

SWP leader James P. Cannon whether he should become chairman of the Art Department at Queens College New York, or take a job in a steel-mill. Cannon advised the former, while making clear that it was not a question of party discipline; Ferguson opted for the latter.

Wald quotes Ferguson's mature view of the problem in 1965: "I have known that conflict for some thirty years; and I have never resolved it. I don't think it will ever be resolved short of the lack of need of a revolutionary party because the revolution has been made. And the conflict is going to remain there for any artist who comes into the party." (31)

Wald appears to endorse this judgement. He is aware of the dangers of Stalinist manipulation of art (though he also argues, powerfully, that the cultural history of American Communism involves very much more than merely manipulation). But there is no formula, to be found in Trotsky or anywhere else, to define the 'correct' relation of artist and party; the contradiction is rooted in capitalism itself. But Wald's own blend of scholarship and commitment shows that contradictions may bear valuable fruit.

Ian Birchall
Middlesex University

Hamish Kimmins, *Balancing Act: Environmental Issues in Forestry* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1992).

As reflected by their titles (for example, *Lost Initiatives* and *Heritage Lost*), previous accounts of forest management in Canada have often been diatribes which offered little but scathing criticism of past forest policies. In *Balancing Act: Environmental Issues in Forestry*, Kimmins endeavours to supply the departure point for a new approach to proper forest management. The author exhorts the extremists on both sides of the current environmental debate to put their "polarized rhetoric" to rest. It is time, he contends, to approach rationally the volatile subject of how we should care for this planet's trees. Consequently, he provides "the average concerned citizen or forester with an introduction to the ecological aspects of the major environmental

issues facing the managers of Canada's great forest resource." (4) In doing so, he presents a monograph that is refreshingly balanced in its analysis and written in layperson's language which renders seemingly complex and technical subjects easily comprehensible. Thus, *Balancing Act* does much to ensure that future armchair critics of environmental policy will be able to see the forest, and will no longer be blinded by the trees.

Kimmins focuses on change, and how modern society has developed a deep aversion to it. At the same time, however, he reminds us that change is an integral — indeed an oftentimes desirable — part of nature. He astutely asserts that "urbanites of industrialized nations" have become detached from nature and "the ebb and flow of natural change and its time scales." (25) This situation has led many people to take an irrational approach to forest policy. For example, "snapshot, frozen-in-time images of recently disturbed forest ecosystems" frequently elicit emotional outcries from citizens critical of "irresponsible" forest policy. (26) Many of these same citizens support programmes which have as their goal the preservation of the environment as if it were a static entity. But, as Kimmins emphasizes, this is simply not a logical approach to nature, because "[o]ne can preserve a landscape view in a photograph or painting ... but ... the single most fundamental characteristic of ecosystems is that they change over time." (88)

Consequently, Kimmins provides a rational explanation of the role that change plays in the environment. For example, he lucidly describes how such complex things as soil, vegetation, wildlife, and weather are all undergoing continuous transformations. He also reveals that these changes are not necessarily to be feared, but rather that they should be understood in a rational way; it is only in this manner that the danger or boon they represent can be properly assessed.

It is also with exceptional clarity that Kimmins explains the basics of forestry. In doing so, he dispels many of the popular misconceptions which currently cloud debates about forest policy. For example, he cleverly demonstrates the irrational nature of much of the uproar over the inclusion of herbicides in silviculture: "While herbicides are still widely used in agriculture to produce the food we eat

and by homeowners to maintain their lawns and yards ... people have become convinced that using any type of herbicide in forestry poses an unacceptable threat to the environment and to public health.”(128-9) Highlighting contradictions such as these greatly strengthens his case for a reassessment of the public’s attitude toward forest management.

In many ways, this book provides a relatively well-balanced evaluation of the subject under consideration. For example, although Kimmins is critical of the purely emotional stand taken by many, he also condemns the manner in which industrialists and governments have managed Canada’s forests. As he states, “[d]ecisions in Canadian forestry in the past have too often been based predominantly on economic criteria. Negative impacts on the environment or on communities were often ignored or given little attention.” (70) This criticism is echoed in his account of the forest industry’s poor record regarding road building in the bush (84) and the size of its clear cuts. (79-84)

In stressing the need for logical discourse in this debate, however, Kimmins has a predilection to be too rational. His chapter on the need to accept the extinction of certain species demonstrates his tendency to diminish the “irrational,” ethical questions regarding this subject in favour of focusing on the scientific considerations. Kimmins is unconvincing in his attempt to illustrate his point in this section, stating that “many species can be lost from an ecosystem without the ecosystem ‘falling apart at the hinges,’ just as many specialty stores can close without a major effect on the ability of a human community to function.” (164) Not only does this analogy not work, but Kimmins also blurs the distinction between an ecosystem’s “natural” evolution in the distant past and the changes which are brought about today as a result of human interference in the environment.

Nonetheless, the aggregate product of Kimmins’ work is truly a breath of fresh air. He urges us to accept the inevitability of the harvesting of the forest while exhorting those in public office and in the forest industry itself to accept that adherence to a sound policy of forest development is in everyone’s best interest. “The time has come,” he declares, “to leave the rhetoric behind and to move on to find ways by which we can actually achieve

the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources that most people want.” (8) Kimmins is adamant that cooperation is the means to this end, for “[t]he environment is far too important... to go on arguing about... All sides in the forestry/environmental debate must enter a partnership to ensure sustainable development.” (234) It is undoubtedly the hope of any reader of *Balancing Act* that the author’s final plea will be realized.

Mark Kuhlberg
York University

Dennis R. Klinck, *The Word of the Law: Approaches to Legal Discourse* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press 1992)

Dennis Klinck’s work is an addition to a new and exciting field of legal analysis that applies the theories and techniques of literary criticism and linguistics to the language of law. It explores this difficult and controversial area in what the author terms a “pragmatic” way: by reproducing frameworks of analysis from other fields, commenting on some of their limitations, and then attempting to apply them to legal language or thought processes. Klinck’s originality lies, perhaps, in his heavily theoretical emphasis, as he attempts to go far beyond the general introductions and applications of theory found in other textbooks in the area. Also, he avoids subscribing solely to the views of any particular school of linguistic or literary analysis, and, subject to some criticisms to be discussed later, makes a substantial contribution to the field.

The more exciting sections of Klinck’s work are the discussions of “Language and Thought” (Chapter 2); “Rhetoric” (Chapter 6); and “Narrative” (Chapter 9). In the first of these chapters Klinck summarizes theories that call into question the possibility of language describing, or otherwise being tied in anyway to reality: notably those of Ferdinand de Saussure. These theories see language as arbitrary in its connection of “signs” (terms used to name things, relations, etc.), with objects in the real world. Signs, as the foundations of our language and thought, can be seen as independent of any external reality, creating a self-sufficient universe, unconnected with the world they pretend to describe.