Book Reviews

Shakespeare's Rome: Republic and Empire. By Paul A. Cantor. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1976. Pp. 228. $12.50.

Since I am not going to recommend *Shakespeare's Rome* with more than lukewarm approval, in fairness I should list a few of my predilections and prejudices about Professor Cantor's subject. Of the two plays under scrutiny in this book, one (*Antony and Cleopatra*) has always been a special favourite of mine, while the other (*Coriolanus*) I have often found elusive or disturbing but never satisfying. To paraphrase Dryden rather loosely, one can fall in love with the Shakespeare of *Antony and Cleopatra*, but the best one can do with the Shakespeare of *Coriolanus* is admire him.

Of the characters in *Coriolanus*, I find myself most welcome in the amiable company of Menenius — "one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning" (II.i. 51-53). My preference is based only to a small degree on Menenius' virtuoso performance in rhetoric, the parable of the belly. He has many other qualities that make him a richly conceived individual and a choice acting part. For example, Menenius is the one man capable of understanding with some sympathy both the resentment of the plebeians and the snobbery of the patricians. He alone has enough objectivity to insist that life must be more than economic and political struggle. He alone has the privilege of self-knowledge in a world where reputation and prestige have darkened the vision of other men. Finally, Menenius is the victim of a movingly human miscalculation at the climax of the play: overestimating his paternal influence on Coriolanus, he assumes that a heartfelt appeal will prevent his spiritual son from ravaging the city of his birth. Instead, the old man is deflated and confused by a single chilling work from Coriolanus: "Away!" (V.ii. 80).

Professor Cantor's Menenius is a much simpler and, I think, much less attractive person. To develop his interpretation of Menenius, Cantor considers the scene in which Volumnia unleashes the full force of her scorn and rage on the Tribunes who have plotted her son's banishment. When the Tribunes leave the stage, amply insulted, Menenius turns to Volumnia with a few kind words of commiseration and a simple invitation: "You'll sup with me?" (IV.ii. 49). In

Cantor's reading of the scene, Menenius has shown "once again that he thinks of man as ruled by his stomach. If his appetite is satisfied, Menenius asks nothing further of himself or the world, and therefore believes a good meal can allay any passion" (p. 31). There may be some elementary truth in this line of thought, but it is disastrously overstated well beyond the limits of credibility. Although we may grant that Menenius is aware of the ordinary appetites as a necessary part of human life, this does not make him a smug sensualist or a shallow temporizer. But enough of Menenius. His case is a symptom rather than a cause of what has gone wrong with *Shakespeare's Rome.*

The thesis of Cantor's book is largely political. In *Coriolanus,* he argues, Shakespeare concerns himself with the processes, conflicts, checks and balances of Republican government. The guiding policies of the Senate are played off against the popular power of the citizens and the executive power of appointed officials. Because of his uncompromising search for purity, Coriolanus lacks the sophistication and flexibility required to survive in this complex political maze: he stands out boldly in the black-and-white world of military action, but he blunders crudely among the many colours and shadings of peacetime. In *Antony and Cleopatra,* Rome is no longer a circumscribed city, but a sprawling empire. The Senate has lost its influence, the citizens have been pacified, and political decisions are now made privately by the great "world-sharers" (II.vii.70). Antony's tragic dilemma, according to Cantor, is the result of his political circumstances: the old values of discipline, loyalty, and responsibility have been eroded by the luxuriance of cosmopolitan living. Antony's fatal error is to look for new certainties where he will never find them: in Cleopatra's arms.

When modestly stated and skillfully applied, this is a worthwhile thesis indeed. At his best, Cantor is capable of using his approach to underscore the political dimension of a particular scene, to describe the conflicting loyalties of an individual character, or to clarify the meaning of a rhetorical passage. But, as I have already implied, the problems raised by Cantor's method outweigh its advantages. First, political analysis takes us much further with *Coriolanus* than with *Antony and Cleopatra.* In a brief concluding statement, Cantor suggests that his determination to approach both plays in an egalitarian spirit has the effect of raising *Coriolanus* to the stature of *Antony and Cleopatra.* On the contrary, I suspect that he has cut the second play down to matching size. The uniformly political emphasis allows little room for the sheer splendour of the love affair in *Antony and Cleopatra.* At times, Cantor lectures the lovers with the timid disapproval of a well-meaning marriage counsellor: "Above all, they allow their private demands and needs to warp their political judgment. Since so much is at stake in their love, it would be remarkable if they could keep their political judgment unclouded by despair when they feel unloved. Moreover, for these monarchs of love, every domestic quarrel takes on the scope of an international incident, since any slight they feel as lovers is magnified into an affront to their dignity as rulers. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that their

political authority is not entirely independent of their love, but threatens to crumble away along with it" (p. 194). Such earthbound analysis may help us to understand one aspect of Antony's nature, but it gets us nowhere with Cleopatra. Significantly, Cantor's relative emphasis inverts Shakespeare's; Antony is the central figure in Cantor's criticism, while Cleopatra finds it hard to compete for attention.

If *Shakespeare's Rome* is rather tame as a work of criticism, as a work of literary or social history it lacks even the energy of genuine curiosity. Cantor's prefatory musings indicate that he considered — and then unwisely discarded — the notion of writing an introduction on the question of Elizabethan attitudes toward Rome. Rigid adherence to this decision leads him into major sins of omission. There is no mention whatever of the *Titus Andronicus* drawing (attributed to Henry Peacham and dated 1595); thus, the most reliable piece of evidence about the costuming of Roman characters in Shakespeare's theatre has been simply ignored. Even more astonishing is Cantor's failure to give Jonson's *Sejanus* so much as a passing nod. As one of the "principal tragedians" in the first performance of *Sejanus* (1603), what would Shakespeare have learned about Roman society from his more scholarly though less gifted competitor? I am neither willing nor able to answer this question; what disturbs me is that a student of "Romanness" in Shakespeare should not have asked it himself.

Perhaps the correct explanation for the many weaknesses of this book is its author's apparent indifference to the theatre. He finds little substance in the role of Menenius; he refuses to be swept off his feet by Cleopatra; he doesn't care about costumes; he neglects Shakespeare's experience as an actor. The same theatrical blindness leads to some questionable interpretations of individual scenes. The party scene in *Antony and Cleopatra*, for example, includes an absurd exchange in which Antony informs Lepidus about the qualities of the crocodile: it is of its own shape, breadth, height, colour, "and the tears of it are wet" (II. vii. 49). Cantor knows that Lepidus is drunk in this scene, but he sadly misjudges Antony's mood: "Antony shows how easy it is to disguise ignorance as wisdom, especially with men curious about exotic subjects who are willing to take words for facts" (p. 183). Nonsense. Antony is making a fool of Lepidus, while taking care not to make a fool of himself. The vitality and humour of the scene have been lost in the sobriety of Professor Cantor's comment.

Every book about? Shakespeare is bound to be, in one sense or another, unworthy of its subject. *Shakespeare's Rome* is no exception. It is a workmanlike study, sometimes informative, seldom extravagant, frequently competent but never much more. Despite the unquestionable appeal of its topic, this is, in the last analysis, an unforgivably dull book. Most of the questions it raises are among those that Shakespeare will not abide.

Dalhousie University *Ronald Huebert*

Tennyson's Style. By W. David Shaw. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976. Pp. 347.

In this immensely complex and thoroughly interesting book Professor Shaw starts from the premise that Tennyson's style grows out of the Romantic and Neo-classical poetic traditions: the first emphasizing symbol and image, the second emphasizing grammar and rhetoric. The result is, he argues, poetry marked by directness and indirectness, which at its best produces both effects at once. While it may be said that such an approach is hardly new, the reader soon recognizes that Shaw's assiduous and scrupulous application of it to virtually all of Tennyson's poetry provides the most illuminative study we have of the relation between the poet's language and thought.

The Victorians faced a world marked by rapidly accelerating change in every facet of human experience. Caught up in the cult of progress they were nevertheless deeply fearful of the loss of long-established beliefs. As a result theirs was an age of experimentation and innovation shaped and controlled by a highly practical instinct for synthesis, or, in Newman's phrase, for "preservative addition". Tennyson, perhaps more than is usually recognized, is entirely representative of his time. Fascinated as he was by science, he ever retained a sense of wonder and mystery. He was at once a transcendentalist and a descendentalist; his accurate observation of nature led him back rather than away from spiritual reality as the ultimate source of normative values. Though certainty eludes him he characteristically achieves repose. Writing of *In Memoriam*, Shaw asserts that "Tennyson's achievement is to hold the cruelty and beneficence of nature, the passivity and power of mind, in balance. He is both revolutionary and traditional, visionary and sacramental, in the same poem." He later expands this remark averring that "the drive towards certainty in Tennyson's poetry, the compelling need for order and finality, is constantly being matched and diverted by the doubling back, by the tremors of doubt and indecision . . .. At its best Tennyson's poetry possesses the authority that comes from having gone through great disorder, with the complete sense of what produces disorder, then coming out on the other side." These general statements, when applied to the immense variety of the poet's verse, are remarkable for their accuracy, but the major accomplishment of Shaw's study in his demonstration of how the poet's style achieves these effects.

Tennyson's style derives, according to Shaw, from his idealist view of the world, from his theory of language centred in the belief that words "half reveal and half conceal", and, from his own pyschological make-up manifest in a courageous struggle against doubt and despair, a struggle motivated by his determination "to find in loss a gain." In the style that emerged, Shaw distinguished six dominant characteristics: repetition which produces a hovering or circular movement, appositional grammar and two-way syntax, skilfull navigation between closed and open or stable and unstable use of language, the combination of clarity and sense and the suggestion of inexplicit truths, and,

finally, directness and indirectness of statement. Of the longer poems it is *Maud* and *In Memoriam* that reveal the perfection of these techniques resulting in a combination of the power of lyric poetry and the cathartic effect of drama. *Idylls of the King*, is less successful in Shaw's view because on the whole it fails to fuse its inherent duality of history and vision, of the human and the ideal. In a footnote he admits that Tennyson may not have sought this resolution for the very good reason that he realized the impossibility of attaining it. Here Shaw is, I think, wholly right. The war of sense with soul is the matrix of Tennyson's vision of the human condition, and the goal of Arthur's idealistic endeavour at reconciliation belongs to another world; hence he is destroyed in his attempt to realize it in this one. Of the shorter poems one can only pause here to applaud the perceptive treatments accorded the monologues of Ulysses, Tithonus, Lucretius, and the late "Demeter and Persephone".

The book ends with an extremely useful bibliographical essay covering, first, general topics related to Tennyson's style and then the individual poems. An accurate and detailed index further enhances its value as a work of reference. The reader of Professor Shaw's painstaking analyses of the poems will surely gain an unshakeable respect for the complexity of Tennyson's art and thought and eschew for good both the simple-minded and simple-hearted judgements that have too often plagued Tennyson criticism in the past.

Dalhousie University *C.J. Myers*

A pioneer gentlewoman in British Columbia: the recollections of Susan Allison. Edited by Margaret A. Ormsby.
Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1976. Pp. 1i, 210, (illus.). $18.95.

Margaret Ormsby, the editor of this book, is something of a pioneer herself. She was born in a log cabin on the banks of the Fraser, near Quesnel, in 1909, and at three weeks of age came to the Okanagan valley with her parents in tow, a valley she would always return to in body and spirit. She still lives in the white house by the still lake, on a property her father, an early fruit farmer, bought many years ago. Margaret Ormsby was, with the late Hilda Neatby, a pioneer professional woman historian in Canada, taking her B.A. and M.A. at the University of British Columbia in 1929 and 1931, and her Ph.D. at Bryn Mawr, completing her thesis on Canadian-British Columbia relations, 1871-1885, in 1937.

This book comes from her love of history, of the Okanagan, and, it is fair to say, from her admiration for an earlier Okanagan pioneer, Susan Moir Allison. Susan Moir was born in Ceylon in 1845 and died in Vancouver in 1937. She had arrived in British Columbia in August, 1860, from Ceylon via England, Panama and San Francisco. She lived for a time at Hope, B.C., married John Allison in

1868, and went to live with him in the Similkameen valley. Allison was twenty years older than the 23-year old Susan Moir; nevertheless they raised fourteen children, and Allison himself lived until 1897, dying at the age of 72.

It was shortly after this that Susan Moir Allsion began to write, first, early Okanagan history, then legends about Indian life there when she first came. The editor of the Vancouver *Province* rather liked her work, and after she moved to Vancouver, in 1928, he persuaded her to write her recollections. These appeared in the weekend *Province*, beginning in February, 1931. It is from these, and the original MS. in the Vancouver City Archives, that this book has been made.

It is a splendid, rich story, and Margaret Ormsby does it full justice. Her notes are magisterial — comprehensive, clear and cogent. Some of them are little biographical gems in their own right. On John Robson, for example, Premier of British Columbia (1889-1892), who died in London from an accident, Dr. Ormsby quotes a letter from John Trutch: "Mr. Robson's death was sudden (;) what fuss they are making about him, he has, I think been a useful man of late — but we remember him in the early days!!!" (p. 149.) Robson had indeed been something of a tartar. More than a little of the charm of the Okanagan comes through from Susan Allison herself, for example, her recollection of the summer of 1875:

> I led a perfectly ideal life at this time. We rose with the sun, when the cows had been attended to (,) put up our lunches, caught a pony, piled the (4) children on and went out for the day, sometimes taking the boat and drifting about in the harbour . . . . (p. 47)

No wonder Dr. Ormsby finds it difficult to leave the Okanagan!

The reader ought to try to have available a good map of southern British Columbia. The Canadian government survey maps, 8 miles = 1", are fairly good for the purposes of keeping track of Susan Allison's travels. The one map in the book covers a great deal of territory and is really inadequate, since Susan Allison's account comes to some fairly close details. I would also like Dr. Ormsby's excellent notes to be referenced more effectively. As it is, one gropes around with page numbers and line numbers as best one can. There is a prejudice against the cluttering up of a text with the little numbers that reference the notes. There may be some clutter, but the little numbers are often needed, and when they are, appearances are almost irrelevant. The notes are too important a source of information to be left quite so casually. After all, there are 120 pages of them to Susan Allison's 72 pages of text.

The typography is impeccable. It is delightful to be cossetted by such standards.

Dalhousie University *P.B. Waite*

Nisan, A Book of Poetry. By John Asfour. Fredericton, N.B.: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1976. Pp. 64. $4.00.

Living Together. By Joan Finnigan. Fredericton, N.S.: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1976. Pp. 114. $5.00.

Arranging The Gallery. By Theresa Kishkan. Fredericton, N.B.: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1976. Pp. 36. $3.00.

Anacrusis. By David Solway. Fredericton, N.B.: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1976. Pp. 16. $2.00.

Fiddlehead Poetry Books has been publishing new and known peots for over twenty years now. This year they will pass the 200 mark on their list of published works. Many of Canada's now-established poets had their first works recognized and published by this important little press. Four recent publications from Fiddlehead are the subject of this review.

Arranging the Gallery is the first volume of poetry published by British Columbian poet, Theresa Kishkan. Her regional origins are important, the jacket blurb tells us, because Kishkan views herself as a regional poet. She is quoted as saying she desires "to write a truly West-coast poetry," because she believes "that the West coast has something very special that (she) would like to be able to articulate." So she fills her pages with spawning salmon, salal, douglas fir, and cedar. Her intentions are partially realized, as many of the lasting images in the book are truly images of West coast nature.

Arranging the Gallery is a slim, only 36-page, chapbook. Kishkan's main concerns are biological, geological, and archeological. She is much better when dealing with nature than when dealing with personal relationships. The poems have more of an emotional appeal than an intellectual one, and they are generally unpretentious word pictures. The diction is simple and often softly sensual. There is a loving quality to the descriptions of bird, fish, and mammal, as if Kishkan actually knew what it was like to be a spawning salmon, a soaring falcon, or a caged mink. Two of the best poems are the opening "Mink Song" and "The Spawning". The former, in well-balanced couplets, describes mink, maddened by their caged condition. Rhythmical and understated, the song of the mink, toe-nails clicking in time against wire mesh, is a sad comment on the unnatural condition of the caged wild animal. "The Spawning" describes with equal sympathy the struggle of the egg-laden salmon upstream to spawn. Kishkan also seems fascinated by the evolutionary process and, like several Canadian poets before her, the image of fish-descended man. As she is concerned with West coast images, however, the fish to be descended from is naturally the salmon.

Kishkan's poems are not profound, but rather present clear and moving images of the natural world — the struggle as well as the beauty. In some ways it is

curiously old-fashioned poetry, unmoved by cities and psychology. Kishkan's footsteps fall on beaches and forest paths rather than on city sidewalks. *Arranging The Gallery* is a good first volume.

Nisan, A Book of Poetry is also a first publication, but it is very different from Kishkan's collection. The source of the poems in *Nisan* helps to explain this difference. They are selected from John Asfour's M.A. dissertation in creative writing, completed at McGill University in 1975 under the supervision of Louis Dudek. Both this academic origin and the supervision are reflected in the poems. They are at once less lyrical and more erudite than Kishkan's. The title, we are told, "comes from a Hebrew-Arabic word which signifies . . . essentially one month in April." So, many of the poems reflect the newness of a Spring-start. This is particularly true in the sections of love poems, "Songs for my Eurydice" and "Nisan Returns". Asfour's boyhood hero-friend, Jack, also died in the Spring, however, and there is a sequence entitled "Words for Jack". Nineteen short poems capture different memories of Jack, and an alphabet poem awkwardly builds an allegory entitled "The Golden Fish". "Z" naturally finds the fish "Floating on the surface of the water,/ Belly up." The possibilities inherent in the section "The Cedar Country," in which Asfour laments the destruction of his homeland, Lebanon, are not quite realized either. The poem "Child" does quite simply and touchingly capture the pain, though, and is consequently one of the best in the book.

Asfour's first section of love songs is addressed to Eurydice, thus styling himself Orpheus, a connection he sadly does not quite live up to. The mythic dimension of this section does not deepen the emotional effect, but rather obscures it. The last section "Nisan Returns" describes a love ended, and one poem particularly, "Cantus", is a beautiful and delicated plea for love.

> Do love me,
> As the winds atop the trees
> Rustle, the day long.
> As the birds to loving mates in autumn
> Nestle in a song.

"Cantus", however, is rather an exception, and on the whole the poems in *Nisan*, though correct and polished, somehow lack life. Asfour seems forever conscious of his role as poet and mars the simplicity of his best poems with too prosaic a style.

Anacrusis is David Solway's fourth publication, and what it lacks in bulk it makes up for in excellence. Only ten short pages of actual poetry, *Anacrusis* sets out in classical style a "Prologue" of three stanzas, an "Argument" of twenty-one stanzas, and an "Epilogue" of five. We accompany the protagonist on his odyssey, which becomes the creative journey in search of a poetic creed in a world that embraces the rational. The sea-change wrought is only a "modicum", but also a "prelude of a faith to come." The poet has found his theme, and is able to "splice/heart's desire to intellect's design." The lines and

images along the way are magical, a happy blend of intellect and imagination. Solway seems at home in his epic style, complete with a catalogue of life's detritus:

> ormolu clocks, chinoiserie, billiard cues,
> belletristic interlocutions, rife
> ventriloquists, redhaired ectoplasms, tombs,
> and much refined discussion in classrooms
> on 'the radical contingency of life,' . . .

It is worth "steer(ing) a course" with Solway through the pages of *Anacrusis*, "the plunge of the alone to the alone", "the voyage to illimitable zero", for he has returned with much poetic booty.

Joan Finnigan is the best and most polished poet of this group, and her book is also the longest. Of course, she is also the most experienced poet, and so comparisons are perhaps not fair. Finnigan has written film, radio, and television scripts for the National Film Board and the CBC, and received several awards, grants, and honours for her poetry. *Living Together* is her eighth book. As Kishkan establishes herself as a West coast poet in *Arranging the Gallery*, so Finnigan affirms her Ontario roots in *Living Together*. The titles of the five sections emphasize this: "Ottawa and the Valley", "Songs for the Bible Belt", "May Day Rounds; Renfrew County", "City Stones; Country Stones (Kingston Poems)", and "Coming Over a Country of No Lights (Northern Ontario Poems)". The collection is a mixture of social realism and lilting lyricism. The diction is a mixture of colloquial speech and more formal poetic language. The forms vary from a documentary poem and a radio play to open lyrics with irregular line lengths.

The "Ottawa and the Valley Poems" capture memories of Finnigan's childhood: The various deaths and near-deaths, "an uncle who nearly died of pull taffy". "Aunt Cora (who) died of tight corsets", and "the worst death of all/. . . of a springtime dose of sulphur/ and molasses." The milkman and breadman making winter rounds with horses and sleighs. The "scissor-grinder man" and "the rag-picker man". All the children's games on McLeod Street: marbles and hopscotch, skipping ropes and balls, road hockey and bicycles. The catechisms and Books of the Bible memorized. All are recorded conversationally, and the cumulative effect is homey and honest.

Similar in its realism is "May Day Rounds: Renfrew County". Finnigan makes her poetic rounds of the countryside, newly awakened in May. The poem opens:

> Sorrow of the last snows is still in the crevasses
> of the hills humus-scented and in the damp darkling tangles
> of the hepatica-woods . . .
> Something musical has a message of green . . .

and continues for nine pages "taking a green inventory" of the land and its people. "May Day Rounds" is what Dorothy Livesay calls a "documentary poem". The poet-persona is a social worker making the rounds of her cases. Sympathetically and with great understanding she wins over both the country cases and the reader. Quite different are the "Kingston Poems". Beautiful lyrics, many of them still record the social history of the countryside, but others capture the lonliness and pain Finnigan feels after the death of her husband:

> Oh, that I might hear one line
> from your lips tonight instead
> of this wind reciting wild sonnets
> in the frozen yard!

The "Northern Ontario Poems" capture the collision of the vast, empty land with the new pioneers bringing trailers and phony native crafts.

Joan Finnigan is a practised and versatile poet. She knows and understands Ontario and its people, and it is a pleasure to share this knowledge with her. *Living Together* is a very special book. As the title suggests, it emphasizes community, the extended family of man.

These four poets, then, are basically quite different. They include two newly-published writers, one well-established writer, and one writer with some previous publications. Their poems cover the spectrum in form, diction, style, and content. Comparisons are probably of questionable value, and each poet at his or her best is worth reading. There is certainly no dearth of poets in Canada today, but Fiddlehead still manages to find and publish some of the most promising ones.

Dalhousie University *Ann Munton*

The Catch. By George Bowering. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976. Pp. 128. $4.95.

George Bowering is not the first Canadian poet to write pretentiously about his own work, nor will he be the last. Still, I think many will agree that in the preface to his new book, *The Catch*, Bowering aspires to new heights (or depths) of ponderosity.

> The passive mind, too, is a net. The creature is there, don't worry, & now it will become a catch. As one grows older one learns to get caught in the mesh oneself. The survivor is only a survivor. Nature's captive lives to be composed another day.
>
> So this recollection. The earliest poem finds George, one hopes, tangled in the lines. "Autobiology" speaks from its own depths. "Cereals for Roughage" are four recent poems gathered by a patient mind in no hurry to understand. In recollection I have striven to edit out any verse that seemed to be peering thru a crenel at the passing show. (9).

After talk like this, it is natural to ask whether the poems measure up to the talk. Well — they don't. One can only conclude that the poet has labored, more or less mightily, to bring forth a rather small mouse. All but one or two of the best poems in the collection tend to be eminently forgettable; the worst, where they do not repel by their incessant bathroom talk, bore by their equally incessant and painfully self-conscious aping of the style of Gertrude Stein and other Modernist writers of fifty years ago. The difference is that where Stein's verbal nonsense is usually spirited and playful, Bowering's, as in this passage from "Composition", a chapter of the prose poem "Autobiology", comes out sounding remarkably like a broken record:

> Consciousness is how it is composed. Consciousness is *how* it is composed. I told the Jungian professor there is no such thing as the subconscious, I decided to appear at his window where the blackness was & shout there is no subconscious. Consciousness is how it is *composed*. We can't go asleep I said & find out what we are thinking because then we are asleep. Or are we asleep. *Consciousness* is how it is composed. We are sometimes composed when we are awake . . . I am composed by him & composed by me & they are different but they are not dreams they are consciousness. That is how they are different & that is composition. (58).

Few of the other forty-seven chapters in "Autobiology" have much more to offer. There is a good deal of discussion about the body, death, decay, and original sin. But little of the work is original; much of it is nauseatingly self-indulgent; and its overall coherence is close to non-existent. For the most part, the poem is a series of generally disconnected images and sketches; one would be hard put to say what the overall point of the whole thing is. It seemed to me that I could have read the chapters in almost any order I liked, and come out with about the same results.

"George, Vancouver", a documentary poem which has been read over the CBC, does have a good deal more unity to it. It is probably the strongest and certainly the most readable part of the book. The poem is an attempt by Bowering to discover the roots of today's Vancouver in the Vancouver of 1792 discovered by Captain George Vancouver; he is evidently also trying to discover some of his own roots in the process.

On the whole, "George, Vancouver" seems to me an interesting technical experiment rather than a successful finished poem. Bowering's simple juxtaposition of past and present is not enough. Nor can one discover one's roots simply by rummaging around in the past, doing, as it were, literary museum work. For the poem to succeed, there would have to be evidence of a kind of imaginative synthesis that simply isn't present here. Bowering's abrupt leaps between the "two Vancouvers" often cause serious problems with tone, and occasionally go so far as to leave one wondering just where one is, why one is there, and who is speaking at that moment.

Still, one comes away from "George, Vancouver" feeling a certain respect for the author. The task he has set for himself is a worthy one. And the final stanza, which is truly moving, gives a hint of what might have been done with the subject.

I have seen some
of what lies in the mind
the fancy of the British king
gone like fish odour
into the life-giving fog of that coast. (42).

As a resolution for the poem in question, these lines are far too easy; they bear far too little relationship to the lines which have gone before them. Still, one feels that one would like to hear more from the poet who wrote them. Unfortunately, it is hard to retain much respect for Bowering after reading "Cereals for Roughage". It is here that the tendency to self-indulgence is worst. The first poem in "Reconsiderations" does have some moving lines. But "Summer Solstice" and "Desert Elm" make family matters seems as clinical as a lab report for Biology 100. And the final group, the "AW" poems, takes us beyond the realm of normal critical discussion altogether. Here, for example, is "AW 1".

down dog why window sky
resemblance car red jacket
lessening lessons in blue
rumes, runes, rooms, tunes,
say sing to resemble they
do not have to remember
not by half (117).

It would seem that one could substitute almost any words one liked here; the words Bowering has chosen give the effect of having been chosen almost at random. If there's a point to all this, I'm afraid I've missed it; if any of the other eight poems in the group make sense, I've missed that as well. On the whole, I'm afraid that the "AW" poems strike me as a verbal equivalent to the kind of doodling one does on a scratch pad while waiting for someone to return a long-distance call.

One final note may be of interest both to academics and to those involved in publishing. As an experiment — both to test my students' mettle and to see if my own visceral dislike for the piece was an overreaction — I submitted the previously-mentioned "Composition" to a basic writing class for critical comment. As it turned out, no one shared my sense of outrage. But then, no one could derive the slightest meaning of *any* kind from the piece. It's a sad comment on the state of poetry in Canada when one of the country's leading poets — and a Governor General's Award winner, no less — fails to make any sense to a group of reasonably intelligent university students, some of whom know a little bit about Canadian literature. Has poetry become so esoteric a pursuit that poets can talk only to other poets, or to people who know authors like Gertrude Stein? Such cleavage between poet and public certainly does not augur well either for Canadian literature or for the country as a whole.

Laurentian University *J.C. Peirce*

Complementaries: Uncollected Essays. By I. A. Richards, Edited by John Paul Russo. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. pp. 289.

I. A. Richards' earliest books, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1925) and *Practical Criticism* (1929), were, along with the essays of T.S. Eliot, the seminal works of modern criticism. And two of Richards' books of the 1930's, *Coleridge On Imagination* (1934) and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), had a significant impact on literary critics. But after that Richards went on to other things — Basic English, general educational planning, and semantics — and became, for criticism, a marginal figure who was not followed in these pursuits. *Complementaries*, a gathering of some of his uncollected essays and reviews, while not a particularly significant book in itself, provides us with an opportunity for reconsidering the position of the early Richards, for examining the later developments in his thought, and, perhaps, for understanding why Richards came to have less and less influence.

Richards is known, of course, essentially as a theoretical literary critic, but the essays collected here under "Theory of Criticism" are certainly not confined to what we usually think of as *literary* concerns — they touch on philosophy at a number of points. In one of his earliest essays Richards laments that critics have had to take their tools from the workshops of philosophy; yet Richards himself obviously has done this and his central concern with the theory of meaning is a philosophical one. An essay such as "Belief" (1930) clearly reveals how deeply Richards' early work was shaped by logical positivism: "At present it is becoming increasingly difficult for anyone, who is not linguistically naive, to hold any philosophical position . . . I have sketched . . . what may look like a philosophical position, but I don't hold it. I have had to use in sketching it too many words whose meaning I am not clear about. The cure for this sad predicament is, I am sure, in devoting to the comparative study of ranges of meaning the energy we now give to reconstructing and redestroying philosophical systems" (36). Richards distinguishes his own concern with meaning from that of Bertrand Russell, whose interest in language he found too much that of a logician and mathematician. Interestingly, in a recent interview Richards emphasizes the influence of G.E. Moore on his own thought. Richards, who took the Moral Tripos at Cambridge, studied under Moore for seven years and there, apparently, began his inquiry into "the meaning of meaning."

This concern with examining meanings rather than with defending a particular position has led Richards to emphsize what he calls "Complementaries". A central aspect of this emphasis is the belief that "Two seemingly incompatible conceptions can each represent an aspect of the truth" (112). The need to recognize and accept the validity of apparently conflicting points of view is part of Richards' "message" to us. The main complementary point of view that has engaged Richards is, of course, that of science and poetry. His first published essay was entitled simply "Art and Science", and in several of the essays and reviews of the early 1930's he analyzes the nature of this opposition. Richards

never, as far as I can see, changes his view that scientific language is referential and conveys "truth", while the language of poetry (and religion) is simply emotive. In a reply to a critique of his work by Middleton Murry, Richards argues, "for me a pseudo-statement may perfectly well be true", but everything else he says belies this, and typically he emphasizes the opposition "between uses of words whose truth or falsity (in the correspondence sense) is (or should be) irrelevant to their effect, and uses of words where truth and falsity are relevant" (40). The claim frequently made that Richards, due to the influence of Coleridge, changed significantly in the mid 1930's from his early positivist vein — John Crowe Ransom in fact speaks of Richards' "conversion" — does not seem to stand up. An essay written in 1949, for example, is entitled "Emotive Language Still". Here Richards does qualify his earlier position, maintaining that all language functions in a number of ways, but nonetheless the basic distinction remains: science indicates and characterizes, poetry appraises and influences. And in his 1969 essay "Semantics" he differentiates between "*cognitive* statements, which convey either true or false information (scientific statements). . . and *affective* statements, which express emotions and attitudes (most poems)" (101). The early influence of logical positivism was obviously deeply rooted and prevented Richards from ever getting beyond this split. To those who believe that literature does have a cognitive function, Richards' critical theory can, finally, be of only limited usefulness and interest.

Further, Richards' theoretical speculations have never seemed very firmly grounded in the concrete act of reading and responding to particular works of literature. The great influence he exerted on the new criticism was somewhat paradoxical given his lack of engagement with specific texts. Of all the major critics Richards has given us the fewest analyses or evaluations of individual literary works. This fact is not greatly changed by the selection of essays presented here under the heading "Practice of Criticism". There are early essays on Hopkins, Dostoevsky, E.M. Forster, a note on Lawrence's poetry, and, from the later work, a review of a reprinting of George Moore's *Brook Kerith*, a review of a book on George Herbert, and a long analysis of Keats' "Ode On A Grecian Urn". This represents virtually all of Richards' practical criticism of literature from over a fifty year period — and it is not an impressive list or achievement. The recent publication of *Beyond* (1974) alters the situation slightly, but, on the whole, the anomaly remains.

There is no single essay in practical criticism here that can be considered to be significant, and, in fact, the later Richards, who has included brief paragraphs introducing each essay, tends to dismiss the early ones. Nonetheless, the 1926 essay on Hopkins does have the virtue of being one of the first attempts to explain his work and establish his importance. Also, it is interesting to see the early Richards tackling a topic like "The God of Dosteovksy", and near the conclusion of the essay Richards provides what is lacking in *The Principles of Literary Criticism:* a discussion of a concrete example of *how* literature affects us and orders our attitudes. The essays on Forster

and Lawrence, however, are only of historical interest in showing an early response to their work. The examples of Richards' later practical criticism are no more substantial and, curiously, in his essay on Keats he makes heavy weather of the point that "there may frequently be more than one valid view of what a good poem is doing", an observation which is surely a commonplace of criticism.

In a 1975 review Richards re-states his belief in the central importance of literature: "Questionings about poetries must, when pressed home, aim more nearly at the root of our being than any others. To be human is to be a maker, the poetries are makings . . . . They are makings of ourselves" (232). Much of Richards' own importance, it seems to me, comes from the force with which he presented the general case for literature, as well as from his more specific ideas about the method of "practical criticism" and the criterion of a poetry of "inclusion". But there were striking weaknesses in the position of the early Richards, and they become even more obvious in this collection of essays.

Richards' mechanistic psychological theories, and their attendant apparatus, have never seemed adequate. Although one can't even imagine any other major critic giving a favorable response to behaviorist psychology, one of Richards' early reviews show amenable behaviorism was to him. Richards was interested, of course, because behaviorism is experimental, it purports to be scientific, and it promises a "method". Richards is unfailing in his belief that somewhere, just around the corner, is a new method, a new technique, that will resolve many, if not most, of our problems. In the 1920's he looked for new developments in neurology, and now he pins his hopes on semantics: "As semantics develops . . . improved techniques of communication for its own purposes, its devices will probably be found of service in other fields . . . . Advances in mental and moral communications comparable to those which have recently occurred in physical communications are not only possible but probable" (107). Richards has been trapped into believing in an ever-receding future.

Apart from this faith in technique, we are confronted with the various "solutions" Richards has proposed. Some of the specific proposals the later Richards has advanced seem decidedly odd. He began to write poetry in 1958 and now believes that the central philosophical problems ought to be handled in verse rather than in prose. Here is an example of what results: "Yet between Thought and sense/The Sentiments have stood/Upholding both, their staunch defence/Let come what would" (125). As poetry, little is realized here, and as philosophy, the ideas seem pedestrian. One of the other ways Richards hopes to resolve problems of communication is by relying on notational and typographical devices. Again, here is an example: "?what is said? serves equally well to point to the words uttered or to what these words mean" (106). This "innovation" of Richards' — which has been universally ignored — seems to me to impede and confuse, rather than clarify, communication.

Finally, there are Richards' more wide reaching solutions to consider. His plans for a worldwide educational system are both vague and unrealistic, and he

certainly evades the question of who would be responsible for controlling such a project. Most preplexing of all is his faith in Basic English — the attempts to use 850 basic English words which, supposedly, will facilitate communication between countries. It seems impossible to reconcile Richards interest in Basic English with his defence of literature, for if literature itself is a form of communication, its importance surely derives from its being the most subtle, complex communication man possesses, while Basic English, which Richards turns to as "a means of avoiding and clearing up muddles" must inevitably simplify, impoverish, and make complex communication impossible. Richards' recent description of himself as a "linguistic engineer" is particularly revealing: "I'm a linguistic engineer. And an educational engineer. I'm looking for new and better ways of making many more capable and useful people through verbal means. Everyone's got that in view, I'm sure, but I'm perhaps a bit impatient" (263). This impatience, I suspect, is the source of many of the weaknesses in Richards' thought. And by being "impatient", by seeking simplified solutions, the man who shaped so much early modern criticism has increasingly lost his relevance for those interested in the study of literature — and possibly for others as well.

The University of Toronto *R.P. Bilan*

Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919. By Roy McLaren. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976. Pp. xiii, 301.

During 1918-1919 almost 6000 Canadians found themselves along with other Allied troops, in the confusion of Russia's civil war. Although Soviet scholars have never forgotten or forgiven this attempted "imperialist foreign military intervention", it remains a forgotten chapter as far as most of the western public is concerned. Despite some efforts to rectify the situation, this is particularly true of Canadians. Vimy Ridge and the other battlefields of the First World War still hold a hallowed place in our national history, but the northern wastes around Murmansk and Archangel, the vast forests of Siberia and the skies of south Russia stir the memories of an ever-diminishing number of Canadians.

In part this is perfectly natural. The Allied intervention in Russia came as a footnote to the large struggle with the Kaiser's Germany, and the Canadians' role is easily lost in general accounts of Allied and British policy. Further, the Russian episode is far from the most brilliant page of our military histories. Indeed, it was at best half-hearted and, in our view, irrelevant, and some would argue that its only effect was to prolong needlessly a conflict that cost Russia millions of lives and, in the final analysis, did much to embitter Soviet-Western relations. But despite this, the story remains a fascinating, if not a glorious one while Sir Robert Borden's own participation in Britain's "imperial" decision making was indicative of Canada's new confidence in the international arena.

For these reasons Canadians should be reminded of these events and Roy MacLaren's *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919* is a welcome addition to Canadian military history.

Although he now lectures in economic geography at the University of Toronto, most of Mr. MacLaren's life has been devoted to government service abroad and a career in business. Thus he is a "buff" — in the best sense of that word — rather than a professional historian. As a "buff" he is obviously inspired by a love of his subject, and this has resulted in the impressive collection of diaries, interviews and first-hand accounts on which he has based his accounts of Canada's military contribution. He shows us the worm's eye view of these events recorded by the pragmatic, and often humorous, Canadian participants that more general histories too often ignore. In this way a wealth of detail — including such wild scenes as an attempt to combine Canadian huskies and Russian reindeer in the same troop convoy — is added to the drier accounts of professionals, and some feel for the day-to-day existences of the soldiers is saved from the historical scrap heap. These details also make Mr. MacLaren's account of the military campagins exciting as well as informative, and his volume is a worthwhile contribution to any library bookshelf.

On the other hand, Mr. MacLaren's grasp of the confused internal realities of the Russian civil war and the byzantine and often ill-informed proposals of Allied policy makers is less sure. Where he concentrates on Canadian actions — such as Robert Borden's initiative in the ill-fated Allied attempt to bring Reds and Whites together at the so-called Prinkipo conference — he is generally sound enough, but this story has been told elsewhere. Further, when he comments in passing on issues such as the Bolsheviks' Brest-Litovsk negotiations with Germany and the background to British intervention in the Transcaspian region, he is often misleading. Readers seeking enlightenment on the general context within which Canadian intervention took place will therefore still be better advised to turn to the standard works of Richard H. Ullman and George Kennan.

Yet such flaws should not detract from the real virtues of Mr. MacLaren's otherwise highly readable book. *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919,* is aimed at a wide audience — both lay and professional — and provides both with a stimulating account of an episode in Canadian history which has been too long forgotten or ignored. For this Mr. MacLaren deserves our heartfelt thanks.

Cambridge Station, N.S. *David R. Jones*

Twentieth Century Essays on Confederation Literature. Edited by Lorraine McMullen. Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1976. Pp 151. $3.95

One approaches books of readings of this kind with some degree of apprehension. Too often they lack the shaping purpose and continuity of the work of the

single individual. They are frequently characterized by an unevenness of style and a variety of treatment that tends to disconcert and confuse the reader. Such fears, however, are surprisingly groundless in the case of this collection. The standard of the prose is uniformly high — even classical, although occasionally tending towards 'the refined'. The pieces chosen, furthermore, fit nicely together, and tend to illuminate each other: thus, for example, A.G. Bailey's article on *The Imperialist* helps to highlight the deficiencies of the regional fiction tradition as it is examined by William Magee, and Magee's treatment in turn is bolstered and clarified by Elizabeth Waterston's identification of the elements of realism and sentimental (not to say sanctimonious) romance in her article "Canadian Cabbage, Canadian Rose". Broadly speaking the pieces chosen present discussions of the cultural attitudes of late nineteenth-century Canadians as they find expression in both the poetry and the fictional and critical prose of the time, and they appear to have been chosen with the primary purpose of giving the reader a fuller ideal of the cultural and social milieu from which Canadian writers emerged. An important, and questionable, supplementary aim, however, seems to be to show how securely the near masterpieces, for example the best of Lampman's poems and Isabella Duncan's novel *The Imperialist*. are rooted in the cultural assumptions of the day, to demonstrate in Claude Bissell's words, how in the best work you can find "the concrete embodiment of the standards of taste that animate much of the critical comment of the time".

Such an aim is of course consistent with the modernist's preference for what is communal in the inspiration of literature, and with his dislike for what is individual or recalcitrant: it emerges from the assumption disseminated by, amongst others, E.K. Brown and A.J.M. Smith, that the best writing is produced by the integrated writer who reflects most fully the assumptions and concerns of his maturing society. What emerges very strikingly, however, from a consideration of the articles reprinted here is that they testify to a split in the representative sensibility of late nineteenth-century Canada. A sense of this split emerges most clearly in the articles about regional and proletarian literature. The two excellent articles on regional literature by Magee and Waterston — Magee's in particular — demonstrate that in the regional fiction that emerged after 1890 — in the work of Connor, Keith, McClung, Knowles etc. — the emphasis on local particularity, and the sense of human authenticity that might be expected to accompany this, is diffused by an evangelical gentility, and a shrinking from the representation of the sources of emotional vitality. Thus, while one is given a clear sense of the generalized social and religious loyalties of the time, one misses just the quality which one might well have hoped to find in such work — some adequate sense of the fully realized individual as he finds his place in and help to shape a particular and maturing society.

This sense of divided aims — divided loyalties perhaps — is most clearly illustrated in F.W. Watt's discussion of an early Canadian labour novel, M.A. Foran's *The Other Side* (1872). Here the protagonist is the victim of the scan-

dalous abuses of laissez-faire capitalism — loyalty oaths, union exclusion, draconian discipline, interminable hours of work — and takes his part in the bitter campaign for strong unions and industrial justice. Nonetheless by the end of the novel, the author, while implicitly commending his hero for his dedication to these causes, contrives to find him a respectable niche in the bourgeoisie as a successful factory owner.

The reason for citing these instances is to raise the general question as to whether the best of Canada's nineteenth-century authors achieved their success 'because of' or 'in spite of' the cultural attitudes and standards of their own time. It was fashionable for the critics of the modernist movement — with which most of the authors represented here seem to be loosely affiliated — to react against the Victorian individualism of Thomas Carlyle, and to emphasize the fostering influence of his own culture on the emerging poet, and to stress too the poet's reciprocal obligation to his community. Undoubtedly A.J.M. Smith's and A.G. Bailey's attractive articles about the Fredericton poets were useful correctives to the late Victorian tendency to discount the nourishing influence for Roberts and Carman of the old New Brunswick community clustered around the capital. In themselves these articles present engaging pictures of the society and culture of "the enchanted city with its elm-shaded streets, its generously proportioned old homes and the college on the hill" and "the broad river winding through the town and the wooded slopes" which bring "the forests and an echo of the sea almost to people's very doorsteps". Nevertheless, it seems to me that A.G. Bailey and A.J.M. Smith, while right in suggesting how Roberts drew on the society of his boyhood, significantly underestimate the extent to which he had to react against the conventions and proprieties of his own society to give scope to "that new and potent force" to which D.C. Scott refers in an article reprinted here, to "the strongly pagan and earth loving instinct" to which Lampman refers elsewhere. Claude Bissell, likewise, seems to be unmistakably in error when he speaks of Lampman's "picturesque realism" (as if his poetry was written to the prescription of James Thomson or John Dyer!). John Ower's excellent demonstration of Lampman's imagination in process in the poem "Heat" seems to be a measure of this error. Thus, while admiring the poise and finish of the majority of the articles reprinted here, one should not necessarily take them as guides for those who wish to encounter the best of Canada's nineteenth-century writers on their own terms.

Dalhousie University *Martin Ware*

Passages. By Gail Sheehy. New York: Dutton, 1976. Pp. 393.

Everybody has been talking about the various crises of adulthood recently; phrases like the "30-crisis" and "the male climacteric" have become as common in the popular press as "relationship" and "meaningful identity" used to

be a generation or so ago. Up till now, though, not a great deal has been done in the way of detailed and constructive studies of the various stages and accompanying crises of adult life. As *Passages*' jacket laments, "What Gesell and Spock did for children hasn't been done for us adults". Accordingly, it has been author Gail Sheehy's aim to go beyond the cant phrases of the women's magazines to find out just what could be learned about the various stages of adult development. Her research for *Passages* included several years' systematic study of adult development, financed by an Alicia Patterson Foundation fellowship, and over a hundred in-depth interviews with adults aged 18 to 50.

It is Sheehy's contention — and one backed up with some fairly solid psychological evidence — that far from being random, the 'crises' of adult life tend to occur in quite regular and well-defined patterns, each serving as the rite of passage to a new phase of adulthood:

> We are not unlike a particular hardy crustacean. The lobster grows by developing and shedding a series of hard, protective shells. Each time it expands from within, the confining shell must be sloughed off. It is left exposed and vulnerable until, in time, a new covering grows to replace the old.
>
> With each passage from one stage of human growth to the next we, too, must shed a protective structure. We are left exposed and vulnerable — but also yeasty and embryonic again, capable of stretching in ways we hadn't known before. Coming out of each passage, though, we enter a longer and more stable period in which we can expect relative tranquillity and a sense of equilibrium. (20).

Unlike the lobster, the human being has a choice, one which he not only can but must make, whether consciously or unconsciously, at each stage. He may take the risks which a positive choice entails. This means giving up "Some magic. . .some cherished illusion of safety and comfortably familiar sense of self. . .to allow for the greater expansion of our own distinctiveness". (21). Or he may batten down the hatches, opt for a 'permanent' lifestyle,and then "When the rumblings of a new stage of development begin within. . .point to the impossibility of change". (*Ibid*). But to choose the latter option is, as Sheehy is quick to point out, to make the changes of subsequent stages that much harder to bring about. Phases of growth cannot be left out. Basic developmental work not done when needed will, if it is left till later, exact a much higher price. Clearly it is healthier to meet life crises head-on when they first occur. To do so, indeed, is to insure continued growth throughout adult life, while to fail to do so is to insure increasing frustration, and eventually a sense of having wasted one's entire life.

The five distinct crises of early and middle adulthood that Sheehy talks about are called "Pulling Up Roots", "The Trying Twenties", "Catch-30", "The Deadline Decade", and "Renewal or Resignation". These occur, generally, during the university years, the immediate post-university period, around the age of 30, during the late 30's and early 40's, and during the menopausal period, respectively. Each is marked by its characteristic and appropriate forms

of activity and mental attitudes. "Catch-30", for example, is marked by an emphasis on identifying what one really wants out of life, by a serious reappraisal of one's career, one's marriage, even of one's suitability to the married state generally. "The Deadline Decade" is marked by the sense of urgency that comes with the recognition of one's own mortality, and by the corresponding attempt to achieve as much as possible as quickly as possible. Throughout, the book is well documented with interview material and with corroborating evidence from psychologists and other social scientists. One comes away with a good sense of what it is to be 22, or 30, or 45, and to face or avoid the challenges pertaining to each of those ages. Particularly impressive are the interviews, many of which would be strong enough to stand on their own. Sheehy is obviously a first-rate interviewer, and a skilled writer. Her account of the late adolescence of Dennis Watlington, a Harlem ghetto boy who encountered numerous problems when he went to swanky Hotchkiss school and became a big football star there, is one of the most moving pieces of journalism I have read in some time.

For all the book's strong points, though — and there are many — something is still lacking. The work just doesn't seen to hang together as an integrated whole. I'm not quite sure why. A somewhat more detailed theoretical framework might have helped, especially if Sheehy had made at least brief mention of childhood and old age, if only as a way of tying together the whole human life cycle. It also might have helped if she had done more to link her various life-cycle phases to phases in the biological development of the human organism. It is quite possible, for example, that the cessation of physical growth, which usually occurs sometime in the middle to late 20's marks a definite phase in and of itself. It seems to have done so for a good many people of my acquaintance. And further research might well uncover still more new phases, as well as helping to distinguish between phases which are culturally based, and phases which are biologically based and which occur in all cultures. One could also argue with Sheehy's restricting herself to middle-class, generally university-educated subjects. But given the immense scope of the task she has set for herself, even as it is, her reasons for such a limitation (16-19) seem, surely, fair enough.

All these are minor flaws. There are much more fundamental questions to be asked. What, for example, does the author really feel about what she has discovered? How has this new knowledge changed her? Sheehy could and should be her own best subject, but somehow she just isn't willing to let herself open up, whether from coyness or from an excessively old-fashioned view of what constitutes journalism. It is true that she begins, in the first chapter, to give a personal account of what drove her to write the book. But after that, we see very little of her indeed, even at times when her presence would be most welcome. And when we do see her, she's playing a bewildering variety of roles. Sometimes she is a mere compiler, sometimes a hard-boiled wire-service type of reporter, sometimes an informed and genial social critic. All of which is to sug-

gest that, valuable though it is as an addition to human knowledge, the book hasn't quite managed to cross that great mystical divide between the realm of popular psychology and the realm of something greater.

Perhaps Sheehy never intended it to, and perhaps she is right to leave things as they are for now. After all, in a culture which worships the case history, the books' format seems almost assured to win it a wide readership. But amid all Sheehy's equivocation about roles and voices, one can't help wondering if she wouldn't have liked to have done even more; there is at times an almost wistful note, as if suggesting an opportunity gone by. Not that the loss need be a permanent one; there is more than enough material in the theme of life's passages for a thousand works of art, should anyone care to produce them. And Sheehy could just be the one to produce them; it may simply be that she is not yet ready.

For my part, I am led to suspect that what we are witnessing here is a quiet metamorphosis between Sheehy-the-journalist and Sheehy-the-artist. In the nobility of her conception, and in much of her prose as well, Sheehy goes way beyond the tough reporter pose she all too often assumes. It now remains only to be seen whether she is able and willing to labor further in the rich fields which she has discovered, and to emerge with a harvest of personal expression and feeling, as well as one of facts and figures.

Dalhousie University *J.C. Peirce*

The Drama of W.B. Yeats: Irish Myth and the Japanese No. By Richard Taylor. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976. Pp. XIII, 247. $15.00

In the past, anyone who wished to study Yeats's later drama was faced with the task of digging back into Pound, Fenollosa, Arthur Waley, and other translators of eastern art into western language to discover how and why Yeats used No drama as a model for his own art. Problems of evaluation of sources, comparison of translations, influence and adaptation made the task unrewarding and often inconclusive. For many years now we have needed a thorough evaluation of both the original sources of Yeats's inspiration, a close study of the correspondences between Yeats's plays and his sources, and an evaluation of the dramatic effectiveness of these particular plays of Yeats. Richard Taylor has done all of these with considerable taste, spirit, and thoroughness.

Taylor's study is divided into five parts, taking up in turn the Early Plays of Yeats, the Pound-Fenollosa background, the No drama itself, from the standpoint of technique and content, "Plays for Dancers", the plays most directly influenced by the No drama, and, finally, a summary of the later use of No material by Yeats. The division in itself has merit, since it allows the reader to discover what he is most likely to need in one place, rather than scattered through ten chapters, as so often happens when an author uses some esoteric critical thesis as his organizing principle. Within that grouping of material, I

found chapters two and three the most useful and original contribution. Chapter two, "Agents of Transmission," best illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of Taylor's study.

Yeats scholarship has always faced the problem of relating historical investigation of Yeats's sources with interpretation of what that material means in his poetry or plays. In his introduction Taylor fairly states the task of criticism, to investigate the use of lyric and expressionistic techniques as a means of directly revealing subjective consciousness. The difficulty is that we have little or no language for describing the "direct expression of consciousness", so that in practice we fall back on describing techniques, assuming them somehow to be the same thing. Taylor has generally followed this course. He has excellent knowledge of his sources and understands the forms and techniques of No drama, but he cannot seem to venture an opinion about what conceivably they might mean. We know (and are reminded in Taylor's first chapter) that Yeats tried for a highly stylized drama, combining music, dance, and poetry. No drama contributed to that development. We are told in Chapter two, "The Agents of Transmission", of the special qualifications of Fenollosa to be a guide to eastern art, because of his "philosophical training". It is suggested that Zen idealism "must have appealed to Yeats". We are not told why it must have appealed to Yeats, nor given any clue as to the actual relation between Zen and No, nor given any help in solving the problem of the "meaning" of Yeats plays as a direct expression of consciousness. I suppose what I am suggesting is that the strong historical ground which Taylor develops could have been extended in a somewhat hermeneutical direction with enormous benefit to the reader. We are in fact given quotations from Fenollosa and Zen Idealism, Confucianism, and some information about what Fenollosa believed about these. These are legitimate topics for investigation, and they could reveal much of what Yeats himself was doing. Unfortunately, these philosophic questions are not carried over into the next two chapters, so that we end once more in the study of dramatic form.

One must admit of course that Yeats did everything possible to make technique and content one, to lift his work above verbal analysis. The dramatic effect of the symbol and its meaning are inextricably bound up, and it is difficult to "allegorize" Yeats's work for that reason. Nevertheless, Taylor's chapters on the No drama and "Plays for Dancers" are valuable indeed. His chapter on the No evokes comparison with Hiro Ishibashi's little book published some ten years ago by Dolmen Press (*Yeats and the Noh: Types of Japanese Beauty and Their Reflections in Yeats's Plays.* Edited by Anthony Kerrigan. No. VI of Dolmen Press Yeats Centenary Papers MCMLXV). Brief as it is, Ishibashi's book somehow points up the *kind* of consciousness we find in Yeats esoteric drama in a way that Taylor does not. Apparently Taylor did not discover Ishibashi's book, since it does not appear in his bibliography, but the two tend to complement each other.

Perhaps this book was not the place to undertake such interpretation. Our critical language, as Taylor himself noted, is ill-equipped to discuss intuition in any event. Yet I still feel the need for a closer analysis of whether in fact Pound and Fenollosa knew what they were talking about. We have had fifty years of East-West scholarship since then, and I feel Taylor's book would have reverberated at a deeper level had he read some of it. The notion of avoiding subjectivism and doing a solidly "objective" study seems somehow anachronistic. Yet despite these reservations, which are perhaps not criticism of this book at all, I must reiterate that I find Taylor's book valuable and important. He has filled a scholarly gap that much needed filling, and he has opened the way for future scholarship as few books on Yeats have done in recent years. I was even able to suffer the indignities of IBM adjutat type in which the book is set. I recognize the need for saving costs but honestly feel it makes the reader's task more difficult.

University of Kentucky *William A. Gordon*

Canada and the Burden of Unity. Edited by David Jay Bercuson. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977.

Canada and the Burden of Unity is a sophisticated and articulate account of the grievances of Maritime and Western Canada against what is considered to be economic, cultural and political hegemony of Central Canada. It is a form of "counter history" which seeks to explain how the colonial relationship between central Canada and these two extremities of society was obtained. Citing such *doyens* of Canadian history as Lower, Creighton, and Morton, editor Bercuson notes that there is a tendency to render sacrosanct "the virtue of national unity" with distinct centralist overtones. As an alternative, this book is intended to offer a rough blueprint for a national economic and political system which, it is argued, would reflect a new and heightened role for the Maritime and Western parts of the society, and a federal structure based "upon the recognition of regional equality".

There are three essays on the Maritimes in this book, and two on Western Canada. Unfortunately, there is no comment on Newfoundland or British Columbia; this is a serious omission, since only their inclusion would complete the history of the impact of centralist policies upon the various regions of Canada. The book pays much attention to a multifaceted examination of the impact of national economic policies upon the economies of the Maritimes and Prairies. All of the chapters are written by historians, with the exception of that by Paul Phillips, who is an economist; he analyses the negative consequences of continental economics and the multi-national corporation upon the ability of Canadian governments to develop reformist policies which would provide for a greater recognition of Canadian hinterland regions.

The other essays, with the exception of that by editor David J. Bercuson who provides a useful *mise en scene* in his introductory chapter, are on the whole sound micro-historical analyses. Authors such as Ernest R. Forbes who deals with national policy and transportation in the Maritimes, and T.D. Regehr who analyzes the effect of centrally developed transportation policy on the West, guide the reader through the complexities and obscurities of areas such as freight rates and tariff policy with a high degree of acumen. Yet, the simplification that is inherent in such an exercise for a book of this scope does not on the whole do any great injustice to the high degree of intricacy which exists in these topics.

Particular worthy of note is the fact that the book provides some extremely good studies of more obscure aspects of Maritime regional history. Nowhere, for example, has the reviewer seen so clearly delineated the impact of freight rate structure, as an element of national policy, upon the regional economies of Maritime Canada. Also, T.W. Acheson in his chapters on the Maritimes and "Empire Canada" provides a useful and penetrating account of the result of centralist policy *vis à vis* the industrial and commercial structure of the Maritime provinces. Only recently in the early 1970's, with the publication of a new Journal, *Acadiensis* have such formerly neglected topics come to the fore. Colin D. Howell's contribution on the Nova Scotia protest tradition, which was one of the first early manifestations of separatist tendencies in this country, also introduces an examination which is of central significance to any student of Canadian Government and politics wishing to expand his understanding of movements of this type.

The chapters on Western Canada should not on the whole seem as obscure in their subject material as those dealing with the Maritimes. Scholars such as the late Vernon Fowke and Chester Martin have already contributed mightily to our understanding of the implications of centralist policies for the Canadian West. David Smith's article for example, "Western Politics and National Unity" traces the course of the Canadian West in the National Political Life, a scenario with which readers should already be partially familiar, albeit from the centralist perspective of authors such as W.L. Morton.

Solutions to the problems of regional inequality which the book plausibly demonstrates are suggested throughout. Generally, two modes are indicated for achieving the goal of equality: greater provincial decision-making capacity, as well as the decentralization of federal institutional structures. The sum total of the burden of anti-imperialist argument in Canada and the Burden of Unity is not, as editor Bercuson notes, toward separation but readjustment. As Canadians generally come to consider our national problems, the studies found in his book will contribute to a very marked extent to discussion about future structures in the Canadian political and administrative system.

On the whole, this is a good book. *Canada and the Burden of Unity* may have some polemical aspects but these are largely over-ridden by the reflection which is to be found in its pages. It is also gratifying to note that with the exception of

Carman Miller all of the contributors are associated with Maritime and Prairie universities. Evidently, the large expenditures made on such institutions in the 1960's, if this book is exemplary, will have gone a long way to creating a partial institutional basis for a national dialogue concerning Canada's future, and the role of "colonial" areas in it.

St. Patricks College, Carleton University *D.J. Bellamy*

Heart of a Stranger. By Margaret Laurence. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976. Pp. 221. $8.95.

Margaret Laurence is one of Canada's best writers. Most of us know her as the creator of Manawaka, that fictional prairie town that is all prairie towns. Four of her novels and one collection of short stories are rooted in Manawaka. Before these works, however, Margaret Laurence wrote several set in Africa, where she spent seven years of her early married life. She has written a novel and a group of short stories set in Africa and a description of her experiences in Somaliland in the early 1950's. She has also translated Somali tales and poems, written a study of modern Nigerian literature, and created a story for children. As well as growing up in Manitoba and spending several years in Africa, Laurence has also lived many years in England and Vancouver, and now is living in Lakefield, Ontario. This great diversity of experience is reflected in the journal articles and essays she has also written during the years. Few of us will have come across all of these lighter creations of Margaret Laurence; but now sixteen essays, along with three previously unpublished ones, have been collected together under one cover and entitled *Heart of a Stranger.*

It sounds like a: "Dear Margaret Laurence. This is your publisher speaking. Since you're not writing any new fiction at this time, why don't you put together a whole bunch of your articles? We can sell them like crazy, because you're a big name now." This, however, does not invalidate the collection, for it is interesting to note that Laurence even writes this sort of thing. And it does reflect the situation of most writers in Canada today. Most novelists do not make a living wage from their novels; therefore, they have to supplement them by writing more saleable journalistic pieces like the ones collected in *Heart of a Stranger;* by becoming a writer-in-residence at a university, which Laurence has done; by teaching, which unfortunately cuts into the time of the writer; or by taking a job utterly divorced from writing, which naturally makes the writing even more difficult. So the pieces in *Heart of a Stranger* are examples of Laurence's "revenue writing". They may not be up to the standard of her fiction, but they are infinitely better than comparable pieces written by hack writers.

The essays in *Heart of a Stranger* were all written between the early 1960's and 1975. They range in length from four to thirty-three pages, but average around ten. They range in merit from the rather frivolous pieces written for the

Vancouver Sun and dealing with Laurence's experiences inside taxis, planes, and "the Idiot Box", to more thoughtful pieces for *Holiday, Mosaic,* and *MacLean's.* The best ones deal with her experiences in other lands on the one hand, and her sense of identity with Canada and her own past on the other. One travel piece deals with a tour taken of classical Greece, while another deals with a trip to Luxor. The highest praise you can give to travel articles is that they make you eager to go and see for yourself what is being described. These certainly do that. As well as describing places, however, Laurence captures people: the talkative guides, her fellows on the tour, and the pilots on the Suez Canal. Character sketches are a Laurence specialty, and there are three in *Heart of a Stranger* all set in Africa. All are, however, very different from each other. "The Poem and the Spear" is a long, very sensitive and well-researched profile of Mohammed 'Abdille Hasan, early nationalist leader in Somaliland. Laurence unravels the contradictions that were this desert leader. She is fascinated by the man's fierce fighting nature, his strong sense of his land, and his use of poetry throughout his campaigns. "The Very Best Intentions" was, in 1964, the first article Laurence ever had published. It is both a profile of a Ghanaian friend and an exploration of Laurence's own "white liberal" behaviour. "The Epic Love of Elmii Bonderii" tells of the Somali poet who died for love.

The first and the last articles in the book are in some ways the most interesting. They both deal with Laurence's growing realization of the need to come to terms with one's own past. For Laurence her writing serves to bring about this reconciliation. The particular interest in these two articles is that they are an earlier working out of ideas more fully developed in *The Diviners.* In "A Place to Stand On" she says of her writing: "I see this process as the gradual one of freeing oneself from the stultifying aspect of the past, while at the same time beginning to see its true value . . .." This idea is phrased another way in "Where the World Began": "When I was eighteen, I couldn't wait to get out of that town, away from the prairies. I did not know then that I would carry the land and town all my life within my skull, that they would form the mainspring and source of the writing I was to do, wherever and however far away I might live." In this last article Laurence even remarks upon the river symbol that is so powerful in the later novel, *The Diviners.* This is the river that seems to flow in both directions, as she says paradoxically in the novel: "Look ahead into the past, and back into the future . . .."

There is a great range in *Heart of a Stranger.* Some of the essays are, as Laurence herself calls one, frivolous; and it is true some of them might have been better left uncollected. I do not think we want to remember Margaret Laurence as a writer who wrote about "taxi drivers I have known" or "strange happenings on plane trips I have taken" and that sort of thing. It is not that these topics are beneath her, but they are not worth collecting into a hardcover book selling for $8.95. There are, however, many essays here that are worth saving. As well as the ones I have already mentioned, there is a brilliant and sensitive review of George Woodcock's *The Métis Chief and his Lost World.* Also

the short "Open Letter to the Mother of Joe Bass", previously published in Al Purdy's *The New Romans*. is very moving.

In the light of the really good essays in the book, then, it is a shame that to make a 200-odd page volume, Laurence included weaker articles. The quality of the selection is not sustained. I wish she had been more judicious in her choice of essays, and had written a few more up-to-date articles to fill out the gaps, describing what she is doing now. After *The Diviners* she said she was not going to write any more fiction, and now she has apparently changed her mind — for which I am rejoicing. But I would like to know more about the change, what her post-*Diviners* attitudes are. A 1971 newspaper article on small-town Ontario is tantalizingly prefaced by the comment that she was tempted to update the article with feelings acquired through living in the area, but she decided not to! So you are left wondering what changed. How does she feel now? This sort of introduction undercuts the article, because you no longer know what Laurence really thinks.

Also, the best article by Laurence that I have yet come across was not included. "Ten Years Sentences" was published in *Canadian Literature* and reprinted in an anthology called *The Sixties*. The anthology looks back on the 1960's and what those ten years meant to various writers. Laurence's essay is very introspective, and she does talk about what the ten years of writing meant to her. The inclusion of such a piece in *Heart of a Stranger* would have given a clearer focus to the collection.

In her "Foreword" to *Heart of a Stranger* Laurence states that the title of the collection, from a verse in "Exodus", refers to the years she spent as a stranger in strange lands, learning both about strangers and herself, learning both about the strange lands and about her spiritual home, Canada. The journeys are at once outer and inner, real and psychic. When Laurence deals with this subject, she is at her best. In a lot of ways she, however, still remains a stranger to us. What you do learn about her comes out piecemeal. The woman that emerges is a sensitive, intensely private person. She enjoys many close friendships and cares for people who are oppressed, minorities or those who are exploited. She does not follow any specific ideologies. She is not a joiner in political terms, although she has liberal views. She is nervous about television interviews; she has definite ideas about family traditions. She cares about her land and her past. These are the things you learn about Margaret Laurence in *Heart of a Stranger*.

She has said that "fiction is more true than fact", and that her other work uses her left hand only. (Clara Thomas, *The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence*, pp. 17-18.) Her real being goes into her fiction, and that is a difference both of time spent in composition and depth of thought. As I have already said though, the essays in *Heart of a Stranger* are better than other comparable pieces written by lesser writers. Margaret Laurence is a very fine writer,

and that cannot be marred just because the familiar essay is not as deep as an introspective novel. Margaret Laurence's left hand is still better than most other people's two hands.

Dalhousie University *Ann Munton*

The Argument of Innocence. By Kenneth Patchen. Oakland, California: The Scrimshaw Press, 1976 (Pub. 2/2/77). $7.50.

When Kenneth Patchen died in 1972, he left behind over forty books written in every conceivable genre, hundreds of original paintings and painting-poems, thousands of "painted books", papier mache sculptures, poetry-and-jazz recordings, plays, and unpublished manuscripts. He left behind a body which had been consumed with pain for over three decades, and he left his wife Miriam, who had ministered to the body and loved the heart for yet a decade longer than that. And also remaining, in every corner of the world, were numberless people who had been touched, entranced, terrified, and amazed at their entrance into the world of Kenneth Patchen.

This book is subtitled, "A Selection from the Arts of Kenneth Patchen", and carries a text by Peter Veres and a foreword by Miriam Patchen. It endeavors to cover all the written and visual aspects of Patchen's work, both by illustration and comment.

In relation to illustration, Scrimshaw Press is to be highly commended for its decision to render the picture-poems and paintings in full color. Availability of color reproductions of these works was previously limited to exhibition catalogs, long out of print, from shows at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and at the University of North Dakota. The photography in the book is , in general, excellent, the color more faithful to the originals than any which have been done. Many are full-page reproductions, and one of them, duplicated in the body of the book, is detachable for framing. While anyone familiar with Patchen's work has favorites among the picture-poems, and no one work could hope to satisfy all these particular prejudices, the choices here are, for the most part, good ones. An exception to this is the plate which is detachable, which seems particularly ill-chosen.

The book also marks the first availability in print of photographs of many of the painted books, which are all one of a kind, the papier mache animals, and the silkscreen prints (done originally in editions of two hundred, and now selling for large sums). As such, it is a valuable source of material as well as a beautiful object in its own right.

Miriam Patchen's foreword is wonderful, and all the delight and joy of her and Patchen's world comes through in her words. If there are weaknesses in the book, they reside in the accompanying text by Veres, which is generally in need of vivification, a greater dose of the "Patchen spirit", and a smaller share of

academese. The poems which Veres includes are quite limited in scope and not at all representative of the extraordinary range of *The Collected Poems* and Patchen's work in general. He also makes the common academic error of identifying Patchen too closely with groups like the Dadaists, whom Patchen had firmly rejected, and discusses very little of the matter, as opposed to the appearance, of the writing.

The problem is perhaps in the scope claimed for the book. The prose work is virtually slighted. *The Journal of Albion Moonlight*, considered by many to be Patchen's greatest work, is treated only in terms of its typographical oddities. *Sleepers Awake*, the longest and most involved of the prose works, is given but a single paragraph, again introducing an exhibition of visual oddities in the text.

It would appear, however, that these textual problems are the result not so much of academic error or a failure in comprehension, but an excess of zeal for the visual arts at the expense of the written works. Veres gauges the move away from horror and toward joy and beauty in Patchen correctly, and the drift from the written to the visual is also an appropriate perspective. The difficulty with this approach, however, is that the great prose works and the whole body of the non-visual poetry appear to be merely footnote or introduction to the pictorial work.

Perhaps the most illuminating portion of the book is the extensive interview with Miriam Patchen which is wisely inserted. Mrs. Patchen's discussion of *The Journal of Albion Moonlight*, and the means by which Patchen moved into his world of wondrous animals and strange people, of green deer and angels, is exciting and moving. There is much useful background here on the visual aspects of the books and the nature of the creatures inhabiting their universe. She and Veres have also put together a chronology of Patchen's life and works.

Relatively little work has been done on Patchen thus far, and this book is a giant step toward correcting that situation. Several books on Patchen will be appearing this year, and doubtless others will follow. Despite certain problems in the text, the book's many strengths outweigh any weakness. Veres' background is in Art, and it is here that his perceptions are useful. The reproductions of Patchen's visual works are the finest available, and the moderate price (particularly for a full-color book of art) should insure use in classes in contemporary art and poetry.

Perhaps most important is that everywhere in the book is Kenneth Patchen's presence in evidence, from the sonorous lines of the young poet in "Joe Hill Listens to the Praying" to the bright and colorful truths of the older craftsman in "The King of Toys" and "In Perkko's Grotto". His hand is seen in the quizzical smiles of his creatures and the blends of colors and masterful lines of the silkscreens. With glee he calls out to us through these pages from a world troubled with sorrow but redeemed in love, "Imagine seeing you here — after all it's not every day that the two nicest people in the big old lousy world get together like this."

It is good that this book is here for us to have.

The University of New Mexico *Richard G. Morgan*

I Too Am Here. Selections from the Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle. Edited by Alan and Mary McQueen Simpson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Pp. xx, 307. $13.95.

After nine years of marriage Mrs. Carlyle wrote to John Sterling to thank him for a note addressed to herself saying that she felt perpetually like the little boy in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* who interrupted adult conversation by tugging at his mother and crying out "I too am here." However neglected Jane Welsh Carlyle may have felt and however justified her feelings may have been, subsequent generations have rendered her ample attention — far more in fact than accorded the wife of any other Victorian writer.

The editors of this collection of her letters, the seventh since her death in 1866, tell us that they designed it primarily for enjoyment — "for bedside, weekend and vacation." And they have succeeded wonderfully. The letters are arranged chronologically within eleven sections devoted to single themes that pre-occupied the indomitable helpmate. One group, for example, centres on a self-portrait, another portraying her leonine husband backed up by an additional group entitled "Guardian Angel", devoted to the care and feeding of Thomas Carlyle. Yet another group deals with servants (she engaged thirty-nine of them during the thirty-two years at Chelsea). And so it goes through almost two hundred letters to delight the fascinated reader. A concise biographical introduction and brief commentaries on each of the eleven sections marked by unobtrusive but impeccable scholarship round out and amplify the self-portrait that emerges.

A very few examples should be enough to entice the prospective reader: In her role as guardian angel Jane confronts the problem of a barking dog next door. As a final resort she sends her maid with a note and a bottle of whiskey demanding that the dog be done away with and suggests getting it dead drunk as an interim measure. The owner good-naturedly solved the issue by untying the dog and drinking the whiskey himself. Writing to Carlyle of the episode she concludes: "It is a week ago, and one may now rest satisfied that the tying up caused the whole nuisance. The Dog is to be seen going about there all day in the yard, like any other Christian Dog, 'carrying out' *your* principle of *Silence*, not merely 'platonically', but *practically*." So we now know that Carlyle had in his lifetime at least one devotee to his Doctrine of Silence.

Surely not the least of her trials and tribulations with servants is recounted to Mary Russell. Her apparently trustworthy maid was discovered to have been feeding her friends and admirers at the expense of the household and capped her villainy by having an illegitimate child in the pantry. The worst of the offence, however, seems to have been the possibility of disturbing the Sage: "I shall only say that while she was in labour in the small room at the end of the dining room, Mr. Carlyle was taking tea in the dining room with Miss Jewsbury talking to him!!! Just a thin small door between them! The child was not born until two in the morning when Mr. C. was still reading in the Drawingroom."

There is a long and delightful account of a visit *incognito* to her old home at Haddington. Early one morning she was seen by an old acquaintance of the family going over the churchyard wall to visit the grave of her father. Later that day the gentleman met her and said, "I saw a stranger-lady climb the wall and I said to myself that's Jeannie Welsh! — no other woman would climb the wall instead of going in at the gate. . . ." Here and throughout the book one receives the indelible impression that Jane Welsh Carlyle was indeed as inimitable as her contemporaries attest. She had besides the gift of self-expression peculiarly fitted to letter writing.

Dalhousie University *C.J. Myers*

The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society. By Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976. Pp. viii, 334. Paper, $6.75.

Penelope's Web: Some Perceptions of Women in European and Canadian Society. By N.E.S. Griffiths. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976. Pp. vi, 249. Paper $4.95

It is gradually becoming accepted and commonplace knowledge that most of the emphasis in the social sciences to date has been on the study of male experience. There is distressingly little reliable information obtainable about the history and roles of women anywhere; needless to say we are at a special disadvantage with respect to finding suitable Canadian sources. In order to understand the roots of our current sexist inequalities and the evolvement of a feminist rebellion against such injustice, readers have had to make unjustified inferences from the few detailed accounts available of British and American experiences.

Oxford University Press has taken an important step in closing this gap by producing these two books in Canadian woman's history; both books concentrate on the history of the feminist movement and, because of their status as pioneer works, both deserve automatic prominence.

While they share the same subject matter, the authors adopt radically different approaches to their material. Cook and Mitchinson focus on the period roughly between Confederation and the winning of the vote for women, offering a rich collection of essays from that time. They offer little of their own views or even background information, choosing instead to allow the material to speak for itself. In contrast, Griffith feels she must present the whole cultural background in which the current Canadian feminist movement developed; and hence she "pillages" an eclectic collection of historical, social, literary and political sources ranging as far back as the seventeenth century and stretching

over both European and North American continents to arrive in the mid-1970's in Canada. She avoids the use of quotes or specific references to sources, preferring to offer the reader her own rather haphazard synthesis of, quite simply, everything she could get her hands on.

Personally, I found the direct approach more satisfying. The essays in *The Proper Sphere* were well selected and thoughtfully grouped so that I finished the text feeling significantly more knowledgeable about the important factors of women's lives in that period and the major political forces of the women's movement. Much of the effectiveness of the collection arises from the continuity of concerns and attitudes of feminists from that time through to the present. Because so many of the selections echo familiarly in the modern ear, one is led to conclude that feminists of the past were motivated by the same sense of indignation and injustice over roughly the same questions as animate current feminists. And those who are not now feminists can understand better those who are by reading these purer, less subtle statements of a bias which is only hinted at today.

The introductory essay sets the pace. Reverend Robert Sedgewick, speaking to a Halifax audience in 1856, begins by arguing that, "In many respects woman is the equal of man. Save in the matter of sex, she has similar form and features. In the higher departments of human nature, she is man's fellow. Her mind comprehends similar powers. . ." A satisfactory enough premise that is somehow made to serve as the foundation of the very different conclusion that women do not belong in the public world of men. Rather, "the sphere of women is home and whatever is correlative with home in the social economy". And hence, he proposes the education "of which no woman can afford to remain ignorant . . . the sublime science of washology and its sister bakeology . . . darnology and scrubology . . . mendology and cookology. . ." Surely no reader can wonder about the appropriateness of a feminist movement in 1856?

Similarly, one reads with a sigh the articles about scarce employment opportunities and unequal salaries for women. In 1890, it is claimed that, "These women, working side by side of the male (labourers) battling with the same physical struggles, full of the same higher aspirations . . . find they receive from one-third to one half less wages, doing the same work with as much skill as their brother workers", and one knows the problem, because current statistics show that women's salaries in Canada today are only 60% those of their male colleagues, and slipping.

But some improvements have been made, most notably in the area of education. In the mid-nineteenth century no university in Canada admitted women. In 1900, only 11 per cent of university students in this country were women, in contrast to 36% in the United States. To help us understand the effect of such restrictions on individual lives, we are offered Elizabeth Shortt's moving account of her experience as a student in the first Medical School class to admit women (at Queen's University in 1879). It is a remarkable piece, stating simply and clearly the difficulties and strengths one acquires in that still familiar ex-

perience of being "the first woman" in a role.

Because I found the Cook and Mitchinson presentations so informative, I found myself in disagreement with Griffiths' whole philosophy. Intending to "provide some historical framework for a discussion of contemporary Canadian feminism", she felt Penelope offered a useful model, tearing apart at night what she put together by day. I do not have such patience. To be sure, in any account of a complex social phenomenon, there are always more questions to be asked, more data to be accounted for, more comments to be added. But there is surely some hierarchy in this endless "web" and some questions are more relevant than others. It is the author's task to sort through and weigh the complex of material, and it is the reader's understanding that the outcome is one person's analysis of the most important insights, gleaned from a wide range of sources, and thoughtfully structured. Surely the author is not obliged to apologize continuously for having to make such choices.

Despite the author's concern, somehow the urgent questions were continually being buried behind trivial or rhetorical ones. I cannot agree that "the most important questions to be asked about the present feminist movement...are: will it last? Is Women's Liberation more than a passing fad?" Or that we must begin by considering such questions as "What is western civilization?" Come to that, what is civilization?"

And one cannot help but be disappointed to find at the end that after her four years of pursuing ethnology, anthropology, biology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, literature and history, she finds her own ambition for the status of women pretty much unchanged. In fact, her single positive proposal is that "somehow that dangerous reality love has to be given a weight, even if it is only marked as 'ingredient x', volatile, inexplicably uncontrollable". This is a hopelessly vague directive and one that does not reflect the common insight of most feminist authors that vague romantic appeals to "love" are at best useless and, more often, vicious. Ambiguous appeals to love and self-sacrificing behaviour have traditionally served as the primary weapon to drive straying women back into the fold should they dare to question conventional family structures and their assigned place in them.

All that scholarly work is dissipated and seems to come to naught, mostly, I think because the book lacks focus and order. There is no evidence of restraint or organizational structure. Still, there is a great deal of valuable information contained within the self-effacing ends. Griffiths rightly stresses that history is composed of the activities of individuals as well as of groups, and women's experience has varied with time, geography, class, education, and idiosyncratic personality differences. There is no single profile we can draw of a typical Canadian woman of any period.

Griffiths' intent to offer a broad overview of the history of the women's movement in Canada is an excellent one, and much of the material she includes does

help to develop such a conception, but the interpretive work is still left to be done. With the research of these two volumes available, it is now possible for the interested reader to develop such insights.

Dalhousie University *Susan Sherwin*

Sheridan and the Drama of Georgian England. By John Loftis. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977. Pp. xi, 174. $7.95.

This is a small but important book, one which provides us not only with a careful and insightful analysis of R.B. Sheridan's major dramatic works, but also with useful and detailed comparisons between Sheridan and his fellow playwrights of the Georgian theatre. Professor Loftis has long been an astute historian and critic of the Restoration and eighteenth century stage, and as one would expect this volume is thoroughly readable and dependable (the only minor slip which need be remarked upon is Loftis's passing reference on p. 161 to *A Journey to London* instead of *A Journey to Bath*, a "fragment of a comedy written by Sheridan's mother from which he apparently took suggestions for *The Rivals;*" *A Journey to London* is actually the title of Vanbrugh's MS. fragment which Cibber adapted and added to when composing *The Provoked Husband).* Loftis rightly feels that a serious and fairminded study of Sheridan is necessary in view of the fact that while there is "a broadly based though tacit assumption that he is a major dramatist," and while his plays are still popular — as the many recent editions and performances of his works attest — there has lately been little enough in the way of criticism which adequately recognizes his true value.

In fact, the last quarter of a century has produced a few full-scale attacks on Sheridan's literary abilities. However, in my view Loftis somewhat exaggerates the significance of these negative criticisms, particularly those by A.N. Kaul and Marvin Mudrick, both rather strident and ill-informed dismissals of Sheridan the artist (though controverting their points does indeed allow Loftis to establish a forceful argument himself); furthermore, while at first drawing the reader's attention to the extreme conclusions of Kaul and Mudrick, Loftis plays down the importance of some recent positive criticism, for example curiously omitting from both text and bibliography any reference to Jack D. Durant's *Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (1975), a work which generally gives its subject high praise throughout.

Still, students of the drama will certainly be grateful for Loftis's fresh look at Sheridan and his age. In the work one finds a balanced criticism of Sheridan: Loftis does not gloss over what could be considered weaknesses in Sheridan's plays — his lack of interest in showing character development, his rather coy avoidance of sexual realities, his tidy but perhaps arbitrary endings — yet he also writes most convincingly of Sheridan's undeniable strengths — his witty

and elegant dialogue, his ability to construct memorable scenes, his rejection of cant and, for the most part, of unthinking cliche (his gratuitous depiction of Catholic and Jew in *The Duenna* is a notable exception).

The perennial charge that Sheridan was derivative must be definitely qualified: as Loftis sees it, "His concerns lay . . . in the exaggeration of and variations on the traditional patterns of the comedy of manners in characterization and action." Accordingly, Loftis finds burlesque, not plagiarism, operating in not only Sheridan's theatrical satire *The Critic* but in all of his comic pieces; his plays are "in their derivatory qualities corollaries of his intensity of focus on separate episodes and his fondness for burlesque." The old critical axiom that Sheridan was with Goldsmith virtually alone in a rearguard action against sentimentalism on the stage is ably refuted by Loftis, who adds to and refines the evidence amassed by Arthur Sherbo, G.W. Stone, R.W. Bevis, R.D. Hume, and others. Sheridan's laughing comedies lack the hard-edged cynicism of the Restoration theatre; Loftis correctly asserts that "a firmly conceived moral vision of tolerant good sense and compassion controls Sheridan's comedies, a moral vision that we could call 'sentimental,' but only — lest we increase confusion — if we remember that we refer to qualities common to much of the best literature of Georgian England."

Throughout the work Loftis develops the premise that while Sheridan's plays do indeed derive from the tradition of Restoration comedy, they are also very much of their age. Although Sheridan was a better writer than Garrick, Colman, Murphy, and Foote, they and others wrote laughing comedies, and in many cases with considerable skill. The Georgian comedy has several characteristics similar to that of the Restoration period; the drama is still witty and "The preserve of the fashionable," and the best comedies still produced laughter not tears in the audience. But one cannot deny that the Georgian comedies, Sheridan's included, comprise an altogether "softer" species: "The eighteenth-century dramatists are less inclined to depict disturbing consequences of human depravity than their predecessors in the Restoration, and their emphasis on magnanimous response to people in distress often seems a falsification of human nature as we experience it." Yet, as Loftis's sensitive analyses make plain, "they were not consistently so solemn as Goldsmith in his essay 'On the Theatre' and Sheridan in *The Critic* would seem to imply."

In three valuable chapters of the work Loftis examines in detail *The Rivals, The Duenna, A Trip to Scarborough, The School for Scandal,* and *The Critic.* The author is not interested in special pleading or in tedious arguments over sources, but in "placing" Sheridan by careful reference to his predecessors and contemporaries. Here he effectively advances his theory that Sheridan's so-called derivativeness is largely a function of his use of burlesque. The final chapter deals with that curious and extravagant piece written late in Sheridan's career, *Pizarro.* Loftis readily admits that the work is disappointing, but suggests that it does have a claim on our attention: Sheridan "seized a moment in theatrical history, exploiting the short-lived vogue of Kotzebue and bringing the

talents of splendid actors to bear in a tragedy that could be interpreted as a commentary on urgent political issues." The author of the incisive *Politics of Drama in Augustan England*, Loftis discusses these political issues with great expertise, but does not ignore the aesthetic weaknesses of the play.

In summary, this is a fine book about the Georgian theatre, of which Sheridan's comedies, opera, and farce are "the finest expression." However, since as Loftis states, theatrical monopoly and censorship, along with other factors, discouraged the production of new plays and encouraged the revival of old favourites, one would have wished therefore not only a detailed comparison of the Restoration plays and their relationship to the Georgian theatre, but also a closer look at the comedies of the early eighteenth century — by such writers as Cibber and Steele, whose plays still held great popularity in Sheridan's day, and doubtless had considerable influence on his works and those of his contemporaries.

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The Politics of Attraction. By Annette Baker Fox, NewYork: Columbia University Press, 1977. Pp. vii, 298.

In this comparative study of the relations of four middle powers (Canada, Mexico, Australia and Brazil) with the United States, the author is operating within the general realm of integration theory. The concept of integration, which the author admits is inappropriate for these cases (vii), has been watered down to something labelled "attraction". The theoretical usefulness of this substitution is rather doubtful. No definition of the term is offered, only the assertion that the four middle powers and the United States are attracted to one another. Aside from the conceptual emptiness of the term, it might be argued that it constitutes a poor description of these particular bilateral relationships since the notion of choice rather than necessity dominates the general usage of the word. Despite Fox's readiness to believe that this is the case, there is little in the book to convince the skeptical reader that choice rather than necessity best characterizes the development of the four bilateral relationships.

This study of "attracted" states specifically focuses on the relationship between two concepts called responsiveness and distance. Responsiveness, as per Kal Holsti's definition, is described as ". . . a disposition to receive another's requests with sympathy, even to the point where a government is willing to sacrifice some of its own values and interests in order to fulfill these requests . . ."(3). While this gives the reader some notion of the intended usage of the term, it does not stand up as an operational definition. Willingness to sacrifice values and interests is never discussed, much less demonstrated. When the terms "cooperative response" (290) and "respond affirmatively" (296) are

used in the concluding chapter, the relevance of the original definition seems questionable since the activities it describes could not be anything but cooperative and affirmative.

Distance, the major independent variable, is more satisfactorily defined. Two components, cultural distance and geographic distance, are examined. In relation to this variable, the four middle powers can be grouped into two pairs, one that is culturally close to the United States (Canada and Australia) and the other culturally distant (Mexico and Brazil), with one of each pair being geographically close and the other distant. This grouping provides the opportunity to compare the relative importance of cultural and geographic distance for maintaining "responsive" relations with the United States on a number of issues.

Four basic issue areas (defence, economic relations, global issues and neighbourhood issues) are discussed in the study. Two of these lead to conclusions about the relationship between responsiveness and the two aspects of distance. In the case of defence, Fox suggests that cultural distance is the relevant variable since Canada and Australia have cooperated more closely with the United States than have the two Latin American countries (68). The possibility that this apparent relationship between cultural similarity and a common orientation toward external threats during World War II and in the post-war period might be spurious is not examined.

Geographic distance appeared to be the determining factor for predicting a disinclination to coordinate policy with the United States on global issues. Canada and Mexico are described as being most consistent in seeking to maintain or establish at least the semblance of an independent foreign policy.

'Positive' responsiveness was most evident on defence and neighbourhood issues, a finding which suggests the irrelevance of the major independent variable. As the author notes: "Patterns of responsiveness between each of the four middle powers and the United States were more likely to develop when there was a genuine community of interest felt strongly on each side" (266). This observation identifies the more relevant concept — community of interest.

With an ill-defined dependent variable and a largely irrelevant independent variable, this study makes a predictably weak contribution at the theoretical level.

Apart from the theoretical framework and analysis, Fox presents a considerable amount of detailed information about the nature of the four sets of bilateral relations. This discussion constitutes the bulk of the book, and it is here that one would expect to find interesting comparisons among the four middle powers. Regrettably this is not the case. The author has relied on secondary sources which have led her along some well-worn paths in terms of describing the individual bilateral relations, and effectively preclude interesting comparisons among the sets of bilateral relations. Thus a student of Canadian-American relations will not obtain much new information on that particular topic, although discussion of Canadian-American relations does dominate the

study. Nor will that student obtain much insight into the way the other three countries conduct their relations with the United States, since the author's descriptions are generally limited to outcomes with little or no generalization about the salient features of the negotiations or situations which led to those outcomes. Such detailed treatment of particular issues may not be possible in a book that attempts to examine four bilateral relationships over a number of issues, but it is the sort of information which is necessary if useful comparisons are to be made.

Although the book offers little in the way of new material, it does offer a slightly novel interpretation of the old material. Most of the literature on Canadian-American relations, for example, is written from a Canadian perspective and much of that has some degree of a Canadian nationalist slant. Fox, however, regards nationalism in the four middle powers (especially in Canada and to a lesser extent in Australia) as an unwarranted obstacle to international cooperation. Cooperation and "responsiveness" are viewed as unmixed blessings from which all benefit. It is perhaps this anti-nationalist approach, which occasionally reveals an American nationalist wolf in an internationalist sheep's clothing, that has led Fox away from confronting the fact that legitimate fears about American influence and its potential effect on the independence of states within its sphere exist in the political lives of each of the four middle powers. As a result some important aspects of political reaction to the United States' presence are overlooked.

Thus, although several references are made to the large discrepancies in power and influence between the United States and the middle powers, the consequences of such discrepancy are not treated. This is a particularly obvious omission in the cases of the two neighbouring middle powers. While it is noted that proximity had a negative influence on foreign policy coordination with the United States (216, 287), the author apparently fails to appreciate that the overwhelming influence of the United States on Canada and Mexico produces the need to appear independent of that influence on occasion.

Another example of ignorance of the consequences of the asymmetry of superpower-middle power relations is found in the discussion of foreign investment. While noting that American-owned direct investment in Canada is extensive, the existence of Canadian-owned investment in the United States is also stressed with at least four separate references (159, 186, 272, 285) implying a reciprocity of impact which clearly does not exist.

In yet another instance, Fox points out that one of the advantages of cooperation between Canada and the United States in the field of education has been that Canadian education materials find a ready market in the United States (257). No mention is made of the market American education materials have found in Canada and the concern that has been felt about their influence on education in Canada.

Two other errors of omission should be noted with regard to Canadian-American relations: the 1971 Defence White Paper which listed the protection

of Canadian sovereignty as the first priority of Canadian defence; and the Third Option of 1972 which announced the intention of the federal government to pursue a policy of greater independence vis-à-vis the United States. While it might be argued that little real change has resulted from these statements of intent, they are relevant to the notion of Canadian "responsiveness" to the United States and should have been mentioned.

The book also contains a few errors that seem to stem from inadequate research and sloppy editing. Federal and provincial jurisdictions in Canada over the export of natural resources are confused (182, 245); figures for the annual number of Canadian tourists visiting the United States in Table 24 (253) are inconsistent with those presented in the text (253). More importantly, perhaps, is a statement made in the course of a discussion about Canadian policy regarding the formal recognition of the People's Republic of China which implies that the United States has also recognized that regime. "Eventually, as in the case of recognizing Communist China, the United States followed suit after others had done so" (280). Whether this indicates that the author is misinformed or has merely made a bad choice of words is irrelevant, the erroneous message to the unenlightened reader is the same.

With the lack of conceptual rigor, the absence of original empirical material, the apparent failure to comprehend the smaller powers' perspectives on these bilateral relationships, and the presence of misleading 'factual' information which characterize this book, its publication is something of a puzzle. Nonetheless, it is possible to say that the book makes two small contributions. In the first place its perspective offers a literature dominated by more or less nationalistic authors from smaller powers a different point of view. Secondly, its failings draw our attention to the continued relevance of the concepts of political realism and nationalism.

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