between misogyny and the arrogance of greedy exploitation, which may in fact be indifferent toward the feminine.

What is lacking, as is the case in many writings in environmental thought, is a familiarity with the mind set of those who do the exploiting — namely, developers, planners, and political leaders. Academics tend to impose a frame of reference for interpreting or re-interpreting the behaviour of the "common man" without direct familiarity with those being interpreted. Giblet's project is a case in point. The analysis that could have served as a valuable tool for understanding our destruction of wetlands turns into a discrediting handicap for those of us who could make some use of these insights when addressing policy and decision-makers.

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The Reign of Ideology
EUGENE GOODHEART
New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, 203 p.

This book belongs to the growing body of literature dedicated to the task of exposing the intellectual poverty and politicized dishonesty of postmodern thought. Goodheart concentrates his attack on the ideology critics active in contemporary literary theory and cultural studies, who, he tells us (4):

> write from their own ideological position without subjecting it to self-critical reflection, as if its intellectual and moral superiority were self-evident. Uninterested in how the text understands itself, they have no compunctions about aggressively translating what the text believes it is saying into a language that serves their own agenda. That language is one of resistance to the destructive legacy of imperialism, racism, patriarchy, and economic oppression. They affirm the *identities* of particular disenfranchised groups against imperializing tendencies to repress them. "Difference" as a marker of identity becomes sacrosanct.

Like the worst of this literature, Goodheart's book occasionally resembles the sort of humorless screed we've learned to expect from knee-jerking conservatives. As such, it sometimes borders on the oxymoronic: 'I harbor a suspicion that *postmodern* is a vacuous term, but I find myself using it to

characterize the contemporary scene' (13); and when he ventures into deeper philosophical waters, it's difficult not to wish that he'd simply drown quickly and be done with it (75): 'German philosophy, in particular the philosophy of Hegel, in effect denied the historical realities of the state in a utopic conception of it, which it then illicitly identified with the real.' Fortunately, however, such low points are the exception for Goodheart and not the rule. At its best — in the chapters that really do belong in it — the book moves swiftly from one accurate blow to the next. Following Goodheart as he summarizes then devastates the unfounded central claims of contemporary literary theory and basic dogmatic tenets of cultural studies, the reader begins to feel like he's watching a rerun of an old Muhammad Ali fight. It's not that the fight isn't fair — it's just that the opponent doesn't provide any real competition. The reader is eventually compelled to agree with Goodheart that, at least to some extent, contemporary literary theory and cultural studies are ideologically corrupt and intellectually bankrupt.

The book that is composed as a single extended argument in support of a central and guiding thesis has now become something of a rarity, as more and more books are being published that are in fact just compilations of independently written articles. Such books often give the appearance of being precisely that, with chapters sloppily patched into the text like dangling modifiers in a run-on sentence. Unfortunately, Goodheart's book does not escape this fate. Versions of its introduction and eight chapters first appeared as separate articles — published between 1989 and 1996 in *Partisan Review*, *Dissent*, *The Sewanee Review*, *New Literary History*, *American Jewish History*, and *London Review of Books* — and some of the chapters give evidence of the sort of awkward editing typical of such patchwork books. Most telling are those hastily written introductory and concluding paragraphs that contain the keywords of the book's 'thesis' that are conspicuous in their absence throughout the rest of the 'chapter.' Some of the chapters of this book really do seem to belong together — like Chapter Four, 'The Abandoned Legacy of the New York Intellectuals,' and Chapter Five, 'Kenneth Burke Revisited — but they appear out of place in the collection as a whole. Other chapters, however, appear both out of place in the book and unrelated to any of the other chapters; the most obvious of these are Chapter Six ('Ideology and Ethical Criticism,' which first appeared as a review of Wayne Booth's *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*), and Chapters Seven and Eight ('Freud on Trial' and 'The Passion of Reason: Reflections on Primo Levi and Jean Amery,' both of which first appeared in *Dissent*.) The remaining three chapters give the impression of actually supporting the book's thesis and, not surprisingly, they contain its most interesting discussions. My comments here will focus on these three chapters.

The general thesis of the book is summed up in the last paragraph of the Introduction (12):

> The essays that follow have in common, among other things, a vigilance about reductive or appropriative statements in the service of one or another ideological agenda. They reject the fashionable idea that there is nothing but ideology and another fashionable idea that the perspectival character of our knowing makes universals unthinkable. In other words, they are impressed by Enlightenment arguments about the possibility of rational discourse and religious or metaphysical arguments about the possibility of transcendence.'

Proceeding from his description of the manner in which the notions of culture and ideology have converged in the mind of the contemporary postmodern thinker, Chapter One, 'From Culture to Ideology,' revolves around the Enlightenment values of self-criticism and universalism. In support of his claim that 'Ideology critique derives from the Enlightenment, but it represents a development of its dogmatic side' (18), Goodheart points out how the postmodern hermeneutics of suspicion has managed to direct attention away from its own failure to engage in self-criticism by establishing a self-congratulatory community of thinkers committed to the rejection of universality, objectivity, and non-perspectival, 'metaphysical' truth (19):

> The truth of ideology critics is not that they wish to rid the world of the concealed motive, the secret they have discovered. Their possession of the secret becomes the basis of solidarity. Ideology, even as an object of criticism, is a way of bonding in a post-Enlightenment world in which traditional communities have lost their authority. For the critic, ideology becomes the community he or she inhabits. It should not be surprising then that Frederic Jameson seems to exhibit no dismay when he declares that everything is ideology.

Chapter Two, 'The Postmodern Liberalism of Richard Rorty,' opens with the following charge (44): 'I put forward the liberalism of Leszek Kolakowski because it is responsive to the epistemological and ethical challenges of postmodernism without being caught in its toils. The same cannot be said of the work of Richard Rorty, whose work [sic] stands as the most significant expression of postmodern liberalism.' It is difficult not to acknowledge the

accuracy and fairness of most of the criticisms Goodheart levels against Rorty in this chapter, but it's equally difficult not to wish he hadn't done a better job of it. When, for example, we find him refer to Bernard Williams simply as 'one of Rorty's colleagues' (45), we begin to wonder how thoroughly he's done his homework, and his treatment of Rorty's general position is sometimes superficial — but generally not as superficial as the position itself, so by the end of this seventeen-page chapter the reader will probably feel that hermeneutic justice has been well served.

Chapter Three, 'Matthew Arnold, Critic of Ideology' was first published as a separate piece in *New Literary History*, but it fits well into the present work and contributes a good deal to establishing its thesis. The chapter is centered around Arnold's notion of 'disinterestedness,' and Goodheart's elucidation of this notion is of both literary and philosophical interest. Goodheart also moves provocatively into the political arena in this chapter (79):

> It is an intellectual misfortune that Arnold has been adopted by neoconservatives who have embraced the partisan passion of the Republican party. There is very little evidence of the free play of intelligence in the predictable support they give to Republicans on civil rights, the market economy, gun control. Contemporary conservatism (old and neo) has closed its mind not only to truths of liberalism but also to what counted as truths in its own traditions.

This move to the political is by no means out of place. Indeed, perhaps the most important contribution of Goodheart's book lies precisely in its identification of the essentially political character of contemporary postmodern thought, and by far the most interesting passages of the book are those in which he draws general conclusions of a political/philosophical nature, for example (81):

> Genuine thinking is an activity against the grain of ideological formulas that petrify the mind. Ideology critics, ostensibly critics of ideology, are in their own commitments to an ideological agenda ideologues, for those agendas are more often than not formulaic "understandings" of reality, whether the subject is imperialism or class conflict or from another ideological standpoint Stalinism. These formulas may spring from master texts that reflect genuine, even profound thinking, a text by Marx, for instance, but the sense of complication

> and difficulty of the text has been lost in the mind of the ideology critic, who no longer experiences that text as itself historically conditioned and vulnerable to criticism.

It is regrettable that, if Goodheart is correct in his estimation of the intellectual integrity of contemporary postmodern thought, those who could best profit from his book will never be willing to read it.

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Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide
F.A.C. MANTELLO and A.G. RIGG, eds.
Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 1996, 774 p.

This is not the sort of book that most readers of *Symposium* will want to run right out and buy, but its publication certainly marks a major event for contemporary medieval studies. Initially modeled on Martin McGuire's 1964 *Introduction to Medieval Latin Studies: A Syllabus and Bibliographical Guide*, which was revised by Hermgild Dressler in 1977, *Medieval Latin* is intended primarily for students who are just beginning their graduate studies in the area. The seventy-odd essays here compiled 'have therefore been written as introductions for nonspecialists'(8), and they are for the most part accessible to readers with little previous knowledge of the area. Whereas the McGuire-Dressler text had been intended more as a bibliographical and research guide than a general and comprehensive introduction to the field, the present work, while retaining and supplementing those features of its predecessor, departs from that plan in both its form and its content. Whereas both editions of McGuire-Dressler had been published as photocopied typescripts (the first edition had been a mere 152 pages in length; the second added another 250+ pages), *Medieval Latin* is a polished publication that has obviously profited from superb editing and copyediting skills on the part of all those involved. But more importantly, this book is not the product of one or two authors, or even of a group of editors, but is instead the fruit of a remarkable collaboration by scholars from eight different countries.

The book is divided into three Parts. In Part One the editors provide informative introductory comments followed by an outstanding overview of 'General Reference and Research Tools,' including an annotated list not only