

Book Reviews

Milton: a structural reading. By Donald F. Bouchard. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974. Pp. 180. \$10.50.

Professor Bouchard's book, his publishers claim, is "the first substantial effort in English literary criticism" to employ the methods of the French structuralists, especially Barthes, Girard and Foucault. It is ironical that the first English poet chosen for this singular honour should be Milton, beloved victim of New Critics, Old and New Literary Historians, F.R. Leavis, Old Uncle Tom Eliot and all. Structuralism brings a radical ruthlessness to the quivering maiden, and if it can't quite be convicted of rape, some variations and angles as yet uncharted by the Alex Comforts of literary criticism are certainly on public view.

Georges Poulet once remarked that he seemed to live in the same apartment building of knowledge as his Structuralist friends, but on a different floor, and in fairness to Bouchard, the present reviewer's feeling about structuralism is somewhat similar ("feeling about" is deliberately chosen, since I feel nothing more systematic than the confused liberal before the Unamerican Activities Committee, an analogy which may be of more than rhetorical effect). To the reviewer, the relationship between writer and audience, between text and reader, is more complex, important and yet indefinable than structuralism tends to allow, and the basic criterion by which any critic is measured is whether he brings to this relationship the rich and sustaining life that literature, at best, creates. I therefore find structuralism conceived as a method (Piaget, Barthes) – or, even more, as an ideology (Scholes) – alien; like Poulet, I'm happy to acknowledge it in the elevator, but I'd find difficulty in sleeping with it.

One can sympathise with the holistic drive of structuralism, and there is clearly some value in relating literary to other structures of communication especially in working with minor or sub-literary forms – anecdotes, folk stories, or popular literature. It usefully studies organization and forms rather than their content or direct humane relevance, and there are occasions when it is important to look carefully at the linguistic structuring of some literary experiences. But to imprison the individuality of *King Lear*, *Women in Love*, or *Paradise Lost* within the kind of

system, complete, self-regulating, and interrelated offered by Bouchard involves a vast over-reaction to an era "when critics are unsure of a shared community of interest" and, even more questionably, when "interpretation is nothing but polemic" (5). Despite its impressive intellectual forebears, Structuralism fails miserably at the level of the individual text, and the failure is the more acute the greater the work it attacks. It is too often singularly insensitive to voice, tone, levels of meaning, historical or ideological context; at best it makes meaningful cross-connections with the study of linguistic patterns and forms of discourse, but too often in offering us an x-ray view of the substrata behind thought, it is incapable of expressing the thought itself.

It is one thing to refuse to interpret, to sink to hermeneutics, when one analyses the fictional mode of, say, Superman comics, and to prefer to recreate the course taken by meaning without designating it (thus Barthes, quoted by Bouchard as one of his head-texts), but in its refusal to interpret, in its attempt to replace substance with cross-reference or "repetitions" (Bouchard, *passim*), structuralism suspends the meanings (and therefore the humane value) of the individual work. Not only, as Frederic Jameson suggests, does the process involve a "radical esthetization of life ... one of a relatively non-mystical, artisanal variety", it also refuses to relate the work to external contexts except those defined by the structures it has already delineated. Kant rather than Hegel lies behind structuralism with its fixed forms for organizing experience, as it flees the reality of history with the vehemence of men for whom it is truly, both individually and collectively, a nightmare from which they are determined to awake. Indeed, in its attempt to substitute order for change, system for variety, structures for meanings, structuralism in its more explicit and rigid practitioners could easily have frightening political and social implications.

I apologize to Professor Bouchard for an example of the polemic with which he is clearly unhappy in literary studies. His book, however, does raise these important ideological issues and in this sense, his publishers are accurate to speak of its "controversial" nature. The insight that emerges from his brief overview of Milton concentrates on "the way in which idolatry is the basis of an iconic and mimetic art" (9), an interesting point that cries out for more substantial historical context and exegesis. On *Comus*, he concentrates on the woods as a labyrinth where "human passion has transformed words into ambiguous counters in the search for truth" (31) and where "there is no way of differentiating good from evil, except through the super-imposition of a mythic reading of ambiguous events" (47), which offered as an objective reading, nevertheless contains that oddly unsubtle note of evaluation which structuralism seems unable to avoid. *Paradise Lost* is seen as "words about words and an intermixing of [Milton's] early thoughts and hopes and their later disconfirmations" (59-60), which is fine except we're not told what the words, thoughts, hopes, and disconfirmations amount to. Bouchard does offer in detail interesting angles on the old view of Milton's "fundamental identification with Satan" (112), and novel backing to Leavis' view of *Paradise Lost* as overwhelmed in words (71-79), but generally Milton is stretched and twisted in a rather painful manner upon the structuralist rack.

If structuralism is the hermeneutics of an anti-hermeneutist, then there are occasions when one begs Bouchard to actually read what the text says: "Adam and Eve must fashion their new life without divine intercession" (64) is how he glosses "their solitary way", ignoring the whole theology of redemption with a judicious wave of his semiological pen. Milton's meanings (and for good or ill, for hundreds of years readers have insisted they exist) float around in a nebulous linguistic context, although there are times when even his linguistic expertise deserts Bouchard as when he argues that Satan creates the first Lover's Hell "where all are apparently equal, but in an equality fostered by the plague — a word which has suggestive sexual connotations in the Renaissance" (126). Perhaps the inaccuracy is there to discredit historical analysis, but judicious searchings in NED and elsewhere revealed no such connotations at the time. Perhaps Bouchard means "Pox".

Other observations crowd in upon the reviewer but real interest in seeing a full-length attempt at structural criticism must be tempered by frustration at the result. Milton will survive his structuralist friends, as he has survived being a latitudinarian, enthusiast, existentialist, neo-scholastic, proto-Marxist and destroyer of the English tongue. Barthes and others have argued that Structuralism needs to descend to the particular to prove its value. It may be so, but the reviewer suggests in his ignorance that, more concerned with literariness in general than literature, structuralists have their real and valuable functions in the general, the substrata, not the particular: perhaps in the basement but not the penthouse of Poulet's apartment building.

Dalhousie University

G.F. Waller

The Sisters. By Elizabeth Brewster. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1974. Pp. 175. \$3.50.
The Coming of Winter. By David Adams Richards. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1974. Pp. 259. \$8.95.

This pair of Maritime novels could easily tempt one into yet more facile generalisations about regionalism and Canadian fiction. The road to a national literature, we are told, lies through the various local regions of Canada and the writer should look to his locus. It is not widely enough understood perhaps that the success of a novel is not directly determined by the place of its setting. A piece of ground is nothing but something for a writer to stand on; it is what he does where he is standing that might be of interest. A stage is obviously necessary, but an audience rarely comes along just to admire the stage; we are interested in what kind of a dance can be done on that ground. Especially in a novel, we expect the writer's linguistic dance to give us some sense of the possibilities of contact between people and people. To try to restrict the novel to one centre of consciousness and its contact with its geographical region is to put crippling arbitrary limits on it. This is what makes *The Mountain and the Valley* (to which Richards' novel has been

compared) so unsatisfactory. Obviously a place, a setting, is necessary; the only route to any kind of general or universal meaning and value is by way of the particular. Fortunately, our writers are beginning to realize that the Canadian locus is as good a place as any to start from — and to realize also that the locus is only the beginning, and not the end.

Elizabeth Brewster's *The Sisters* is set in New Brunswick and the blurb hopes to engage us by claiming that it is a story with a "strong and passionate sense of place" and is also "full of love". Although the book is set in the Maritimes, its interest is not limited to what it says about its locale. Similarly, although it is, at least in part, about love and history, it is not full of love. The advertising claim on our sentiment almost makes one wish for some other book, full of hate. Despite the plurality of its title, the novel centres on one sister, Janie Marchant, who is the narrator. Each of her two sisters, Vickie and Lottie, has a chapter (e.g. "Vickie Remembers"), and these chapters serve to highlight for us Janie's relative sensitivity of response to events. In a mild way, the story of Janie is a parody of a "True Romance" story, and it is partly this unpretentious plainness of the tale, with the corresponding clear simplicity of the prose, which gives it its appeal. Janie sees herself as a bit like Fanny Price in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*: "the sickly, snubbed poor relation". She also compares herself to Jane Eyre: "Were we not both poor and plain and (I hoped) intelligent and sensitive?" The answer to which is yes. Unfortunately Janie Marchant lacks Jane Eyre's defiant, romantic and rebellious spirit. She comes close at one point to acquiescing in a marriage to a bland clergyman, a mistake Jane Eyre could not make, as we know from her rejection of St. John Rivers.

Brewster makes it clear, however, that this story is a modern "True Romance" and is therefore not much like true romance. Janie does, at the end of World War II, marry her shining hero, appropriately named Francis Knight, but this knight quickly loses all sense of adventure and is unwilling to camp out overnight on the floor of Janie's revisited childhood home. He is a knight incapable of sharing her desire to experience the "strangeness of the world".

The book begins and ends with the adult Janie's revisiting her early home of Moss Lake. The novel is evidence that the attempt to recover the so-called 'lost childhood' can be successful and that the quest leads to a deepening of spirit. Janie's sisters have no interest in the childhood farm, and they are correspondingly shallow in their ability to respond with human feeling, particularly in moments of crisis. The novel suggests, however, that despite the value of the quest for lost time, time itself is one-directional and growth to maturity is always and continually an experience of loss and separation. The Garden of Eden is not altogether some place in the past; it is here and now in the guise of love, and Brewster gives an unsentimental and lyric expression to the theme of the separation of lovers through time. Janie says: "I'm going to be homesick all my life." She quotes from Edwin Muir's autobiography: "Time wakens a longing more poignant than all the longings roused by the division of lovers in space, for there is no road back into its country." Remembering, though, is at least somewhat of a substitute for living one's life twice. The separation between lovers caused by Time, however, takes place even though they are not separated by Space. A line from Tennyson makes the point:

"The days dividing lover and lover. . . ." So, although Janie gets her not so gallant Knight, she remains divided from him by the ongoing days. Despite the severe limitation put on the interest of the book by a central character who has the virtues of a Jane Austen heroine and none of the passions of a Bronte one, this novel presents a complex lyric and romantic theme in a simple, prosaic and non-romantic way. A promising, and at times moving, if not an exciting combination.

David Richards' first novel, *The Coming of Winter*, lacks the power of understatement that is available to a skilled and experienced writer (poet) such as Brewster. Indeed, if Brewster's novel is a modest and slightly disappointing success, then according to Faulkner's epigram, Richards' novel, which seems to attempt so much more, is perhaps an impressive failure. The parallel with Faulkner is perhaps consciously sought after by Richards. He is, at any rate, unfortunately given over to one strain of Faulknerian, urgent, running rhetoric, such as: "It started with the island as it always did and then with the island as it moved away into the sea black and green and he far out in it swimming toward the island, at once seeing the hot sand of the island and then out in the sea." The "and he swimming" structure is an obsessive stylistic device that becomes maddening before one has read even a few pages.

Richards has other thematic and symbolic obsessions as well, and one's fear that the blood-marked hands of the hero Kevin Dulse (sweet, sea-weedy Kevin, who blows his mind on a sweet wine called Hermit) are hands bearing Christian stigmata is born out. Kevin's crucifixion is continued in the local pulp mill where he burns hands and feet in lime. A disastrous marriage ceremony drives in the last nail. His friend John Delano gets his stigmata by trying to burn, with a cigarette, through a ten dollar bill wrapped tightly round his fist. Young Christs tortured by the demons of an encroaching society based only on the fast buck; the only rituals available to them, rituals debased by the tawdriness of contemporary society. So even the drinking of the sweet wine is to be seen as a parody of the Church's rituals.

The novel opens with a scene of Faulknerian hunt ritual, perhaps meant to be distantly reminiscent of the confrontation scene in "The Bear". In fact, the scene of Kevin's hunting is one that is rich with potential, and it shows that Richards does have imagination, intelligence, perhaps even a 'vision'. Kevin's need to find meaning in the hunt is intense, and his frustration is correspondingly intense because with the increasing encroachments of modern society there is less and less game. It is to be found only next year maybe, somewhere deeper in the woods. Kevin's desire for game, however, almost creates a deer: "That instant he craved for it to be there, noticing nothing of the day, the field in view, but only the brown hide of the animal, the black heaviness of it through the thin twigs. He heard the sharp sound of his rifle before he realized he had fired and then he heard its sharp painful sound again, twice to the head. The smell of powder mingling with other smells that he did not notice. And he knew that it was a cow, not a doe." This is a scene with almost too much potential, and the novel is led into some rather lengthy and boring narration to try to make this hunt disaster fit in with Kevin's marriage plans, his drinking bouts, the funeral of a friend who leaves a pregnant girl-friend beloved by Kevin's other friend John. But the scene itself is a daring combination of two Faulknerian hallmarks: ritual as a way to significance, and grotesque comedy.

The novel ends with Kevin caught in a meaningless modern marriage ritual (unlike his friends, he believes in marriage) which is a series of tense, emotionally bereft mechanisms. While the wedding reception food is being dutifully swallowed, Kevin's drunk friends dismantle his car and put a pig inside to make the love coach thoroughly foul. On seeing this, Kevin knows that he will call his wife, will think of her as, a slut. So the debased rituals are debasing, and since there are no adequate rites of passage, there seems to be no way into the future. Unlike Brewster, Richards suggests that there is no way back into the past either. Almost as a gesture against despair, Kevin's father gives him a new gun (a .303 to replace the cow-felling .22). But there is no more game. Hence the bleakness of the title. Winter is coming alright, and Spring is a long, long way behind. With a little more freeing of a sense of humour and a little more concise observation of the way in which people in interaction create their own rituals of the moment — and Richards does do this occasionally in the family home scenes — Richards could produce a novel even more worth reading than this one is.

Dalhousie University

Alan Kennedy

The Sincere Ideal: Studies on Sincerity in Eighteenth-Century English Literature.
By Leon Guilhamet. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974. Pp. vii, 299.
\$15.00.

This admirable book sets out to trace the ideal of sincerity as "a significant intellectual and moral movement in the eighteenth century" characterized by extensive scrutiny of self and society in relation to standards of private and public guilelessness. Professor Guilhamet is not merely using new words to reinforce commonplaces of eighteenth-century criticism — the importance of personal honesty and public probity; rather, he finds in the works of a number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers a concern with sincerity as a complex virtue essential to the proper realization of the self and the proper operation of society. For these writers, sincerity is possibly the most potent of virtues, and certainly the most elusive.

The book is an historical study of the sincere ideal as a literary standard expressed in "patterns of imagery and ideological positions, as well as a certain posture or 'voice' of the poet". In other words, Professor Guilhamet is as much interested in the psychological implications of the ideal as he is in its historical development. While the ideal has classical roots in the works of Homer, Plato and Horace, its appearance in writings of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century suggests to the author that it was in this extended period that sincerity found its time in England as the definitive virtue for writers at work in a literature influenced by a combination of tendencies derived from Puritanism and neo-classicism.

The introspective spiritual autobiographies and apologies of the Puritans and the plain style of sermon rhetoric in the late seventeenth century had as their rationale a deep concern with the sincerity of religious conviction. Persecuted, the Puritans formed bands of true believers. For a time, during the Commonwealth, they were optimistic that their ideal of "the pure, simple Christianity of the early Church . . . could be made a reality for all Englishmen". The failure of the Commonwealth forced the Puritans to seek the realization of their ideals elsewhere, in the private world of the self. With the stabilizing of religious ferment in the reigns of William and Mary and Queen Anne there was a growing optimism amongst writers about the improvement of society. However, the political complexities of Augustan England turned out to be such that the idealists were driven to rural retreats "where they might, by means of imagination, set reality right" as they drew moral strength from the virtues of the plain, honest life amongst true friends in an Horatian-pastoral setting. The parallel with the Puritans is striking. Like them, the eighteenth-century writers found that they were forced to internalize their idealism. "In their suburban strongholds these poets sought first to clarify and substantiate the sincere ideal in broad social terms, and when they had failed in that, turned to a more limited conception of society. Finally, when even that society of friends failed to gratify, they turned to lonely self-investigation."

In the context of this development, Professor Guilhamet analyzes the importance of the sincere ideal as a "secular moral standard" whose appeal was broad enough to accommodate writers as various as Thomson, Young, Collins and Gray, amongst many others. The moral idealism of sincerity — its requirement that what men say and do reflect what they truly think and feel — forms the basis of social criticism for many eighteenth-century writers, encourages openness of mind and freedom from bigotry and superstition, and promises "that human state in which everything is made possible". For some writers, the ideal might have promised too much. Distressed by the insincerity of their world, Thomson and Akenside create a pastoral "myth of the sincere society" only to find that reality will not sustain it. Young removes the myth from present reality and argues its fulfillment in the garden of God. Collins and Gray grapple with the relationship of sincerity to art — Collins in the early odes concerned with the loss to modern writers of the qualities of "simplicity, spontaneity, truth to Nature, and relevance to society" characteristic of the ancients and Shakespeare, and Gray in his perception of "the conflict between the formal qualities of poetry and the 'real' self of the poet."

The culmination of the development of the sincere ideal is, Professor Guilhamet argues, in Romanticism: in Blake, whose work manifests his life-long aversion for deceit and insincerity, and, above all, in Wordsworth, for whose poetry sincerity provides "the underlying moral base". With Wordsworth, sincerity is taken for granted in the poet's relationship to the world and to his art and is not self-consciously invoked and worriedly analyzed, as it had been by the earlier poets whose devotion to the ideal marked a breaking-away from "the fixed moral concepts of neo-classicism" and made possible a transition to the "free aspiration of the Romantic age".

Professor Guilhamet's thesis is that the sincere ideal implied both "a bold assessment of man's ability to stand against the troubles of life and to prosper in doing so" and the revelation that "man's inner being was something worthy of celebration". In relation to this thesis, his readings of eighteenth-century poetry — particularly of Thomson, Young and Gray — are intelligent and stimulating. His book is a model of careful study and clear explication of ideas in literature.

Mount Saint Vincent University

Paul W. McIsaac

"Complaints is many and various, but the odd Devil likes it": Nineteenth Century Views of Newfoundland. By R.G. Moyles. Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1975. pp. xii, 187. \$12.00.

As Moyles admits in the introduction, this book of nineteenth-century views of Newfoundland is intended to be an entertaining picture of life in Newfoundland and Labrador during the last century. Newfoundland, whether in this century or the preceding one, seems to have attracted to it a number of people of considerable writing ability who have, one might say, fallen in love with the island and its people. The writings of these people — clergymen, journalists, military men, sporting enthusiasts and what in Newfoundland are called "gad-about" — constitute the bulk of the material from which Moyles has composed his work. He has strung together his cullings with an interesting narrative which, without intruding itself into the quoted material, aids the reader in understanding its historical context. This is especially helpful in the section of the book dealing with the sectarian newspaper politics of the period before Responsible Government was granted the Island in 1855.

The rough humour and courage which come through the pages of the book were engendered by the material conditions of life in Newfoundland, and these qualities are revealed in the writing, sometimes despite the intentions of strait-laced and obtuse reporters. The book thus reveals the development of the personality and sensibility of Newfoundland which has attracted other Canadians to Newfoundland in the post-1949 period. The numerous fires which ravaged St. John's through the nineteenth century have often made one wonder whether anything of the written history of the Island would have survived. Doubtless there was a heavy toll. However, Moyles's book is culled from printed sources available at the British Museum and in other larger libraries in Britain, Canada and the United States. These sources are compiled in a bibliography included in the book.

The slender amount of printed material available on the Newfoundland Outports has not daunted Moyles, and he has used the major source, various missionary journals, to present a view of nineteenth-century outport life. These accounts give the sense of what it felt like to live in the material bareness of Newfoundland's isolated and scattered fishing stations and sparsely settled coves. The sparseness of

the writings of such witnesses as Rev. Julian Moreton and Canon Wix gives a clear picture of what, to those missionaries, were the barbarities of life outside St. John's. Moreton's account of being forced by his own conventionality to smoke a pipe which had been in the mouths of several unclean fishermen reveals how trying for Englishmen of delicate sensibility life in Newfoundland must have been. Another account of the same missionary's discovery that the bread he was eating on a cold winter's morning had been kept from freezing by its spending the night in bed with two serving girls reveals, in a subdued way, the humour that leavened the hardship of Moreton's life in the outposts.

This book gives a fascinating glimpse into Newfoundland life of a century ago and is well worth its cost of twelve dollars.

St. Mary's University.

Cyril Byrne

The Mind's Empire: Myth and Form in George Chapman's Narrative Poems. By Raymond B. Waddington. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. Pp. x, 221. \$13.75.

George Chapman's poems are reputedly among the most "difficult" in the language. Chapman's seemingly obscure style and private symbolism, the complexity of his allegory, and his immense range of learning all act as obstacles to any but the most intrepid of modern readers. Furthermore, even those thoroughly trained in Renaissance platonism, the cult of Orpheus, iconography, numerology, mythography, perspectivism, political theory, poetic theory, and typology (to name a few of the concerns in Waddington's book), still tend to find Chapman's major poems lacking in intellectual coherence and in structures that sufficiently support the complexity of the conceptual loads placed upon them. Somewhere too is the elusive question, all too frequently passed over, of the ultimate poetic worth of Chapman's works.

Raymond Waddington's book is a fine addition to the slender body of critical comment on Chapman's poetry (though one could wish for something better than its incomplete and inconsistent index). Heralded by his several preliminary articles on Chapman, *The Mind's Empire* is the first book-length study of Chapman's narrative poetry. The Homer translations are excluded, but detailed readings are given to *The Shadow of Night* (1594), *Ovids Banquet of Sence* (1595), *Hero and Leander* (1598), *The Teares of Peace* (1609), and *Andromeda Liberata* (1614), with additional brief comments on *De Guiana* (1596), *An Epicede* (1612), and *Eugenia* (1614). The central concern of Waddington's study is Chapman's crucial choice of form in these poems. Three different kinds of form are distinguished: the generic (outer or conventional form), the mythic (inner form or shape of the narrative), and platonic (the idea of truth behind the poem). Particular attention is paid to the second kind of form (the mythic), and to Chapman's frequent adaptation of

standard myths to the inherent requirements of his poems. Here presumably is the explanation for the somewhat unexpected inclusion in the book of a full chapter on Chapman's best-known tragic drama, *Bussy D'Ambois*, a chapter which, however, no one will regret the opportunity to read. Indeed, seeing what such an approach can reveal about the play, and recalling Waddington's illuminating study elsewhere of the Mars-Venus myth in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, one may hope that this book will have a sequel devoted to Chapman's plays, particularly those which employ a mythological structure to shape their dramatic action and its meaning.

The Mind's Empire begins with a chapter on Chapman's poetics which stresses the increasingly accepted point of view that Chapman in the past has been widely misread as a second Donne whereas he really "belongs to an entirely different poetic constellation." Chapman has his own unique poetic identity, but, if he is to "be twinned with any one of his contemporaries, a far better case could be made for Edmund Spenser". Where Chapman "predominantly wrote allegorical poetry; Donne did not." The remainder of the chapter then considers this crucial distinction and the specific nature of Chapman's "language of mysteries" and of his poetics, which, Waddington argues, form a completely consistent statement though scattered in the prefaces, dedications, epistles, and commendations written throughout the poet's career. Chapter Two deals with *Bussy D'Ambois* and amply demonstrates the value of Waddington's approach. Drawing upon a considerable knowledge of Renaissance mythography and iconography, he shows how "in this drama Chapman gives us heroic tragedy at the level of generic form," and in turn "creates the mythic form of the tragedy from the interacting myths of Prometheus and Hercules, a sensible manifestation of the idea or form of *concordia discors*." Discussion of Renaissance conceptions of Jupiter's Eagle, Actaeon and Mercury's Caduceus are also included. Though the significance of most of these elements has not passed unnoticed by critics, nowhere is there anything approaching Waddington's success in illustrating Chapman's creation of a coherent mythic form of his own through the use of so many seemingly disparate mythic elements.

Chapter Three deals with *The Shadow of Night*, Chapman's first publication and perhaps his most complex. Waddington connects the spirit of the two hymns that make up this poem to the *Orphic Hymns* and to the general Renaissance cult of Orpheus. When he comes to the vexed problem of whether the poem possesses any intellectual coherence or structure, Waddington argues that the *Hymnus in Noctem* is "preliminary, rather than complementary" to the *Hymnus in Cynthia*, and that Cynthia, who appears at the end of the first hymn, operates as the key to the whole and "in her threefold manifestation as Luna, Diana, and Hecate, . . . supplies the narrative structure for the corresponding planes of activity — the philosophic, political, and poetic." Chapter Four, drawing upon Renaissance fascination with perspectivism as a key, deals with *Ovids Banquet of Sense*, and, in that other vexed question of "whether Ovid rises to a spiritual epiphany or sinks in sensual debauch," Waddington opts for the "descent reading". His argument is a convincing one and does much to enlighten what is surely one of the most teasing of literature's interpretive mysteries. In Chapter Five it is argued that, whereas *Ovids*

Banquet of Sense is a mock Ovidian poem, *Hero and Leander*, Chapman's continuation of Marlowe's famous piece, is a "true" Ovidian work and also, in spite of the seeming paradox, that it is a small epic. The concluding sixth chapter discusses *The Teares of Peace* and *Andromeda Liberata*. As in the preceding chapters, Waddington's considerable grasp of Renaissance learning is tellingly used for interpretive purposes and to reveal the nature of Chapman's poetic methods.

Whether Waddington's book succeeds in restoring a sense of the poetic worth of Chapman's poetry is questionable, especially as he himself obviously has considerable reservations in this respect about several of the works he discusses. Nonetheless the application of his learning and the type of critical methodology he advocates clearly demonstrate that the much commented upon obscurity of Chapman's poetry can be confronted and even in part dispelled.

Acadia University

Alan R. Young

The Realist Novel in England: A Study in Development. By Ioan Williams. London: Macmillan, 1974. Pp. xv, 205. \$22.00.

Professor Williams' study is an attempt to trace the development of the realist novel from Jane Austen and Walter Scott through Thackeray, Eliot, and Meredith. His aim, as he makes clear in his introduction, is to investigate the idea of realism itself, as well as the specific works of fiction which manifest that idea:

We are actually concerned here with two things — the abstract idea of Realism as a certain relationship between Reality and literature; and the concrete manifestations of this abstract idea, which necessarily took on a form showing the influence of ideas and attitudes which accompanied it historically. . .(xi).

One comes to such a study with high hopes. The material with which Williams has to deal is intrinsically fascinating; the book covers some of the most important novelists in our language, and some of the most crucial issues in the intellectual history of our culture. Unfortunately, the work's effectiveness is largely vitiated by its author's confusion as to just what type of book he intended to write, and what kind of audience he intended to reach. His dual aim is perhaps overly ambitious for a work of 200 pages. In any case, he fails to fulfil either of the purposes he sets for himself in the introduction. The work finally provides neither an adequate investigation of the idea of realism, nor a meaningful discussion of the realist novels themselves. Except perhaps in his chapter on Harriet Martineau, "Rationalism and Real Life", Williams offers little insight into the social, economic, and scientific background for the Victorian novel. At the same time, his reading of the novels is in general most cursory; nor, given his format, could it have been otherwise, for he has most unwisely attempted to cram about two dozen novels by ten novelists into the

space of 150 pages (the remaining quarter of the book being given over to various introductory chapters). The question of audience is closely related to that of purpose. While Martineau, Bulwer Lytton, and Maurice make rather arcane fare for the undergraduate or general reader, no nineteenth-century specialist is likely to proceed very far with a work containing such statements as "After a sustained reading of late 18th century fiction, the novels of Jane Austen come like a breath of wind in the face" (12). University professors, in short, are likely to find the book too general to meet their needs, but too narrow to meet their students'.

Williams' most serious failure is his inability to arrive at any satisfactory definition of the term 'realist'. His attempts at definition are, however, worth considering in some detail, as illustrative of a semantic confusion which mars the entire book. Noting that "the idea of Realism rises naturally to mind" when we think of mid-Victorian fiction, Williams suggests:

We have come to associate mid-Victorian fiction with a naive confidence that Reality consisted in the material and social world around them. . .that although it could not be identified with matter itself, it certainly lay in the material world. (x).

His conclusion to this inconclusive paragraph is noteworthy for its circularity:

Finally, the texture and scope of mid-Victorian novels settle the question. Their solidity and firmness, their humour and breadth of interest in the abundance and variety of human character, and their unprecedented physical, social, and psychological detail, make the term Realist especially appropriate. (x-xi).

Later, after admitting that "Realism is a notoriously slippery term", Williams suggests its meaning has not remained constant, that, in fact:

. . .from the original function of describing the fiction which first attempted to represent Reality in nineteenth century England, France and Germany, it will continue to be used to describe fiction which anticipates the characteristics of this literature, or, independent of chronology, to describe novels which embody other, generally 'truer' concepts of the real than that dominant in the nineteenth century. (xi).

Without even pausing to explain what he means by 'truer' concepts of the real, Williams moves us, in the very next paragraph, back to the eighteenth century:

. . .to the moment when artists and intellectuals in Europe abandoned the idea that art should show truth to nature and started to think in terms of using it to establish the nature of truth — finding truth within experience rather than making experience conform to some authoritative and arbitrary pattern derived from philosophy or theology. At this point art took on a new status and a new function, and although it has developed through successive generations as the idea of Reality itself has changed, it has rested on this fundamental assumption and developed along lines laid down at this time. (xi).

The extreme semantic laxness of this passage is worth considering for a moment. Williams' most uncritical bandying about of such terms as 'truth', 'nature', and 'experience' is symptomatic of the larger semantic confusion of which I have already spoken. One would have thought Professor Lovejoy's thorough investigation into the uses of the term 'nature' in the 18th century would have forever laid to rest talk like Williams' excessively cute distinction between "truth within nature" and "the nature of truth". In any event, this distinction adds little to our understanding of anything. It is clearly an oversimplification to suggest there was "some moment" when artists in Europe ceased to think in one way and started to think in another. Nor is there any reason to suppose that one could not gain 'experience' from studying a philosophical or theological system, just as one could gain it from a walk through the Lake District or a 13-hour day in a blacking factory. At least, there is nothing in Williams' use of the term 'experience' to prevent our putting such a construction on it. What art's "new status and function" might be, we are never told; as for the "fundamental assumption" of which Williams speaks, it is evidently so fundamental that he does not consider it worth mentioning.

Unfortunately, Williams' understanding of the term 'realist' is of a piece with his understanding of the terms 'truth', 'nature', and 'experience' in the passage just quoted. Considering the ways in which the term is used in the passages from the introduction cited earlier in this review — let alone throughout the book as a whole — one can only conclude it to be a sort of catch-all, which can mean pretty well whatever one likes. I am not trying to criticize Williams for his inability to come up with an absolute or rigorous definition of a "notoriously slippery" term. But I am trying to suggest that his use of the term, without narrowing it into a context of appropriate scope for his study, can only lead us down the road to chaos. He would have done better to have stuck with his first 'definition', a concern with the material and social world, and left out the rest of the introduction altogether.

Williams comes closest to salvaging his book in the chapter on Martineau. Here, he offers a useful synopsis of some of the major scientific issues with which the Victorian writer was forced to come to terms, and a good account of the intellectual and spiritual impact of the new science on one woman who tried conscientiously to face up to it. In this chapter, the initial semantic confusion does not loom quite so large, for the author has a pretty fair operational idea, at least, of what 'realist' means in the context of Martineau's writing: a concern with the principles of physical science and political economy. He is able to use this idea of 'realism' quite effectively in his analysis of Martineau's novel, *Deerbrook*, which he sees as a valiant if not entirely successful attempt to reconcile science, religion, and morality. Unfortunately, in no other chapter is he able to approach the degree of clarity achieved here.

Elsewhere, Williams' semantic difficulties are mirrored by an almost total lack of consistency in his structuring of the book. Some chapters, such as those on Austen and Thackeray, concentrate on a single novel, while others, notably the one on Lytton, attempt to discuss three or four works in the space of a dozen pages. Nor

are the introductory chapters much help. Although these chapters occasionally mention authors and works not treated in the main body, they are all too heavily devoted to mere summarization of material presented at greater length later on. Had the 50-odd pages comprising these chapters been restored to the novelists, Williams' format would still not have permitted close readings of very many of the novels, but we might at least have been spared his one-paragraph capsule summaries of *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*, and *Vanity Fair*. I certainly hope that if Williams attempts any more studies in development, he will confine himself to the number of novels for which he is able to give close readings in the space allotted.

Many readers will probably share my perplexity at Williams' choice of novelists. While this choice is, of course, his own prerogative, I do feel that the inclusion of Lytton and Maurice in a study of Victorian 'realist' fiction from which Kingsley, Trollope, and Mrs. Gaskell have been totally omitted, and Disraeli virtually so, merits at least a word or two of explanation, preferably in the introduction. And so long as Williams was including people (Martineau, Maurice, Carlyle) who made their mark primarily as non-fiction writers, he should have brought in Herbert Spencer, whose long friendship with George Eliot as well as his central position in the intellectual history of the period would have made his appearance almost obligatory.

There is a great deal more that could be said about this book; my own limitations of space allow for only the briefest summary. The chapters on the Victorian giants: Dickens, Thackeray, Meredith, and Eliot, are among the book's most major disappointments. These chapters add little to our understanding of the novels, and, with the exception of some useful remarks on the background of Eliot's "religion of humanism", even less to our understanding of the current of ideas from which the novels arose. The lack of any adequate discussion of *Middlemarch* can only be termed shocking. The introduction, aside from its futile attempts to define 'realist', says little or nothing about the author's intentions for the rest of the book. Particularly noteworthy is the absence of references to any other critical studies of the period or of the genre, let alone any indication of what this book adds to previous studies. Most disappointing of all, however, is the conclusion. Less than five pages in length, and centred on a very perfunctory discussion of James's *Portrait of a Lady*, it brings the book to an abrupt, if not downright arbitrary halt:

So wherever we place the beginnings of modernism, and however keenly we are aware of the co-existence of factors derived from the past, or pointing to the future, in James's *Portrait of a Lady* we must realize that we are faced with something fundamentally different from anything that precedes it. (202).

It is true that in a previous paragraph, Williams pays lip service to the advances made by writers like Hardy, Wells, and Bennett. But had he seriously considered even one novel by any of these writers, or by Samuel Butler, it is unlikely that even his penchant for drawing hard and fast historical boundary lines would have stood up for very long. As it is, the conclusion is merely further evidence of an

intellectual flabbiness which undermines the entire book. One can only come away from this badly organized and (at \$22.00) criminally expensive survey with the realization that our literary heritage is a good deal more complex than Professor Williams would have it.

Dalhousie University

J. C. Peirce

High Windows. By Philip Larkin. London: Faber & Faber, 1974. Pp. 42.

It must have been a wry satisfaction for Philip Larkin to have been chosen as the editor of the new *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century Verse* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1973), for he had let it be known that he does not enjoy the poetry of "Eliot or Pound or anybody who is normally regarded as 'modern'" (*London Magazine*, IV, 8, Nov. 1964, p. 71). Nevertheless, one can imagine that his satisfaction with his editorship, a tribute to his own poetic achievement, was accompanied by a mood similar to that expressed in the last stanza of "Money" in his fourth and most recent volume of poems, *High Windows*:

I listen to money singing. It's like looking down
From long french windows at a provincial town,
The slums, the canal, the churches ornate and mad
In the evening sun. It is intensely sad. (p.40)

The intensity of sadness is one of the major aspects of Larkin's poetry, but the sadness never becomes tragic, or despairing, or sentimental. The seeming sentimentality of the lines above is undercut by the realization that the appeal of spending money is just as immature as the appeal of wallowing in a sunset pathos. The speaker's maturity consists in recognizing the ever-present possibility of such lapses into immaturity, and in being able to smile at how intensely sad it all is.

Another major aspect of Larkin's poetry is its sense of separation between the speaker and his experience of the world, like looking down at a provincial town from "long french windows". In the title poem of this volume such detachment is evident in

the thought of high windows:
The sun-comprehending glass,
And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows
Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless. (p.17)

Larkin's range of tone and diction can be measured by the fact that this is the conclusion to a poem which begins

When I see a couple of kids
And guess he's fucking her and she's
Taking pills or wearing a diaphragm,
I know this is paradise....

The friction between words such as "fucking" and "paradise" seems to tarnish the appeal of both, leaving nothing but a paradise lost, or rather, the comprehension of nothing, which itself can be a marginal illumination and source of unsentimental, intellectual comfort. In "The Old Fools", a poem about old age, Larkin writes "Perhaps being old is having lighted rooms / Inside your head" (p.19), rooms through the windows of which can appear, at least, "the sun's / Faint friendliness on the wall some lonely / Rain-ceased midsummer evening" (p.20). Such an experience amounts to an epiphany in Larkin's poetry, not an epiphany of ecstasy, certainly, but of momentary redemption from solitude. Again, the solace to be gained by such an epiphany is not a sentimental one, for such an experience has been placed in the minds of old fools, and thus is considered foolish, too. But terming old people "old fools" is itself foolish, for the speaker seems little wiser than they: his questions about old age and imminent death cannot be answered by them now, nor can answers be found eventually by his own experience in the future, for then the speaker, too, will be an "old fool". Such a realization tempers with a wry humour the ominousness of the assured ending - "We shall find out." The speaker and the reader, and everybody, will be implicated in such a vain finding out, but so too are they implicated now in the shared thought of the sun's "faint friendliness". The choice of the adjective "faint" is an eschewal of any overwhelming claim to absolute value, yet there is a kind of marginal reverence here, that is the stronger for having had its frailty admitted.

A similar kind of reverence can be found in the quasi-prayer at the end of "Show Saturday", a description of the activities of an exhibition day which must come to an end as "the dismantled Show / Itself dies back into the area of work":

Let it stay hidden there like strength, below
 Sale-bills and swindling; something people do,
 Not noticing how time's rolling smithy-smoke
 Shadows much greater gestures; something they share
 That breaks ancestrally each year into
 Regenerate union. Let it always be there. (p.39)

At such moments the sense of detachment is lessened, but not abolished, for the speaker is able to approve of union from his high vantage point as spectator, if not participate in it actively.

The intensity of sadness, the sense of detachment, and the wry humour are also characteristics of Larkin's earlier volumes, *The North Ship* (1945), *The Less Deceived* (1955), and *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964). The prospective reader of *High Windows* has the right to ask if there is anything different about Larkin's poetry written during the last decade. He can rest assured that Larkin's language is as finely controlled as ever, that his is still the poetry of shifting perspectives and attitudes which, for all its lack of linguistic complexity and mythic allusions, demands alertness and flexibility on the part of the reader. The new elements to note are a sense of immobility and reduced space. In "The Whitsun Weddings" Larkin had made a fine ending of the braking of a racing train; in this new volume the closest one gets to a train is "Friday Night in the Royal Station Hotel" where

the focus is on the physical isolation and feeling of exile of the only guest left behind in the railway hotel. In "Ambulances", Larkin had described these vehicles which "thread / Loud noons of cities"; "The Building" shows their destination, the hospital where the sick will lie immobile. The peripatetic movement through the church in "Church Going" seems no longer possible now, for the church mentioned in "The Building" is "a locked church" (p.25). Even in an out-of-doors poem such as "To the Sea" space seems cramped as "everything crowds under the low horizon" and a steamer seems "stuck in the afternoon" (p.9). But this movement towards immobility and narrow confines is kept closer to Mr. Bleaney's world than to Beckett's.

The windows which these poems open for us face inwards towards a mental landscape and outwards towards a sociological landscape of post-war England, landscapes which are familiar to readers of Larkin's previous poetry. It is one of the merits of his poetry that such familiarity is based on shocks of recognition, and not on nodding in acquiescence at obvious, self-evident descriptions of a shared social milieu or statements of current attitudes, with which familiarity would only breed contempt. Such shocks of recognition rely on the openness of the reader to experience, and of the poet to communication. Larkin addresses the sun in "Solar" thus:

Coined there among
Lonely horizontals
You exist openly. (p. 33)

Likewise, these poems may have been coined among "lonely horizontals", but do more than illuminate such landscapes. What makes them part of our poetic currency is the way they "exist openly". Larkin's detachment usually serves as a "sun-comprehending glass", and if beyond that glass lies only "the deep blue air, that shows / Nothing", his poetry should not be confused with modern work of less detachment and more gloom. Such literature can be aptly described by lines from Larkin's "To the Sea":

Like breathed-on glass,
The sunlight has turned milky. (p.10)

In the midst of a literary scene featuring much heavy breathing, it is a pleasure to read Larkin's poetry of illuminating clarity.

*innis College,
University of Toronto*

David C. Nimmo.

The Rebellion of Young David and Other Stories. By Ernest Buckler. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975. Pp. 138. \$7.95.

In the course of his writing career Ernest Buckler has so far published almost fifty short stories. A few have become familiar from their inclusion in anthologies,

but the vast majority have remained largely inaccessible and forgotten in the back numbers of a wide variety of magazines and journals. Robert Chambers' selection of fourteen of the stories is a service to Canadian literature long overdue and can only add to the popular and critical acclaim that Buckler has received for his four major published works, *The Mountain and the Valley*, *The Cruellest Month*, *Ox Bells and Fireflies*, and *Nova Scotia: Window on the Sea*.

Wisely ignoring the unsuccessful and cliché-ridden crime stories ("Three Little Words", "Guilt on the Lily", "In Case of Emergency"), the overly-sentimental stories characterized by their visionary parallels to the Nativity ("The Stars Were Bright"), the Crucifixion ("The Echoing Hills") and the Resurrection ("On the Third Day"), and the equally contrived stories that employ some coincidental device ("The Doctor and the Patient", "The Educated Couple"), Chambers has restricted his selection according to five broad themes. Each of these is recognizably central in Buckler's longer works and each seems to have elicited the literary qualities that one associates with Buckler at his very best — emotional intensity, perceptive and sensitive analysis of character, the skillful delineation of the unconscious and unarticulated emotional bonds and conflicts that can exist between two people, especially within the same family, innovative and sometimes daring metaphors and verbal effects, and a controlled and dramatic balance between the poetic density of his reflective and descriptive passages and the primitive economy that is particularly evident in his presentation of action and of the speech of rural characters.

The first group of stories in Chambers' arrangement consists of three works dealing with the relationship of father and son ("Penny in the Dust", "The Rebellion of Young David", "The First Born Son"). Each depicts a different version of a familiar conflict in Buckler's fiction: "an inarticulate man a little at sea with an imaginative child" ("Penny in the Dust"). The next two stories, anticipated by the secondary theme of "The First Born Son", focus upon the equally familiar concern in Buckler with the conflicting worlds of City and Country ("Another Christmas", "You Could Go Anywhere Now"). The third group portrays the ebb and flow of emotions within family relationships, specifically those between husband and wife ("The Quarrel") and between brothers ("The Clumsy One"), and again one is conscious of the parallels elsewhere in Buckler, particularly in *The Mountain and the Valley*. Chambers' fourth group contains three stories involving the impact of a stranger upon an already established family relationship ("The Dream and the Triumph", "A Present for Miss Merriam", "Last Delivery Before Christmas"), and the final group has four stories, the protagonists of which reach back into the past and experience revelations that subsequently resolve for them the problems of the present ("The Wild Goose", "Long, Long After School", "Cleft Rock, With Spring", "Glance in the Mirror").

Chambers' selection is a judicious one, for each of the stories included deserves its re-publication. Inevitably, however, those who may be familiar with Buckler's stories will miss "The Bars and the Bridge" and "David Comes Home" from the first group, "Goodbye Prince" and "A Sort of Sign" from the third, and "The Finest Tree" from the fourth group. It is a pity too that there was no space for such

stories as "The Darkest Time", "The Line Fence", "One Quiet Afternoon", and "Blame It on the Snow", none of which falls readily into any of Chambers' five categories, but all of which are arguably of equal literary merit to those stories finally chosen. One would have liked to have seen an example of Buckler's humour, such as "The Eruption of Albert Wingate", and one can only regret that Chambers did not seize the opportunity to slip in one of Buckler's unpublished stories from the Ernest Buckler Collection at the University of Toronto. Particularly welcome, for example, would have been the first appearance in print of "The Locket", a fascinating anticipation of the David/Ellen relationship in *The Mountain and the Valley*, or the story variously called "Children", "Hares and Hounds", and "The Day Before Never", a subtle and moving exploration of the relationship between a boy and a girl which again anticipates *The Mountain and the Valley*, or "The Balance", a version of which appears in *Ox Bells and Fireflies*. More surprising, perhaps, is that Chambers did not include as a group the stories dealing with a theme that has always had a special fascination for Buckler: "the theme of lonely people who, because their true inner warmth and vitality is never suspected come to be cruelly labelled by others as if one negligible 'type' or another" (Biographical note for *Chatelaine*. Copy in University of Toronto Buckler Collection). "A Present for Miss Merriam" and "Long, Long After School" really belong here, as do the unpublished versions of "Children", "Blame It on the Snow", "The Balance" and "One Quiet Afternoon" with its portrayal of the prototype for Bess in *The Mountain and the Valley*.

One must be grateful, however, that at last there is an available anthology of Buckler's stories. What they reveal collectively is that Buckler's gifts as a fiction writer are by no means restricted to his novels. Indeed, stories like "Penny in the Dust", "The Quarrel", or "The Dream and the Triumph" are equal to the very best in Buckler's longer works. Though this collection confirms the impression one has from the novels that Buckler's narrative technique is limited to the conventional and that his themes and plot motifs are limited in their variety, the stories also confirm that at his best Buckler is a writer with a superlative degree of skill, perceptiveness, emotional power, and control, and a writer whose themes are the compelling universals of the inherent conflicts between past and present, city and country, family and outsider, man and woman, age and youth, and society and the individual.

Acadia University

Alan R. Young

The Poetry of John Clare. By Mark Storey. London: Macmillan, 1974. Pp. x, 228. \$19.50.

This book proceeds chronologically, working through copious examples selected from the earlier poetry to conclude with an examination of the asylum poems. Professor Storey regards his primary aim as defining the poet's approaches to nature

while, secondly, examining the poems themselves within the literary and critical context of Clare's time. His assessment of Clare's poetry, unlike that in John Barrell's *Idea of Landscape*, deals with "the more general question of Clare's development as a poet" rather than with his particular locale. But these two works together with J.W. and Anne Tibble's *Life*, a 1972 revision of their 1932 edition, as well as Professor Storey's own *Critical Heritage* (1973) all serve to up-date a neglected but unusual poet of genuine romantic stature. Like Keats, Clare was largely unappreciated in his own time and was regarded as something of a curiosity. Although the appeal of the Northamptonshire peasant poet to the nineteenth-century reading public was great, his best work remained unpublished until 1935, so that he becomes a twentieth-century phenomenon, and the present interest in him confirms his poetry as particularly applicable to the rootlessness of our society:

I AM: yet what I am none cares or knows,
 My friends forsake me like a memory lost;
 I am the self-consumer of my woes,
 They rise and vanish in oblivious host,
 Like shades in love and death's oblivion lost;
 And yet I am

The full, heart-rending poignancy of Clare's poetry can hardly be appreciated without a knowledge of his biography, and one of the difficulties with Professor Storey's treatment of it is that, although his approach is one of developmental growth in the poet, too little of his biography is incorporated into the text although, without the obvious difficulties of too long a book, the author has done well with his first chapter, "John Clare: the Man and the Poet". Clare, born in 1793 the son of a poor labourer, was also not unacquainted with hard work and remained poor all his life in spite of help from interested and influential men. As a consequence his education was naturally limited, but his natural love of old songs and ballads led him at an early age to verses of his own and, despite technical limitations, he had a strong sense of language, often strikingly dialectic. But his natural taste, craftsmanship, and poetic integrity nonetheless remained unappreciated by those in his rustic environment; and, misunderstood, socially miscast, and inevitably lonely, in 1837 he was certified insane and spent the last twenty-five years of his life in the Northampton asylum where, during periods of lucidity, he wrote some of his best poetry. To make the most of Professor Storey's penetrating observations on Clare's poems, one who is unfamiliar with them needs to keep the Tibbles' *Life* at hand, since the story of his tragic life must be read along with them.

Edmund Blunden has aptly described the poet's sense of colour, sound, and locality as enabling him to render rich and strange many things, which were not in themselves either, and one of these was the social protest voiced in *The Shepherd's Calendar*. As Professor Storey indicates, Clare's feelings about enclosure added to his sense of alienation and inevitably cut off the past traumatically. With the passing of the village common passed also "the old honesty and integrity", and in both this poem and *The Parish* Clare becomes "the spokesman for his community".

On the technical side, although there is much in this work suggestive of Thomson's *Seasons*, and although there is considerable description for its own sake, it is Professor Storey's contention that in the writing of *The Shepherd's Calendar* Clare unconsciously started a revolution by moving forward, not only from mere description, but also from the imitation of Thomson and Cowper to achieve "for the first time in a long poem, a plangent tone of regret untinged by sentimentality", which apparently came to fruition in the sonnets and the better asylum poems.

Clare was in love with nature and poetry. In the second chapter of his treatise Professor Storey shows how the poet transposed the one into the other and how, as he developed, he moved away from the eighteenth-century "artificialities of the pastoral" to a more personal utterance. In his best work, poet and poem become one just as he and the country-side in which he lived were one. Both are unsensational, undramatic, and intensely intimate, while in the poetry his romantic sensitivity mingles with the peculiar but poignant isolation stemming from his origins to colour the whole, and thus reflect his native country-side. In poem after poem Professor Storey shows how for Clare nature was "a source of rapture that was wide-ranging and inspiring" while it was at the same time "well-defined and detailed".

The same argument is carried forward to a later chapter, which is largely given to *The Rural Muse*, Clare's last volume, in which the poet is shown to "explore his attitudes to the natural world" with more finished "technical and emotional" control. The sonnets in this volume are especially analyzed to good effect as the author reveals Clare using the form as "an ideal vehicle for a vision of nature that embraced the simultaneity of what he saw" as well as the essential unity in the things seen, together with the emotional twist arising from a joy described but now over and gone forever. In these sonnets, as in the birds' nests poems, Clare is shown to explore the mystery of nature itself, which is always associated with the equally mysterious reminiscences of his own past.

Everywhere in his treatise Professor Storey stresses what a perusal of the poems themselves reveals, namely, that there are often awkwardness in style, grammatical slips, and rhythmic roughness, but that in spite of these faults much of Clare's verse is subtle, spontaneous, and sincere, full of lyrical and passionate music conveying feelings closer to Wordsworth and Coleridge than to those of Thomson and Collins, or even Cowper, from all of whom he derived so much. Moreover, his poetry is as genuinely romantic as the man himself, with an idiom and a content uniquely his own.

In short, *The Poetry of John Clare* illustrates with fine discrimination clarified by comparison, contrast, and analogy what James Reeves has called Clare's "most precious gift", his sense of "organic harmony between poet and nature". His was "a quiet ecstasy and inward rapture", and it is to be hoped that, not only Professor Storey's critical introduction to the poetry, but also the renewed biography of the Tibbles and Mr. Barrell's study of this unique and touching poet will all stimulate the interest and attention that Clare deserves, and that a complete and reliable edition of his work may now be forthcoming.

Dalhousie University

A. J. Hartley

The Queen V. Louis Riel. Introduction by Desmond Morton. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974. Pp. xxxv, 383. \$6.95 (paper).

The publisher's description which appears on the back cover of this book reminds the reader that in the late Nineteenth Century "litigation was a prime public spectacle, and the trial of Louis Riel in 1885 was followed intently across the country". The trial is still being followed today, certainly in Canadian history classrooms across the country, and the enigmatic figure of Louis Riel is the subject of continuing academic debate. The debate of such an emotional issue, however, can quickly pass beyond the facts, and the editor and publisher have therefore performed a distinct service to the teaching of Canadian history in making the transcript of Riel's trial readily available to the student and the general reader. Moreover, Desmond Morton has introduced that transcript with a lucid description of the trial and related events which will surely help to focus the debate on the main issues.

The introduction begins with the report of Riel's surrender, received in Ottawa on 16 May 1885, and moves quickly to a discussion of the venue of the trial, the size and nature of the jury, the charge of high treason and the question of Riel's sanity. This is followed by an account of the progress of the trial itself, and a brief analysis of the political background against which the Regina drama was played out. Descriptions of the leading characters are neatly woven into the narrative, and the introduction concludes with the author's brief assessment of the issues.

It was, of course, clear to both prosecution and defence, as Morton points out, that "Riel's fate had depended more on politics than the law". (p. xxi) Indeed, Riel himself is supposed to have said to one of his guards, "Politics will save me". If, indeed, he expected politics to save him, he misread the political climate of Canada, but so did the Conservative government in assuming that the Roman Catholic hierarchy spoke for the heart of Quebec. Politics destroyed Riel, and the next decade witnessed the destruction of Macdonald's Conservative party as an effective expression of the cultural and religious dualism of Confederation. Morton's account of this political background is excellent, even in its brevity, and his summing-up of the issues is a challenge to the reader.

Given the constraints of space under which Morton clearly had to work, he has performed his editorial function admirably. Yet transcripts of even the most lurid trial can make rather dull reading, and one suspects that most readers of this book will content themselves with the thirty pages of introduction followed by a browse through the three hundred and eighty-three pages of transcript and exhibits. Surely, therefore, the editor should have been encouraged to elaborate somewhat his account of the course, the issues and the background of the trial. Failing that, at least a system of cross-reference would have been helpful in carrying the reader from the narrative of the introduction to the evidence of the transcript. That having been said, however, it remains that Morton has ensured the availability of this most important source for anyone who wishes to enter the Riel debate.

The University of Regina

C. B. Koester

The Influence of the United States on Canadian Development: Eleven Case Studies. Edited by Richard Preston. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1972. Pp. 259. \$7.75.

Nationalist Canadian historians urge a greater emphasis on study of Canadian subjects in an effort to discover what identifies Canada and her people. Yet it is difficult to see how this will result in determining what is unique to the Canadian experience if comparisons are not made with other nations and in particular the United States. It must be remembered that even Canada's identity crisis is similar to that experienced by the United States much earlier. Professor David Potter described this as "a somewhat compulsive preoccupation with the question of their Americanism". In their efforts to stress the uniqueness of their institutions and way of life, Americans avoided comparisons with other nations. But, like many Canadians today, Americans sought praise from foreigners. Charles Dickens no sooner stepped ashore on his first visit to the United States than he was accosted by an American who wanted to know how he liked America.

The comparative approach to history is indeed useful in avoiding a narrow perspective and historical nationalism. In his introduction to the series of essays in *The Influence of the United States on Canadian Development*, Professor Preston recognizes the need to use comparative techniques to understand "the process of overall change that has produced the community known as Canada" (p. 5). He claims that the most reliable comparative research that has been done has come from Canadian scholars resident in the United States (p.22). This he attributes to the fact that only Canadians have sufficient knowledge of both countries. For the most part, Preston believes, Americans are "unaware of, or apathetic towards Canadian efforts to preserve national identity and independence" (p.9). This volume represents an effort to help correct the situation. It is a compilation of a selection of papers presented at the inaugural seminar of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States held at Duke University in April 1971. Among the thirteen contributors are seven Canadians, four of whom were then teaching in the United States.

Carl C. Berger discusses "Internationalism, Continentalism, and the Writing of History: Comments on the Carnegie Series in the Relations of Canada and the United States" in his contribution. He provides useful information on the state of Canadian studies both in the United States and in Canada as a background to his analysis of the Carnegie Series. In his analysis, Berger emphasizes the internationalist idealism of James T. Shotwell and the belief that the story of Canadian-American cooperation could serve as an example to the world of how nations could live at peace with one another. However, Berger points out, this conception of Canadian-American relations was unacceptable to those Canadians who, in the 1950's and 1960's, became increasingly concerned about continentalism and its implications for Canada.

"The American Impact on Canadian Political Science and Sociology" is examined by Allan Kornberg and Alan Tharp. They conclude, rather testily, that

"if U.S. nationals did not exist in Canadian universities, they might have to be invented, or perhaps, manufactured under license — from an American parent firm, of course" (p.98). This conclusion emanates from the authors' study of the two social sciences most commonly considered Americanized at Canadian universities. The study was based on questionnaires submitted to departments of political science and sociology in Canada, an examination of the journal literature in both fields, and a "collation and classification of political science doctoral dissertations" (p.58). Since their analysis indicated that Canadian concern over the degree of Americanization is unfounded in fact, the authors conclude that "the underlying objection is to the United States as a society!" (p.97). Kornberg and Tharp find it ironic that many American social scientists were initially encouraged to come to Canada to establish programs at Canadian universities. The double irony, for the authors, is that many American academics left the United States for the same reasons their Canadian colleagues reject 'Amerika'. Unfortunately, Kornberg and Tharp do not indicate how many American academics left the United States because jobs were unavailable there or because Canadian salaries were higher. Nor do they indicate how many of the American academics wish to apply for Canadian citizenship.

Mildred A. Schwartz opens her essay with the statement that "if there is one area of political life that stands almost immune to American influence, it is the style in which politics is conducted" (p.99). She then proceeds to disprove her statement. She presents a fairly traditional view of her subject drawing upon secondary sources. In Carl E. Begbie's essay on the 1965 Automotive Agreement he argues that the Agreement was unique and is unlikely to be followed by similar trade pacts. Instead, Begbie argues, Canada should "press for a long-term, mutually-beneficial trade policy with the United States" (p.123). Robert Gilpin considers the political implications of American direct investment in Canada and concludes that Canadians are less concerned with the origins of invested capital than they are with its political implications. In view of the number of known cases of American interference in Canada's trade with other nations, it is difficult to understand how Gilpin can state that "American corporations and the American government . . . do not have the monopoly of power that critics of American imperialism charge" (p.135).

With the exception of Irving M. Abella's "American Unionism, Communism, and the Canadian Labor Movement", the remaining essays are regional in nature. Abella's thesis is well-presented, but students of Canadian labour history are better off consulting his book *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour*. The other essays deal with such topics as: irrigation in British Columbia, underdevelopment of the Maritime Provinces area, 1710-1867, Samuel Gompers and the Berlin Decisions, American literary influences on Canadian writing in the early nineteenth century, and the Americanization of French in Windsor.

Professor Preston states in his introduction, that "the essays that follow cast only a little more light on the nature of American influence on Canadian development" (p.25). His evaluation is generous. Those Americans who are apathetic about Canadian aspirations are unlikely readers, and those who wish to appreciate the

influence of the United States on Canada would do well to look elsewhere. Apart from the essays by Preston, Berger, and Kornberg and Tharp, most of the selections would have benefited from further study. Sometimes it is better to leave unpublished those papers which have served their purpose as a basis for seminar discussions.

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Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance. By Lawrence Buell. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1975. Pp. viii, 336. Paper, \$3.45.

Viewed strictly as art, the writings of the Transcendentalists appear to be imperfect. Viewed strictly as theology or philosophy, they seem shallow. Yet, like Emerson's mysterious Sphinx, these works possess an elusive power that calls the critic to account. To judge Transcendentalist literature one must see it in its original context and must learn to appreciate essentially nonfictional forms such as the travelogue, the sermon, the autobiography, and the conversation. Lawrence Buell's *Literary Transcendentalism*, "through a combination of intellectual history, critical explication, and genre study . . . undertakes to outline the nature and evolution of the Transcendentalists' characteristic literary aims and approaches, and the ways in which these express the authors' underlying principles or vision." The attempt is for the most part successful, and anyone interested in American Transcendentalism should read this book. On the other hand, prepare for some critical unevenness; odd judgements and interpretations are scattered through the analytical sections.

Mr. Buell first explains how the Transcendentalist aesthetic emerged from Unitarianism and how the conflicting artistic theories of inspiration and craftsmanship were resolved into a consistent literary method. This background established, he traces the influence of two important forms of communication, conversation and sermon, on prose style. All this is well done.

The most stimulating section of *Literary Transcendentalism* is Part III, comprising five chapters under the heading "Word and World: Nature as a Model for Literary Form". The first of these chapters is a sound and thoughtful discussion of organic style that sets forth the relationship between Emerson's ideas on metaphysical correspondence and his views on poetic form. Writers who committed themselves too literally to structuring a work of art on the pattern of nature could find themselves unable to fulfil the equally important demand of spontaneity. Certain of Thoreau's remarks, "as well as . . . other Transcendentalist attempts to represent the natural order . . . seem to cherish simultaneously a desire for total imaginative freedom and a desire for metaphysical coherence. Any just appreciation of the quality of their vision must therefore be somewhat double-minded also." It is hardly necessary to point out that a reader who is unwilling to take this bifocal view will see the refusal or inability of the Transcendentalist writer to sacrifice

either one or the other principle to artistic expediency as a weakness, leading to many interesting failures, considered aesthetically.

When Mr. Buell deals with catalogue rhetoric, he sometimes tries to impose more order on passages than they will bear. A case in point is a passage from Emerson's journal which is extracted and set up as if it were a stanza from a poem:

The world is a Dancer
 it is a Rosary
 it is a Torrent
 it is a Boat
 a Mist
 a Spider's Snare
 it is what you will.

"Clearly there is a shape to this 'arbitrary' list: syntactical parallelism, and the device of shortening the clauses to 'a Mist' and then lengthening them again, into an all-inclusive assertion", says Mr. Buell. He is right. But when he tries to convince us that "the procession of images also has a sort of logic: the dancer and the rosary suggest stylized movement, unleashed in the next line by the torrent on which the boat floats and which turns to the mist that congeals into the spider's web", his analysis becomes merely wishful thinking, prompted by a praiseworthy admiration of Emerson. Another unpersuasive commentary results from his impressionistic scrutiny of a short catalogue from *Song of Myself*.

I hear the bravuras of birds the bustle of growing
 wheat gossip of flames clack of sticks cook-
 ing my meals.
 I hear the sound of the human voice a sound I love

"In this instance", says the critic, "one does not particularly care to learn that 'the auditory imagery is progressing from the natural to the human level,' which is obvious enough." In a sense there is such a progress, but is it all really so obvious? The first three instances of auditory imagery, *bravuras*, *bustle*, and *gossip*, operate from the beginning on the human level, and have been chosen by Whitman to personify nature, since the auditory nouns must function figuratively or not at all. When one notes that Whitman's love for the opera — "I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?)" — provides the first of these auditory nouns, there is no longer an appearance of progress in the auditory imagery in any simple or obvious sense. The alteration which does occur is a shift from playful figurative imagery to literal imagery, from "bravuras of birds" to the straightforward "sound of the human voice". The simplicity of the final line deepens the tone, emphasizing Whitman's love of his fellowman, which is greater than even his love of nature. Still speaking of this passage, Mr. Buell writes,

The real challenge and pleasure are to see exactly how the birds become transformed into wheat, into flames, into the cooking utensils, into voices. One needs to connect the fields of birds with the crop below, the conversion

of it into the foodstuff which is now being cooked in a friendly atmosphere of clatter and talk, reflected in the "gossip" of the heartening fire. This is the real unity of the catalogue, of any catalogue, the main way in which it becomes a microcosm of a fluid but cohesive universe.

Catalogues may be unified by metamorphosis, but they need not be. Here the unity is achieved by a progression of associations, not by metamorphosis. Mr. Buell's transformation of birds into wheat into foodstuff into the poet's dinner sounds more like four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie than Whitman's celebration of life. Fanciful explications like these are not, however, the rule, and most of the author's conclusions seem justified. The catalogues, "at least in the best Transcendentalist literature", are not haphazardly arranged, and the recognition of the "potential subtlety, the range of tones and nuances of which [the catalogue] is capable" will indeed lead the reader to a better "understanding of the Transcendentalist sensibility" and will place him "in a better position to appreciate its handling of form in more elaborate literary structures."

A chapter on Ellery Channing concludes Part III. The treatment of Channing is sympathetic, emphasizing the failures, hesitations, and doubts of the Transcendentalist when the source of his inspiration refused to flow. More significant writers like Emerson and Thoreau often assumed a public tone of self-assurance that concealed their doubts and fears. Buell argues that we can learn something of the private spiritual lives of major Transcendentalists by reading Channing, whose verse "merits a fresh look".

In the final section, "the vision of the self as a subject and as an aspect of technique" is considered. Mr. Buell's theoretical discussion of autobiographical writing helps one understand the use of the persona in Transcendentalist works. Comparing passages from journals, lectures, and essays throws light on Emerson's personae. The author's study of the persona in *Walden* strengthens his thesis of the relationship between art and vision. The book closes with a lulling chapter on Transcendental egoism in Jones Very and Whitman.

Setting aside an extraordinary number of errors in proofreading and the absence of a bibliography, and making the usual allowances for differences of critical opinion, *Literary Transcendentalism* is a substantial work of criticism and literary theory.

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