

## Book Reviews

*The Swing in the Garden.* By Hugh Hood. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1975. Pp. 210. Hardcover, \$11.95. Paper, \$4.95.

*A New Athens.* By Hugh Hood. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1977. Pp. 226. Hardcover, \$15.00. Paper, \$6.95.

Hugh Hood's *The Swing in the Garden* is not a traditional novel. It is, rather, a highly interesting example of a spiritual and intellectual autobiography that offers a subtle blend of fictional characters and situations with a great deal of real and verifiable factual information. Writing sometime during the 1970s, the central character, Matthew Goderich, ruminates over the major formative influences on his boyhood, taking into account the years from his birth in Toronto in 1930 until the outbreak of World War II in 1939. As an autobiography, the book could aptly be subtitled *A Portrait of the Art Historian as a Young Man*. Matthew has many of the traits of an artist, and yet he has no single, predominant artistic gift, except his precocious facility with words. Displaying this facility to the full, he tells an energetic story, creates fascinating characters and develops dramatic situations, but all of this is, in a sense, secondary to his main intention, which is to understand the complex and yet often simple ways in which an artist transforms reality so that it conforms with his vision of what life should be like. In brief, Matthew is more a thinker and historian than an artist, by temperament and because he is profoundly influenced by his father, a professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto.

Art, for Matthew, is by no means restricted to the traditional categories of literature, painting, music, film, architecture and so on. In addition to these categories, he considers as works of art his own life and the major historical events taking place in Canada, Toronto and the Western world during the 1930s. This refusal to follow traditional categories makes *The Swing in the Garden* a startlingly rich, varied and wide-ranging book, as Matthew, with his immense but never ostentatious erudition, frequently interrupts the narrative to write mini-essays on diverse themes. Coming under his scrutiny, for example, are the various forms of transportation that man has invented, especially automobiles, trains and ships; Canada's growth from colony to nation; the

struggle to reconcile socialistic ideals with capitalistic enterprises; the feeling of identity that is conferred on men by the aesthetic form of religious ritual; the role of education in informing, edifying and liberating the mind and the imagination; the influence of organized religion and apocalyptic Christianity on the prevailing myth of Canada as a New World, potentially an Eden; and the importance of the never-ending quest for the Ideal in all of its manifestations, both secular and religious. It does not matter whether Matthew's historical and aesthetic analyses are valid or invalid; perhaps many of them would raise the sceptical eyebrows of Careless, Lower, Innis, Frye and Grant, to name only a few. What does matter, however, is that these observations are true to Matthew's experiences and perceptions when he, as an adult, reflects on the past and how he has become the man that he is.

From this intellectual and spiritual autobiography emerges a consolidated impression of, in particular, the city of Toronto as it was in the 1930s. It is no exaggeration to say that with *The Swing in the Garden* Hugh Hood does for Toronto what Dickens did for London, Joyce for Dublin, Balzac for Paris and Farrell for Chicago: he makes Toronto, through the evocative and transforming power of his thinking imagination, into a sublime work of art—into a kind of found poem—so that, in a fascinating Wildean paradox, the "life" of Toronto eventually begins to imitate the very art that gives it life. In reading the book I had the impression that I was being taken on a real tour of 1930s Toronto, with Hugh Hood or his surrogate Matthew Goderich as a knowledgeable and above all enthusiastic guide, showing its artifacts, its various documents of social history, while giving a brilliant exegesis of their individual significance and their relationship to the macrocosm of which they are an integral part. Everything in this museum of the mind, be it big or small, is worth Matthew's consideration. There are detailed and loving descriptions of hockey cards, the colours and designs of bus transfers, Ford phaeton V-8s, movie fan magazines like *Silver Screen* and *Photoplay*, the warehouses of Toronto commerce, ships with poetic names like *Britamolube* and *Britamette*; even Dinky Toys are fondly remembered, as the formal inventory of the city's "holdings and collections" goes on seemingly without limit. At one point the adult Matthew observes that he is obsessed by "the collecting and recording impulse, so intimately tied to calendars, the methods of historical chronology and the impulse to articulate a connected account of the past" (p. 72) and he speculates that this kind of obsession "never seems to become sufficiently intense to issue in art of the highest order" (p. 21) and cites, as proof for this contention, writers like Kipling, O'Hara and Dreiser. Less hampered by the need to collect and order facts, and therefore greater as artists, Matthew argues, are writers like Tolstoy, Proust and Joyce. One never feels, however, that Matthew's passion for the science of fact-gathering and classification is the least bit limiting and neurotically obsessive-compulsive. Facts simply form the foundation from which he takes imaginative and daring leaps. Moreover, he knows well the phenomenon that perhaps was first made into an aesthetic theory by Proust; namely that because

we impart so much of our imaginative energy into the things we live with, we soon gain our sense of identity and continuity from what those things are, mean and become.

It is this relationship between facts, especially historical facts, and art that Hood explores in more detail and with even finer perceptions in *A New Athens*. It is a sequel to *The Swing in the Garden*; together they form the first two novels in a planned series of twelve, called *The New Age*, which Hood is writing about the ostensible subject of what it is like to live in Canada (particularly, it seems, Ontario) during the middle years of this century. Writing in 1966, the adult Matthew Goderich describes his studies towards an M.A. in Art and Archaeology at the University of Toronto in the late forties and early fifties, and his love affair with and eventual marriage to an artist named Edie Codrington who comes from the mythical town of Stoverville (based, it would seem, on Brockville). Like *The Swing in the Garden*, *A New Athens* is very much a spiritual and intellectual autobiography; in some ways, the second book is superior to the first, largely because the philosophical discourses are more closely integrated with narrative, characterization, conflict and the like.

There is an absorbing scene in *A New Athens* in which Matthew has the etymology of his names explained to him by his mother-in-law to be, May-Beth Codrington. By means of this explanation Hood overtly delineates the primary themes of *A New Athens* and, I suspect, of the entire series of twelve novels. " 'Matthew,' " May-Beth observes, is " 'The first of the synoptic evangelists, the interpreter of the Old Law in the light of the New. Whenever Matthew narrates an incident in the life of Jesus, he relates it to Mosaic experience, illuminating the old tradition by the wonder of the new. The Sermon on the Mount, the law of love delivered from the top of the hill, proceeds from the Law delivered to Moses, equally radiant, equally at the top of a hill, in that case Mount Sinai' " (pp. 104-105). Matthew, then, in his modern role of art historian, mediates between Canada's past and present, interpreting them in the light of one another. This mediatory role he first experiences academically, when he writes his M.A. thesis on the *Stone Dwellings of Loyalist Country*. From architectural designs and extant buildings he is able to make educated assumptions about what principal styles influenced the genesis of those designs, and in so doing he exposes the various layers of time in Ontario history, finding that they are so rich in fact and spirit that they refute Rupert Brooke's famous dictum to the effect that Canada is haunted by its lack of ghosts.

Implicit in Matthew's untangling of the skein of Canadian architectural history is the notion, first voiced in *The Swing in the Garden*, that Canada is a potential Eden, a New Jerusalem, and that the prophets of this vision are not necessarily religious leaders and their disciples, but secular historians like Matthew whose thought is always being guided by an innate belief in the perfectibility of man. It is this belief which May-Beth relates to Matthew's surname of Goderich. The town of Goderich, Ontario, she explains, was laid out as a perfect wheel, like the vision of a wheel that the prophet Ezekiel saw high in the sky. She adds that the wheel is an ancient "holy symbol" signifying

"completion," and concludes by noting that the name " 'Goderich' means 'God's kingdom,' from the old English 'Godes rice' " (p. 105). Thus Matthew is, in a sense, a blessed character—one of the elect—who, as the leading historian of Canadian architectural styles (and other aspects of Canadian art) is charged with the responsibility of searching for and divining the significance of events, people and works of art that achieve the miracle of perfection and completion. In *A New Athens* there are three key scenes wherein Matthew is portrayed in his double role of prophet and thinker.

The first scene occurs in Stoverville at that appropriate time for renewing aspirations: New Year's Eve, 1952. Skating on the frozen St. Lawrence with some of their friends, Matthew and Edie are fortunate to have a fleeting vision of a ghost ship encapsulated by the ice. The writing here is beautiful, as Hood captures both the atmosphere of that strange night and the mystic serenity emanated by the ephemeral vision. Naturally enough, it is only Matthew and Edie who see the vision; just as they call their friends over to share their mystical experience, the weird night lighting changes and the vision vanishes. In a second and related scene occurring years later, Matthew, Edie and their children are swimming in the St. Lawrence at the same spot when they come across a team of American archaeologists diving for the ghost ship. Aided by Matthew's knowledge of Ontario history—especially Loyalist history—the archaeologists eventually recover and restore the ship, which is put on public display in the summer of 1966. One of the many clues Matthew gives them, is the "key" as he calls it, to the puzzle: the ship's large, key-shaped rudder which he knows is lying buried in the garden of a long-time resident of Stoverville. It is this image of Matthew as the holder of the "key" of knowledge and interpretation that Hood allies with the biblical significance of Matthew's name that is explained by May-Beth Codrington. There is some subtle irony in the fact that although Matthew, a Canadian, plays a central role in the recovery and restoration, the ship is of British origin (it was a naval gunboat constructed in 1825 to patrol the St. Lawrence River and protect sailing ships from American pirates) and the archaeologists are American. Hood, however, is not judgmental and parochial: Matthew, rather than being appalled by our historical inheritances and our dependence on other nations for identity, revels in the cultural richness and variety that these inheritances create; and, after all, it is he as a "genuine" Canadian who ultimately shows how the pieces of our cultural and historical puzzle fit together. And, although his is somewhat wary of the museum approach to our history—to, for example, the process of recovering and restoring the ship—he prefers a museum of this kind to mere bogus imitations of past artifacts and locales, such as the South Nation Village project (similar to the one at colonial Williamsburg) on which he works irregularly throughout the course of the novel. He explains: "We can't actually live in our own past. All we can do is remember it, love it, and try to understand it. We can't make it come back" (p. 166). Moreover, in the active investigation and restoration of our collective memory, he suggests, is an innate vision of the future and of our quest for social perfection.

Matthew's prophetic role in seeing parallels between history and art is especially evident in the third key scene of *A New Athens*. After the death of her husband, Matthew's mother-in-law, May-Beth Codrington, lives more and more secludedly in her large, sunlit painting studio at the top of her house, where she paints hour after hour, drawing inspiration from her "fathomless, reaching need for icons, for imagined signals of heavenly life" (p. 121). In order to be literally closer to her source of inspiration, May-Beth paints in the top of her house; she imagines herself as one of the disciples, waiting as they did during Easter and Ascension, to be filled with the Holy Spirit. She allows no one in her studio and, to be sure of its sacred privacy, locks it with keys which she has changed regularly—they are the keys to her kingdom, as it were. One day Matthew, Edie and their children arrive for a spontaneous visit, and they find May-Beth seated peacefully in a chair in her living room. She is dead, and in that moment there is a remarkable serenity, which is extraordinarily moving, as the family kneels before her and prays. Later when they manage to get into her studio with the help of a locksmith, they find the keys in the studio: it was as if May-Beth had emptied herself of her driving, unearthly vision, into her art, and was therefore prepared—and what is more, knew she was prepared—for death. Her last and greatest work is an enormous triptych, called *The Population of Stoverville, Ontario, Entering into the New Jerusalem*. It is characterized, Matthew observes, by a "vision of the heavenly and eternal rising from the things of this world" (p. 211) and puts him in mind of Ensor and Spencer.

In opening the studio, Matthew and Edie have a vision or epiphany that is the religious equivalent of the earlier, secular vision of the ghost ship. And, while the vision is at first private, eventually it must be made public; and naturally it is Matthew as the prophet of perfection who is instrumental in exposing the kingdom of visionary art to the world. The triptych is securely glued and screwed to the wall: it belongs in that place and that place only. So, with Edie's help, Matthew turns the house into the Codrington Colony for the Encouragement of Visionary Art. The town of Stoverville, then, through the transfiguring energy of May-Beth's imagination, becomes a New Jerusalem, just as, in *The Swing in the Garden*, the city of Toronto, illuminated by Matthew's analytical insights, is turned into a sublime found poem. Relatedly, the town of Athens, near Stoverville, has its image of the Ideal: having created a village out of the wilderness, its citizens in the nineteenth century eventually set up the enduring landmarks of civilization: churches and, more importantly, schools. They do not necessarily believe, Matthew explains, that their village "was as great, as central to culture as the city of Athena, but only that their schools were in the tradition of the Academy" (p. 59). Between them, Athens and Stoverville bring together the Hellenic and Judaeo-Christian bases of our "Mosaic" Canadian culture; it is apt, then, that this image of unity should occur in 1966, just in time for the joyful celebration of nationhood the next year.

*The Swing in the Garden* and *A New Athens* are remarkable for their range and depth of characterization, story and thought. No doubt these qualities will

continue, and even improve, in the remaining ten books, the third of which is expected later this year. We can look forward to a new Hood with the same delight that we once looked forward to a new Powell. One thing is already certain: Hood's *The New Age* is in every respect worthy of comparison to Powell's *The Music of Time*.

University of Toronto

Denis Salter

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*Promoters and Politicians: The North Shore Railways in the History of Quebec, 1854-1885.* By Brian J. Young. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978. Pp. xiii, 193. Maps, Notes, Bibliography and Index.

In North America land transport developed more slowly than water transport. But during the nineteenth century it leaped ahead. The blazed trail, the bridle path, the corduroy and macadamized roads followed at lengthy intervals, plagued by neglect and centralized jobbery. Then came the steam railway. The earliest in Canada was the line from Laprairie to Saint-Jean, Lower Canada, which began operations in 1836. Ten years elapsed before a second line was built.

Once they had got over the trauma of 1837 and 1838 and put the rebellion rhetoric of the Papineau years behind them, Lower Canadians threw their energies into constructing railways and talking about the economic potential of the province. Railway building became something of a mania. Politicians, businessmen and clergy, all got into the act. *Promoters and Politicians* is a study of one aspect of this mania, namely the building of the North Shore Railway and the Montreal Colonization Railway, north of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers. After financially and politically chequered careers, both lines went bankrupt. They were taken over by the provincial government; but in the end, they were manoeuvred into the hands of the Canadian Pacific system.

Brian Young, a member of the History Department of McGill university, has not undertaken to write a railway story in the style of Pierre Berton. He is not Pierre Berton—fortunately. But he does provide an interesting, useful, fact-filled, account of the role of the railways in early Quebec politics (or is it the role of the politicians in railway-building?). And it does have its elements of drama with its confrontations and its corruption. Quebec politics have always been a complicated business, and the province's economic history is not to be separated from the rivalries of Montreal and Quebec, the north and south shores, the French and English communities, Liberals and Conservatives, public and private interests, and in this particular story, of the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Pacific. The book is not intended to be a history of pre- and post-Confederation Quebec, neither is it an effort to follow the current fad of playing with the computer to analyse the social and economic impacts of the railways upon Quebec society. What the book does is to bring out some of the



factors which helped keep Quebec, during its formative years, preoccupied, weak and "highly mortgaged" to the federal government. The railways were, admittedly, an important part of Quebec's integration into a transcontinental state; but Professor Young wonders if, in making its contribution to tying Canada by steel, *a mari usque ad mare*, the province did not have to pay a pretty stiff price.

George F.G. Stanley

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*The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan: Selected Essays Old and New.* Edited with introductions by Elspeth Cameron. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978. Pp. 301. \$12.95.

Since the essay offers the writer an unparalleled opportunity to talk directly to his readers, the form is most congenial to authors who not only value a personal relationship with their audiences, but also wish to educate them. Thus the essay is the form best suited to MacLennan's goals as a writer; whether he ever should have written fiction is a point worth considering. One is forced to the conclusion that, despite the weak action and characterization of his novels, they have a value larger than the sum of their parts. They have reached more people than his essays, and their social and political value in contemporary Canadian society cannot be challenged. Nonetheless, the works do not weigh heavily next to books by writers who have had greater success in combining social comment with the depiction of man as an individual, for example, Dickens and Tolstoy, both of whom MacLennan admires. Though MacLennan is a far slighter writer than his importance as a novelist would suggest, he is a far better writer than the neglect of his essays by the general public would indicate.

This said, it is unfortunate that this selection of MacLennan's essays is so uneven. The editor confidently tells us in the introduction that the thirty-four essays that comprise this book are the "best" of the "four hundred or so essays" that MacLennan has written. However, the essays selected to represent the last fifteen years of MacLennan's writing do not show him to advantage. The editor's aims—"to enable the reader to see the development of MacLennan's ideas, to follow the maturing of his personality, and to trace the high and low points of his life"—conflict with purely aesthetic ones. For example, the simplistic Freudian analysis at the end of "Two Solitudes: Thirty-Three Years Later" (1978) is not going to enhance MacLennan's reputation as an essayist. In addition, the tone of false modesty may offend some. MacLennan wonders why he has been asked to comment on the Quebec crisis: "Why me? I truly wondered. I am an extremely private person . . . all I know about our politics today is what I read in the papers . . ."

MacLennan's view of the past in "Reflections on Two Decades" (1969) reads like popular journalism. The past forty years represent "the most colossal explosion of the libido in history":

In an age so permissive and luxurious, its intellectual leaders permissive even with the truth, the father is beginning to appear as the sexual rival of his son on a scale seldom seen since the Stone Age, while the mother, rejuvenated by the cosmetician, the pharmacist, and a college education, has in the cities become a most potent rival of her inexperienced daughter.

The least desirable item in the Freudian legacy is psychological jargon; its wide application in other fields has resulted in much stereotyped thinking about art, literature and politics. One is saddened to see MacLennan falling into such an obvious trap.

Two other recent essays "The Changed Functions of Fiction and Non-fiction" (1967) and "The Writer Engagé" (1976) shore up MacLennan's position in his long-standing feud with modern "ivory tower" writers like Proust and Joyce. MacLennan stalwartly continues to announce that the novel is "at the lowest level of prestige it has ever known" while Bellow, Fowles, Lessing, Barth and Malamud continue to write prestigious novels, some of which may even tell a good story. MacLennan's literary categories seem cranky and inflexible. Does he really believe that "non-fiction writers have learned how to write better stories than the novelists are now capable of writing"? He argues that a "new form" has been created which reaches "its deepest and most splendid scope" in the work of historian Barbara Tuchman. This exaggeration is open to question, but looked at from another angle it explains the approach to Canadian history that MacLennan takes in the essay "The Rivers that Made a Nation" (1961), the introduction to *Seven Rivers of Canada*. MacLennan does not convince us that a new genre exists, but he turns history into such a fascinating story that one wonders why he never wrote an historical romance. He has all the requisites: a background in history, strong convictions about the significance of the past, the ability to write prose narrative, and a bent to the romantic. Even his didacticism would work better if the issues were more distant in time.

Quite a lot more of the "best" of Hugh MacLennan does appear in this book. Two essays written in 1956, "October and Smoke" and "Confessions of a Wood-chopping Man" show the writer's mind at its most civilized and balanced. The querulous note of the later essays is absent as MacLennan reflects on the pleasures of the autumn and the advantages of age: "Perhaps the body is like a plant that stores sunlight into the mind as the leaves of a chrysanthemum feed into the bud all the sun-filled hours of the summer months." He justifies chopping down trees on his property in Quebec as a creative act equivalent in value to the work of an artist: "Carving out the raw material of a forest to create a civilized wood is like making a picture or writing a book." This view of experience in which man and nature are in harmony and man exercises a beneficent influence on his environment is more congenial to MacLennan than the view that in displacing God, man created "a vacuum which 'Nature' (the respectable word for God) abhorred," and that "the worship of collective humanity" has filled the vacuum. Admittedly it is hard to be graceful when assessing post-war society. The very emotional involvement with the world that



MacLennan finds so admirable may prevent the writer from being level-headed in assessing phenomena like "Drugs, the Pill, sex, Viet Nam, and L.B.J. . . ." (a curious mixture of items which appears in "The Writer Engagé").

MacLennan is also at his "best" as a raconteur. "An Orange from Portugal" (1947), "The Lost Love of Tommy Waterfield" (1955) and "A Disquisition on Elmer" (1957) all include a good story. The stories act as unifying devices for what may seem discursive commentary and generally deal with the single-minded and the eccentric, who lend themselves well to the pithy anecdote. The essay on "Elmer," ostensibly about the etymology of the word, is about the American national character and includes an account of one of the more colourful cranks in MacLennan. Elmer, annoyed by a braggart who blows his four-note car horn in the middle of the night, shoots his man, "Sideways. Through the ass." Elmer's hostility to things he does not like is linked by the writer to a national determination to show where one stands on basic issues. Similarly, "Have You Had Many Wimbledons?" is less about tennis than about British "tactics and imagination" in human relations. An elderly lady with apple cheeks keeps the commentary together.

MacLennan has written frequently about Scotland and his Scottish ancestry. What faithful reader of his is unaware that the highland heart in Nova Scotia is a transplant? The editor includes "Scotchman's Return" (1958), "The Scottish Touch: Cape Breton" (1964), and "Scotland's Fate: Canada's Lesson" (1973). "Scotchman's Return" is elegantly written and includes a delightful character sketch of MacLennan's father, but it reiterates MacLennan's theory about "that nameless haunting guilt" peculiar to the people of Scotland. Rarely has guilt seemed so romantic, so much one people's personal possession. Failure is treated with nostalgia too, and in "Scotland's Fate: Canada's Lesson" failure actually is offered as the explanation for Canada's "humbleness" in her dealings with the United States: "We hold in our collective unconsciousness a memory of Scotland's loss to England. It accounts for our profound distrust of any expression of self-confident rational nationalism." MacLennan is less woolly about the Scottish strain when he is writing for those same Americans. "The Scottish Touch: Cape Breton" was written for *Holiday* magazine, and it includes the observation that "When the natural water dries up, it is human for people to try to drink at the mirage."

Another favourite MacLennan topic is Montreal ("my haven in a nuclear world"). Though there is random comment about the city in the volume, none of the Montreal essays is included. In "If You Drop a Stone . . ." (1952), Montreal is described as having a "small-town psychology." This is the judgment of a big-city dweller who has learned to control his experience by demarcating his territory and staying within it. If intimacy were the main attraction of Montreal for MacLennan, he probably would have gone back to Cape Breton. "The Art of City Living," or "City of Two Souls" (both from the collection *Thirty & Three*), for example, would have given us a broader view of the man and the city.

Each essay is preceded by a short, unnecessary introduction. The publishers should note that my copy of this volume was so poorly bound that it split apart at pages 124-25 during the first reading.

Dalhousie University

E.L. Bobak

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*Petits-Mâtres et roués. Evolution de la notion de libertinage dans le roman français du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle.* By Philippe Laroch. Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1979. Pp. 389. \$20.00. Paper.

The title of this study of the evolution of libertinism in the French novel of the eighteenth century effectively reflects both its structure and subject matter. It is a treatment of literary types based on an expanded version of Robert Mauzi's typology: the *petit-mâitre* or apprentice libertine and the *roué* or the master libertine. The first half of the work deals with varieties of *petits-mâîtres* and their feminine counterparts and contains chapters dealing with their appearance and variations in different social classes. Libertinism in literature is seen as a reflection of society. Examples of eighteenth-century libertines (mostly *fin de siècle*) as well as plot summaries of numerous, infrequently-read novels are provided. The section ends with a chapter on Nerciat in which the delicateness of his descriptions and verbal technique are praised. This is largely a stylistic analysis which differs in approach from the treatment assigned other novelists.

The second half of the book is a study of the master libertine of which the major portion is devoted to *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. Valmont is, according to Dr. Laroch, a combination of *petit-mâitre*, *amoureux*, and *roué*. His love for Mme de Tourvel whom he chanced upon (and did not select as an object of seduction), who does not represent a worthy opponent for him, and whom he seduces basely by profiting from her *ennui*, the season, and her location (all of which are unworthy of the *roué*), is the cause of his internal conflict and eventual downfall. Mme de Merteuil is seen as the leader of the game but is also victim because she loved her victim (Valmont) too much and because she forgot to fight with her own weapons.

Dr. Laroch shows that the *petit-mâitre's* occupations evolved from a study in technique to a study in the pleasure of sensual fulfillment which became bestial and cruel. The *roué* became a rival of God and eventually a divinity replacing religion for the adoring female.

The study includes an interesting comparison of Mme de Merteuil and Mme de La Pommeraye and mentions a link between Marivaux and Sade which bears further exploration.

At times there is a question of vocabulary which may confuse the reader. Nerciat's delicate, suggestive "*préciosité*" is praised and Laclos's descriptions are termed lascivious (p. 15). Nerciat is termed feminist because he insists on the

voluptuous reactions of his heroines who lead the action of the game by resisting.

While it is facile to criticize a work for its omissions and it would be wrong to give the impression that this book is not the result of massive erudition, this reader noted the particular absence of developed analysis of libertinism as a philosophical concept. The libertine, even if he did not enunciate his philosophy in each novel, was surely demonstrating a moral concept, a philosophy as discussed by critics such as Lester Crocker, particularly in his recent article, "The Status of Evil in *Les Liaisons dangereuses*." Surely, it was necessary to provide limits to such a huge topic, but by viewing the libertine in the bounds of his actions, a player of a game whose stakes and rules changed throughout the century, one sees him as a kind of caricature, a puppet moved by invisible strings, a novelized version of a social being. One dismisses perhaps too easily the consideration of the ethics of both the novelized version and the real-life counterpart of the worldly libertine of the Regency and the reign of Louis XV whose superficiality is made to contrast with the revolutionary violence of the social and religious ideas of the "new order" reflected by Sade's writings.

Dalhousie University

Roseann Runte

*Pope's Once and Future Kings: Satire and Politics in the Early Career.* By John M. Aden. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978. Pp. xiv, 218. \$12.50

Written by one of our leading Pope scholars, this book has much to recommend it. However, a reviewer would be remiss in his duty if he failed to point out a few of its many stylistic problems. One finds it difficult to like a work which uses the slangy "into" for "interested in" or "concerned with": in one place we are told that "Pope was much into the Court Wits . . ."; in another, that "He was certainly into 'imitation' of a satiric, if not political, import by 1709. . . ." Similarly, twice we discover Pope "touching base," once "with politics," and once "with the Catholic issue." Furthermore, at times Professor Aden's metaphors are either mixed or confusing or both:

It [Pope's work] begins in the first minutes after noon of Stuart decline, falls quickly under the shadow of a militant Protestant regnancy, enjoys a brief if uncertain respite in the chequered sunshine of Anne, and falls again under a Hanoverian winter of discontent.

Now that Hanover was installed Pope was more than ever vulnerable, and he was doubtless right in assuming, if he did, that some form of disclaimer would be prudent, especially if he could devise a way of doing so that would mock his stalkers and compound the impeachment all at the same time.

And one is forced to speculate on the meaning of the following bit of extravagant imagery: "We can track him [Pope] everywhere in Rochester's snow." The metaphor seems to imply that traces of Pope can be found in Rochester's

work, but actually the opposite is intended.

Indeed, this work's prose requires the reader to do a considerable amount of guessing about meaning, whether because one finds the thoughts too highly condensed ("Two lines suppressed in the early editions and restored in 1736 read, in fact, like a youthful descant on the Stuart surcease of Williamite sorrow: . . ."); its pronouns lacking reference ("But Pope was under no necessity of awaiting the Peace or the Tory fellowship to strike out at William and tyranny. He was born and bred to that."); its epithets ambiguous ("In 1730, when the *Ode* was published in a Cambridge memorial volume, there appeared, directly following this couplet, a stanza unprinted before or after in Pope's lifetime: . . ."); its 'shorthand' phrasings awkward ("Pope did not have to await Horace and the thirties to hit upon the idea of adapting translation to the uses of political satire."); its syntax misleading ("Except for the Statius and *An Essay on Criticism*, which require separate treatment, this chapter on Pope's politics and satire concludes with another series of translations.") By this convoluted statement the author apparently means that the chapter will conclude with a discussion of certain translations; an analysis of Pope's Statius and *An Essay on Criticism* will be given in the following chapter). Finally, on occasion the prose must simply be deemed hopelessly self-contradictory or ungrammatical:

Though less certain and more nearly random, allusion elsewhere in the book cannot be dismissed as a likelihood.

Of the footprints I have taken to be Pope's, I have tested them against the evidence of the Greek and of the translations in English up to Pope.

Yet despite these stylistic lapses, surprising to find in the work of a scholar who has so often in the past written with vigour and lucidity, the book contains much that is both interesting and valuable. Its thesis is that Pope, from his youth up to 1728, "the outer limit of this study," was not merely concerned with exploring "Fancy's Maze"; rather, he was becoming increasingly adept at the art of satire, particularly political satire. The title refers to the Williamite and Hanoverian reigns, which Pope, looking backward and forward, cunningly satirized throughout his early work. In his first two chapters Aden outlines the many laws directed against Roman Catholics from Elizabethan to Hanoverian times, and discusses their effects on Pope and his family. While Pope's genius helped him to maintain his dignity and freedom, as a devoted Catholic he did suffer in many ways; indeed Aden concludes that the discrimination he felt as a result of the penal laws "goes far to explain his resort to satire and politics in the first place."

In Chapter III Aden traces the possible influence on Pope's satiric method of certain Restoration and early eighteenth-century minor works, particularly the various *Poems on Affairs of State*. The chapter ends with a thoughtful analysis of the relationship between Defoe's verse and Pope's. The next chapter details the satiric elements in Pope's earliest poems; here Aden seems occasionally to be grasping somewhat to maintain his theme. For example, while he concedes

that Pope's impulse in writing the *Pastorals* was not a satiric one, he stresses the fact that *Spring* was dedicated to Sir William Turnbull, and on their rides together Pope "must have learned something too [besides about the classics] about politics and King William, though he may not have heeded all he heard." However, Aden does manage to draw our attention to a couple of interesting veiled allusions to politics in *Spring*.

Chapters V and VI discuss in meticulous detail the satire and "political coloration" of *The First Book of Statius his Thebais*, *Temple of Fame*, and *An Essay on Criticism*. In the following chapter Aden deals with Pope's early prose satires, which he rightly feels "reflect an interesting side of Pope's literary life," despite the fact that they are usually given little notice. Yet though he finds a certain level of sophistication in Pope's periodical writings, in the Dennis and Curll lampoons, and in the *Key to the Lock*, oddly enough he has little to say about *A Clue to the Comedy of the Non-Juror*, a work of both literary and political satire: it hits out not only at both Cibber and the Bishop of Bangor, as Aden observes, but also at the Royal Family, a fact of which he seems unaware.

On the other hand, that Aden is inclined to push his thesis rather too hard suggests itself in Chapter VII, where he discusses, among other "Deep Whimsies," Pope's delightfully light-hearted "Farewell to London In the Year 1715." The following verse is usually taken as a good-humoured allusion to the actresses Mrs. Younger and Mrs. Bicknell:

My Friends, by Turns, my Friends confound,  
Betray, and are betray'd:  
Poor Y--r's sold for Fifty Pound,  
And B----ll is a Jade.

Yet Aden sees complex political satire lurking in these seemingly innocent lines:

. . . [they] clearly refer to the Tory crisis, both intramural and at large: the last days of Anne, the breach between Oxford and Bolingbroke, the vindictiveness of the new Whig Parliament, Bolingbroke's flight to France, Swift's well-advertised plans for deserting the ministerial mess for Letcombe, Oxford's prospect of impeachment, and all the other distresses attendant upon the "Change of Scepters," including the emergence of the Whimsicals, or Hanoverian Tories, who may be glanced at more overtly later on.

Aden is on firmer ground in his next, and final chapter, which analyzes political innuendo and satire in Pope's *Homer*. While one might quibble with Aden over a few of his identifications, on the whole his case is a solid one. Especially intriguing is his interpretation of Book XXIV of the *Odyssey*, which he sees as "almost wholly an allusion to the return and pardon of Bolingbroke (1723): to the injustices done him (and Harley too, it may be), to his efforts to mount an opposition, to the kind of life befitting true nobility (the rural), and to the ratification of higher law and the prospect of peace in the restoration."

Although Aden does tend to overstate his case at times, his thesis is for the most part sound. One must regret that the value of the author's scholarship is

somewhat diminished by the obscurity and carelessness of his style. However, our reading of Pope's early poetry is undoubtedly deepened and enriched by Aden's sensitive analyses, based as they are on an impressive knowledge of the politics of the period and a keen sensitivity to satire.

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