

## Book Reviews

*The Thrales of Streatham Park.* By Mary Hyde. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1977. Pp. xvii, 373. \$15.00.

The first thing to strike the reader of this handsome and unusual book is the fact that it is dedicated to nineteen people, all of them the godchildren of the author, Mary Hyde, and her late husband, Donald F. Hyde. As Mrs. Hyde observes, these godchildren "are exceedingly lucky to have been born in the twentieth century," in contrast to the fate of young people two hundred years ago, when the chances of survival beyond infancy, even in a well-to-do family such as that of the Thrales of Streatham Park, were very slim indeed. Of the twelve children born to Mrs. Thrale herself only four reached adulthood, though it should be noted that the combined ages of the four survivors, all females, totalled 313 years.

Hester Lynch Salusbury Thrale, later Piozzi (1741 - 1821), is best known to literary historians as the friend of Dr. Johnson; the rival, as biographical anecdotist, of James Boswell; the Mistress of Streatham Park in England and Brynbella and Bach-y-Craig in Wales; and an indefatigable diarist. Her own publications included a much-read compilation of *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson*, an edition of her correspondence with him, a couple of travelogues, and a study of *British Synonymy; or an Attempt at Regulating the Choice of Words in Familiar Conversation*.

Had it not been for a lack of tenacity on the part of her father, John Salusbury, Hester might have become a Nova Scotian. In 1749, to get away from his financial problems in England, Salusbury sailed without his family to Halifax, where he was given a seat on His Majesty's Council and the post of Register and Receiver of His Majesty's Rents. His stay was short-lived and unhappy, but he managed to acquire, presumably by a settler's grant, four tracts of land in the Halifax area, including some thirty acres in what was then called Dunk's Cove and is now known as Purcell's Cove. Many years later, Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi, believing that the Nova Scotia properties were part of her inheritance, tried to gain possession of them, but found that they had been confiscated and reassigned by the Board of Trade. Her letter on this subject, dated 1790 and addressed to a Halifax lawyer by the name of Jonathan Sterns, is now

in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, and her father's Halifax journal, an interesting if somewhat self-pitying document, is deposited in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.

Mrs. Hyde notes that in 1814, a great-grandson of John Salusbury and grandson of Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi, Bertie Mostyn, visited Halifax from November 10 to December 15, when he was serving aboard the *Saturn*, a 74-gun man-of-war. Whether he called at Purcell's Cove, or inspected his great-grandfather's other former Nova Scotian properties, is not known.

The story of the Thrale family has been well chronicled before, most notably by James L. Clifford in his excellent biography, *Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale)*, and by Katherine C. Balderston in her monumental edition of *Thraliana*. Mrs. Hyde's book differs from these by concentrating on the journal or "Family Book" in which Mrs. Thrale recorded the details of her children's births, christenings, education, travels, diversions, illnesses and deaths. Though the record is largely a sombre one, partly because of the family's disproportionate burden of outrageous fortune, and partly because of the surviving children's extraordinary dislike of their mother both before and after her much-criticized second marriage, in her early forties, to the Italian musician, Gabriel Piozzi, what emerges from it all is a moving tale of quiet heroism on the part of a talented and fascinating lady whose love of life could never be subdued. Something of her irrepressible spirit can be witnessed in the lavish party she threw to celebrate her eightieth birthday, when she entertained six hundred guests and danced until five in the morning.

Like all truly heroic spirits, she has her faults, in her case mainly the faults of excess: an overweening ambition to breed prodigies and geniuses, which led her to pound Latin and Greek and the catechism into the fragile minds of her offspring when they were scarcely out of diapers; a bewildering and sometimes misdirected energy of body (she was less than five feet tall) and spirit that drove her into political campaigning for her brewer husband, Henry Thrale, even when she was at an advanced stage of pregnancy, and spun her in an endless social whirl from youth to old age; and a stubborn expectation that her children and her friends could and would keep pace with her feverish day-to-day activity.

Not the least remarkable of her accomplishments was the faithful keeping of a series of journals, diaries and daybooks, nearly all of which have survived, to throw light on the age of enlightenment and enrich our knowledge of some of her most colourful contemporaries.

Mrs. Hyde's book is, as one might expect from one of the great collectors of Johnsoniana in our time, a labour of intense devotion. At times, indeed, her zeal for detail might be said to outrun her authorial judgment, as when she provides meticulously compiled descriptions and diagnoses of nearly every one of the Thrale children's infant and childhood maladies, and an equally exhaustive account of her heroine's pregnancies. Her clinical footnotes, based upon the advice and testimony of twentieth-century physicians, sometimes show Mrs. Hyde slipping into the painfully obvious. We are informed, for instance, that "Mrs.

Nesbitt's palpitations were probably due to recurrent attacks of rapid heart action" (p. 193); that the uncommon size, at birth, of one of Mrs. Thrale's children was "due to the very long time the child was carried. The fetus continues to grow *in utero* beyond the term." (p. 203); and that the "Itch", or scabies, was caused by a mite which burrows in the skin (p. 207). It is hard to believe that such snippets of medical intelligence are of vital importance to the subject.

Most of the women in Mrs. Thrale's life were curiously indifferent or hostile to her. Her daughters all but disowned her. There were notable exceptions among her acquaintance, such as Penelope Pennington, who attended her in her last illness, and Miss Willoughby, the supposed natural daughter of Charles James Fox, whose youthful buoyancy cheered her in old age. The men, by contrast, were greatly devoted to her. While she was not a conventionally beautiful woman, she appears to have charmed a very oddly assorted group of menfolk that included not only her two totally different husbands, Henry Thrale the brewer, and Piozzi the musician, but also Samuel Johnson, Charles Burney, John Cator, and Arthur Murphy. In her octogenarian years she won the admiration of a young actor, William Augustus Conway, though the rumours that they had an affair were undoubtedly exaggerated. Even James Boswell, though sharply critical of her in his *Life of Johnson*, formed what Mrs. Hyde has called in another book *The Impossible Friendship* for her, and recognized her worth. Her one masculine *bête noir* was Giuseppe Baretti, who tutored her daughters in languages and whom she suspected of turning them against her.

While she enjoyed the company of men, she evidently liked to control them and to keep them in their place, though her success in this respect was mixed. She could not, for instance, prevent her brewer husband, Henry Thrale, from over-producing beer and hence getting himself into continual financial difficulties; nor could she control the gluttony which led to his death by apoplexy. As for Dr. Johnson, she appears to have regarded him at times, understandably, as at least as much of a burdensome nuisance as a genius, and ultimately discarded him when he raised violent objections to her liaison with Piozzi. It is equally clear, however, that he provided the kind of counsel and solace that her own family consistently and cruelly denied her.

Although Mrs. Hyde's study does not add a great deal to our knowledge of this redoubtable lady, it certainly deepens our understanding and sympathy for her. The scholarly documentation and the nice range of illustrations make the book a highly desirable addition to any eighteenth-century library collection, and the humane standpoint from which the absorbing Thralian domestic story is retold gives it a pleasing extra dimension.

*The Elizabethan Prodigals*. By Richard Helgerson. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976. Pp. x, 178. \$8.95.

Richard Helgerson's *The Elizabethan Prodigals* has a provocative thesis and an often persuasive argument. Helgerson claims that the lives and some of the literary works of five Elizabethan gentlemen writers (George Gascoigne, John Lyly, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge and Philip Sidney) follow the pattern of the Prodigal Son story and its inherent concern with the processes of rebellion, guilt and repentance. For Helgerson this pattern, so common in Elizabethan literature, can be related to "the pattern of a literary career as it existed in England for at least the first three decades of Elizabeth's reign." This relationship is evident in the situations of his five selected writers. Caught between the opposed attractions of humanism and romance, which Helgerson terms the "opposed members of a single consciousness," these men found it natural to project themselves in both their lives and works as prodigals at a time when humanist sanctions against romance and certain forms of poetry denied them a comfortable situation as artists. Although the conditions of the time prevented them from making the contribution to the commonwealth expected of them by their parents and teachers, their rebellion, whether the product of their own unruly passions or professional frustration, "could nevertheless satisfy negative expectation, the expectation that prodigality leads to repentance." Furthermore, the manner in which they lived out this pattern provided them with both "an identity supported by the governing ethos of their age" and a "guarantee of achieved selfhood."

At first encounter Helgerson's thesis seems on the one hand to promise a none-too-convincing alliance of literary, biographical and sociological history. On the other hand, one is attracted by several possibilities: an explanation for the presence of what has long been recognized as a major fictional paradigm in Elizabethan literature, a context for examining the works and lives of five important writers, and an exploration of a major artistic didacticism and the opposing attractions of poetry. *The Elizabethan Prodigals* advances our understanding of all three of these matters, and it frequently overcomes any doubts we may have about such explorations of the relationships between literary and biographical history. Helgerson's first chapter outlines the fictional paradigm and the manner in which many authors between the 1570's and the early 1590's identified themselves with their repentant prodigals. Chapter Two provides a useful discussion of the literature of parental and pedagogical admonition in an attempt to clarify the Elizabethan idea of a self defined by duty and a settled ideal of behaviour. Such literature, as is well known, has its counterpart in the fiction and drama of the age, and versions of the Prodigal Son paradigm typically begin with a scene in which a father, elder or teacher provides the prodigal-to-be with precepts of ideal conduct. Helgerson's five writers employed such scenes in several of their works, and, as Helgerson shows, they themselves in a number of instances were exposed to a similar admonitory

conditioning: "Compared to that official better self, the romance-writing other could seem only a prodigal fool, 'decked, by God's bones, like a very ass.'"

Successive chapters on each individual writer include telling analyses of Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* and Green's *Pandosto* and an intriguing discussion of Lodge's later Catholicism. The final chapter concerns Sidney, the odd man out in Helgerson's group since neither his reputation nor his works seem to fit the pattern. Making much of contemporary accounts of Sidney's belief that his *Arcadia* and *Astrophel* may have ill effects on readers and hence should be burned, Helgerson argues that Sidney, lover, poet and prodigal, "is less an exception than his admirers would have him appear." The pursuit of this argument makes for the most interesting chapter in the book, particularly when Helgerson discusses the Old and New *Arcadia*.

There are, however, deficiencies in *The Elizabethan Prodigals*. One worries, for example, about the supposed homogeneity of Helgerson's group of writers when socially Sidney had very little in common with any of them. One worries about the misleading implication that various authors fit into time slots corresponding to successive decades when in fact this is often not the case. One worries about such matters as the inaccurate allusion to *Misogonus*, which is used as an example of an English Prodigal Son play in which there is no final reconciliation and forgiveness. Not only does Helgerson not even mention the fact that the end of this work is missing, but he fails to take account of the father's promise of forgiveness and the words of the Prologue in which a reconciliation is anticipated. Later, when discussing Gascoigne's *The Glass of Government*, he ignores some curious inconsistencies concerning the schoolmaster Gnomaticus, whose name means "discerning", and whom Helgerson sees as spokesman for the morality that the play upholds. Why does Gascoigne have his man of discernment so easily deceived by Echo in Act II, scene iv? Why did Gascoigne, a soldier in the cause of the Prince of Orange, have Gnomaticus praise the University of Douai ("but lately erected"), a bulwark of Roman Catholicism and the site of Father Allen's notorious English College? And how is this reverence for Douai to be reconciled with the play's even greater apparent reverence for the Calvinists of Antwerp and Geneva? Possibly Gascoigne's play has a substrata of concealed irony, and, if this is so, then Helgerson's analysis of the play and of its connection with Gascoigne's repentant state is surely too simple.

Finally no one who reads the chapter on Greene will be convinced by Helgerson's account of Greene's repentance and its relationship to his later satiric works. Though Helgerson takes the usual view that these works probably adopt a stance that only pretends to be penitent, he nevertheless claims them as part of his literary-biographical pattern. This is too easy, and we are left disappointed concerning what might have been revealed had Helgerson taken his analysis of Greene a stage further.

Such qualifications are serious ones and do at times uncomfortably weaken the effectiveness of Helgerson's argument. Even so this is a book that offers the student of Elizabethan literature a challenging thesis and a good many provocative insights.

*Acadia University*

*Alan R. Young*

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*Walpole and the Wits: The Relation of Politics to Literature, 1722 - 1742.* By Bertrand A. Goldgar. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1976. Pp. 256. \$14.95.

Mr. Goldgar's account of the relation between politics and literature during Sir Robert Walpole's administration is detailed, comprehensive, and often eruditely ironical. An avowed literary history, it challenges not a few critical opinions. Discussing authors and works in terms of the responses elicited in the pro-government and opposition press and employing a belligerent sense of practical politics, Mr. Goldgar attacks generalizations about the homogeneity, principles, and political status of the men of letters. He assails the belief that Augustan writers behaved as a group and possessed a common political ideology. He insists upon the disunity of both the literary and political opposition and argues that there was no politically significant rapport between writers and politicians.

Mr. Goldgar's depreciation of the notion that Augustan satire developed effective political motifs, resting on evidence that the satirists uninventively borrowed such motifs from the press, denies political integrity to the men of letters, as does the biographical information he provides to maintain that authors fluctuated in political stance not from a sense of political purpose but from a desire to advance their literary careers independently of ultimate political commitment. More convincing because less polemical is Mr. Goldgar's explanation of the vagaries of response to writers and works. In his fine elucidations of why works with political intentions were ignored while those without such intentions were often made the focus of intense political concern, he demonstrates both that men of letters could not escape politics and that there was inevitably no room for them in the political arena.

The increasing alienation of literary figures from the sphere of public responsibility is detailed through the manner in which Walpole's indifference to authors became a major journalistic motif. Whereas the pro-government press scorned the humanist idea which had previously allowed writers to expect favour and influence independently of political stance, the opposition press used the motif as a political weapon without a concomitant concern for literature. Nevertheless, the literary men, although most had strong reasons to

dislike him, were slow to form a concerted opposition to the prime minister. This slowness and their continued solicitation of court favours are presented as short-sighted interest in their careers as distinct from an accurate perception of the state of letters. Mr. Goldgar holds that, granted works such as *Gulliver's Travels* were viewed as opposition propaganda, they resulted from individual hostility rather than from a literary faction. The writers' political sense is further decried in Mr. Goldgar's contention that they assessed their own and their friends' work neither accurately nor consistently. For example, while Pope and Gay thought *Gulliver's Travels* harmless, Swift, disagreeing, saw it as an offensive piece of propaganda, but he misjudged its political effect since the opposition press did not regard it as worthy of exploitation.

Mr. Goldgar's comments on Fielding and Pope also minimise the political effectiveness of Augustan literature. His survey of Fielding's early plays finds no consistent opposition to Walpole and attacks the notion that they were responsible for legislation against the theatre. Fielding's move to the establishment stage is related merely to a desire to please as wide an audience as possible without capitulating to party. Mr. Goldgar stresses how gradual was Pope's eventual commitment to that opposition and that it was based on, not principle, but personal obligations. He disclaims that Pope was the spiritual patron of the opposition and was championed by the opposition press.

Their aloofness to daily politics and contentment with general satire proves to Mr. Goldgar that most writers were not moved by public affairs but were narrowly and selfishly concerned for letters. He holds that the split between the king and Prince Frederick in 1737 was the circumstantial reason for the apparent unity of the literary opposition. Reductively he asserts that favour from the future king was the sole motive for the authors clustering around the Prince. For Mr. Goldgar the literary opposition lacked coherence because there was no official patronage and because the sensibilities of the patriot poets and the satirists were incompatible. After demonstrating that Fielding's later plays contained political ideas only to please the Prince and praising Pope's lone defence of the man of letters in a political society, he uses these, the greatest of the writers, to exemplify the fragility of the literary opposition by stressing that Fielding left it in the moment of victory and by analysing Pope's disillusioned retirement. There is, therefore, nothing understated in Mr. Goldgar's conclusion that the political press was remarkably stronger than the literary intelligentsia and that the political inadequacies of the latter furthered disregard of men of letters.

Despite his refreshingly anti-literary bias, problems arise from Mr. Goldgar's assumption that the press's reception of a literary work is the best index of its political seriousness. For his compelling account of the ironic and figurative strategies of the journalistic factions proves too much: it shows that the press, far from providing a consensus, had few standards for responding to a literary work. If Thomson was ignored for the relatively political poem, *Liberty*, while he was savaged for celebrating the birth of Prince Frederick's daughter after the

split from the king, the press must be deemed a fallible political index. Perhaps Mr. Goldgar is sometimes too close to the opportunistic journalism he describes. After dispraising the major writers by suggesting that the patriot poets could have been more effective against Walpole than the satirists, he eagerly concurs with the pro-government press's defamation of the patriots. Moreover, crucial points are made when he deserts his basic assumption: hence, he asserts that Pope's *Epistle to Augustus* was received properly even though it forestalled reaction from the pro-government press. Similarly, his citation of Fielding's *The Opposition* as one of the most effective satires at a time when the press was at a loss about Fielding's political stance evidences both the unreliability of the press and Mr. Goldgar's unclear sense of effectiveness. Given this study's wealth of provocative information, the reader must realise that the author sometimes betrays his assumptions and substitutes suspicious value-judgments for his avowed historical method.

University of Alberta

Robert James Merrett

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*Six Journeys: A Canadian Pattern.* By Charles Taylor. Toronto: Anansi, 1977. Pp. 254.

According to the author, this book is intended to draw to our attention six neglected Canadians, who possessed the elements of greatness, and to show them as part of a Canadian pattern. I admit that the six he has selected were unusual, out of the normal rut of Canadian experience. But are they united by any other common bond? Certainly not greatness. Few Canadians will deny greatness to Emily Carr; but equally few would claim greatness for James Houston. Do the six share common political, philosophical or religious views? Who could be farther apart than the tory nationalist, James Sutherland Brown, and the liberal internationalist, Herbert Norman? Or the Christian missionary, William White, and the sexual libertarian, Scott Symons?

The author works hard in his introduction to discover common traits uniting all six Canadians. He points out that they all came from pioneer British stock, and that all of them had a dominating idea about which they had something to say. Agreed. But what is novel about that? The same remarks could apply to a large percentage of the Canadian population. And there is no bond of unity when the dominating ideas are all different. The author even suggests that all six were driven by a strong, inner religious motivation; which makes me wonder just how far he thinks he can stretch the elastic. It requires little imagination to see just how the disciplined, heterosexual Brown would have reacted towards the undisciplined, homosexual Symons. A common bond between these two? "Not bloody likely" is how Eliza would have put it.



Setting aside the arguments as to whether there is any common pattern to the life journeys of the several individuals who provide the subject matter of this book, let us admit that Charles Taylor has given us a series of well-researched, interesting and instructive vignettes of the careers of six relatively unknown Canadians—again I would except Emily Carr. She can scarcely be considered as relatively unknown in this day and generation.

But who are the others? James Houston? We know him as the man who made Canadians aware of the rich artistic heritage of Arctic Canada, and who wrote a pessimistic, moralistic but successful novel about the Inuit. Since publication in 1971, this book, *White Dawn*, has gone through twenty five editions and been translated into numerous languages. It even made Hollywood! Success, yes. But is success the essential ingredient of greatness? Herbert Norman? If we even recall his name today, we remember him as the unfortunate Canadian diplomat who was hounded by the American State Department into committing suicide because of an early dalliance with communism while a student at Cambridge University. Better we should recall his books, *Japan's Emergence* and *Soldier and Peasant*. Whatever claim Norman may have to greatness must be based upon these. Scott Symons? A latter-day Oscar Wilde, irresponsible, self-indulgent, egotistical, the spoiled little rich boy whose morale was stronger than his morals. Brown and White? Who were they? A soldier who drew upon plans to defend Canada against a possible American invasion in the nineteen twenties and who ran foul of our pro-American establishment for so doing; and an Anglican missionary whose collection of Chinese artifacts helped make the Royal Ontario Museum one of the great world depositories of oriental art.

On the whole, I enjoyed Charles Taylor's book, even if I found no unity in it. As a correspondent for the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, he has the easy, flowing style of the journalist, which carries the reader along smoothly, without too many rough spots, to each journey's end. For a long time I have felt that James Sutherland Brown and Bishop William White deserved further study. I can say the same thing about his essay on Herbert Norman. Perhaps that is why I regard these three essays as the best in the book. Taylor's paper on Emily Carr is a good one; but it adds little or nothing to what we already know about Canada's most famous woman artist. With Houston and Symons Charles Taylor is less successful. It is, after all, hard to make much of a man who abandoned the country about which he wrote so convincingly to enjoy the flesh pots of the United States. He should have remained in the north to fill the distinctive Canadian role of victim, which Margaret Atwood has identified as the central preoccupation of Canadian literature. As for Symons, I find neither heroism nor splendor in this sordid character, despite the author's efforts to discover traces of both.

*Professor Emeritus of Canadian Studies,  
Mount Allison University.*

*George F. G. Stanley*

*Lightly*. By Chipman Hall. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1977. Pp. 127.

It is interesting to consider how much of our regional fiction is centred on the child. There are the old stand-bys, like *Who Has Seen the Wind*, or more recent works such as *The Lives of Girls & Women*, or the French-Canadian works such as *Une Chaîne dans un parc*. In fact, most Canadian authors publish, at some point in their careers, regional recollections focussed more or less through the persona of themselves as children. But the genre is not as straightforward as it appears, and it is not every author who can handle its stylistic demands. One great problem is, of course, what to do with the author's inescapable adult perspectives: to withhold them, as W.O. Mitchell does, to keep the idiom and point of view pure, and thereby run the risk of very limited scope; or to include them through the use of adult story teller recalling childhood, as Alice Munro does, and run the risk of creating at times a rather shadowy child? And what about all those perfectly dreadful first novels (which blessedly never spawn sequels) centred on children who resemble neither children nor adults nor chimpanzees? The autobiographical novel may be predictable, but its excellence is not.

Chipman Hall seems to be aware of these issues and he deals with them with varying degrees of success. After a page or two, he settles in to the child's point of view and maintains it throughout. This aspect of the novel is extraordinarily beautiful and effective. Bayo's loneliness, his rich imaginative life, his empathy with nature and his gentleness toward those who reject him are all immensely attractive, yet never cloy. His perceptions are expressed in a voice and idiom that are unalterably his, and always evocative of his character and place:

Being lost to die out of its place in the sea, the shell was left here to make me think about it, and being thought about makes it special. Now if it could think back about me, that would be love. Anyhow, I will take the shell home, and Mumsey will probably throw it out.

Though the major experience of the book is a mystical one, quite literally the transference of spirit from grandfather to grandson, the boy's view of it remains credibly that of a boy. He accepts without question the changes which begin to take place in him, from clumsy withdrawal to companionable competence, having believed all along that love would make him special, like the shell. As for his grandfather's role as holy man, he grasps the physical features of it, the sewing of robe and sandals, and the desire to walk on the surface of the sea, and he senses the significance of each symbol, quite apart from definition. The point of view is a little less effective in the action scenes, such as the baseball game or hauling in fishing lines in high seas. Bayo's narrative rings true, as always, but the child's tendency to take too much for granted strains the reader's comprehension to the breaking point.

The choice of point of view, then, has its advantages, but makes some very tricky demands. How, for instance, is Mr. Hall to reveal all the aspects of this mystical experience which lie beyond the nine-year-old's grasp? One way to handle such a problem is to suggest, through various stylistic devices interpretable by the adult reader, all those conceptual areas to which the child is sensitive but has neither the mind nor the vocabulary to explain. This is the old Joycean technique from *Portrait of the Artist*, used so well by Andre Longevin in *Une Chaîne dans un parc*. Since *Lightly* is centred on the mystical unity of all nature, one would expect a heavy reliance upon natural symbol, and, indeed, there are some interesting and highly archetypal uses of tree, gull, sun and sea. There is also some attempt to use the present tense to indicate developing states of consciousness, the past to reveal experiences that have already been integrated into the self. These devices work subtly and well, and after Bayo's ideal vision of himself as a tree upon which the gulls come descending or the description of the dory held lightly aloft by a trusted sea, we do not really want or need an explanation.

Unfortunately, explanation is precisely what we get, and far too much of it. In the first fifty pages, the character of Philip Longlan is rich and credible, his story telling idiomatically Nova Scotian, his obsessions with the sea and his guilt about this past rejection of his family carefully and beautifully interconnected in rambling monologues. Occupationless now and determined to develop a relationship with his grandson, he is cast quite naturally as one who talks his way toward understanding, and while he is struggling verbally with "seeing into something different he wants us to live with", his presence is entirely complementary to the boy's. Once he knows, however, what it is he is after, he begins to speak in abstractions and clichés ("at last I can see the old are only wise when they are innocent as children") which are not only embarrassingly unnecessary but take the edges from the individuality of the man and the credibility from the entire situation. Here one can only suppose that Chipman Hall loses faith in the suggestive power of symbol, character and action, and turns material with mythic potential into a kind of pop cult. It is a credit to Mr. Hall's powers as a writer that we can believe in a retired Nova Scotian fisherman obsessed with the desire to walk upon the sea, but we can never accept his speaking like an elementary school teacher lecturing on William Blake.

The disastrous opening of the novel falls into the same area of error, the assumption that the book needs a commentary, a thesis statement with which to begin. The book really does not need such convoluted and ultimately trite additions: it is a beautiful and profoundly moving story, regional literature that gives to landscape and culture the elusive quality of myth.

*Sandbars*. By Oonah McFee. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977. Pp. 357. \$11.95.

*Sandbars* is as natural as its name suggests, while a good deal of its substance is also, like the sandbar, submerged and lying just beneath the surface. It is a leisurely and lyrical novel about a girl growing up in the Ottawa area in the 1930's, and, unlike other Canadian coming-of-age novels, it does not concentrate on the sexual experimentation of the young girl; rather it concentrates on her awakening sensibility to the world around her, her family, and her first loves. Maturity is not marked by sexual initiation alone, but by the moments of clearer vision when everything comes suddenly into focus. McFee concentrates on the interplay of external occasion and internal reaction to it, and there is no intrigue and little suspense. *Sandbars* is a quiet book, and indeed silence and the interaction of silence and melody are recurring motifs in the novel. It is a book to be savoured and not rushed through. The effect is cumulative, like the grains of sand gathering layer upon layer to form the sandbars of the title.

The first-person narrator is Hannah Watson, and in the present she is separated from her husband and living in Toronto. She is in her mid-50's and makes silk lampshades for a living, but beyond this and a brief encounter with a taxi driver, we know little about the Hannah of the 1970's. We get to know the Hannah of the 30's and early 40's through a series of images and remembered moments from the past, and the mixture of adult reflection and youthful discovery is well-balanced. *Sandbars* is not just a record of a child's growing up, but a record of an adult's appreciation of the process as well. The growing and changing relations of the family dominate the book, and McFee calls being part of a family a "celebration". She compares it to the tides as well, the sureness and dependability of the relationships, family members going out into the world but always "coming back in again".

Rather than telling all the day-to-day happenings of Hannah, McFee distils out only the moments of great significance, the moments in which everything is suddenly clearer and sharper. From one remembered moment of concentrated awareness to another, from one little epiphany to the next, the stream of consciousness ordering is often difficult to follow. The style, though beautiful, can be annoying if you do not adjust to the pace. One moment is developed and interest aroused, only to be dropped when the next chapter opens yet another memory-door months and years away. The moments are the sandbars on which Hannah has been beached for a while; the current of life has stopped temporarily, and the sandbar-moments are particularly special and to be remembered.

There is no progressive time sequence, then, in *Sandbars*, and it is almost as if the pages of a diary had been shuffled and rearranged, with images rather than time ordering the telling. Music and silences become the keys to remembrance, with either a melody recalling a past moment or the communications of silence. Music is an integral part of the family, and the children are brought up with a respect and love for music and dancing, while the father has studied

piano and expresses his pent-up emotions through his instrument. Most of the novel's episodes are linked either by music or by moments of silence in which there is an understood communication. As McFee says, "What speaks better than silence?" (p. 204) Sunlight can have a brassy sound, while the flow of music can have "a silence in it somewhere". Sounds and silence define each other here, and the "impetus of silence" can "throb", or a shared moment can be "a dazzle of silence". (p. 178) There are the sudden illuminating silences and the communicative silences of shared quietude. Not all the silences are comfortable and reflective, however, and there are also the awkward, teenage, fumbling silences and the slightly frightening, alone silences of two a.m. and darkness. Finally, there is the overspreading silence of death and the anguish of the emotion that cannot be expressed to the people who matter, not until it is too late. Hannah knows this only too well, and as McFee says, "It is not the past you mourn, but the expectations of the past. And that is the dream you follow." (p. 354). In many ways *Sandbars* becomes a dialectic of silence or, to use Susan Sontag's terminology, it elaborates an "aesthetic of silence". The words of the book are constantly weighed and balanced against the alternative of silence, and are thus cleansed or purged by the possibility. *Sandbars* progresses in the mode of modern art that could be called "definition through opposition", and is thus, despite the 1930's setting, a very contemporary work.

*Sandbars* is Oonah McFee's first novel, and she is apparently at work now on a second and plans still two more to complete the cycle. While *Sandbars* tells Hannah Watson's story to her mid-twenties with a few glimpses into her life beyond, presumably the planned three novels to follow will fill in the years to the present. If those years are as richly revealed as the ones in *Sandbars*, they will be well worth re-living with McFee.

*Dalhousie University*

*Ann Munton*

*Recollections of People, Press and Politics.* By Grattan O'Leary. Toronto: Macmillan, 1977. Pp. xv, 208. \$12.95

Perhaps it is unfair to think of this book as it might have been: twice the length, written with the full weight of his maturity and without the sword of a terminal illness over him, with notes, recollections around him, and best of all, with abundant time. The book is so good that one feels cheated. Grattan O'Leary started it much too late. People had been pressing him for years to write it, especially John Gray of Macmillans—the *spiritus movens* behind Creighton's *Macdonald* as well—but O'Leary, unlike Creighton, could not be brought to do it. He retired as editor of the *Ottawa Journal* in 1963, when he was 75 years of age; Gray then began a concerted campaign to get O'Leary to write that autobiography. It was not easy. All O'Leary's life he had been a newspaperman—and a good one—but he had never written a book. He feared

it. He told Gray, half in apology, "I'm afraid of writing a bad book." Gray told him he couldn't, even if he tried. Nevertheless, it was another twelve years, 1975, before O'Leary got down to work, and then only because he learned he had cancer, and that he would live only a year. So this is the book of a man, 87 years of age, with permanent silence looming around the corner.

It's a book for an evening by the fire, or for that matter a day at the beach, or for almost anywhere where savoury writing can be enjoyed. O'Leary had seen a lot of life in Canada. He was born in 1888 in an Irish family settled in the Gaspé, a family that had, for its memories and pride, pictures of the Pope, Charles Parnell, and not least, John L. Sullivan. O'Leary quit school in Percé when he was twelve, went to sea, and ended up in 1909 in Saint John, New Brunswick, an agreeable, grimy old place, as a newspaperman working on the *Saint John Standard*. Two years later he got the chance to go to the *Ottawa Journal*, for \$17 a week. He saw the defeat of Laurier in 1911 and a great deal of Ottawa life afterward, from that old *Journal* office at the corner of Elgin and Sparks Street.

O'Leary has a fund of stories about Parliament. A witty Jewish Liberal, Sam Jacobs, MP for Montreal-Cartier, 1917 - 1938, made a strong protectionist speech; Meighen, the Conservative leader, rose and invited Jacobs to come across the floor of the House to the Conservative Party, patently his spiritual home. Jacobs got up and said, "Mr. Speaker, one of my ancestors did that sort of thing two thousand years ago, and the world hasn't stopped talking about it yet!"

O'Leary was editorial writer for the *Ottawa Journal* year in and year out, and he was not one who cultivated an innocuous style. "A healthy strain of irritability is almost necessary for a good editorial writer. If he cannot get worked up over his subject then he is better to take up some less robust vocation." That was what he wanted his book to be, robust. But he was not by any means sure he would get that from taped memories, which was all that he now had the time or energy for. "I've never dictated," he once said to Patrick Watson. "I spoil all my stuff when I dictate. . . . you see, I write by ear. . . ." He was right of course. Too many books are written without sense for the cadences of English. His book carries itself; the truth is that O'Leary, even at his second best, is marvellous. He gives a salty, sensible, inside look at Canadian political life between Laurier's funeral in 1919 and Lester Pearson's in 1972. There is no humbug in it. As Robert Stanfield rightly notes, O'Leary knew hog-wash when he saw it. He was, and is, a good man to have around.

*One Half of Robertson Davies*. By Robertson Davies. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977. Pp. 286. \$10.95.

*One Half of Robertson Davies* is a collection of miscellaneous talks, lectures, and addresses, subtitled "provocative pronouncements on a wide range of topics"—ranging, in fact, from an animal fable for children to a four-part study of evil in literature. The range of weight and tone in the pieces is nearly as wide as the range of topics. Connoisseurs and students of Davies will enjoy having the contents in easily accessible permanent form; new readers will find it a fascinating literary smorgasbord for sampling.

The most obviously interesting pieces in the book are the more formal pieces of literary criticism. The four lectures which make up section five, under the general title *The Masks of Satan*, consider "the heated, sometimes rowdy approach of literature to the problem of Evil" in four groups of writers from Victorian times to the present day. "The Devil's Burning Throne" and "Phantasmagoria and Dream Grotto" consider the portrayal of evil in nineteenth-century drama and fiction respectively; "Gleams and Glooms" is a study of ghost stories in terms of their portrayal of evil, and vindicate the sub-title of the book by offering "provocative pronouncements" on a critically somewhat neglected genre as it has been practised from Poe to Muriel Spark; "Thunder without Rain" concludes the series with a consideration of some major and minor fiction writers of the twentieth century—not all of them obvious choices for a discussion of the nature of evil. Each of the lectures comprises brief studies of several writers and works, and the tracing of various manifestations of evil in the course of these studies provides the reader not only with a very clear map of the fictional development of evil within the period, but also with a shrewd estimate of each individual writer's place within that development. The theoretical matrix of Davies' own fictional development of evil (in *Fifth Business* and *World of Wonders*) is evident in the discussion of many of the works here, and study of it throws considerable light on the novels, particularly *World of Wonders*.

Similarly, anyone concerned with the impact of Jung on literature, Canadian or otherwise, will find Davies' observations on Jung, Freud, and evil in the course of these four lectures, particularly towards the end of "Gleams and Glooms", extremely illuminating. This is, of course, even more true of the lecture entitled "Jung and the Theatre", one of the other four pieces of criticism in the book (the other three in this section being "The Conscience of the Writer", "What May Canada Expect from Her Writers?", and "Insanity in Literature").

However, it is not only in the provision of so much of Davies' literary criticism that the value of *One Half* lies. What the collection also does is reintroduce Davies as a humorist of considerable stature both as a writer of comedy and a wit. There are several pieces of comedy included: the gently ironic children's fable about "Animal U", for example, and the two deft and delightful send-ups of the Gothic horror story in "The Cat that Went to Trinity" and "Dickens

Digested"; in both of the latter the influence of John Collier (whom Davies at one time admired as a story teller) is visible from time to time, although Davies lacks Collier's essential sourness. If he has written more stories of this type it would be nice to have them in print.

But even where humour is more or less incidental to the occasion (prize day at a girls' school, or an address to an architectural association), Davies is fortunately unable to resist the temptation to levity and even more fortunately able to succumb with wit and elegance. Davies' style as a humorist in these pieces is, however, not easily described. For the most part it is an oblique, ironic humour and flourishes in the casual, but loaded, aside, although it is not particularly epigrammatic (in the manner, for example, of Saki) and therefore difficult to quote. He is unequalled in the satiric art of symbolic naming of characters (such as Gates Ajar Honeypot, in "Dickens Digested"), over which more than one critic has come to grief. And, although he can be scathing on occasion, in this collection his humour is by and large not particularly savage.

Yet in his discussion of humour in "The Funny Professor" (an appreciation of Stephen Leacock), his portrait of the temperament of the humorist emphasizes the "sardonic strain". Davies claims here that the humorist, a man "to whom the funny side is almost always, and immediately, apparent", is a man "under stress", whose stress "does not always find its outlet in humour; or at least in good humour. It can be savage." Davies appears to deny his own identification of stress as the source of humour, for in talking about his own humour he describes it as "one of the elements in which I live. I cannot recall a time when I was not conscious of the deep, heaving ocean of hilarity that lies so very near the surface of life in most of its aspects." The two ideas do not seem truly congruent, and it would be interesting to attempt to reconcile them. It is not immediately clear, for example, if Davies sees himself as a humorist of a different kind from Leacock, or simply of a different degree—or even whether or not he assumes that all humour can be accounted for by the temperamental ability to see "almost always and immediately" the funny side of things, however one may define "funny". Certainly *One Half* provides a varied and comprehensive basis of evidence for such an attempt to clarify the matter.

*Dalhousie University*

*Patricia Monk*

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*Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichröder, and the Building of the German Empire.* By Fritz Stern. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977. Pp xxiv, 620. \$17.95.

This is an admirable book; it is history at its best. Stern's new work is eminently fair, sensitive, and sagacious. It reads extremely well. Although non-Germans and a new post-war generation of German historians have done much to extend



our understanding of modern Germany, their accounts have been frequently marred by the excessive intrusion of ideology and redundant conceptualization. Stern's book is free of such blemishes. He is refreshingly skeptical of attempts to squeeze the past into the imaginative but often arbitrary forms constructed by avant-garde historians. Nor is the reader forced to peel away layers of jargon and metaphysical terminology. Personalities are granted the uniqueness which "scientific" historians have often sought to diminish if not eradicate. Throughout the book Stern is astutely and sympathetically aware of the complexities of human nature.

*Gold and Iron* is the story of the founding and maturation of the Second German Empire under the guidance of Otto von Bismarck and Gerson von Bleichröder. While some of the material is familiar there is much that is not. Access to the Bleichröder archives has enabled Stern to rescue Bismarck's most influential economic adviser and personal banker from obscurity. More important, he has brilliantly integrated the hitherto untapped sources with more familiar knowledge to produce a first-rate analysis of Bismarckian Germany.

One of the major themes of the book is the explosive growth and the penetrating impact of industrial capitalism. Germans responded ambivalently to this process, none more so than the nobility. On the one hand they sought material gain, on the other they mouthed disdain for money and stockmarket speculation. They vied for the services of Bleichröder yet they mocked and vilified his zeal for his profession. Generations of German historians shared this prejudice toward money matters. Their accounts of the Bismarckian state avoided economic factors. Stern, in contrast, shows that Bismarck was not the economic simpleton conservative-nationalist German historians have sought to portray. Under the tutelage of Bleichröder, Bismarck gained a sophisticated understanding of the interconnections of politics and economics. He also became one of the wealthiest men in Germany; the Prussian state richly rewarded him for his political services and Bleichröder successfully managed his stockmarket portfolio. Furthermore, Bismarck continuously craved even greater wealth. No one else has so thoroughly investigated this facet of the chancellor's life.

Stern reveals that the spirit of covetous capitalism was widespread among the German elite. Many Junkers sought to take advantage of the opportunities opened up by industrial capitalism, but not all succeeded. The optimism and avarice of the *Gründerjahre* were followed by the dejection and resentment of the post-1873 depression years. One of the by-products of the extensive economic and social dislocation was a new wave of anti-Semitism, the second major theme of Stern's work.

No one else has analysed the phenomenon of Central Europe's anti-Semitism as well. Through the personality of Bleichröder, a Jew, Stern describes the rapid but limited rise of German Jewry—"Bleichröder's success was swift and extraordinary, as was Germany's. It was brittle as was Germany's". Despite emancipation Jews were often still treated as pariahs and/or parvenus. Equality

depended too much upon assimilation. But assimilation was undermined by old prejudices, a weak defense of liberal values, and new disaffections produced by rapid modernization. We are also so conscious of the "holocaust" that we expect the existence of similar hostile relations between Germans and Jews in the past. In contrast to most investigators, Stern offers a more sophisticated and complete analysis of German anti-Semitism. The chief characteristic of German-Jewish relations, as he deftly shows, was ambivalence not crude hostility. German and Jew shared many values and traits—efficiency, seriousness, "a certain ritualized warmth and sentimentality," and "extraordinary appreciation for learning." This brought them together, yet also pushed them apart. Some German Jews, such as Bleichröder, sought to be more German than the Germans. He was as conservative as Bismarck and as unhesitatingly patriotic as any other German. To some extent Bleichröder sought to deny his own Jewishness and insensitively begged for acceptance as an equal; not exactly honorable but human and plausible. Stern's work is admirable because he has objectively and fully analysed and understood the personality of Bleichröder. Certainly, this is an impartial biography, and an impartial account of German anti-Semitism.

Stern believes that a study of anti-Semitism should be "frank and fearless", and his study is: "Given the antecedent sentiments in Germany about Jews, about business, and about social values generally, it would have been astonishing if the sudden rise of Jewry had not evoked resentment." Resentment yes, but how did anti-Semitism achieve respectability? We know of Treitschke's and Stöckers anti-Semitic remarks; Stern explains why these remarks were so powerful. He explains the association of anti-capitalism, anti-liberalism, and anti-Semitism in the public mind. He shows the reader why Bismarck—Bleichröder's associate, patron and even friend—experimented with political anti-Semitism: "for Bismarck all people and all things were pawns." The author's analysis of anti-Semitism is persuasive because it does not become a metaphysical treatise. He employs specific examples and personalities to flesh out his analysis. Personalities are superbly integrated with issues. The reader is virtually transported back to Bismarckian Germany. It is an unusually empathetic account.

The book contributes to historical knowledge in a variety of ways. While many historians have engaged in fruitless debates about the primacy of either foreign or domestic policy, Stern effectively persuades us of their interconnectedness. He accomplishes this by tracing the intimate connections between diplomacy and economics in Bismarckian Germany. His comments on the politics of the Bismarckian period are insightful and ideology free. His deft personality sketches and portraits bring to light a host of "lesser" personalities. The book is simply Bismarck's best biography. *Gold and Iron* supersedes every other account of Imperial Germany; its reading is essential to an understanding of modern European history.

*Two Shakespearean Sequences.* By F. W. Brownlow. London and Toronto: Macmillan of Canada/Maclean-Hunter Press, 1977. Pp. ix, 245. \$19.90.

F. W. Brownlow's lively book argues that we should rethink our traditional overview of Shakespeare's development. Conventionally, we still echo the Romantic categorization of the plays' vision maturing from *Henry VI* or *The Comedy of Errors* through *The Tempest*, and reflecting in their progression their creator's own developing inner life. Instead, Brownlow takes two sequences of plays, *Henry VI* to *Richard II* and, a little more controversially, *Pericles* to *Timon* (which he argues may be Shakespeare's final play). He suggests that we see not so much a growth as a constantly analytical and sceptical cast of mind. He sees, moreover, not an inner development so much as "a characteristic nervous energy" probing at the public issues of the age, and especially at the received myths propagated by the Elizabethan establishment. The resulting book tends to drift frequently from its stated aims, but it is nevertheless a lively and a stimulating piece of criticism.

Brownlow takes as his opening text Hamlet's insistence that drama shows "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." Shakespeare was, he argues, "reading the signs of the times by a kind of infallible poetic augury" and, more than most of his contemporaries, was "very much the poet of the future, a writer whose characteristic themes had barely entered the consciousness" of his age. Part of a writer's greatness is undoubtedly that he articulates more than he says, but having dropped in what could either be an important or merely a commonplace idea, Brownlow never really develops it. He remains content with impressionistic gestures at Shakespeare's using the theatre "not so much (as) his medium of expression into which he translates his material, as the means through which he finds its true nature." The interrelationships between a writer and the changing cultural modes of his time, the pressures of residual modes of thought and the articulation of incipient modes are all crucial questions, not least in Shakespeare and Renaissance studies generally. Brownlow waves a graceful hand in the direction of such issues and settles for a clear sometimes witty and provoking, *explication de texte*. Anglo-American criticism of Shakespeare is notoriously weak in handling both theoretical and wider cultural issues, and it is a pity to see an otherwise interesting book so reticent to pursue the most important implications of its approach.

The book's two sequences of plays are handled clearly and intelligently. The reading of *Richard III*, a crucial play in any examination of Shakespeare's independence of Tudor orthodoxy, is especially incisive. Without the moral indignation of Wilbur Sanders or the breadth of reference of William Elton, Brownlow shows carefully the subtle ways Shakespeare's scepticism expressed itself. The play is seen as one of a number of works rehabilitating Richard, and Shakespeare is shown as taking Richard's villainy as part of the received tradi-

tion and proceeding to undermine it. The play becomes "an exposure of the falseness of Tudor myth" as a vivid, likable, complex character is deliberately set against the stiff allegorical myth by which he is supposed to be judged. As Brownlow puts it finely, the conflict in the spectator's mind "does not arise out of Richard's character, but out of the play's action, which is the immediate cause of Richard's character."

When Brownlow turns to his second sequence of plays, we tend to lose sight of any strong overview in his argument. With these plays, he is concerned with Shakespeare's sophisticated experimentation and his mature pleasure in relaxed, gratuitous decorum. Brownlow's lack of focus is compensated for by some fine incidental observations and asides which are undeniably the stuff of fine teaching as well as criticism and which point to the level of felt engagement with Shakespeare at which the book was conceived. "It sometimes seems," he comments at one point "as if years could pass by in the teaching of Shakespeare without it occurring to someone to say that the plays deal with. . . matters of common and personal experience. . . . A reflective spectator watching a play will translate his aesthetic pleasure into his knowledge of life." Equally simple but important is his remark on Hermione's blessing upon her rediscovered daughter where, he says, "the play comes as near to breaking through the veil separating art from life as anything in Shakespeare. . . . If a miracle is being dramatised here, what is it? That husbands do indeed have wives, wives daughters, and daughters mothers? That human relationships are real, integral to individual life, not accidental?"

The most controversial part of the book is Brownlow's not quite original assertion that *Timon* may be Shakespeare's final play. He constructs a new "last phase" for Shakespeare which includes the romances, *Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, possibly the lost *Cardenio*, and *Timon*. All are seen as sceptical and sophisticated fictions dealing with "the saving of men from the consequences of evil" in a world "governed neither by reason nor Providence but by human motives alone." *Timon's* affinities with these plays are traced and the evidence for a possible late dating is persuasively assembled, although without insistence. Brownlow's reading of the play is provocative and certainly fits plausibly into his argument.

Shakespearean criticism is notoriously self-obsessed and conservative in fashion. Brownlow's book does not contribute to our current revaluations of its theoretical basis nor (regrettably) does it take up the crucial questions of cultural interrelationships which it hints at raising. But in its vigor of tone and succinctness of argument it is a lively offer of dialogue, and in its unpretentiousness it teaches us the most important lesson when reading Shakespeare, and that is humility.

*The New Confederation: Five Sovereign Provinces.* By Brian A. Brown. Saanichton and Seattle: Hancock House, 1977. Pp. 158, index.

With the Robarts-Pépin Commission travelling around Canada listening to briefs on the nation's political and economic ills, everybody has a chance to offer his or her own solution to the members of the Commission. In this book *The New Confederation*. The Reverend Brian Brown, a United Church clergyman who has lived in various parts of Canada and now resides at Dawson Creek, B.C., offers his solution to the general public. He has, interestingly enough, the endorsement of W.A.C. Bennett (a former premier of British Columbia) who has written the foreword, and the blessing of René Lévesque (the present separatist premier of Québec) whose letter to the author is prominently featured on the dust cover.

While reading the book, I wondered if it was intended as a serious attempt to deal with the problems of Canadian unity. Or was it a political tract for the New Democratic or Social Credit parties, or a satire on the briefs presented to the Robarts-Pépin Commission? By the time I completed the book, I concluded that the author really was trying to be serious. It was clear that he was no lover of Pierre Trudeau and that he saw no hope for Joe Clark. It was also clear that although he would like the New Democratic Party or Social Credit to adopt his ideas, there was little likelihood that either party would venture to espouse them. His only support might come from Lévesque.

"Sovereignty-Association" is what Lévesque has said he wants for Québec. But he has been wary of defining what he means by it. The Reverend Mr. Brown, whose poodles, he tells us, are named Pierre and René ("René bites hard and Pierre yaps a lot"), does it for him. "Sovereignty-Association" means, simply, an association of sovereign states, a kind of economic community or *zollverein*, with a weak confederal authority responsible for the post-office, currency (but not banking), passports and defence (p. 46), to which, on p. 151, he adds veterans' affairs and "quite possibly" a solicitor-general. Everything else should come under the jurisdiction of the sovereign provinces. The author does not know if such a programme will satisfy the Parti Québécois. He thinks it will please the Committee for Western Independence, the Western Canada Party, the Western National Party and the Independent Alberta Association. He offers no comments on how the rest of Canada will look upon it.

So much for our political ills. The remedy for our economic ills, Brian Brown suggests, is equally simple. Government in Ottawa is too far removed from the people of Canada. The provincial governments are much closer. To prove his point he refers to a friend who knows the telephone number of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture in British Columbia, but who does not know the name, much less the telephone number of the Deputy Minister in Ottawa! But some of our provinces are too small to be viable economic units. The answer, then, is to enlarge them. Instead of ten provinces, we should have five sovereign regions.

Ontario and Québec are large enough to qualify as regions. The other three should include (a) the Atlantic sovereign region (comprising Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Labrador minus Churchill Falls which should go to Québec, but with the eastern tip of Québec opposite the Straits of Belle-Isle offered in exchange, New Brunswick, minus the northern Acadian region, but with the addition of Anticosti); (b) the Prairie sovereign region (including Ellesmere Island, Baffin Island, Manitoba and Saskatchewan); (c) the Mountain-Pacific sovereign region, "Mackenzieland" (including British Columbia, Alberta, the Yukon and the Mackenzie valley). Such a redistribution of boundaries and legislative powers would, in the author's opinion, make it possible for each region to carry on independently, eliminate the need for adjustment grants and solve the unemployment problem.

Of course there may be some arguments about the sites of the regional capitals. But this, too, presents no real problem. Halifax would be happy as the principal financial and economic centre of the Atlantic region; and so the provincial House of Commons could be located at Charlottetown and the Senate at St. John's, and the Supreme Court at Fredericton. In the Prairie region the House of Commons could sit in Regina, the Senate in Winnipeg, and the Supreme Court in Frobisher. In Mackenzieland the House of Commons would meet in Edmonton, the Senate in Victoria, and the Supreme Court in Whitehorse. Visualize, if you can, the jitneying around the regions each time the legislature meets or the court is in session. This scheme may assist in reducing Air Canada's deficit, but will add nothing to the efficiency of provincial administration. I doubt if I have encountered woollier ideas than these.

Personally I have always been fearful of the political consequences of the steady growth of centralization in Canada and the erosion of provincial rights since the Second World War; but I cannot accept Brian Brown's solutions as reasonable or feasible. His so-called third option is no option at all. I cannot accept his politics or his economics; neither can I accept his history. Here is a sample. Writing about the Nova Scotia privateers he says "not all these freelancers were regarded as outlaws, at least not by the British. They were valuable allies in times of war. In the War of American Independence, it was these "privateers" (as they were called then) who ensured that the American rebels never got control of the high seas." (pp. 89 - 90) Perhaps the old saw about the cobbler sticking to his last could, with justice, be applied to the reverend gentleman.

On p. 64 we read, "Squirrels in Atlantic Canada are so small and thin. Oh, they are fine, intelligent squirrels but they don't have it so easy. In Quebec the squirrels are healthy and sleek, and they have a glow of quality in their fur. The chubby squirrels of Toronto just make you smile for their good fortune. Out West we don't call the big fellows squirrels. We call them badgers but they are surely related to their cousins." This should convey some idea of the literary style and intellectual content of this book.

When you come across *The New Confederation*, read the blurb. It will save you some 150 pages of repetitive prose, naive politics, and simplistic economics.

*Professor Emeritus of Canadian Studies,  
Mount Allison University.*

*George F.G. Standley*

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*Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase.* By Jacques Berthoud. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1978. Pp. viii, 191. \$16.95.

Berthoud's penetrating and concise study of the major phase of Conrad's creative life—the years from 1900 to 1910—gives one the impression of seeing a familiar Conrad but seeing him more clearly than before. He points out that from the beginning Conrad has posed problems for critics partly because fascination with his life tended to obscure the nature of his work but more importantly because his work was produced at two removes (at least) from the author's native environment. The difficulty in placing Conrad firmly in an intellectual and artistic context has led, he feels, to a great deal of irresponsible criticism. Conrad has been cast, as he puts it, into an absurd number of incompatible roles: "As an impressionist, as a *symboliste* of sorts, as an allegorist (Jungian or Freudian), and more recently as a political moralist of reactionary, conservative, organicist, existential, and even revolutionary tendencies." If the tradition or cultural context within which Conrad wrote is in doubt, then, and we cannot take reliable bearings from it, perhaps we should approach the work from the opposite direction. He proposes, that is, that we approach the work in terms of Conrad's own understanding of himself and his art.

As Berthoud points out, we have in *A Personal Record* Conrad's meditation on this very question of his life and art written at the height of his creative and intellectual powers. Realizing that biography is not criticism and intention not achievement, Berthoud explores the autobiography with great tact and insight. We find in it familiar Conradian preoccupations and strategies: the ideal of fidelity, restraint, and solidarity, the primacy of the imagination, the chronological shifts. We also find that thematically and artistically the emphasis is not on the material but on its significance, not on life (in this case Conrad's own) but on life understood. To the widely held view, then, that Conrad is as E.M. Forster put it "misty in the middle as well as at the edges", Berthoud replies that a more productive assumption might be that Conrad was in full possession of what he wanted to do and say and that when approaching Conrad we must be prepared to cope with a rigorously analytical mind.

In the ensuing discussion of the novels, Berthoud demonstrates convincingly Conrad's intellectual control of his materials by showing how the elaborate structuring of characters and events contributes to his meaning. For example, while the Patusan episode of *Lord Jim* has often been dismissed as overwrought

and redundant, he illustrates the precise correspondences between it and the Patna episode and suggests its necessity if we are to comprehend the nature of Jim's predicament and the depth of his tragedy. In *Patusan* Jim is "rewriting" his life as a success story, in defiance of objective facts, in accordance with his exalted idea of himself. And without some sense of the reality of his private vision (albeit vulnerable and transient) the court's assessment of him would be the only effective reality, which Conrad is at pains to deny. Or in *Under Western Eyes*, he shows that contrary to most opinion the kindly and reserved Western narrator is not contrasted with the tortured Russian student. Rather the many correspondences between them suggest they are complementary types. They both represent the critical spirit, the desire for normality in human life based on a rational assessment of human nature, society and history. And their different fates take us to the heart of Conrad's meaning in the novel, his conviction that the critical spirit upon which a tolerably civilized life depends has contradictory claims made upon it. It must be detached from the human scene (to maintain perspective and avoid fanaticism) yet it must be committed to it (to avoid sterility and to maintain human solidarity). The narrator lives in a society which has made its bargain with fate, so he is shielded from the consequences of this tragic paradox; Razumov, living in a different world, is destroyed by them.

The novels reveal, then, as Berthoud demonstrates, not only the power and profundity but also the clarity and coherence one expects in great literature. Moreover, despite their variety and richness, they form part of a single exploratory process. Recurring through the works of this period is the tragic point that "man seems capable of discovering the reality of his own values only through their defeat or contradiction." In successive novels Conrad probed the essential otherness, intractability, and darkness of the outer world and dramatized the effects of this on the inner world of men and women caught, as he was, between the urge toward scepticism and the need for faith.

Berthoud's study is an important contribution to Conrad scholarship not only because it provides an extremely reliable guide through the complexities of the major works but also because it sheds new light on Conrad's contribution to the modern movement in literature. One of the most cherished convictions of the twentieth century is that truth is a public rather than a private thing, that what is true about man is not what he thinks of himself but what he does. The emphasis on public standards over private visions is the result of a profound shift in sensibility over the last 100 years. The Christian, or Idealist, or Romantic emphasis on the primacy of individual experience has gradually been superseded by the behaviourist, or structuralist, or marxist emphasis on the importance of social context. And, as Berthoud shows, at the very beginning of the century Conrad was exploring the tragic implications of this conflict between private vision and public reality.



*An Appetite for Life.* By Charles Ritchie. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977. Pp. ii, 173. \$10.95.

In 1974, with his first volume *The Siren Years*, Charles Ritchie established himself as an artful, perceptive, and entertaining diarist. Now, with this second volume, subtitled "The Education of a Young Diarist", he confirms and enhances that position. Once again, we may enjoy Mr. Ritchie's agreeable style which combines economy and grace spiced with a ready wit.

Ritchie has divided the work, appropriately, into two parts, giving us pictures of Halifax and Oxford in the Mid-Twenties, worlds, as the publisher's blurb says, now long gone. But, curiously, not merely the work, but the diarist himself is really in two parts.

Part I deals with Halifax, 1924 - 1925, when Mr. Ritchie was a student at the University of King's College. And in this part he is rather like an intellectual Holden Caulfield, viewing the world of grown-ups with a somewhat jaundiced eye. (I say an *intellectual* Holden Caulfield because the young Ritchie was reading works in those days which I am sure Holden would have vigorously rejected.) In Part I and to some extent early in Part II we find a picture of an immature, insecure young man, susceptible to feminine charms but painfully aware of his inexperience.

Part II, as we get into it, presents quite another person, another person in another world, Oxford. And now, in place of Holden Caulfield, we meet a diarist who is like Samuel Pepys in his readiness to describe his adventures with unblushing frankness. The setting, however, is not Pepysian nor is it all romantic Oxford with towers and quads and ivy. Rather, we enter a world of Bright Young Things, not unlike the people we meet in Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall*. But it is amusing, at times hilarious, and always entertaining.

Part II begins with the diarist's voyage overseas in a small steamer during the Autumn season when the weather on the Grand Banks is, at least, disagreeable. The diarist sought the seclusion that the cabin grants, being an indifferent sailor. And, on October 2, 1926, he recorded the effort of a ministering angel:

A kind cross-eyed steward brings me brandy and tells me not to go near the dining room, where he says the passengers are "stoofing themselves with dookling and vomiting all over the place".

And an intriguing entry for October 5:

I got into conversation with a graduate student also on his way to Oxford. He is a fine intelligent young man called Forsey. He has read all the serious articles in political science magazines and attended sessions of the House of Commons in Ottawa and taken notes of the proceedings. He will probably be a figure in public life. Why can't I be more like him?

Next, of course, Oxford. And this part of the diary is full of anecdote, but it would be unfair to the potential reader to retail it here except, perhaps, for a passing mention of the dean who had actually heard of Nova Scotia "and thought he had a cousin there, either there or in British Columbia."

The diary is a rich collection of fascinating glimpses of the early years of the man who was to achieve a notable career in diplomacy: Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador to the United States, High Commissioner for Canada in London. Lots of fascinating adventure, related in engaging style.

Mr. Ritchie mentions that he has piles of notebooks full of diary entries—an exciting prospect of more good things to come.

*Halifax, N.S.*

*W. Graham Allen*

*D. H. Lawrence: The Novels.* By Alastair Niven. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978. Pp. X, 188.

Up to a point, Alastair Niven's "Introductory Critical Study" of Lawrence's novels could serve as a model of its kind. There is just the right amount of biographical background to provide the necessary historical context and to provoke consideration of how personal experience is reflected in or transmuted into art. In addition, Niven's style conveys a sense of the excitement of exploration, while the tone is that of the sophisticated literary critic who is not afraid to speak plainly. Moreover, Niven's many fresh insights obviate the besetting danger of introductory studies: mere condensation or synthesis of established criticism.

In the latter respect, Niven is especially to be commended for his analysis of Lawrence's methods of characterization; his discussion of the character and role of Anna in *The Rainbow* and of the difference between the Ursula of that novel and the Ursula of *Women in Love* is highly original and challenging. Similarly, Niven's discussion of the organic relationship of Lawrence's prose rhythms to the themes of his fiction at once opens up new territory and provides an irrefutable corrective to those who, for one reason or another, deny Lawrence any conscious artistry. Niven has so many interesting new things to say that it is paradoxically unfortunate that his study should appear as an introductory work, at least in this particular series where the avowed objective as stated by Robin Mayhead in the General Preface is "to make available to a wide public the results of the literary criticism of the last thirty years." For as much as Niven's study reflects and advances one trend in modern Lawrence criticism so much does it fail to reflect the entire picture.

Specifically, Niven is a follower of Leavis—"Dr. Leavis" as Niven somewhat formally titles him—and from Leavis's well-known critical perspective Lawrence's major contribution is to be found in the social, moral, political and essentially secular implications of his thought, and his art is to be evaluated in the context of the "great tradition" of the novel. Accordingly, what is missing

from the book is any consideration of the mythic character of Lawrence's fiction or of his quarrel with Christianity and the western emphasis upon the values of history and individualism. It would seem, furthermore, to be this orientation to the novelistic that accounts for the curious unevenness of space allotted to respective works. For example, *The Lost Girl*, a relatively minor work but one with pronounced sociological features, is given eighteen pages, while the major but mythic *Plumed Serpent* is allotted only nine; in the same way twenty-two pages are devoted to the political *Kangaroo* but only eleven to Lawrence's final romance, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Worse still, Niven's desire to see Lawrence as a realist and social critic leads him to make moralistic value judgments, as for example when he observes of Lawrence's concern with Aztec beliefs in *The Plumed Serpent*: "That he believed for a while in the possible relevance to the modern world of its more grotesque notions justifies Leavis's view of the novel as 'regrettable.'" Or again, Ursula's vision at the conclusion of *The Rainbow* is criticized as a substitution of "the symbolic pattern of the novel for truthful insight," and as indicative of Lawrence's "uncertainty".

Finally, the non-comprehensiveness and bias of Niven's study are also reflected in the critical studies of Lawrence to which he refers the reader in his "Selected Reading List", although here another bias also manifests itself. Missing from the list are such recent myth-oriented studies as George Ford's *Double Measure*, James Cowan's *D. H. Lawrence's American Journey*, and Baruch Hochman's *Another Ego*, and lest the explanation seem to be that the format of the series allows only for a limited number of titles, it should be pointed out that the "selected list" includes both studies by Leavis, another book not specifically on Lawrence but by Michael Black of the Cambridge University Press, and a British Council pamphlet on Lawrence by Niven himself. The second bias I mentioned will become more apparent if one notices that out of eighteen critical studies listed only three are non-British or American publications, and if one observes that while permission to quote from the Harry T. Moore (Viking Press) edition of *The Collected Letters* is noted in the "Acknowledgements", in the bibliography we are informed that quotations from the letters are from the Aldous Huxley (Heinemann) edition.

The point, however, is not merely that Niven's study is informed by colonialist prejudices but that it does not "make available to a wide public the results of the literary criticism of the last thirty years," and that by reason of this it concomitantly provides a very unreliable "introduction" to Lawrence for the general reader. By the same token, as much as the book may provide the student with the information necessary to sit "university examinations" at British or Commonwealth institutions, so much does it also confirm the freshman notion that the author—or the author's countrymen—is best qualified to interpret his work. Ironically, therefore, aside from the specific insights, Niven's study may be most instructive to North American readers for the embarrassing example of protective nationalism and its consequences that it represents.

*Madder Music*. By Peter De Vries. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1977. P. 221, \$8.95.

Free-lance writer Bob Swirling awakens one morning to discover he has been transformed into Groucho Marx. Actually, things aren't quite that simple. Swirling's 'metamorphosis', conceived in error and sustained through sin, has been a long time a-brewing. Although there are signs that he is becoming crazier and crazier as the book progresses, it isn't until the fourth of a series of increasingly zany affairs, this time with the wife of the local newspaper publisher, that he surrenders completely to the delusion. But when he does surrender, he does so with a vengeance. It takes two months and a fiendishly ingenious practical joke conceived by his new black girl-friend, Pauline Winchester, to jolt him out of Groucho and back into himself. And even then, there's some question as to whether the cure has taken. The book closes as Swirling, still presiding over a coeducational and (to say the least) sexually liberated menagerie, strides forth disgustedly into the night—as W.C. Fields. Though he feels, after what he has been through, that "Now the Lord would give him quittance in full, surely" (218), it is just such quittance which—in marked contrast to many earlier De Vries characters—he proves unable to obtain. Hence, perhaps the need to resume play-acting.

The broad outlines of the book will be familiar to De Vries devotees. As a man seeking to escape the consequences of his sins (particularly his sexual ones) by going mad, Swirling is in the same tradition with such fondly remembered characters as Augie Poole, Chick Swallow, and Nickie Sherman. What's different about Swirling is that, unlike the earlier characters, he fails to find eventual redemption in a renewed devotion to home and family—perhaps because he has never had to raise a family in the first place. Once he has helped his widower father to realize a tidy sum for an invention, and has seen the old gent well married off, Swirling's formal domestic responsibilities are more or less at an end. While he's never really happy—as his play-acting shows—with the bizarre living arrangements in which he finds himself, the absence of the firm anchor of home and hearth makes it all but impossible for him to come up with any kind of constructive alternative to the hedonistic path which he follows throughout the novel.

Despite the bittersweet tone of the book's ending, De Vries's humor is as lively and fresh as ever. To attempt to dissect that humor, at least within the confines of a brief review, would be quite impossible. It's enough to say that in *Madder Music*, De Vries more than sustains his reputation as one of the funniest authors currently practicing. At least two scenes, the one in which Pauline, discovered on the premises by Swirling's fundamentalist landlady, *cum* mother-in-law, manages to keep him out of trouble by pretending she's his cleaning woman (174 - 176), and the one in which Swirling, as Groucho, systematically insults everyone at a party given by the cuckolded newspaper publisher (190 - 201), had me roaring with laughter. Numerous other scenes, such as the

one in which Swirling attends evening class with his first lover-to-be, Becky Tingle, produced comic spasms of an equally profound if less dramatic nature. It has been a long time since any modern novel, even a De Vries novel, gave me so much in terms of sheer reading pleasure.

As always, there's more to this De Vries novel than meets the ear. *Madder Music* shows the author to be as perceptive and pointed a commentator on the mores of 'liberated' suburban America as ever. What is, perhaps, different is a fresher and gentler note, a sense—not always so apparent in earlier works—of his acceptance of man's perverse and perhaps tragic fate. A religious sense, always latent in his work, emerges rather more openly here. We come away from the book feeling, even more clearly than before, his awareness of man as a definitely limited being. This new note of acceptance suggests to me that *Madder Music* is not only great fun, but a book which will, in time, be worth returning to. In fact, I would suggest, it is a work which could well be crucial to any assessment of the entire De Vries corpus—an assessment, I would add by way of conclusion, which would seem to be long since overdue, considering both De Vries's durability and his real stature as a comic novelist.

*Dalhousie University*

*J.C. Peirce*