the term "queer," despite its inclusive, anti-identificatory nature, precludes any form of the kind of embodiment—especially in homosexual subjectivity—that Dickinson hopes to instill. But this is a minor quibble about a major work. Dickinson makes manifest the importance of a queer critical perspective whose time is not only come but is finally "here."

The Zen of Gardening

Kieran Egan

Building My Zen Garden. Houghton Mifflin n.p

Susan Davis Price

Growing Home. University of Minnesota Press n.p
Reviewed by Gordon Fisher

To the casual observer, a traditional Japanese garden looks simple: a rustic gate, a variety of large stones, a stream, a waterfall, a pond, a scattering of manicured trees and shrubs, and winding paths. Of course, not all Japanese gardens match this description, but whether a temple garden of stones and gravel or a carefully tended space on an apartment balcony, the traditional Japanese garden conforms to an aesthetic that is recognizably different from that which generates the profusion of flowers and shrubs in an English garden and the geometric formality of French and Italian gardens.

Underlying the simplicity of the Japanese garden is a highly developed aesthetic with roots in eighth-century China and Japan, links to Taoist and Zen philosophy, and a practical basis in the context of local climate and geography. Many books have been written about Japanese garden design, explicating the principles, precepts, and taboos that govern the selection of stones, the flow of streams, and the patterns of paving stones. Within such a regulatory