Book Reviews

One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker: The Tumultuous Years 1962 to 1967. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977. Pp. xxiii, 309. $15.95.

This is a book that ought never to have been written. Perhaps it was to be expected that the rather mellow Diefenbaker of the second volume of memoirs would be completely transformed in his recounting of "the tumultuous years," 1962 to 1967. Accuracy and fairness give way to a blatantly biased selection and, indeed, distortion of the facts, to innuendo, and even to guilt by association techniques.

Some of the events of these years might normally have evoked sympathy for Mr. Diefenbaker: the undoubted American interference in the events surrounding the 1963 election; the inexplicable conduct of some members of his cabinet during its time of beleaguerment; the Pearson government's attempt to bail itself out of its difficulties by using the Munsinger investigation as a diversion. But Mr. Diefenbaker's tactics in this book forfeit any claim to kindly feeling. He is entitled to express susprise that Mr. Justice Wishart Spence would play the role of royal commissioner in the patently political Munsinger affair, but to infer that he had the chief justiceship in mind as a reward is simply going beyond the pale of reasonable propriety. He has the right to be indignant, if he wishes, that D.W. Leatherdale, the President of the Young Progressive Conservatives of Manitoba, took action against his leadership, but to add that he is the son-in-law of G.W. Baldwin, M.P., who was annoyed that he had not been made a cabinet minister, savours of McCarthyism.

The message that emerges most clearly from the book is Mr. Diefenbaker's version of the divine right of kings; a belief that he alone had the right to determine the length of his tenure as leader, sometimes, it seems, because he had rendered services of inestimable value to his party, and sometimes because it would have been disastrous for the Conservatives to depose yet another of their leaders. As the book proceeds, so does the parade of villains who cause him to lose elections and conspire to topple him as leader. An American President and his officials defeated him in 1963, and he had it confirmed for him by an

American named Loughman whom he chanced to meet later at the Aswan Dam. In 1965 the villains were two provincial premiers: John Robarts, who failed to put his "big Blue Machine" into high gear, and Duff Roblin, who declined to run: "Had (he) been a candidate, I believe nothing could have stopped us."

Heading the conspirators against Mr. Diefenbaker's leadership were a Toronto and Bay Street clique, whom he labels "the Warwicks" of the Conservative party, but their number increases by the score and, by innuendo, seems to include the twenty-four Conservative M.P.'s who refused to sign a declaration of loyalty to their leader and whose names are listed in Appendix II. They include a large portion of the members whom many would regard as the most respected in the Conservative caucus. Even Robert Stanfield does not escape unscathed; his offence was to chat amiably with Dalton Camp and to appear not displeased with the rowdy reception that Mr. Diefenbaker was receiving from the party's annual meeting in November 1966. It is tragic that a book whose sole purpose was self-justification could be so lacking in credibility; it is more than a little hypocritical that a man who demanded complete loyalty for himself could exhibit so little of that quality towards his successor, and later towards Joe Clark until Mr. Stanfield intervened.

The anti-intellectualism of the book and Mr. Diefenbaker himself is best illustrated by his treatment of his "one Canada" stance on which he prides himself above everything else. Accordingly he condemns such supposedly blatant examples of the dangerous "two Nations" heresy as Lester Pearson's statement that Quebec has a special position as the homeland of a people; Part II of the Fulton-Favreau formula which, he says, was intended to give the provinces "an open sesame in federal matters," but which, apparently without his knowing it, was practically identical with Part II of his own government's Fulton formula; the appointment of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission, a group of "socialists and outspoken protagonists of particular constitutional changes"; and the Montmorency Declaration of the Conservative party, which he has always misinterpreted because he regards the French and English "nation" as equivalents. Yet the academic who helped him write his memoirs is brash enough to suggest in the "foreword" that Mr. Diefenbaker prevented his party from "embracing the disastrous Two Nations expedient" and "saved Canada from Balkanization by default." Surely Mr. John A. Munro should have been able to distinguish between rhetoric and substance. Mr. Diefenbaker's inability to make that distinction prevents him from seeing that he was a failure in running both his country and his party.

Dalhousie University *J. Murray Beck*

Thomas Hardy: Art and Thought. By F.B. Pinion. London: Macmillan, 1977. Pp. x, 214. $19.50

Any student of Thomas Hardy is familiar with the work of F.B. Pinion. In 1968 he published *A Hardy Companion*, a most useful handbook to Hardy, and in 1976 *A Commentary on the Poems of Thomas Hardy*. The most recent book, *Thomas Hardy: Art and Thought*, comprised of fifteen essays and nine longish 'notes' "closely related to Hardy's art and thought" (ix), would seem to be an outgrowth from Pinion's *Companion*—although Pinion states that most of the essays "have been written recently, developing from notes made since the publication of *A Hardy Companion*" (ix). The same kind of abilities and compendious knowledge of the Hardy canon which produced the *Companion* also produce this book—though not so happily.

Pinion's primary concern in *Thomas Hardy: Art and Thought* is to show how Hardy's "art was influenced by other writers" (ix), and his unquestioned knowledge of literature in general and his close familiarity with Hardy's work in particular make him eminently well-qualified to pursue his aim. There are chapters which prove Hardy's indebtedness for ideas and characters in *Desperate Remedies* to Wilkie Collins' *Basil;* chapters which deal with Hardy's virtuosity in describing landscape (his "pictorial art") and in presenting rustic humour; and many sections which show the influence on Hardy of writers such as Richardson, Pater, Darwin, and Shelley (indeed, Hardy's manifold debt to Shelley becomes a kind of *leit-motif* in Pinion's book). There is a problem, though. Pinion's basic technique is to focus attention on one aspect of Hardy's work—it might be his use of a reiterative topic or image—and then to show how often it recurs throughout the novels and poems. This can be useful, especially when demonstrating how extensive an influence a writer like Shelley has had on Hardy. The danger is of course that in dealing with a pervasive stream of imagery one is prone to misread, or inaccurately read, any specific example of that imagery. For instance, when Pinion is treating the caged bird motif he quotes from *Tess of the d'Urbervilles:*

> Once while Tess was at the window where the cages were ranged, giving her lesson as usual, she thought she heard a rustling behind the bed. The old lady was not present, and turning round the girl had an impression that the toes of a pair of boots were visible below the frieze of curtains.

And then he comments: "the interloper is, of course, Alec d'Urberville. The caged birds are a reminder of the human condition: all people are caged birds, Hardy wrote in 1885" (115). Apart from the syntactical ambiguity of this statement, Pinion is, I think, over-responding to the specific image. Now, certainly, in some of Hardy's work a reference to caged birds does, indeed, carry the meaning Pinion wishes to emphasize here, but not every time. The very ex-

haustiveness of Pinion's familiarity with Hardy (and of the method he uses) causes him occasionally to bring to a passage more freight than it can bear. A charge which, moving on to a more general level for a moment, those of us who teach literature must continually guard against. A novelist or poet may often intend multiple meanings, but not always; and over-response is potentially as misleading and insensitive as no response at all.

Another danger immanent in Pinion's method is that of skimming from one example to an analogous one to another and so on, not stopping long enough to make a significant point. Rather than presenting an argument, Pinion often presents a list of examples with only the skimpiest commentary attached. Thus, when dealing with Hardy's pictorial description, to a twenty-six-line quotation from *The Dynasts* he adds a limp seven word comment: "Hardy's technique is that of the cinematographer" (31). Many similar ill-balanced examples can be found—all of them, it seems to me, the result of Pinion's panoramic method.

Pinion, wittingly or not, seems to be very much a proponent of Buffon's school *"Le style c'est l'homme même"*: he sees Hardy as the kind of writer who, being the sum of his own experiences and reading, whenever he wishes to describe a certain situation resorts automatically to a particular kind of image, phrase, or idiom, culled of course from past experience or reading. For example, whenever Hardy wants to comment on the subjectivity of impressions, or the failure of love or hope he seems quite naturally to fall back on a well-worn image like the iris-bow, or frost, or the ravaged garden. Pinion may be right to some extent, for these images do recur throughout Hardy's work, but his way of drawing our attention to them tends to reduce them to their lowest common denominator. We see each as conforming to the qualities of a long succession of similar images and the poem or chapter from which it comes merely as a poem or chapter in Hardy's canon rather than as a specific piece which can be (I am tempted to say, should be) read as an autonomous work. As a result of Pinion's endeavour in this book, the aesthetic distance between reader and, let us say, poem is increased to such an extent that one gets a vast and vague panoramic view as opposed to a close-up. I happen to prefer close-ups.

As a final note let me say that there is some real value in knowing or being made aware of the influences which shape a writer's outlook on life and which thus leave their imprint on his novels and poems. Some of Pinion's chapters, for instance those on Richardson and Shelley, do perform this useful function; but as a general method the excursion into the realm of source and influence hunting has general dangers. It tends to become self-rewarding—we seek sources merely for the sake of proving that they are there; it also tends to become self-deluding—an analogue in thought, image, or even diction is too easily translated into a proof of influence or at least artistic genealogy. Let me conclude with one more example. While discussing wind and rain imagery, Pinion quotes from the last two lines of Hardy's "During Wind and Rain":

Ah, no; the years, the years;
Down their carved names the raindrop ploughs.

And he baldly states that "Wind and rain as an image of trial and tribulation came to Hardy from the clown's song at the end of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night:*

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
For the rain it raineth every day." (186)

Where, one is inclined to ask, did Shakespeare get his wind and rain from?

Acadia University *David Baron*

The Rise of the Parti Québécois, 1967-1976. By John Saywell. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto press, 1976. Pp. 174. $12.50. Paper, $5.95.

In the aftermath of the *Parti Québécois* electoral victory of November 15, 1976 it was not surprising to see books on this party and the recent election suddenly appear on the market, in French and English. This one, however, is a good one. Professor Saywell has collected the accounts which he wrote on Quebec politics between 1967 and 1975 for the *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs* (of which he is the editor), and has added a prologue, introductory passages to link the chapters together, a chapter on 1976, and an epilogue. Saywell has already done a similar task with another of his books, *Quebec 70,* which was extracted from the *Canadian Annual Review* of 1970.

As the author admits in his preface, republishing such material in its original form excludes benefiting from hindsight. He proposes, on the other hand, that the reader can benefit from reliving events as they happened, as the situation appeared to observers at the time. We can agree with this. More traditional historical works studying Quebec politics during this critical period will certainly later be written and both *genres* of the books can usefully complement each other. Until then, this book will probably be the standard English-language study of the PQ's first decade.

All of the milestone events leading up to the PQ victory are portrayed in the author's skillful writing style. The birth in 1967 of the *Mouvement Souveraineté-Association* led by renegade Quebec Liberal René Lévesque. The absorption by this organization in 1968 of two other separatist groups to form the *Parti Québécois.* The April 1970 general elections at which the PQ already attracted 23% of the vote. The overhaul of the official party programme in a shift to the left at the PQ's fourth national congress in early 1973. The October

1973 elections at which the PQ increased its share of the vote to 30% and became the Official Opposition. Finally, the party's acceptance at its fifth national congress in late 1974 of Claude Morin's ingenious electoral scheme to include in the party programme a plank obliging a PQ government to hold a referendum on independence. Saywell concludes with a glimpse of the future: If the federalists in Quebec don't regroup under capable leaders, "independence *and* association, so gently argued, could easily win the day" (p. 174).

Several criticisms can be made. First of all, there are too many quotations and they are often too long. For example, a long quote from a Lévesque-authored statement comprises approximately one third of the chapter on 1971. A quote from a document written by Claude Morin makes up about a third of the chapter dedicated to 1974. The three-page epilogue is comprised mostly of a long quote from Lévesque. Although most quotes are followed by a citation of the source in parenthesis, some inexplicably are not.

Secondly, the inclusion of an index and especially a bibliography would have been welcome. Although the author was forced to rely heavily upon newspapers since his accounts were published each year, he might have included a list of later published studies on the PQ and Quebec politics of the period for the interested reader.

Finally, his discussion of the very important internal conflict between the PQ's parliamentary and executive wings which erupted suddenly in September 1974 would have been more complete if he had mentioned the catalyst of this crisis, i.e., the Quebec by-election in the riding of Johnson in August 1974. This election resulted from the efforts of the PQ deputies to force the Liberal incumbent to resign because of conflict of interest accusations. However the PQ executive council wasted the work of its party's deputies by poorly organizing the campaign of the PQ candidate in the eventual by-election. The PQ parliamentary wing burst out in anger the following month in a direct challenge to Lévesque's leadership.

Despite these deficiencies, this book can be useful to the general reader interested in Quebec politics and history. For academic circles it can be used in undergraduate and low-level graduate courses in Quebec or Canadian politics and history. It is not directed to the veteran researcher in Quebec affairs, who will likely already have read Saywell's yearly reports in the *Canadian Annual Review* in any case. However, even for this category of individual the book could serve as a useful review.

Université de Bordeaux III *Howard L. Singer*

Shakespeare's Sonnets. Edited with analytic commentary by Stephen Booth. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977. Pp. xix, 578. $25

Stephen Booth's edition of the Sonnets is ambitious and important. Although his text is a conservative one—he tries simply "to adapt a modern reader . . .

and the 1609 text to one another" (ix)—his critical methodology is a long looked for sign that New Criticism and Old Literary History are being challenged in that most conservative of arenas, Shakespeare studies. His edition is one indication that, at last, a contemporary critical paradigm, a flexible and suggestive hermeneutics of the phenomenology of reading, is becoming respectable. Booth provides a reproduction of the 1609 Quarto and a modernized text printed in parallel to it. He relegates the pseudo-problems of authenticity, arrangement, biographical speculations and the sonnets' "story" and "characters" to a cursory five-page appendix, and stakes the importance of his edition on a long analytical commentary, sonnet by sonnet, which exemplifies, he argues, a criticism which is "pluralistically committed" (508), and instead of arguing how a sonnet *should* be read, instead concerns itself with how, in his view, the work *is* read, how it probably *was* read by the Renaissance reader, and why.

Rather than reconstructing "the" or even "a" meaning, Booth emphasizes the experience of reading itself. "Scholarly glosses," he asserts, ignore "that verse exists in time, that one reads one word and then another"; and so he tries to "indicate not only what words mean but when they mean it" (x). Readers are not so much given meaning, they make—or to be fair to Booth, who is not sufficiently bold to escape the text's determinative role, they discover—meanings. How do we evaluate and articulate the meanings we discover in a sonnet? Booth's fundamental metaphor is that of metempsychosis: we encounter a continually self-modifying range of suggestions, overtones, ideas and echoes, and his contemporary attempts to analyze the processes "by which the relevant meanings of Shakespeare's words and phrases and the contexts they bring with them combine, intertwine, fuse, and conflict" in a reading (xii). He argues that claims of exclusive meaning diminish the complexity of reading. His notes, therefore, "are designed to admit that everything in a sonnet is there" (xiv). He speaks of words activating suggestions, drawing threads of potential meaning together, of ideas and echoes crossing the reader's mind, or of the byways down which we may be beckoned by words and phrases, the suggestions of which may be modified or cancelled as we read.

Booth is especially suggestive when he writes of "Shakespeare's habit of using language with a special precision that both gives a precise meaning not quite demonstrable in the syntax and a wealth of additional meaning as well" (193). At such times, Shakespeare will use syntactic imprecision or constructive vagueness to make words do multiple duty and raise continually changing associations in the reader's mind. For Booth, indeed, our experience of reading is guided fundamentally by syntax which clarifies, blurs and directs our understanding. A typical comment is that "syntactical momentum carries a reader into clarity", or that we must note "the power of syntactic genre to direct" our expectations (366, 450). Booth is highly illuminating in his careful tracking of the syntactical manipulation he sees as directing our reading of the sonnets.

Undoubtedly, this edition constitutes a landmark in Shakespearean criticism. Nevertheless, its methodology is, finally, too timid. There might be

trivial objections to some of the suggestions he finds in the sonnets; many of his undertones are, surely, barely audible. Or at least such objections would be trivial were he not as insistent as any New Critic that the text is finally deterministic. To save a degree of the reader's autonomy, he overtly tries to "resurrect" that vague collective, "the Renaissance reader" to "insure that a reader's experience of the sonnets will as far as possible approximate that of the first readers of the 1609 Quarto" (xii). Which reader? Ben Jonson or Francis Meres? John Donne or Thomas Thorpe? And, more importantly, which reading? A quick skim in the Mermaid? An informed, studious re-reading? A tipsy giggle with one's coy mistress? It is indeterminable what Shakespeare's original readers "might have heard" or "may take" words to mean (163). Booth seemingly cannot admit that readers make meaning, that they bring to a text as well as receiving from it, and that each reading is a new encounter with possible meanings. Booth too occasionally speaks of the sonnets' "potential" for meaning (425): like the greatest art, the Sonnets are crystalline, refracting light according to the angle from which they are viewed.

Another radical flaw in Booth's methodology is his virtual ignorance of tone—indeed of the whole crucial affective dimension of the sonnets. He rightly acknowledges, on Sonnet 124, "that even the most scrupulously open-minded glosses on its particulars do very little to explain how it achieves its grandeur" (419). He relies on his analysis of syntactical manipulation instead of facing the challenge he unquestionably recognises and tracing how the poem is held together by the affective feeling it evokes in the reader's experience. Altogether, what one misses in Booth's commentary is an acknowledgement that meanings, syntactical patterns and undertones set up patterns of responsive feeling in a reader as well as of ratiocination. The sonnets are, usually, foci of feeling; their logic is frequently intuitive and affective; their fundamental manipulation consists not primarily of ideational suggestions but movements of feeling in us which they guide and with which they interact. For Booth, our response to a sonnet is not only determined by the text but insofar as we participate in discovering its meaning, over-intellectualized.

I am emphasizing the methodological timidity of Booth's commentary simply because the direction in which he points is so suggestive and so overdue in Shakespearian studies. Other readers may stress other qualifications. For instance, there is, distressingly, virtually no acknowledgement of the sonnets' historicity. For all the concern with "the Renaissance reader," the poems exist in an historical void, with no apparent connection with any ideological, social or economic contexts. Booth is rightly anxious to ignore useless biographical speculation, but in doing so he ignores a crucial dimension of them—that they open to us a sensitive, indirectly articulated response to the dynamics of their age.

One other, final, cavill. Booth's edition is annoyingly inconvenient to use. A reader wants to have the commentary side-by side with the text. Ingram and

Redpath's stolid commentary, or even Wright and LaMar's pedestrian paraphrases can be consulted alongside the sonnets to which they refer; Booth's text is virtually useless as a reader invariably needs to open another text to follow him. As compensation, there is an excellent word-index to the commentary.

Notwithstanding its inconvenience and its critical timidity, this is a work of first-rate importance, hopefully a precursor of a long-needed revolution in our understanding of reading Shakespeare.

Dalhousie University *G.F. Waller*

Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit. By Frances Ferguson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. Pp. xvii, 263.

Since studies dealing with Wordsworth's use of language are comparatively rare, one takes up Frances Ferguson's book with considerably interest. One puts it down time and again, however, with a sense of frustration and defeat; and although the abstract nature of the subject has something to do with the impenetrability, it is rather Miss Ferguson's own use of language that eludes comprehension and thus contributes to what she regards as "counter-spirit".

Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit begins with a chapter on Wordsworth's prose, surveys the background of language generally, and is mainly occupied with the poet's concern with its limitations as a means of expressing feeling, a theme which is continued in the fifth chapter, "Wordsworth's Epitaphic Mode". Here the poet's epitaphic style of composition is shown to go beyond the elegiac as a method of writing reflections on recollections of his previous selves. Miss Ferguson thus makes a valuable contribution in these chapters, and her further chapter on the poet's classification of his poems, where she stresses the importance of the affections in the poet's scheme, is also instructive. The remaining chapters examine, severally, the "Immortality Ode", *The Prelude*, the Lucy Poems, and *The Excursion:* and Miss Ferguson interprets them largely in terms of paradoxes and relationships operating, in her view, rather like the language of counter-spirit itself.

This treatment of the poems is questionable, less because it defies the traditional interpretations of them than because it runs counter to the general spirit in which Wordsworth used language. In an abstract study of this kind it would seem necessary to begin, however briefly, with the positive spirit pervading Wordsworth's poetry, if only thereby to define the more clearly the nature of "counter-spirit" in it. But in her preoccupation with language as counter-spirit Miss Ferguson minimizes the basic importance of the organic theory of development as well as the fundamental place of language in that theory.

Wordsworth agreed substantially with Herder, Rousseau, Schlegel, and others in matters linguistic, all of whom had adopted the hypothesis that Man represents nature at the highest point of her activity. Having risen above his animal kindred in the break-through to consciousness, he created language as a consequence of his new status; and it was equally inevitable that he who was most skilled in the manipulation of that language—the poet—should enjoy the esteem of his fellows as an interpreter and spokesman for all of them. When Wordsworth wrote that he felt

> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things,

he was but giving expression to this general organic nature of development on this planet, and thus of the transcendental significance of language.

An all-embracing spirit of love informs language and, whatever might be its adequacies in representing human passions (and Wordsworth was certainly aware of its limitations), the possession and use of language none the less enable man to record both emotion and thought, thus keeping the past alive and, in some measure, anticipating the future. It was this affectionate spirit enshrined in the written word that made Wordsworth vow to be a poet, and the same that caused him to leave volumes of poetry in which he had used language to transfer thought and feeling through the senses directly to the inner world of the imagination. "Written words," as Miss Ferguson says, "become implicit testimony to the persistence of the operations of the affections". None the less, she fails, as it seems to us, to clarify the relationship between consciousness and language, and to see the one as the reason for the other. For her, the Romantics "continually construct speculative histories which imply that the 'meaning' of origins is both inexhaustible and unattainable." Origins, indeed, are "where you find them" (p. 4).

Nor is it feasible that language can at one and the same time be both spirit and counter-spirit. In the prose passage from the poet's third "Essay upon Epitaphs" from which Miss Ferguson derives her title, Wordsworth is saying no more than he said in his notes on "the Thorn"—that words are not mere "vehicles", but are "*powers* either to kill or animate". In the Essay as in the notes, the poet is discrediting language as "the dress of thought" (the phrase is Pope's) and, in urging that it is indeed no less than "an incarnation of thought", he is also saying that language conceived as mere "dress" becomes a "counter-spirit" that poisons rather than nourishes the reader. De Quincey explained what Wordsworth had had in mind: the union between poetical thought and language is "subtle" and "ineffable", he wrote, and went on to add that thought and language "are not united as a body with a separate dress, but as a mysterious incarnation". In the Essay Wordsworth is expostulating on his favourite theme of the emptiness and inanity of Neoclassical diction, and argu-

ing in favour of "the real language of men". With her strained shadow-boxing Miss Ferguson tries too hard and thus overlooks the obvious.

In her treatment of language as an incarnation of thought she explores Wordsworth's attitudes to Pope's 'unmeaning antithesis' and convincingly offers his solution in the employment of "words echoing words" (p. 166). But here, she is dealing with the spirit of language rather than the counter-spirit of it, although her argument becomes a curious inversion implying the latter. The recompense of the echo depends upon "the power of making language the 'incarnation' of thought" (p. 165), as she rightly says, but her concluding remarks on the subject attempt to convert the spiritual incarnation into the language of counter-spirit in an effort to "liberate the epitaph . . . from language itself" (p. 167).

Again in *The Prelude* she argues that the poem "virtually constitutes a series of epitaphs spoken upon former selves, 'other Beings', who can be approached only across vacancies almost as wide as those between the living and the dead" (p. 155). Novel and stimulating as the idea is, it won't quite do: the vacancies are "almost" but not quite; and since an epitaph is a brief composition written on the occasion of a person's death, it must be noted that the "other Being" of "those days" is not dead. Thanks to memory, the "other Being" is very much alive and has a "self-presence" in the poet's mind as he writes his autobiography. Moreover, the former self—the "other Being"—is often enhanced by the poet's imagination, and the "vacancy" that "appears" so wide is obliterated by the poem itself. The epitaphic mode captures the bitter-sweet of flux and the human condition, but it obliterates neither the positive spirit of the poem nor the unification of the poet's previous "selves" with his present self. Together they form a whole, though complex man. Consciousness has given rise to language which cannot at one and the same time be both spirit and counter-spirit, and the latter, it would seem, can only enrich the positive spirit of the whole life-span.

Although Miss Ferguson is conversant with the *corpus* of Wordsworthian criticism and has produced a scholarly treatise deserving of careful attention, she has in our view forced Wordsworth's poetry to fit a thesis that is itself less clearly defined than the title of the book would lead us to expect and one which, in any case, is limited in its application.

And though perhaps unnecessarily picayune, one nevertheless expects academics, whether authors or publishers, to discriminate in the use of language; and a book on Wordsworthian language may be presumed to respect the language in which the poet himself thought and wrote. But in this text even the innocuous hyphen is slighted: the eye is scarcely impeded by 'nonhuman', but 'reimagining', 'reanimation' and 'reenact' retard, while an unplanned division like 'noncoin-cidence' (p. 117) is annoying; and lamentable as careless proofs always are, they are inexcusable and irresponsible in a costly book

bearing the imprint of a prestigious university press: errors on pages 7, 117, 128, 131, 139, 147, and 257 (note 2) are among the most glaring, and certainly contribute to the cloudiness of Miss Ferguson's thesis.

Dalhousie University *A.J. Hartley*

Close to the Sun Again. By Morley Callaghan. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977. Pp. 169. $9.95.

Callaghan's career as a writer spans a fifty-year period during which Canadian fiction has moved away from the historical and rural romance to the novel of urban realism. Callaghan has been one of the principal figures in effecting this change, and his influence on Canadian fiction can hardly be over-estimated. As well, Callaghan has served with exemplary diligence the deeply felt need of Canadians to test the moral premises on which their society is based. That his writing, meant to be transparent and fluid, often seems murky and mannered, sometimes seems beside the point, so compelling and immediate is the conflict at hand.

Close to the Sun Again indicates that Callaghan has lost none of the honesty and expertise with which he has examined the values men choose to live by. *A Fine and Private Place*, his last book, can be put into perspective as an embarrasing aberration, and one can turn away with relief from its diffuseness and cloudiness of purpose to the tightness and clarity of vision of the current work. The first third of the book is set in contemporary Toronto, to which former naval commander Ira Groome has returned in a search for a former self. The rest of the book is an examination of the man Groome was and the events that led up to the dramatic personality change which he had undergone thirty years before. The second section is set on a corvette on the North Atlantic during World War II, and is handled as a "flashback" of Groome's as he lies dying in a hospital bed as the result of an auto accident.

The flashback is one of the numerous devices that the book employs which would help to convert it readily into a film. The self-contained action scenes are tailor-made for the movies, for example, the sinking of a U-boat, the bridge of the corvette during battle stations, survivors from the corvette adrift on a float. Apart from the set scenes, the book has an overall theatricality of situation: a single woman set among a group of men, two men in love with the same woman, an atmosphere in which death might come at any moment, and does. Rarely would the conversion of book to movie be so easy.

The Ira Groome that we meet at the beginning of the book is a man who sardonically describes himself to his mistress as standing for "a lack of passion". "Never get personally involved, and then you can be utterly ruthless", he ad-

vises the Chief of Police. For the last thirty years Groome has lived his own life by this rule. It has earned him distinction as a naval commander and the nickname "Ribbons " Groome, and it has enabled him to become a strong man for the Brazilian Power Corporation. Money, power and recognition have followed. When we encounter him, he is still living by this rule, having accepted a job as Toronto police commissioner, but the return to Toronto itself is an indication that he has begun to doubt the rule. Following his wife's uncomprehending deathbed questions to him, "Where did you go Ira? Was there someone else?", he had been rejected by his son who planned never to see him again.

Groome begins the search for his earlier self by literally reducing his power. He quits his job with the Brazilian Power Corporation, a multi-national organization where he has been "a screener of men who might upset the corporate service", and though essentially he takes on the same role in Toronto, the scale is reduced. One day he is made vulnerable by a meeting with a former navy friend, Leo Cawthra, and to his great surprise, he finds himself standing at the foot of an escalator waiting for a sign of recognition from the people descending. Almost by accident, he discovers that this sense of expectancy is heightened by drinking, and because his secret feelings delight him and dispel his boredom, he begins to drink heavily. After a meeting of the Police Commission during which he barely manages to conceal his intoxication, he starts taking rest cures at a local sanatorium. His mistress, who cares so much for appearances that she has had a dead tree in her driveway repainted so that it would not spoil the look of the column of trees, conspires with Groome to conceal his condition. But so overwhelming is his need to unearth this buried self that he hastens from the sanatorium in a rain storm and crashes into a skidding truck.

Near death, Groome is now vulnerable enough to remember the time when he was "close to the sun", that is, in a state of passionate life. At the time of the events that calcified Groome's emotions for thirty years, he also had been in a peculiarly vulnerable condition as the result of a severe concussion suffered when a plane had raked his corvette. When he had become conscious, he had marvelled at the "wonderfully distinct" faces of the seamen around his bed, and at the uniqueness of their private worlds. In this undefended mental state, he had gone to sea again. When his corvette picks up two men and a woman, survivors from a ship in the convoy ahead, he is instrumental in restoring life and warmth to them. The woman, Gina Bixby, and one of the men, Jethroe Chone, turn out to be a gambler's daughter and her bodyguard. The nature of their relationship never becomes fully clear to Groome, though his contact with them damages his emotions so severely that he never dares venture into the "jungle terror of deep personal involvements" again.. Groome had believed that he and Gina were in love, and had accepted her explanation of her attachment to Chone, but Groome is left in "agony and bafflement" by Gina's willingness to die in order to prevent Chone from getting away from her. The strength of their

tie puts Groome's whole life in question, and rather than leave himself vulnerable again, he commits "high treason against himself" and lives thereafter in a world of impersonal relationships. Thirty years later, in a Toronto hospital, he realizes finally "that there could be no life, no love, no truth, without the passion that shattered all the rigid things". This self-awareness is accompanied by a vision of the world as a colorful circus parade, and he feels no fear, and does not ask "Who am I?" as he dies. The experience that was his undoing proves to be his salvation.

The pattern of the action of the book is so direct as to be almost simplistic. Wanting desperately to understand the low point he has reached in his life, Groome re-creates what he calls his "high point". Callaghan has carried the simplified structure of the novels of the thirties a step further, running the risk of writing a pat book for the sake of economy and clarity of vision. This pitfall is narrowly avoided by the depth and force of the writer's commitment to his theme. Callaghan works best in the shorter forms where he can keep control of character, setting and language. The little known novella *No Man's Meat* (1931) is among Callaghan's best work, and he is certainly the most important short story writer Canada has produced. In its concentration of subject and setting, *Close ot the Sun Again* reads more like a short story than a novel. When Callaghan chooses a broader canvas, as in *A Passion in Rome*, he operates under a handicap and blunts his talent.

A rehashing of the controversy about whether Callaghan's prose is equal to the burden he expects it to carry is not in place here, but one cannot resist quoting the following remark made by Groome to his mistress after they have made love:

> You have really excellent breasts, old girl. A perfect breast should be of a size and shape that can be covered by a champagne glass without having the glass tip. You understand? A breast should have a vibrant life of its own.

I suspect Callaghan does not mean to condemn Groome as thoroughly as this remark does. Maintaining the integrity of his characters through their dialogue has always been a problem for Callaghan.

Dalhousie University *E.L. Bobak*

W. B. Yeats and the Idea of a Theatre: The Early Abbey Theatre in Theory and Practice. By James W. Flannery. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976. Pp. xx, 404. $22.50.

This is an important book for anyone who is seriously interested in the modern theatre; despite the apparent restrictions suggested by the subtitle, it is not narrowly confined to Irish drama, let alone the plays of W.B. Yeats. None of my

subsequent criticisms or the various heated disagreements which it provoked in me (some of which there's no space to explore in this review) should be allowed to obscure this importance. Dr. Flannery has written a detailed and wide-ranging study that comprehensively explores its full title: it sets W.B. Yeats within the theatre of his own age (or, rather, the various theatres that were to be found in Ireland and in England, France, and Scandinavia at different times during his lifetime) as well as in relation to the somewhat different theatrical climate of today. In so doing, Dr. Flannery illuminates both the theoretical as well as practical dramatic writings of the poet and the evolution of Anglo-Irish drama from its beginnings at the end of the nineteenth century to the early 1970s. He writes perceptively about writers and artists who influenced Yeats' work for the theatre, especially Wagner, Symons, Villiers de L'Isle Adam, Maeterlinck and Gordon Craig, Lady Gregory and J.M. Synge (though his hostility to *In the Shadow of the Glen* appears based on an insensitive response that has little to do with dramatic criticism). Moreover, he asks us to re-evaluate the plays of Yeats in theatrical as well as literary terms and gives us critical guidance in this task by skilfully using his wide reading, his scholarly choice of much hitherto unpublished material (by Yeats and by many of his contemporaries) and the practical experience gained by staging several rarely produced plays by Yeats. He is surely right in claiming that "few topics have been subject to greater distortion, speculation, and outright gossip than the history of the Abbey Theatre and Yeats' role in its creation", and his own narrative clarifies the poet's work as theatre manager, dramatist and aesthetician with admirable thoroughness and critical acumen.

Understandably, perhaps, the book begins on the level of embattled polemic, openly challenging many of the critics who have failed to recognize Yeats' dramatic genius. While there is far too much discussion of critical views that do not deserve to be taken so seriously, it is necessary for Dr. Flannery to consider some of the more important hostile criticisms of Yeats as a man of the theatre, particularly when several have been advanced by critics (T.R. Henn comes to mind) who are primarily sympathetic to Yeats' work and ideas. It must be said that Dr. Flannery is not always fair to such critics; his treatment of Helen Vendler's views is a case in point. However, in one respect a major battle was won by him without a shot needing to be fired, so far as I am concerned, though he does expend much critical ammunition in the course of his argument; I wholeheartedly agree with what he calls his "basic thesis" that "Yeats' dramatic theories are more important than his actual practices." For many years I have regarded the poet as one of the three or four most important twentieth-century critics of drama. The range and depth of this criticism—on practical matters as well as on a wide variety of theoretical issues—is quite extraordinary and is surely unmatched in English. Dr. Flannery draws upon a wide variety of sources, including much unpublished material, to make out a most impressive case for recognition of the complexity of Yeats' theatrical vision as well as his sheer professionalism in practical terms. The comparison with Gordon Craig,

which convincingly proves that of the two Yeats had the more down-to-earth approach, is shrewdly telling, and here, incidentally, one appreciates the copious quotations from the fascinating but still largely unpublished correspondence between the two men.

The study does full justice to the poet's skill in public relations; he was a shrewd and adroit manager of men whose essentially political talents (his manipulation of the dispute with the Fay brothers which led to their leaving the Abbey Theatre is a case in point) were of enormous value in the creation and maintenance of the Abbey and the Irish dramatic movement. Here is Yeats as a man who was always receptive to new ideas and experiments, continually interested in the technique of staging plays (by others as well as by himself) and in all the subsidiary arts of acting, verse speaking, lighting, designing scenery and costumes and all the other practical matters that contribute to theatre production.

In addition to drawing our attention to positive elements in what Flannery calls "the extraordinary work of the early Abbey Theatre" (he is good on Fitzmaurice's writings as well as the stage work of the Fays) the author is especially successful in promoting his "chief endeavour" to "rediscover what Yeats' dramatic and theatrical ideals actually were as well as how they evolved out of his personal philosophy of life and his aesthetic as a poet and were tested on the stage of the early Abbey Theatre." One's only reservation about this significant part of the book is the author's tendency to exalt Yeats at the expense of his colleagues and fellow practitioners; I see little justification for Flannery's conclusion that, "as many as any other single cause, the intransigence, theatrical ignorance, and downright selfishness of Lady Gregory and Synge thwarted Yeats' ambitions for the early Abbey Theatre." Here, as elsewhere in the book (particularly in the early chapters), there is far too much special pleading and an irritating tendency to accept Yeats' theories as valid facts with which to refute his critics.

About the exact nature and extent of the poet's dramatic genius, however, one's original misgivings persist. It is difficult to accept the assertion that Yeats' plays exhibit "the widest range of experiment of any dramatist in the history of the theatre", let alone the claims for his many successes in that experimentation. I am fully prepared to believe that, given appropriately imaginative productions, more of Yeats' plays than are usually recognised can offer the spectator genuinely theatrical excitement on various levels of ritualistic and realistic intensity. Yet how may one legitimately include Yeats in the small circle of truly great dramatists in the English language—as Flannery seems to invite us to do, albeit with some hesitation at times (for instance, his cogently argued premise that Yeats' "dramatic theories are more important than his actual practices" is surely an important critical admission as well as a valid aesthetic approach to the subject). What major playwright worthy of the title has possessed a dramatic genius strictly confined to the one-act genre? Is there one really great play by Yeats that exceeds that length? I hardly think so, and Dr. Flannery

seems not to make any such assertion. Whatever may be claimed for Yeats as a playwright—and he has certainly written several one-act masterpieces—must surely allow for this (to me serious) limitation. That Dr. Flannery seems not to take this into account, however, does not radically damage a work that rewards attention for its discussion of a wide number of significant dramatic and theatrical problems. The same can be said in favour of overlooking the unnecessary amount of documentation—in the text as well as in the footnotes—that is, no doubt, an unfortunate result of the work's origin as a doctoral thesis. Much more rigorous editing would have greatly benefited this nonetheless stimulating study of a worthy subject.

University of Alberta *Ronald Ayling*

Timothy Warren Anglin 1822-96, Irish-Catholic Canadian. By William M. Baker. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977.

Born in Ireland, Timothy Warren Anglin emigrated to New Brunswick in 1849 where he eventually became a newspaper editor, the spokesman for the Irish-Catholic population in that province, and, successively, a provincial and federal politician. This work by Mr. Baker analyzes the career of Timothy Anglin, including the last decade of his life when he was out of public office and living in Ontario. The author has given us a solid assessment of a nineteenth-century Irish-Catholic journalist-politician.

This book, unlike many doctoral theses which are later published, is pruned of unnecessary detail and the reader is left with a story that is both interesting and clear. The writer informs us at the beginning that his attitude towards his subject is one of "respect without affection" and this is amply demonstrated throughout. Certainly, this is the strength of a good thesis, and of this book.

Anglin's views on Confederation were shaped in some measure by his Irish background and the Union of 1801 with Great Britain. For that reason, among others, he initially opposed the union of the British North American provinces, but on this issue, as on some others, his views changed. For example, as much as he condemned the treatment of Ireland he was quick to realize that British power in New Brunswick and the other provinces was used differently—at another level of self-interest. Although Anglin's views on issues could change, we are still left to wonder about the degree of opportunism involved. The author is very fair in his treatment, for the pen of a less objective observer might have characterized Anglin as a complete opportunist—as one who used the Irish-Catholics of New Brunswick to satisfy his own ambitions. Though the author does not hesitate to point out examples of Anglin courting the Irish-Catholic vote, he also demonstrates that Anglin often risked unpopularity for the support

of Irish-Catholic causes, particularly on the schools question in New Brunswick. And while Anglin often appears as a rigid and puritanical dogmatist, he is also shown as one who could, at least occasionally, change his mind on an issue.

If there is a weakness in the work it is that there are so few examples of Anglin's humanity portrayed. Perhaps the evidence did not permit this, but we wonder about his daily relationship with his wife and children, for there is so little information on them. Since the author is eminently fair in the treatment of his subject, we can only assume that there was very little material on his family.

Anglin's contribution to Canadian history was noteworthy. His moderate approach to the Irish-Catholic question in the pages of his newspaper undoubtedly contributed to a saner religious atmosphere, and his assiduous reporting of events while a member of Parliament helped to dispel ignorance. It is therefore fitting that his story has been placed before us. We appreciate the fact that it has been done fairly, for Timothy Warren Anglin often forced people to make a choice.

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