

## Book Reviews

*Thackeray's Novels: A Fiction that is True.* By Jack P. Rawlins. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974. Pp. xi, 244. \$10.00.

Rawlins' *Thackeray's Novels: A Fiction that is True* is an excellent study. It is also initially irritating. Rawlins sees Thackeray as not simply unable to sustain an illusion of reality in his fiction but drawing attention explicitly and constantly to the fact that fiction is lies. Thackeray's narrative methods are, therefore, hostile to the ends of a dramatic action in two ways: first, in undercutting the reader's acceptance of conventional romantic plots and patterns; and second, in weakening "our interest in drama's primary end — the illusion of intense and particular reality." His books become a running commentary on "the difference between the way we read and the way we live. We read romantic novels with an easy moral absolutism and live according to a more pragmatic creed." Rawlins' notion seems to be that drama is a straightforward matter of satisfied and relatively simple expectations, one might almost say a clear working out of "poetic justice" (though, to be fair, he later has an excellent section called "Beyond Poetic Justice"), and that artists who destroy such moral and aesthetic illusions are somehow clumsy or perverse. One sees here, to start with, a familiar modern prejudice in favour of James' and Lubbock's emphasis on "dramatic" technique. And James is appropriately invoked in the Preface, pronouncing that to "admit that the events he narrates have not really happened" is for the novelist the "betrayal of a sacred office". But one senses as well that the idea of drama in use here is a rather naive one that leaves little room for irony or for a *King Lear*, except as revised by Nahum Tate. At times Rawlins sounds a little like Dickens' Mrs. General as when he tells us, "Though the proprieties of the novelistic art may be hard to define, it is easy to sense that Thackeray is disobeying them." By such standards Dr. Johnson, with his common sense view that the spectators of a drama "are always in their senses, and know . . . that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players", is a flaming radical. Rawlins gets his touchstones of dramatic propriety from Sheldon Sacks' *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, and Sacks, though himself no doubt the modestest man alive, inspires Rawlins to such a triumphant gem of a note as this:

Because we have used Sacks's categories to provide us with a vocabulary for Thackeray's discontent with the novel as he finds it, it is not to be assumed that Sacks shares Thackeray's simplistic view of the antagonism between dramatic narrative and argument. Sacks treats the problem with an insight and subtlety that are irrelevant to an understanding of Thackeray's conception of it.

O mighty Sacks! As Dr. Johnson would say: "Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet." Thackeray's audience does not fare much better. Rawlins sees Thackeray aiming his fiction at a simple-minded hypothetical reader ("Victorian novel-readers are historically famous for reading in hopes of a good cry") with the intention of destroying the reader's easy aesthetic and moral expectations: "The conclusion of *Vanity Fair* is meant to gall and frustrate." Despite Rawlins' smugness about the Victorian novel-reader, however, he too seems to share in the gall and frustration, not, since he is a tough and enlightened modern, balked of a good cry but hindered in finding "clarity of dramatic commitment, and artistic coherence and closure".

However, despite the rather rigid manner in which Thackeray is taken to task, Rawlins has seized on a centrally important facet of Thackeray's work and richly demonstrated Thackeray's insistence on it in a host of closely read illustrations. Even his censures are sometimes amusing, as when he catches Thackeray first moralizing on Miss Hester's loyalty as a mercenary taking care of old Sir Pitt, then moralizing on her disloyalty in tormenting him: "Thus he sermonizes on a text that he immediately identifies as spurious — and proceeds to sermonize on the opposite data with equal felicity. We can easily imagine him sermonizing on the implications of his having thus deceived us." Moreover, even early in the book, Rawlins shows some sympathy for what Thackeray is about: "The narrator allows the surface [of *Vanity Fair*] to remain intact, but uses its presence as a text for an aesthetic discussion that leads to an apologetic truth: that, given the nature of man, life cannot be a successful novel." Rawlins is very acute on the complex shifts of perspective Thackeray keeps forcing on his reader, artifact to life, life to art, the immediate moment to the vista of time or death. At one point, after demonstrating why Thackeray is not a realist, he then argues why he nevertheless achieves a peculiar effect of realism: "By asserting that his novel is rather arbitrarily excerpted from a world that extends infinitely far beyond the bounds of the book, Thackeray accomplishes something like the effect of the naturalist painter who, by omitting the far side of his figure's face, wins from the viewer a stronger belief in both the side he sees and the side he cannot see."

Rawlins, then, locates "the force for disharmony" in Thackeray's work "in an extreme consciousness of the novelistic process at work and an extreme distrust of the moral value of conventional romance. . . . His insight into the processes of writing and reading would be entirely praiseworthy if it were not destroying a very compelling drama by its presence." In the latter part of the book Rawlins explores the philosophy or vision of Thackeray's later novels, what Thackeray is getting at. Thackeray is fascinated with the mind's insistence on forming patterns — the making of a novel is a paradigm of this relentless but also illusory and dangerous

activity. Camus says, "There is not one human being who, above a certain elementary level of consciousness, does not exhaust himself in trying to find formulas or attitudes that will give his existence the unity it lacks. . . . What, in fact, is a novel but a universe in which action is endowed with form, where final words are pronounced, where people possess one another completely, and where life assumes the aspect of destiny." Like Camus, Thackeray senses and insists upon the tragic disparities between the form things have and the form we wish to impose on or see in them. Rawlins is precisely right when he says Colonel Newcome is "a believer in the morality of artistic form", and his account of the Colonel's end is excellent in its sharp discriminations: "The Colonel provides us with Thackeray's one unquestionably right, artistically satisfying ending — satisfying as Oedipus's punishment is satisfying — but Thackeray makes sure we recognize that such an end is not inevitable or God's design or even the author's; rather, it is the wilful action of an old idealist, in defiance of more pragmatic humanitarians who can respect but not comprehend one who would rather die in a tragedy than live in an inartful world." Rawlins' account of how Thackeray explores the implications of the notion of poetic justice in life and art is astute, and the concluding chapter is very fine indeed. Still, Rawlins is not one to be carried away and gives a carefully measured assessment of Thackeray's limitations, as he sees them, in his Epilogue.

The number of books on Thackeray is amazingly small, and some of those are disappointing. This one, though you may reject or be irked by some of its assumptions, is important and valuable.

University of Alberta

R.D. McMaster

*Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality.* By Herbert Lindenberger. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975. Pp. xiv, 194. \$11.00.

The author, Avalon Foundation Professor of Humanities in Comparative Literature and English and chairman of the Comparative Literature program at Stanford University, makes it clear he is not dealing with the "development of historical drama as a *genre*". Nor did he conceive his book in terms of "a close reading of representative great texts". He uses rather a "horizontal approach" by which he examines each text selected in a number of separate contexts. He takes his examples from a great variety of authors — Shakespeare, Corneille, Racine, Goethe, Schiller, Buchner, Brecht, and many others; and indeed part of the value of his book comes from precisely this ability to range widely over an exhilarating diversity of works to illustrate his findings.

In its very planning and structure the book throws up the problems, characteristics, and artistic insights peculiar to historical drama. The chapter dealing with historical reality and levels of reality yields its secrets slowly: the enumeration of the four levels of reality — sources, conventions of theatre exploited, sense of

historical continuity, influence of our own situation on the work — I accepted naturally; the quick survey of the Tudor myth system of Order and Degree, postulated with such finality and confidence by Lily B. Campbell and E.M.W. Tillyard, attacked with such incision by A.P. Rossiter, and demolished with such relish by critics like Robert Ornstein and J.W. Lever (“... the so-called ‘chain of being’ was in an advanced state of rust by the end of the sixteenth century”) I found valuable; but what stimulated me most were the comments on the limitations of documentary drama (which offers “a very selective view of history”) and on the claims of such drama to be therapeutic and dispense with professional actors and audiences. It is not so much that drama now justifies itself through its ability to imitate life: it is rather that “in certain contemporary contexts” life has to justify itself “by the quality and intensity of its drama”.

For me the richest part of the book is Chapter Two which deals with Conspiracy Plays and Tyrant and Martyr Plays. Professor Lindenberger early in this chapter makes the statement that both sums up an aspect of his thesis and invites modification in the light of recent events:

Conspiracy can best be dramatized in situations where both the ruling authority and its opponents are visible to the audience; thus, monarchies, dictatorships, and oligarchies (for instance, those of Venice or late republican Rome) lend themselves much more readily to conspiracy plays than does a modern democracy.

This statement leads the author to a survey of *Julius Caesar*, as an illustration of the power of rhetoric and as a tragedy of the “tainted idealist”, that impresses as one of the best parts of the book; but it also leads him to deal with contemporary audience reaction to such topical or documentary plays as Miller’s *The Crucible* and Kipphardt’s *In der Sache J. Robert Oppenheimer*.

Chapter Three, which deals with the “magnifying” process in historical drama, reveals some of the author’s shrewdest insights. After outlining Northrope Frye’s theory of the progressive decline of the hero through mythical, romantic, high-mimetic, low-mimetic modes to the modern ironic mode, Professor Lindenberger improvises on Frye’s theory by illustrating the diminution of the hero within single works by Corneille and Racine, in Wagner — *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, in Shakespeare — *Coriolanus* and *Hamlet*, and in novels by Scott and Tolstoy. In the sections on ceremonial and panoramic drama, the comments on Shakespeare’s *Henry V* probe beneath its ceremonial qualities to hint at subtler aspects, for example its arguments on the evils of war. The attraction of the panoramic play is set alongside its besetting weakness — too great a literary content for its theatrical frame. Nevertheless, the impressions of Hardy’s *Dynasts*, Karl Kraus’ *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, and Ibsen’s *Emperor and Galilean* are so attractively set forth that one wishes for an opportunity to see these plays staged.

The focus in Chapter Four is sharpened on the Henry IV plays as containing (one of) Shakespeare’s “distinctly original contributions to world literature”. L.C. Knights is drawn upon for his description of *Henry IV Part One* as “a realistic portrayal of the ways of the world and an insistent questioning of the values by



which its great men live — with a consequent ironic contrast between public profession and the actuality"; and Professor Lindenberger himself sums up the originality of *Henry IV* by referring to "its secular focus on a discernibly 'real' world, its cultivation of multiple points of view, its balance of public and private perspectives, . . . its artistic persuasiveness". These comments may well be intended as a balance to set alongside the discussion of academic approval of Shakespeare's seemingly "mediating" role in *Henry IV Part One* — the approval of "many literary intellectuals" for "what they took to be Shakespeare's values in the play".

Although the author tends to avoid direct use of close-study technique, one of his most instructive passages occurs in Chapter Four where he brilliantly illustrates the conflict between the techniques of ceremony and those of *Realpolitik* by critical examination of a brief extract from *Richard III*. From here he goes on to deal with other problems of fusing the political with the timeless by an examination of such Goethe plays as *Egmont* and *Hermann und Dorothea*. Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* turns out to be ideal for illustrating not only oscillation between the political and the timeless but also oscillation between the political and the private worlds. This play, in constantly forcing us "to rethink our conceptions of private and public", is described as being "as mercurial as its heroine".

The very high level of scholarship and the unusually closely packed nature of the book demand of the reader close attention. There are many passages of stimulating insight that can be quoted; but the results of its research cannot be neatly tabulated or summarized. This is by no means a quality that should put us off or lessen our admiration for its achievement. Even in its last few pages this critical work on historical drama keeps up its pace and interest: it moves from swift surveys of Brecht's *Mother Courage* and Gerhardt Hauptmann's *Die Weber* to an appreciation of the ballad-like qualities of Lope's *Fuenteovejuna* and an illuminating quotation from Racine's *Britannicus*; it examines power relationships in Shakespeare's history plays and shows how Büchner and Brecht tended to anticipate or reflect contemporary fashion by reducing their heroes and villains to size and ridiculing them. The work ends with a quotation from Machiavelli's dedication of *Il Principe* on the subject of the relationship between the princes of power and the men of "humble and obscure condition" who write about them. Discussing the notion that the tables might be turned and a prince attempt to portray the nature of ordinary men, Professor Lindenberger concludes:

If any were to take up the challenge in Machiavelli's dedication, they might, like many of our own recent authors, simply tell us how banal we all are.

Which seems to me a very apt way of narrowing the focus, reducing the magnification, and returning us to normality after a heady incursion into the realms of high imagination, high magnification, and high historical heroics!

Dalhousie University

J.T. Low.

*The Oldest City: The Story of St. John's, Newfoundland*, Vol. 1. By Paul O'Neill. Erin, Ontario: Press Porcepic, 1976. Pp.432.

Paul O'Neill's refreshingly informal and discursive history of St. John's is obviously a labour of love, a richly circumstantial account of British North America's "oldest city" which is not so much an exercise in historical analysis as an expression of communal pietas, a deeply-felt narrative tribute to a civic tradition that reaches back into the Elizabethan period and even beyond. Indeed, much of old St. John's characteristic charm can be attributed to the fact that it has never wholly outgrown its Elizabethan origins. Its peculiar atmosphere and flavour, the rhythm of life and temper of mind of its citizens, the cadence and turn of phrase of popular speech, are still perceptibly those of an old-fashioned seaport and fishing station whose cultural affiliations, at their deepest level, remain European rather than American. The earliest settlers of St. John's were the contemporaries of Shakespeare and Jonson, and it may not be altogether fanciful to see in those qualities that distinguish the outlook of their modern descendants — a shrewd and salty realism, a humourous gusto and a keen relish for all that is eccentric, extravagant and vividly outrageous in human behaviour — as the happy play of cultural atavism.

St. John's, the eldest and one of the most neglected by-blows of Tudor colonialism, has always looked to the past rather than to the future, to the east rather than to the west, and has remained, for better and for worse, a city basically conservative in spirit. As Newfoundland's old national anthem, *The Ode to Newfoundland*, puts it, "Where once they stood we stand". While most Newfoundlanders of the post-Confederation generation would echo this declaration of defiant nostalgia only in accents of the heaviest self-irony, it defines an attitude or syndrome to whose persistence everything in the economic, social and political history of St. John's bears perennial witness. In an age when urbanization has become almost synonymous with dehumanization, with the systematic obliteration of personal and collective identity, St. John's innate conservatism or traditionalism, its unostentatious devotion to the cult of its own past, has kept it one of the most intensely individual and human of all North America's cities. All good things, however, exact their price, and it is salutary for the lover of St. John's to remind himself of what its people, and the people of Newfoundland in general, have had to pay for their inveterate attachment to old ways.

The harbour of St. John's, which probably received its name from Corte Real, an Italian navigator in the Portuguese service, was frequented by European summer residents, most of whom were French fishermen, as early as the turn of the fifteenth century. Though the French and the Portuguese presence played almost as great a part in the early history of St. John's as that of the English, the latter were the first to assert a formal claim to whatever exploitative possibilities this unprepossessing European outpost of progress had to offer. In 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, from the site of the present War Memorial, publicly took possession of the "new found land" in the name of Queen Elizabeth. Gilbert, like most of the gentlemen adventurers who played a prominent role in the early affairs of the new colony, was a dedicated though far from personally disinterested agent of Tudor

state capitalism and its middle-class backers and chief financial beneficiaries, the great mercantile houses and syndicates of Bristol and London.

In other words, from the very beginning, the history of St. John's has been largely determined by the fortunes of the Atlantic fishing industry and by the policies of those vested interests, foreign and local, which have stood to profit from it. On the whole, these policies have been anything but conducive to the material well-being and social development of Newfoundland. If, as Sir Thomas More put it, the sheep of Tudor England devoured its dispossessed peasants, the cod of Tudor and post-Tudor Newfoundland devoured its fishermen. What soon developed in Newfoundland was a socio-political system in which most of the resident fishermen were reduced to the status of either serfs or outlaws. Indeed, the vestiges of this form of economic and social vassalage endured even into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when it assumed the guise of the debt-ridden fisherman's servitude to his local merchant, and the local merchant's dependence upon the great mercantile houses of St. John's.

It was, in fact, not until the mid-twentieth century that this system was smashed once and for all by Smallwood, who, quite rightly, saw in Union with Canada the only feasible means of effecting a long overdue social revolution in Newfoundland. Significantly, it was not in conservative St. John's, the administrative and financial centre of the system, that Smallwood found his strongest support, but in the so-called outports, which, though intensely traditional in their attachment to local ways and customs, were anything but conservative in social and political outlook. One of the secrets of Smallwood's success in overcoming the average Newfoundlander's instinctive distaste for any form of political association with the "mainland", was that he knew how to appeal simultaneously both to the traditionalist and to the radical strain in the Newfoundland temperament, a dual appeal that found its expression in a vivid political style — which, alas, eventually degenerated into a mere T.V. mannerism. In contrast, the style adopted by Smallwood's more formidable opponents was no less apt an accommodation to the oligarchic conservatism of St. John's — the style of the calculatingly sentimental, pink-white-and-green reactionary with his moistly patriotic eye firmly fixed on the main chance.

The truth of the matter is that old St. John's, in spite of its anachronistic charm, reflected a basically static, colonialist and rigidly stratified society. For generations it had been the regional capital of a kind of North American Sicily, of a jealously ingrown island community locked into precarious economic dependency upon a single industry. What was worse, the few beneficiaries of this state of affairs tended to perpetuate a quasi-feudal mentality that represented the single greatest block to social and political progress. The wonder of it is that the people of St. John's and of Newfoundland should have kept their soul intact under such a regime, that in spite of all they should have managed to retain an individualism, a humour and a vitality that is a tribute to a spiritual endurance under historical adversity that is hardly less than heroic.

Mr. O'Neill, though he has, quite properly, emphasized the positive rather than the negative side of St. John's history, deserves the highest commendation for a book that will long remain indispensable as a guide to the understanding of "the oldest city" and of its people. One looks forward to the second volume with the liveliest anticipation.

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*T.E. Flynn*

*Coleridge and the Idea of Love*. By Anthony John Harding. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974. Pp. xi, 281. \$19.95.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "love" as a "state of feeling" with regard to a person, which arises from sympathy. Furthermore, in religious use, "love" expresses "the paternal benevolence and affection of God, to the affectionate devotion due to [Him] from His creatures, and to the affection of one created being to another thence arising". This is a good place to begin if we are to get the most out of Professor Harding's scholarly treatment of the various aspects of Coleridge's ideas on relationship, of which the most comprehensive and all-pervading is that of love. The subject recalls the four loves distinguished by C.S. Lewis in his admirable little book, where he shows how each of the four loves examined by him merge into the others, but in which he also warns us of the distortions that may render the three natural loves of affection, friendship, and eros dangerous without the leavening charity of divine love, which is necessarily the goal of all of them. Such is Coleridge's idea of love, and such is the matter of Harding's book.

*Coleridge and the Idea of Love* is useful as an omnium gathering of Coleridge's comments on relationships, for although the title narrows these to "love", the author's main interest is relationships — between the individual and his fellows, between one man and another and between him and society; and these relationships depend ultimately on some aspect of "love". The blurb on the jacket indicates what the contents page confirms — that the first three chapters of the book "explore Coleridge's idea of relationship as it developed throughout his creative life, and show how Coleridge's own relationships influenced his thinking about morality". Harding pursues his subject logically by adhering to Coleridge's biographical and literary chronology, and does so in a thorough manner by bringing Coleridge's ideas into comparison and contrast with those of other thinkers on the subject of relationship, and these include Coleridge's contemporaries as well as our own.

There is less actual "development" than at first sight would seem to be the case, however, for although Harding makes a salutary effort to connect his discursive explorations with Coleridge's poetry, his entire disquisition culminates inclusively in the fourth and final chapter, "The Social State". Here he deals particularly with the relationship between the individual and society, and he quotes from Coleridge to the effect that the individual can be fully developed only by the society in which he thrives; and as a critic and author he goes on, commenting on the quotation to the effect that "the first principle of all that Coleridge wrote on man's relation to the social state" was implicit in Pantisocracy (p.206) so that, to use Coleridge's own phraseology, the end was already known in the beginning. Coleridge's early thinking on the nature of human relationships was not unrelated to his later writings. Although most of his political speculations were penned during the later Highgate period at the Gilman's, sympathy was there from the beginning, whether shared with Southey and Sara Fricker, or in idea with those who were collectively to become the ideal state that failed to materialize in America.

We can see how closely Coleridge adhered to the semantics of "love" by noting Professor Harding's comments on *The Constitution of Church and State*: "Coleridge believed that theology was, as a matter of historical fact, the ground and basis of all science, and of what we may loosely term 'culture'; and, moreover, that science, morality and 'culture' themselves return to theology in the end." Putting it more explicitly, he adds that, for Coleridge, theology excluded neither 'humanism' nor 'humane sciences', but rather that it was "their foundation, both historically and in essence" (p.250). This is exactly so, because "love" expresses "the paternal benevolence and affection of God, to the affectionate devotion due to [Him] from His creatures, and to the affection of one created being to another thence arising". The dictionary precisely defines Coleridge's attitude. As Harding himself writes, "It is only through Religion, indeed, that true community exists" (p.252).

F.D. Maurice, Coleridge's greatest contemporary disciple and interpreter — to whom, by the way, Harding makes no reference — took his theories of relationships as well as the role of religion in shaping them from Coleridge; and like Coleridge's, Maurice's ranged all the way from those in his own family circle to those summed up in Christ's relationships, in the Godhead on the higher level, and with mankind on the lower. For Maurice as for Coleridge, relationship was "a beautiful ladder set upon earth and reaching up to Him, prefiguring that heavenly relationship, and ... a descending ladder set in heaven and reaching to earth". The principles behind the Christian Social Movement stood on this view of "human relations" which Maurice, like Coleridge, regarded as "the base", both of English life and the English constitution: he had told Charles Kingsley that "man's sonship to God" was grounded on "the eternal relation of God to man in the Living Word". (*The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice* (2 vols., 1884), ii, 271.) For Professor Harding's study of Coleridge's idea of "love" it is worth pointing out that Maurice was paraphrasing Coleridge from whom he got this "basis" for everything he had written on the nature of relationships. From Coleridge's *Lay Sermon* on the Bible as an archetypal national history, Maurice obtained the germ of the idea that he developed later in *The Kingdom of Christ*; while all that he said in that work respecting the relationship between Church and State was "nothing but an expansion" of Coleridge's expository reconciliation of Law with Religion, the latter of which defined that "state of feeling" alive both in the individual and in the social body, and also as a mediating force between the two; this was "love" as both men understood the term.

*Coleridge and the Idea of Love* contains a useful bibliography, and the index includes some subject entries: that on "love", for example, cites references to charitable, divine, marital, parental, platonic, sexual, and sibling loves — indicating both the range of Coleridge's excursions on the subject as well as the comprehensiveness of Harding's research on the subject.

Because of the discursive nature of the author's treatise, he does well, also, to sum up Coleridge's "essentially coherent idea of human relationships" in his brief introduction. But the fourth and last point in his summary, on the "vital function of religion", not only embraces the other three, but also includes a perceptive hint on the meaning of history as well. Professor Harding's study is one, therefore, that

throws much light on Coleridge and, seemingly incidentally and inadvertently, on Maurice as Coleridge's most incisive interpreter. We have waited for a very long time for a study showing something of the way in which Coleridge brought all aspects of the human condition into unity through relationship, and *Coleridge and the Idea of Love* is one that no serious student of this great thinker can afford to ignore.

Dalhousie University

A.J. Hartley

*Letters Home.* By Sylvia Plath. Fitzhenry and Whiteside; Harper & Row, 1975. Pp.502. \$14.75.

In a letter written in October, 1956, Sylvia Plath wrote: "My poems and stories I want to be the strongest female paean yet for the creative force of nature, the joy of being a loved and loving woman; that is my song." With such a positive statement, how does one explain the chthonic elements in her work? Those familiar with her most famous volume, *Ariel*, have been struck by the stark confessional manner of her poetry, the obsession with alienation, psychological disorder, and suicide. When did her Muse turn sour? Her own dramatic suicide in that awesome winter of February, 1963, in London, seemed to have fulfilled the expectations of many, and lent momentum to the cult that has since been associated with her. Yet, this volume of letters, edited by Mrs. Aurelia Schober Plath, the poet's mother, does present a somewhat different view of Sylvia, and undoubtedly sheds some light on the workings of this poet's mind; perhaps, too, they will explain why she has become such a powerful force in contemporary poetry — along with Lowell, Roethke, Snodgrass, Hughes, and others.

For the scholarly-inclined, these letters — over a thousand have been written to her mother, of which this volume is a selection — are a boon, for they will help to clear up some of the misunderstanding about the poet's supposedly negative relationship with her mother. Here, clearly, Sylvia writes that her mother is her "favourite person in the world". Also, they will help to clear up some of the misconceptions about the poet herself — for she was an extremely healthy girl preferring a sunny extroverted life, but with a profoundly creative side, who combined academic excellence with solid creative writing, and still found time to socialize with her friends, both male and female.

Sylvia Plath's seriousness stems from the fact, as these letters show, that she was bent on being a creative writer of the first order; as such she continually honed her intelligence and talent to serve her art, while at the same time being able to enjoy "a charmed plathian existence". The letters, written while she attended Smith, clearly attest to this, even though she didn't come through altogether unscathed, for she suffered a mental breakdown in her junior year: a fact well dramatized in her autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar*. Sylvia, of course, was continually plagued by self-doubt and the need for self-justification — arising out of her intense desire to achieve the best. Thus, when she failed to gain entry in Frank O'Connor's creative writing class at Harvard, she plunged headlong into the doldrums.



Later, Sylvia went to Cambridge on a two-year Fulbright scholarship, completely recovered from her psychological breakdown, and continued to excel — both in writing and academic work. There is no doubt that she loved Cambridge, as well as the intellectual stimulation in England which was so vitally necessary for her art. It was during this period, after 1956, that she met such luminaries as T.S. Eliot, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice — as well as her future husband, the brilliant young poet, Ted Hughes. With the latter, Sylvia's life seemed to have flowered; she wrote enthusiastically to her mother about her husband, convinced that he was a genius, about her own burst of creative activity, and the excitement of having met all sorts of stimulating literary people.

What is difficult to gather from these letters is the extent of Ted Hughes's influence on her work: whether the important "breakthrough" in her writing should be credited to Lowell, Roethke — or to her husband. The letters clearly indicate her admiration for Ted Hughes, but they also suggest that she was gifted with her own resources. Strangely enough, her best poems were written when she was "ditched" by her husband; then, going through intense anguish she awoke at four in the morning and wrote, before her two children were awake, those final dramatic poems, such as "Lady Lazarus" and "Daddy".

The letters are not all written to her mother; a few are to her beloved brother Warren, as well as to her generous literary patron, Mrs. Prouty. Besides Plath's interests that the letters reveal, they also intimately present a picture of what it was like to be a college girl in the fifties, the pleasures of Cambridge, the irrevocable commitment to the life of the imagination and the development of a literary reputation. Yet, the letters are not brilliant in the same manner that Dylan Thomas's are — with a few exceptions — even though they never fail to please.

Mrs. Aurelia Plath has shown her good taste in editing these letters, deleting the sensitive parts, and being careful not to hurt anyone. The end result seems to be that we end up knowing what is already known about the poet. Of course there are more letters to come, just as there are more poems and prose that have not as yet been published. One awaits eagerly for more of Sylvia Plath's writings — letters, poetry, short stories — or just anything.

Ottawa

Cyril Dabydeen

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*Egoism and Self-Discovery in the Victorian Novel: Studies in the Ordeal of Knowledge in the Nineteenth Century.* By John Halperin. New York: Burt Franklin, 1974. Pp.x + 294. \$14.50.

There is a lacklustre kind of criticism which closes off inquiry, shuts down avenues of approach, and reduces the fictive panorama to a dull photocopy. It asks no questions of the reader and demands no active participation in the discovery of meaning, image, and form. Unhappily, just such a work is John Halperin's *Egoism and Self-Discovery in the Victorian Novel*.

Halperin adopts the massive theme of egoism as the organizing principle of his study. In it, he considers "the moral and psychological expansion of protagonists who begin in self-absorption and move, through the course of a tortuous ordeal of education, to more complete self-knowledge" (p.v). Clustered under this umbrella definition are Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Brontë, Trollope, Eliot, Meredith, Hardy, James — that is, every Victorian novelist of any account whatever.

That so many authors must be included is part of the problem. After all, if egoism becomes so general as to apply to almost every novel, it ceases to function in any meaningful way as a focus of inquiry. To say, as Halperin in effect does, that Emma Woodhouse, Paul Dombey, Richard Feverel, and Michael Henchard undergo identical educative processes is to be both entirely right and totally wrong. What Halperin is noting is the nineteenth-century novel's preoccupation with individual moral growth which often proceeds from selfishness to selflessness. But Emma's ignorance is a far cry from Richard Feverel's, and Paul Dombey's flaws have a much different origin than do Michael Henchard's. The *bildungsroman* may be an operative structural force in these novels, but it alone cannot link them all together.

An important question that Halperin overlooks is precisely what he means by egoism in the first place. Is it pure selfishness as in the case of Gwendolen Harleth? Is it self-conceit, lack of sympathy, pride, self-deception, moral stupidity? In this study it turns out to be all these and more. Whatever flaw a character has is ultimately ascribed to egoism. Such a polysemous usage leads to a befogged view. After all, isn't Pip's lack of a firmly defined ego part of the reason why he can be so shaped by Miss Havisham and Magwitch? Isn't it precisely Jane Eyre's egoism that enables her to survive? Halperin never considers these aspects of his subject, although his study hinges on a definition of the term as any conduct derived from the ego.

The difficulty Halperin has in coming to grips with this term is most obvious in his discussion of Meredith. After all, one would expect any study of egoism in the nineteenth-century English novel to centre on one special work, to wit, *The Egoist*. But Halperin is forced to eschew this book because it does not fit his pattern (or Patterne) of "self-absorption; education; self-knowledge". He is correct in stating that "[w]hile Sir Willoughby is an egoist who remains for the most part self-deceived, the novel's other major character, Clara Middleton, undergoes self-discovery without ever having been genuinely an egoist" (p.199). What he does not see is the weakness of overlooking the central work of the century on this subject simply because it does not fit into his thesis.

Above all, however, it is Halperin's treatment of his material that is most dissatisfying. His method is to offer a few general remarks at the beginning of each chapter and then illustrate them by offering plot summary mixed with a small amount of obvious commentary. In his discussion of *Framley Parsonage* he states:

Riding to hounds several months later, Mark meets Sowerby again and asks him when he is going to take care of the bill. Sowerby seems to have forgotten all about it, and calls Mark "green" for having endorsed it. Mark is surprised and distressed by his attitude; Sowerby replies: "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." And away they both went together, parson and member of Parliament." (p.70)

Likewise with Dickens he writes:

Mr. Dombey locks himself in his room for some time to brood over these things. He does not think of comforting his daughter, who is of course heartbroken over her mother's death. He sees Florence so infrequently, observes Susan Nipper, the girl's maid, that he would not know who she was if he met her on the street. Why does he neglect her now? Because... (p.84)

Such plot rehash is tedious and stultifying. When commentary does come it usually offers little insight and often simply rephrases the novelist's own descriptions:

Emma's "self" is being "developed" in a crucible of suffering brought about through the conceit of "fancy". (p.23)

Like Lydgate, Bulstrode, Casaubon, Fred, Rosamond and the other egoists in this novel, Dorothea's self-absorption blinds her for some time to her life's real duty — that is, being "absorbed into the life of another." More fully than any of them, however, she realizes her mistake, recognizes her own needs, and thus is able to immerse herself in "beneficent activity" in behalf of others — an apotheosis George Eliot, no feminist, argues and hopes for. (p.161)

Like the heroines of Jane Austen and George Eliot, Isabel [Archer] in her egoism has *perceived* incorrectly. As her self-interest gives way to objectivity, however, the shadows on the moon begin to disappear and the full moon comes into light and focus. And so she begins to see what her husband is, and how it could have been that she venerated him. Osmond himself, like Darcy and Casaubon, has not really changed; it is that Isabel's perception, like Elizabeth's and Dorothea's, has changed. (p.265)

With the bulk of the criticism written at such an elementary level, little exists with which to either agree or disagree. After all, one can hardly refute that Lucetta arrives in Casterbridge, invites Elizabeth-Jane to live with her, and becomes the object of Farfrae's passions. One can argue, especially in the case of the discussion of *Great Expectations*, that the summation does not do justice to the complexity of the novel. One can disagree with the implied view of Adrian in *Richard Feverel* as a kind of prophetic and sympathetic character rather than as the cynical villain that he is. One can further dispute the evaluation of *The Egoist* as a novel in which egoism and self-discovery "are for the most part separate, unconnected, lacking symbiosis and logical development one from the other" (p.202). But basically one is left with pages and pages of generalized plot summary and such basic comments that even a first careful reading should make unnecessary. In fact, this book functions best as a way to review the major actions and chief thematic concerns of the novels considered in its pages.

It should be stated that Walter Allen has written a warm and commendatory "Introduction" to this book. In it he praises Halperin for expanding his "knowledge and appreciation of Charlotte Bronte and Hardy" (p.ix), and for explaining why the novels discussed "remain the delight of the common reader" (p.ix). It should also

be stated that Halperin has appended an amply annotated "Bibliographical Note" to the volume which I found the most enjoyable and elucidating section of all. The author obviously knows his criticism and is just and appreciative to his mentors. He can write with authority and clarity, but, unfortunately, the bulk of his book offers little evidence of a real critical consciousness at work.

*University of Iowa*

*Charles I. Schuster*

*Tube of Plenty.* By Erik Barnouw. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975. Pp. vi, 467. \$16.95.

One of the curious features attending the Bicentennial observances of the United States is the spate of allegations and revelations concerned with the seamy side of the Republic's history — in contrast to the color and pageantry of the anniversary programs. During the past year — the eve of the Bicentennial — and into the present year, we have had disclosures about Watergate and its attendant evils, as well as those of the activities of the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. Even the legend of Camelot (D.C.) is tarnished. Taken altogether, the testimony suggests that Columbia is not, necessarily, the gem of the ocean.

And now comes Mr. Barnouw's book.

His sub-title is *The Evolution of American Television* but, in telling this curious, and often sordid story, Mr. Barnouw uncovers a mass of duplicity, avarice, and injustice scarcely matched since the muck-raking efforts of Ida M. Tarbell, Upton Sinclair, and Lincoln Steffens.

The first signs of tooth-and-claw appear in the early pages which deal with the beginnings of broadcasting generally. These, perhaps, are of interest, primarily, to the social historian or to the broadcaster who cares to know how it all began. (And there is a reference to that all-but-forgotten Canadian, Reginald Aubrey Fessenden, who, early in the century, began experiments in the transmission of voice rather than electronic bursts.) There are revealing accounts of the power struggles between big interests to grab control of broadcasting, but these belong to the rather specialized and introductory part of Mr. Barnouw's history.

His book, after all, is concerned with television, so, after a review of the set-backs created by the Depression of the Thirties, World War II, and then the Korean War, we finally come to the explosive growth of television in the Fifties and after. It is not a pretty picture; it is not flattering to the television industry, the government, or, indeed, the general public. Mr. Barnouw traces, and explains, the decline of courageous, artistic, informative programming under sleazy pressures.

He has much to say about what is known as the McCarthy era when hysterical witch-hunting put many talented people out of work — and successfully intimidated network executives. He takes us through that unhappy period; then through the presidential election of 1952 — the first time that television moved into a major election campaign and, with it, the manipulations of the advertising

agencies. (In one afternoon, General Eisenhower sat in a studio and read fifty answers off cue cards — answers which would later be tacked on to filmed questions from people around the country.)

There is more than a touch of irony in the overnight success of J. Fred Muggs, a winsome young chimpanzee, who, through television, becomes a sensation. As his producer tells it:

Women proposed to him, advertisers fought for the right to use his photo in their supermarket flyers; chambers of commerce sought his good offices; actresses posed with him; officers of newly commissioned naval vessels demanded that he christen them.

And Mr. Barnouw adds:

“In Florida he got a room in a restricted hotel. He appeared as a guest of honor in Central Park in New York at an I am an American Day rally, although really a native of Cameroon.”

Mr. Barnouw has a compact prose style and has filled his 467 pages with a staggering mass of data. In the limits of this review, it is impossible to do more than suggest the scope of his book which embraces the commercial and political pressures on and by broadcasters, the valiant struggles of the late Edward R. Murrow, the role of television in international interference as promoted by the Brothers Dulles, the quiz show scandals, and its impact on domestic production in other countries, such as Canada and Australia. In these countries, Hollywood producers whose production costs for successful telefilms had been met ten times over at home could sell for nation-wide showing at cut-throat prices.

Mr. Barnouw tells it all: Viet Nam, Watergate, everything. Indeed, the managing editor of *Variety*, Robert J. Landry, has termed the book — with some accuracy — a one-volume encyclopedia. Certainly it has a wealth of information. And its author writes with authority.

Erik Barnouw is Emeritus Professor of Dramatic Arts at Columbia University where he helped to found and then chaired the Film Division. He also helped to organize the Writers Guild of America. After graduating from Princeton, he studied in Vienna with Max Reinhardt, and entered radio in 1931. He has worked for C.B.S., N.B.C., and the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Service. He has won several awards for television documentaries and he is the author of an award-winning work in three volumes, *The History of Broadcasting in the United States*.

His book is a thorough, scholarly, and provocative examination of a twentieth-century phenomenon which has had a profound effect upon most of us.

Halifax, N.S.

W. Graham Allen

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*The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken*. Edited by Dorothy Blakey Smith, with an Introduction by W. Kaye Lamb. Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1975. Pp. xlii + 396. \$18.95.

Dr. J.S. Helmcken (1824-1920) was a rare character, and these are rare memoirs. He came to Victoria, Vancouver Island, in 1850, to work as resident surgeon for the

Hudson's Bay Company, and died there seventy years later.

He was born in Spitalfields, London, of German parents who had migrated to England. The German name was Helmiken; in the Gothic script the "i" is scarcely distinguishable from the "c", so the change can be explained. The young Helmcken was apprenticed at 14 to an able and hard-working doctor nearby, and he eventually got his degree from Guy's Hospital, across London Bridge from Whitechapel. In 1847 he travelled to York Factory and back from London, as the doctor aboard the Hudson's Bay Company's annual supply ship. He then went to the far east and back, 1848-9, as doctor on a passenger vessel. On his return he was offered the Hudson's Bay Company post in Victoria, and accepted. He left England, October 21, 1849, and never returned.

Helmcken was a short, dark, young man with a handsome head and sharp blue eyes. He was a worker, and, like many doctors, was a hard-headed realist. He had hardly a grain of poetry in him. He had had to learn Latin for his profession, but mastering Caesar and medical texts was enough. He would not have Virgil. He had no love for English poetry either, save some readily understood. John Gilpin's ride was one of his favourites. Poetry like Milton's he thought an abomination. Probably growing up poor in London's east end, as he did, was apt to make one impatient with intellectual poetry; there were too many things to be done in the world to waste time trying to understand Milton.

Helmcken had seen a good deal of slums and beggary, and took them in his stride, "squalor, dirt, starvation, and lots of immorality" as he put it (p.33). He noted though that even those who worked for the same wages in the same factory had strikingly different ways of keeping their homes. One would be neat and clean, the other dirty and unkempt. But he was never priggish. He had a tough streak of egalitarianism that spared him that. He was amused at the pretences of some of the English emigrants in Victoria. They kept thinking, he said, of the civilized life and civilized amenities they had left behind, instead of taking and enjoying whatever they could in North America. Helmcken had a lively sense of humour, which sometimes got him into trouble, but which often overcame his preternatural shyness, and in later life it gave salt and vigour to his intelligence and his writing.

His fundamental realism comes through in his letters. "Depend upon it", he wrote H.P.P. Crease in 1885, "whatever is, is good. There is no evil save one's own sentiments." It sounds almost like Thomas Huxley. He was a realist about Confederation, too. He said in 1870, in the British Columbia Debates on Confederation:

...no union on account of love need be looked for. The only bond of union outside of force — and force the Dominion has not — will be the material advantage of the country....Love for Canada has to be acquired by the prosperity of the country, and from our children.

The sheer refreshment of this is worth more than all the rest of the British Columbia speeches about Confederation put together.

He could at times be touchy and irascible, especially when in defence of Victoria and her interests (which were, too often, his). He admitted himself that he was at times just plain fanatic (p.228). J.D. Edgar from Ottawa seemed to find him so in



1874, slightly hysterical about his contribution to the terms of Confederation and obdurate about not changing any of them. There were times in the 1870's, in fact, when to an outsider, British Columbia politics seemed strangely like the Mock Turtle's school in *Alice in Wonderland*: Reeling and Writhing, and with the four branches of arithmetic, Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision.

Altogether, though, this is a superb run of memoirs. One is tempted to suggest that there are only a few better in Canadian history. At least since 1867, one can name the good autobiographies on one's fingers: Sir John Willison, J.H.E. Secretan, Sir Joseph Pope, Hector Charlesworth, James Gray, John Glassco, Wallace Stegner. There are some others. Helmcken's are lively, and his account of growing up in London, and of his life as an impecunious medical student at Guy's Hospital, remarkably vivid. And there is no better eye-witness account of early life in Victoria.

This book is beautifully edited. There is nothing worse than an editor who says good-bye to the reader right after the introduction, and then leaves him to shift for himself. Dorothy Blakey Smith's notes are remarkable; indeed, the research behind them is breathtaking. Kaye Lamb has written a splendid, rich introduction.

It would be a pity to mar any of this with cavil. Still, it would have been nice to have had a little larger type. The present one must be about 10-point; an 11- or 12-point would not only have been more agreeable, but would have given the book the finish it deserves. Fortunately, the lines are well-leaded, and the typography is impeccable. The University of British Columbia Press and everyone connected with this book can be congratulated on an excellent piece of work, both useful and readable. It is *too* readable. It was nearly impossible to do other than read it through at one sitting.

Dalhousie University

P.B. Waite

Joseph Spence. *Letters from the Grand Tour*. Edited by Slava Klima. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975. Pp. xii + 496. \$25.00.

Joseph Spence was an Oxford don who succeeded Thomas Warton as Professor of Poetry and wrote *Polymetis*, a learned work on classical mythology. He is best known now, however, not for his classical scholarship but for his friendship with Pope and for the anecdotes that he recorded concerning Pope, Dryden, Addison, and other writers of their period. Though not published in Spence's lifetime, they were used extensively in manuscript by Johnson in the preparation of his *Lives of the Poets*, and even today, especially in the splendid edition edited by James Osborn (under the title *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men*), they remain a source of primary importance for the literary history of the early eighteenth century. Though no Boswell, Spence loved good conversation and was a reliable recorder of it.

In his early thirties, Spence, who had never been abroad before and who looked forward to enjoying in his old age "a good easy chair, good company, and the being able to look back upon one's life without anything to frighten one in it," left

Oxford three times to go on protracted continental tours as bear-leader to three young Englishmen of the upper class who were completing their education, as was the custom, with the Grand Tour. The young men were out to see the world and turn themselves into self-assured cosmopolitan gentlemen, and, in one case, to sow some wild oats at a safe distance away from home, though the behaviour of none of them was much like that described by Pope in the fourth book of the *Dunciad*. The third of Spence's charges spent one of his three years abroad attending a kind of male finishing school in Turin, where he learned to ride, fence, and dance, and all three of them learned some French and Italian, made good social contacts, and saw the sights. Spence, for his part, hoped to achieve financial security and to study classical antiquities on the spot in preparation for writing his book. During the whole time of his absence from England, he wrote regular letters to his mother, which, at one time, he evidently had thought of publishing, for he edited them and had a fair copy made. These are the letters that Slava Klima has now published after wisely restoring the passages deleted by Spence as too personal and reverting to the original wording whenever Spence had later improved the style.

Though Spence is not a great letter-writer, had his letters been written in an age not so well provided as the eighteenth century was with great letter-writers they would not suffer so much as they do by comparison. Nevertheless, he has a clean, straight-forward style and is capable of a vivid description:

The two days we were upon the road happened to be Whitsun Monday and Tuesday with us here. In a hundred places the roads were full of country people, dressed all in their best, and in their different fashions. I think all the women had hats, some like men's, some odd high crowns, some neat straw hats, very wide-brimmed and with little steeples upon them, like the black high-crowned hats in England. For one part of the course all the women wore odd black things on their heads, of wool and fashioned like Turkish turbans. We had the pleasure too, as 'twas a great holy day, of seeing two country processions of the priests and poor people, one of which had the cross carried before them and the picture of their favourite saint swinging on a banner in the air. The other had all this with kettle-drums and music and the militia on horseback, and so was much finer and much more pleasing to heaven no doubt.

Or this:

Helvoet is a very little town, and looked to us like a town in miniature. The houses are very small and very neat: everything in little and so pretty that it looked like a street when you view it through the little end of a perspective glass. A Frenchman on board said 'twas a 'ville d'harlequin'- a harlequin town, for the bricks used in their houses are so small, and often interchangeably of two different colours, that they looked like patchwork or a board to play at draughts upon.

In one respect, however, his letters are disappointing. All the time he was writing Spence was living in close quarters with one of his three young charges, travelling in the same carriages with him, eating his meals with him, sleeping in adjacent bedrooms, sharing an intimacy that would not have existed in Oxford but that was

inevitable when travelling together in strange lands among unfamiliar faces. Spence was in his thirties while the young men were teenagers. What did they have in common? How did they avoid boring each other into irritability? Yet Spence obviously succeeded in bridging the generation gap, winning and retaining the respect and even affection of all three. Moreover, his position must have been made even more difficult by the nature of his duties. Though he tells us that he accompanied the first of his charges as a companion, not as a tutor, clearly to the third of them, Lord Lincoln, he was tutor and under obligation to send regular reports to the young man's guardian, the Duke of Newcastle, through his secretary, on his progress and behaviour. Linky, as he was called, knew what was going on but evidently never resented the reports. Spence's tact was put to a particularly severe test when Linky fell in love whilst in Florence. It was thought essential that he marry an heiress but he had already turned down one ugly rich girl who had been picked out for him by his guardian before he left England, and his new love didn't have a penny. Spence was badly worried for a while but ultimately succeeded in bringing Linky home uncommitted and resigned but still his friend.

Naturally the diplomatic moves necessary to bring about this triumph of tact took place privately in conversation rather than in letters that we can now read, though we are able to read some reports of what was going on in letters written by Spence to his mother and other people and by Linky's guardian and even by Linky himself. What I find disappointing is that in none of Spence's letters do we find revealed any of those qualities of mind and character that made him such a success as companion and tutor to high-spirited young men. It is often difficult to tell from the letters to what extent they shared Spence's interests. Did they go with him normally on his various expeditions to art galleries, churches, the crater of Vesuvius, and the like, and, if they did, did they like the experience and in what ways, if any, did tutor and pupil contribute to each other's enjoyment? The only hint given by the letters is Spence's frequent use of the plural first-person pronoun, but even that is ambiguous. It is true that Spence once got drunk with Lord Middlesex, the first of his charges, so that they became "as merry as crickets" together, but they were travelling together at the time and so could not have avoided each other's company. Usually Spence writes as if he were alone, pursuing his classical interests by himself whenever he could. Moreover, the image that he projects of himself is not what one would have expected to appeal to young men. The comments he makes on works of art and antiquities in his letters and notebooks (from which latter Professor Klima has unwisely included a number of extracts) are uniformly banal, often consisting of no more than approval or disapproval except for a note on dimensions: he was forever pacing things off or measuring them with a pocket ruler. I cannot help thinking of him as a fuss-budget and a mother's boy. But that can hardly have been the whole truth about his character. His weakness as a letter-writer is that he has concealed that whole truth behind a veil of reticence. He must have actually been far more outgoing than he seems and to have depths to his character, powers of insight and imagination that never surface in the correspondence.

Professor Klima's editorial work is competent and painstaking, though he seems to have found it hard to resist the temptation to include too much. But his notes

are clear and helpful, and it would be hard to find anything that might puzzle a reader that he has not fully explained. The McGill-Queen's Press, too, must be complimented on a beautifully designed book that is a pleasure to read. Keep the handsome dust jacket on, however, for the hard case does not do the book justice.  
*Port Maitland, N.S.* *Clarence Tracy*

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*The Republic of Childhood: A Critical Guide to Canadian Children's Literature in English.* 2nd ed. By Sheila Egoff. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975. Pp.335. \$10.95; \$6.95 (paper).

It has been eight years since the publication of the first edition of *The Republic of Childhood*. The new version is longer, including books which appeared between 1965 and 1974; the organization differs; and there is some entirely new material, the sections on Eskimo legends, poetry and plays, and picture and picture-story books. Miss Egoff probably now has made her book indispensable to every library in Canada and to many in the other English-speaking countries.

The book deserves this kind of distribution. It is thorough, lucid, and free of jargon. Praise and disapproval are offered neutrally, and Canadian books are placed within a broader context. Here is the author on historical fiction:

Admittedly Canadian writers have a harder task in dealing with history as material for fiction than do their counterparts in Great Britain, France, or the United States. Canada lacks revolutions, civil wars, medieval pageantry, an 'age of kings'. Perhaps this land of compromise has had a history too complex, too subtle to provide the conflicts that form the basis for a good rousing tale. Yet, however valid these excuses, the range of historical topics represented in Canadian children's literature still seems extraordinarily narrow and the treatment of them unnecessarily bland.

On the other hand, here is Miss Egoff judging the Canadian realistic animal story:

If the quantity has been low, the quality has been consistently high. The best of the Canadian publications in this genre have attained a world-wide audience unmatched by any other type of Canadian children's book. With Haig-Brown, Mowat, and Bodsworth still active, and with such newer writers as Widell and Langford, the tradition of achievement will surely be maintained. After all, the animals of Canada are still there for the seeing and the telling and their appeal is perennial and universal.

Dispassionate and fair judgments are always needed, but especially in Canadian letters. The book also merits wide distribution because of the extensive annotated bibliographies which appear after each chapter. These can be extremely useful to those wishing to purchase children's literature, and to those wanting to read it, including children. (Miss Egoff might consider doing a children's version of her own book.)

The first edition of *The Republic of Childhood* was reviewed in *Canadian Literature*, but the bulk of the attention came from library journals including *Hornbook* in the U.S. It is a measure of the position the book has established for itself that journals such as the *Dalhousie Review* are devoting space to it. It is also an indication of the general growth of attention to children's literature within Canadian letters. Serious consideration of the literary merits of Canadian writing aimed at children is only now developing, and Miss Egoff's book certainly has supported this growth. The establishment of magazines like the *Canadian Children's Magazine* and *Canadian Children's Literature* should do "...for children's writing what *Canadian Literature* has done for the adult counterpart", as the author says, but her book has helped create the climate of opinion in which these magazines could gain support and funding.

Miss Egoff's chapter on Eskimo legends is new to the second edition, the first major Canadian collection of stories for children having appeared only in 1967 though Americans had been active in this field since 1943. The 1967 volume, *The Day Tuk Became a Hunter & Other Eskimo Stories*, was put together by Ronald Melzack. Actual involvement of Eskimos in the production of books about themselves so far has been slight, though Father Maurice Metayer's *Tales from the Igloo* (1972) is illustrated by Eskimo artists, and based as it is on tape transcriptions, has a "rare immediacy and authenticity".

Children's poetry and plays were not covered in the first edition, evidently because material available was of insufficient merit. Early poetry anthologies were derivative, dull or "textbookish" in appearance; Desmond Pacey's verses were among the few with any originality. The picture has changed some. We now have two good anthologies, *The Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada* (1968), and Louis Dudek's *All Kinds of Everything* (1973). The compilers of *The Wind Has Wings*, M.A. Downie and B. Robertson, did not limit themselves to poems written specifically for children. In the world of verse written just for children there are more graveyards than palaces, but in the last few years Dennis Lee has set a standard that will be hard to live up to. *Alligator Pie* and *Nicholas Knock*, imaginative nonsense verse beautifully illustrated by Frank Newfeld, are outstanding in this field. As far as the drama goes, always a weak area in the juvenile literature of any country, Canada only has started to contribute. Miss Egoff mentions with some enthusiasm Eric Nicol's *The Clam Made a Face* (1972), and James Reaney's *Apple Butter & Other Plays for Children* (1973), which, she points out, play well but do not read well. One gathers that it is still not possible to judge Canadian children's plays as literature.

In the realm of fantasy, Canadian writing continues to lag behind. Until recently, Catherine Anthony Clark held a strong but solitary position, but the young writer Ruth Nichols with her two recently published books *A Walk Out of the World* (1969) and *The Marrow of the World* (1972) is now "Canada's most compelling creator of fantasy" according to Miss Egoff.

It is in the field of fantasy for children that Canada's major writers for adults have failed. Margaret Laurence's attempt, *Jason's Quest* (1970), is described by Miss Egoff as "the most disappointing book in Canadian children's literature". Anne

Wilkinson's *Swann & Daphne* (1960) is more social satire than fantasy, and seems directed at adults rather than children. Pierre Berton's "facile adult cleverness" mars *The Secret World of Og* (1961). Berton was more successful in his first children's book, *The Golden Trail: The Story of the Klondike Gold Rush* (1954), which is a straightforward account of this event.

In fields other than fantasy, Canadian writers for adults have had varying amounts of success at children's literature. Morley Callaghan's *Luke Baldwin's Vow* (1948) is described by Miss Egoff as "blatantly didactic" and designed to reveal the author's belief "that only a moral is necessary in a children's book". This is a predictable failure from such a heavy-handed writer as Callaghan whose adult fiction merits similar description. At the other extreme, Farley Mowat has scored considerable successes with *The Black Joke* (1962) and *Owls in the Family* (1961). Thomas Raddall, writing for children, is as competent and careful as he is writing for adults, but the spark of *His Majesty's Yankees* is missing. On the other hand, journalist William Stevenson's best work may be his children's book *The Bushbabies* (1965). Mordecai Richler has now entered the field with *Jacob Two-two Meets the Hooded Fang*, a brash and sophisticated book aimed at urban television-sated children (this work appeared too late for Miss Egoff's survey).

In the field of verse Desmond Pacey, and especially Dennis Lee, who does not derive so directly from A.A. Milne, have written skilfully for children, while Susan Musgrave has failed completely to duplicate her success in adult poetry.

With the exception of Farley Mowat and Roderick Haig-Brown, no writer in recent years has been equally adept in both areas. The major contemporary figures in Canadian writing for children, e.g., Christie Harris, James Houston, Catherine Anthony Clark, do not have comparable bodies of work aimed at adults. It is certainly not any easier to write a good children's book than it is to write a good book for adults. An understanding of this point should be more widespread among writers and publishers — parents' purses and children's imaginations would be served better.

Dalhousie University

Esther L. Bobak

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*Gringos from the Far North: Essays in the History of Canadian — Latin American Relations, 1866-1968.* By J.C.M. Ogelsby. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976. Pp.xiv, 346. \$17.95.

Books which are collections of essays are invariably difficult to review. This book is no exception. In this case, for instance, the essays, which are "an attempt to explore the *history* of Canada's relations with the republics [of Latin America] since Confederation" (p.4, emphasis in the original), encompass not just a history of the Canadian state in these regards, but, in addition, the experiences of Canadian "citizens" and "institutions" in Latin America. The title of this collection, *Gringos from the Far North*, is thus most appropriate because the greater part of this book — and, to this reader, the most interesting part — is devoted to accounts of the



participation of individual Canadian citizens and Canadian institutions, economic and religious, in the social, economic and political affairs of the several Latin American societies. The subtitle of the book, *Essays in the History of Canadian-Latin American Relations, 1866-1968*, on the other hand, is misleading in as much as 'relations' implies a kind of interaction that is political/governmental in character, and relations of this nature are the subject of, at best, five of the eleven essays in this collection, even if they are not entirely absent in most of the other six. The individuals and organizations whose activities in Latin America constitute the primary data for the story of the gringos from the far north were (or are) persons and groups for whom the question of their Canadian nationality or status had (or has) little or no bearing upon these same activities in the Americas south of the United States-Mexico border. In large measure, then, this is a book about the activities of Canadians *in* Latin America.

That a book on Latin America from the Canadian perspective would have this character ought not to surprise us. However, the nations of Latin America have not been a major object of Canadian external relations nor an important subject of Canadian foreign policy. Canadians have been active in Latin American societies, nevertheless, both in economic enterprises and in religious missions. These activities have, on occasion, necessitated diplomatic intercourse, but, with few exceptions, the story of the gringos from the "far" north (as opposed to the "near" north — the United States) is not a story about the Government of Canada. The essays in this collection, in fact, make very clear how limited and even perfunctory international relations between the Government of Canada and the Latin American states have been over the past century.

Two essays in particular provide a comprehensive and revealing account of the limited degree of official Canadian relations with Latin America. These are the initial two chapters of the book. The first concerns the efforts of successive "generation[s] of Canadian trade and political leaders ... to 'discover' Latin America" (p.32). The ministerial mission of 1968, for instance, was in the tradition of earlier missions in 1866, 1930, 1941, 1946 and 1953. The author's obvious preference for closer relations between Canada and Latin American nations, nevertheless, leads him to the conclusion that the 1968 mission played an important and "truly productive" part in the establishment of "the most broadly defined position Canada has taken about its relations with Latin America" (p.36). The more recent Trudeau mission to Latin America is not considered, of course, but it would have provided interesting material for the account of the periodic sojourns by Canadian public officials who (this reader has concluded at the invitation of the author) have given the impression "that they might have been merely migratory birds, who went to the warmth and sunshine of the region during the Canadian winter only to return to the north to get on with more important business" (p.10)!

The second chapter covers a shorter period of time — 1940 to 1946 but deals with the important (?) decisions which had to be made by the Government of Canada on the question of the establishment of diplomatic relations with, among other Latin American nations, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Peru. The

chapter provides further evidence of the fact that "Canada has not looked south to the Latin American countries with the same interest that many of them evinced in it" (p.61). Several Latin American nations had pursued, even wooed, Canada, it would appear, both to enhance their national prestige and to accommodate demands for postings from their diplomatic corps. "Canada", says the author, "did not accept these criteria as reasons for expanding her own foreign service" (*ibid.*).

Relations between Canada and Latin American nations, in other words, deserve little more than the treatment provided in these two initial chapters. Canadian-Mexican trade relations are considered in a third essay but the minimal trade, at least direct trade, between the two reflects the limited degree of interaction between the two North American nations. The two other chapters that concern Canadian-Mexican relations, "Canadians and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-28" and "Mexico, Roman Catholics, and A Question of Canadian Sovereignty, 1927-28", do attest to the thoroughness of the author's research on Canadian-Latin American relations, but, in fact, merely serve to provide further evidence of the paucity of these relations.

The six remaining chapters deal with the participation of Canadians in the economies of Latin America (two chapters), the activities of Christian missionaries (three chapters), and the experiences of a Mennonite community of Canadian emigrants in Paraguay. The first five chapters are interesting accounts, providing as they do glimpses of the initiative of a number of Canadians — entrepreneur and missionary alike — in socio-economic milieux foreign to most Canadians. These accounts, however, demonstrate that these individuals (including corporate persons) were not acting as "Canadians" but rather as businessmen and Christians; their primary reasons for being in Latin America had nothing to do with their citizenship or nationality. The chapter on the Mennonite community, while fascinating in and of itself, illustrates even more clearly the tenuous relationship between "Canadians" and "Canadian", given this community's preference for non-identification with secular organizations, most particularly that of the nation-state.

In addition to its account of both Canadian-Latin American relations and the story of Canadians in Latin America, the essays in this book provide the reader with historical glimpses of Latin America which most Canadians, I suspect, will find most interesting, interwoven as they are with the experiences of fellow Canadians. The essays of this book were obviously researched carefully and the author is to be congratulated for the preparation of a volume that is well-written, instructive and refreshingly free from academic pretensions. The essays are historical in the best sense of historical scholarship, that is, devoid of simplistic ideological explanations. The author is at his best in presenting, sometimes explicitly, usually implicitly, the motivations — ranging from greed, to adventure, to a sense of challenge, to altruism — which have accounted for the participation in Latin American affairs of the 'gringos from the far north'.

*William Henry Bartlett: artist, author and traveller.* By Alexander M. Ross. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973. Pp.164, ill., \$15.00.

W.H. Bartlett is as well known in Canada as any nineteenth-century artist. That means that his pictures are everywhere, but almost nothing is known of the man himself. Bartlett was a Londoner, born in 1809. His training, his travels, his work, were extraordinary. He made no less than six visits to the Middle East, 1834-5, 1837, 1842, 1845, 1853 and 1854; he made four visits to North America, 1836-7, 1838, 1841 and 1842. In between he sketched in England, Scotland, France, Switzerland, Holland, Greece, Sicily, Turkey, Palestine, Italy. He had a remarkable talent for textures, of landscape, lakes, stone, buildings, ruins, and a taste for the picturesque. The figures in most of Bartlett's pictures are casual, designed to give the picture life and movement, and to sharpen the sense of the picturesque in the observer.

It was the introduction of steel engraving about 1823 that made much of this possible. Bartlett's illustrations were for travel books, which had a tremendous vogue between 1825 and 1855, and after. Copper engraving had existed since the sixteenth-century, but the soft copper plates could only be used for limited editions. Steel engraving changed all that, and made possible the publication of large runs of the beautifully illustrated *Beauties of the Bosphorus* (1840), *Canadian Scenery* (1842), or *Switzerland* (1836). Bartlett did not do the engraving. He made the sketches from life, and then, at home in London, made up small sepia wash drawings, from which the engravers worked.

It was not an easy life. Interminable journeys, bad hotels, bad roads, illness, heat, and danger. Bartlett almost lost his life when an avalanche knocked him into the May torrent of the Aar, on the Grimsel Pass in Switzerland in 1835. He did lose his life in 1854, dying of the cholera at Malta, on his way back from the Middle East.

This book is a major effort at a Bartlett biography, well-written and meticulously researched, and it gives the perspective essential to an understanding of Bartlett and the world he moved in. He is too often thought of as a Canadian! For Bartlett's pictures of Canada the best book is *Bartlett's Canada: a Pre-Confederation journey*, introduced by H.C. Campbell, and published by McClelland & Stewart in 1968. The preoccupation of this splendid book by A.M. Ross is the larger world, the larger perspective, that in fact of Bartlett himself.

Dalhousie University

P.B. Waite

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*N.W. Rowell: Ontario Nationalist.* By Margaret Prang. Toronto and Buffalo, University of Toronto Press, 1975. Pp.553, X, illus. \$25.00

In this large, painstakingly-thorough biography of perhaps the most neglected of great Canadians, Professor Prang lets the record speak mainly for itself instead of resorting to judgements and interpretations of her own. Although she had massive

raw materials to work with, especially the long, detailed letters of Rowell himself and the papers of his contemporaries, her task was made especially difficult because Rowell was essentially a private person who did not always reveal his innermost feelings even in his letters to his wife. Nonetheless, a composite picture of Rowell and his drives emerges from a myriad of incidents, sometimes portrayed by himself, sometimes by others, and often unrelated to the consequential events of his career.

Thus his moralistic, almost pietistic, side manifests itself most clearly in his reaction to two plays on the London theatre. To his daughter Mary he confided that *By Candle Light* was full of "sex and suggestive beyond words", and that he did not wish any more of it. "I am afraid I am not very up to date in my tastes, but I do not want to be, if this kind of play is up to date." In contrast he described *Antony and Cleopatra*, with the young John Gielgud playing Antony, as "magnificent". When the *Times'* reviewer described the two leading characters as "too coldly intellectual", he admitted he "liked it so much" because "there was nothing of the lustful gypsy in Cleopatra and a lack of ardor in Antony". Then there is the picture, revealed largely through Wilfrid Eggleston, of the dignified and refined Rowell, who, as chairman of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, listened in grim silence and with obvious distaste to the "half-baked economics, appeals to prejudice, jumbled logic, and parish politics" of the voluble Premier Mitchell Hepburn of Ontario, and with brief comments, "diction chaste and cultured", brought an unhappy session to a quick end.

Disappointingly little evidence exists of Rowell's inmost feelings when he finally realized he had debarred himself from further participation in politics, even though he had sufficient talent to be prime minister. While the manner of his let-down might have broken a lesser man, he put on a bold front, showing neither resentment nor keen disappointment. He discovered his fate after the Liberals had won the election of 1926, but were still weak in Ontario and in need of a Minister of Customs who could convince the public that they were serious in their pledges to clean up that department. Yet, after having persuaded Rowell to enter his cabinet, Mackenzie King discovered that the forces arrayed against him were so formidable that he was unlikely to be elected to any seat that was available in Ontario.

As the leading prohibitionist in Ontario, he would have met the implacable opposition of the wets, and especially the distillers, who would have objected strongly to his investigating their affairs as Minister of Customs. As the province's leading Methodist layman, he had played a major part in church union and thereby antagonized many Scottish Presbyterians who constituted a basic element of the Liberal party. As a prime mover in the Canadian war effort in 1917-18, he had not endeared himself to the German vote in Ontario, but most of all, as one who had deserted Laurier and become a foremost member of the Unionist government, he never received the forgiveness of many Liberals, who seemingly selected him as the chief turncoat and determined there would be no light in the window for him. Actually, as Professor Prang indicates, the "wet" Liberals overlapped the Irish Catholic, anti-Unionist elements in the party, and all were personified by Charles Murphy, who assailed Rowell with a venom he met at the hands of no one else. In the end King withdrew his offer, temporarily so he said, but permanently as Rowell

knew all too well. Perhaps it was just as well on other grounds, since King would undoubtedly have found Rowell too much of a liberal in matters of social policy.

Much of Rowell's failure as a practical politician resulted because, in the words of the sub-title, he was an Ontario nationalist. While this phrase is not to be interpreted in any narrow or parochial sense, it describes his ideological make-up as well as it can be done simplistically. He willingly acknowledged that the Conservative government of Ontario had administered stupidly Regulation 17, which restricted the use of French in the public schools, but at the same time sympathized with the purposes of the regulation, and failed to understand the opposition of the franco-ontariens and the Quebecois to its provisions. Again reflecting the views of Ontario, he dismissed far too lightly the objections of French Canadians to being conscripted to fight a foreign war. Much like the George Brown of an earlier day, he regarded western Canada as a projection of Ontario, on which the values of that province were to be stamped. A determined nationalist, he and Borden went a long way to securing Canadian autonomy in external affairs, but again viewing these matters through the eyes of British Ontario, he favoured active Canadian participation in securing a common Empire diplomatic front, something which was anathema to Mackenzie King and French Canada. A strong supporter of the League of Nations and collective security, he was appalled when the King government, apparently influenced by an isolationist Quebec, repudiated Dr. Riddell's efforts to secure stronger sanctions against Italy during the war in Ethiopia.

So is raised the perennial question of whether a man with principles can, without deserting them, be successful in Canadian politics. Perhaps the great master of brokerage politics, Mackenzie King, had a guilty conscience about Rowell, for unable to use him in active politics, he rewarded him in other ways. Rowell, a leading constitutionalist, was delighted to take some major cases to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council at a time when Viscount Sankey was employing the "living tree" approach which comported with Rowell's own views. Later he became Chief Justice of Ontario and headed Canada's most prestigious royal commission. Such are some of the many sides of Newton Wesley Rowell that emerge from Professor Prang's competent, well-researched biography.

*Dalhousie University*

*J. Murray Beck*

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*Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained 1956-62.* By Peter Stursberg. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975. Pp. XV, 278. \$15.00

Perhaps the greatest puzzle about *Leadership Gained* is its title. Within a year of his great electoral triumph of 1958 John Diefenbaker's star was on the descent, and he was on his way towards losing the leadership of Canada and the Progressive Conservative party. It may be that the intent of the title was to provide a counter-title like *Leadership Lost* for this book's sequel, but in that case the titles of both books would be painfully inappropriate.

To determine the utility of *Leadership Gained*, it must be asked if Peter Stursberg's method of presenting oral history is an appropriate device for making Canadian politics intelligible over a six-year period. For his two volumes Mr. Stursberg has transcripts amounting to a million words of interviews with some forty people. Yet in a very real sense he started with two strikes against him because of his inability to use his nineteen hours of interviews with Mr. Diefenbaker lest he violate the latter's contract for the publication of his memoirs. Mr. Stursberg attempts to dismiss an obvious gap by saying that "in any case, the great bulk of my interviews were about Diefenbaker and the Diefenbaker period", but the book suffers irreparably because the chief protagonist is not there to set his interpretation of events against that of his friends and foes.

Even if the Diefenbaker interviews had been included, the book would still have posed a difficult problem. According to the flyleaf, "oral history shows that there are no simple explanations, no single truths, and these pages contain different interpretations of the same event . . . any attempt at assessment or judgment is left to the reader." But a few illustrations may cast doubts upon the wisdom of leaving the reader in this position.

Canadian politicians and political scientists have been debating whether long periods of one-party rule produce a relationship between cabinet ministers and top bureaucrats which militates against the latter performing acceptably for a government of another party, and more specifically whether the deputy ministers and other leading civil servants who carried over from the St. Laurent regime were genuinely loyal to the Diefenbaker government. From Mr. Stursberg's interviews it is interesting, if shocking, to discover that because of the distrust of "some people in External Affairs", communications between George Drew, the Canadian High Commissioner in Britain, and Howard Green, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, were sent through Grattan O'Leary of the *Ottawa Journal*. Gordon Churchill shifted seven people in Trade and Commerce and "if the other fellows had done what I had done we might have been saved some of our troubles". Even the moderate Walter Dinsdale suggests that from 1962 to 1963 the top echelon of the civil service was not only uncooperative, but outright hostile, and that "political booby traps were constantly being laid". In contrast, George Hees found that "civil servants were out to do one thing, — to help their minister, Tory, Grit, NDP, or whatever", while the Liberal J.W. Pickersgill who, though a former history teacher, demonstrates he is one of the most partisan and un-objective of men, pooh-poohs the idea that any more than one or two civil servants behaved improperly. The outcome must be to leave the ordinary reader, for whom the basic problem has not even been set, a little bewildered and confused, while the academic would have appreciated judgments from someone of Mr. Stursberg's nature.

Students of Canadian politics generally regard Pierre Sevigny as an amiable but incompetent bumbler; yet the uninitiated might conclude from his own uncontradicted account in *Leadership Gained* that he was one of Diefenbaker's principal "idea" men. As he tells it, he persuaded Premier Duplessis to support Diefenbaker with the argument that, if the Conservatives did badly in *la belle province*, many would conclude that "the strong man of Quebec is not Maurice Duplessis, but Louis



St. Laurent". Again, by his own account, it was he who "put a bomb" under Diefenbaker by his use of the phrase "One Canada"; who came out first with the idea of Expo; who suggested Georges Vanier as Governor-General; who "more or less" found a solution to the thorny problem of university grants for Quebec; and who, by suggesting a tailor for Diefenbaker, converted him from "a shabby dresser" to "a tailor's dummy, straight from Savile Row". But the more sophisticated reader, appreciating how badly Sevigny has confounded the elections of 1957 and 1958 in the same interview, is likely to treat everything he says with a grain of salt.

More significantly, there emerges from the book the picture of a John Diefenbaker, whose expertise in economics was limited but whose natural instincts in these matters were invariably right, and who failed in the end because he let himself be led astray by a reactionary wing of the cabinet headed by the conscientious, puritanical Donald Fleming, the major villain in the book, instead of following the ideas of progressives like Alvin Hamilton and economic adviser Merril Menzies, the book's most tragic figure. Yet, once again, the picture is dim and indistinct because it is sadly lacking in the judgments and interpretation needed to clarify it.

By itself oral history may provide all sorts of fascinating titbits; it may also serve as a valuable tool in providing raw material for the writing of sophisticated history. But it has still to be demonstrated that it can do anything more.

*Dalhousie University*

*J.M. Beck*

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*Monck, Governor-general, 1861-1868.* By Elisabeth [Monck] Batt. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976. Pp.191. \$10.00.

This is a brisk, lively little biography, well worth reading. The author does not seem to know Canada well, and the book has the flavour of having been written in Britain; but that is, in a way, authentic, since Lord Monck and his family were observing Canada essentially as outsiders. It is useful to see our society as the Moncks saw it, a bit raw and rough, where manners were apt to be crude and direct, and where politics cut close in to personalities and pocketbooks.

"The Moncks were not clever!", an Irish novelist once told W.L. Morton, who introduces this book. But if they were not, they were also without pretences or humbug, and did the best they could with what they had. Monck himself took the Governor-generalship in order to recoup his personal and family fortunes. He was not the first Governor-general, in French or English Canada, to try that, nor the first to fail at it.

The general reader should enjoy the book, in itself a tribute to the talents of its author. She is not a professional historian, and occasionally this shows through; but it would be churlish to cavil at it. What is valuable here for the professional is the inside glimpse of British North American politics from Monck's private correspondence, much of which has never been available before. The great bulk of Lord Monck's correspondence was burnt in 1931. All that was saved were some of Monck's letters to his son, and a small but very significant quantity of letters

selected on the spot, by the estate steward Michael Meany, to be saved from the general holocaust. Hidden for thirty years, the letters duly came to light, and we have some reason to be grateful for the work of the perspicacious steward that day.

It is not so much that anything especially startling alters the shape of events. One knew that Cardwell was determined to get New Brunswick into Confederation by every means short of force. But it is useful to see how he put it, as he did in a private letter to Monck: "I am anxious to turn the screw as hard as will be useful, but not harder" (p.109). But even more than this, some of the off-hand comments in these letters give another dimension to men's characters. Sir William Fenwick Williams, the General Officer Commanding British troops in Canada (1859-1865), and who was born in Annapolis Royal in 1800, is often referred to in the history books as "the gallant old soldier". He is referred to by Edward Watkin as "a worn out old roue". Charles Tupper was described by Lord Mulgrave (Lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, 1860-1863) in a letter to Monck in 1864: "You will find him [Tupper] a clever and presentable man. Between ourselves I think him an unscrupulous blackguard" (p.71). Or again, Williams' opinion (Williams was Lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, 1865-1868) that Joseph Howe carried the Nova Scotia elections in 1867 with American money (p.151). That is easy to allege, difficult to prove. Nevertheless, it is details of this kind, frank, gossipy and doubtless sharply prejudiced, that give zest to the book, and another perspective to some well-known figures.

Monck himself is here believable, friendly, hard-working, a man whose conscientiousness Canada has some reason to be grateful for. Mrs. Batt has not quite mastered the period, and a few more well known books might have helped her, such as Robin Winks, *Canada and the United States: the civil war years* (Baltimore, 1960). But the book is a good portrait, and it gets on with the story with a minimum of academic fuss and admirable celerity.

*Dalhousie University*

*P.B. Waite.*

*The Elizabethan Theatre*, V. Ed. by G.R. Hibbard. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975. Pp.xvii, 158. \$10.00.

The general theme of this collection of essays is the English theatre prior to Shakespeare. Two of the contributions may be dismissed with brief notice, because they deserve to be reviewed elsewhere. Richard Southern's remarks on *Apus and Virginia* are taken directly from his controversial account of the Tudor interlude, entitled *The Staging of Plays before Shakespeare*. The book provides conjectural notes on the techniques used by the first professional English actors for productions of plays ranging from *Mankind* (c.1466) to *The Coblers Prophecie* (c.1589). The discussion of *Apus and Virginia* depends heavily on evidence scattered throughout the book as a whole; it would be simply unfair to assess it out of context. David Bevington's essay, "Discontinuity in Medieval Acting Traditions", may be set aside for similar reasons. This paper is a competent and well-written summary of the major traditions in medieval stage presentation; perhaps it is best read as a supplement to Bevington's recent anthology of medieval drama.

The six remaining essays are equally divided between the neighbouring provinces of literary criticism and theatrical history. Of the critical essays, J.A.B. Somerset's analysis of the Vice figure in the morality play makes the strongest attempt to combine literary and theatrical concerns. Somerset begins by posing questions that have been asked many times before. Why is the Vice figure typically the funniest and most attractive character in the morality play? Should we respond to such boisterous entertainment principally as "comic relief"? Or must we be constantly aware of the didactic function of humour in the plays? To anticipate dramatic history in a permissible way, do we laugh with Falstaff or at him? The replies to these questions will depend in large measure on the training and sensibility of the person who answers them. In Somerset's case, medieval theology provides the important clue. The Vice character, after all, represents the temptations of the flesh as they act upon Mankind. Medieval sermons, as it happens, have a great deal to say about the ambiguity of temptation: sin is attractive and bad at the same time. Thus, it is only natural that the Vice figure should exert a parallel ambivalence on the audience: "as the vices amuse us, we can be said to share the hero's seduction." This valid and sensible conclusion could have been drawn without the help of theological argument, since it rests not only on the paradox of sin but on the paradox of theatrical laughter. Every comedian knows that an audience in the theatre will laugh at a line or a routine that in normal circumstances would provoke only militant outrage. Somerset's parallel between theology and theatre is perhaps no more than a coincidence, but at least it is a happy and suggestive coincidence.

Two of the literary essays deal with individual playwrights. In "The Oddity of Lyly's *Endimion*," Peter Saccio argues that Lyly's most widely read play is unique in its mixture of abstract symbolism and concrete reality. Saccio notes that Cynthia and Tellus, the two female forms in the world of *Endimion*, are usually taken to represent *Venus coelestis* and *Venus vulgaris*, or in more familiar terms, sacred and profane love. "I find this over-schematic," Saccio writes, "as if one were to mistake for London itself the conventional diagram of the Underground." But Lyly's mind is so intrinsically schematic, I fear, that even the most "conventional diagram" runs very little risk of distortion. As the occasional reference in Saccio's paper implies, the landscape of *Endimion* is a theatrical version of Spenser's incredible maze in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*. Endimion chooses friendship for the same reason that Britomart chooses chastity: the allegory requires them to do so. To saddle poor Endimion with an existential dilemma is to crush him with a burden he was never meant to bear. I suspect that the courtiers whom Lyly entertained were delighted with schematic allegories, even if it is difficult to share that delight nowadays except in a secondary and historical way. Lyly's addiction to the "conventional diagram" may in the long run be a weakness, but it remains a principal touchstone of his dramatic method.

In a long essay on George Peele, Inga-Stina Ewbank sets herself the impossible task of defending this playwright's least defensible habit. Time and again, Peele adopts the tiresome strategy of allowing a character to describe in detail the stage-picture that the spectator might very well describe for himself. Ewbank applauds this technique on the grounds that Peele is working out "a kind of mutual

illumination between his visual and his verbal imagery". This sounds impressive in theory, but few of the examples referred to will support such analysis. David's description of Bethsabe, we are told, is a verbal rendering of "the whole sexual paradox"; but the imagery of "flowers" and "sweet Odors" can be found on the lips of any conventional Petrarchan lover. Peele's descriptive tendency is neither verbally interesting nor dramatically relevant; it is simply the mark of a playwright who understands his craft imperfectly. Ewbank rightly stresses the central place of spectacle in Peele's plays, but she resists the conclusion toward which her argument leads: the descriptive passages may indicate that Peele falls for the lure of spectacle at the expense of all else. None of the illustrations in this paper are drawn from Peele's best play, *The Old Wives Tale*. Ewbank sidesteps this play by remarking that it is "so much a thing in itself". Indeed it is, for in *The Old Wives Tale* Peele is for once a skilful playwright if not a distinguished poet. One indication of his skill is a scarcity of those awkward verbal paintings which Ewbank so gallantly but wrongly defends.

Two of the essays on theatrical history focus on specific problems: R.W. Ingram gathers evidence about the dramatic activities of the Cappers' guild in Coventry from 1494 to 1597, and D.F. Rowan discusses the staging of *The Spanish Tragedy* during the half-century of its immense popularity. The deliberately limited scope of these essays allows for scrupulous accuracy in the use of evidence and prudent caution in the presentation of conclusions. Ingram's paper includes discussion of the "spade and distaff" used as symbolic properties for Adam and Eve, of the masks worn by most principal characters, of the repair and maintenance of pageant wagons. Documentary evidence is quoted in detail, as if to emulate F.M. Salter's practice in *Mediaeval Drama in Chester*. Rowan's treatment of *The Spanish Tragedy* draws a firm and welcome line between fact and conjecture. The play was certainly performed at the Rose and Fortune theatres, and probably on a dozen other stages of varying design. Thus, the search for an "ideal" Elizabethan production of *The Spanish Tragedy* may be a chimerical undertaking, Rowan warns. Instead of creating the stage production of his dreams, Rowan confines himself to judicious comment on the more confusing stage directions in the text of the play itself.

This interpretive procedure is the subject of the most important essay in the collection, T.W. Craik's "The Reconstruction of Stage Action from Early Dramatic Texts". When stage directions are deficient (as they are in most sixteenth-century texts) or editorially suspect (as they are in many modern editions), how is the producer or indeed the intelligent reader to come to grips with the real or imagined actions of the characters? Craik's first example admits an authoritative solution: consult the Bible. The scene in question is Joab's murder of Absalom in *David and Bethsabe*. In the biblical account of this event, Joab finds Absalom suspended from a tree by his hair, and dispatches him with three mortal darts. In the play, Joab must throw the first dart when he says "Take that", and two more darts during his last two lines to Absalom. An appeal to the Bible admirably solves a problem that editors have bungled rather badly. In this case, of course, the Bible is a reliable guide chiefly because it is Peele's source for the action of the play. Different problems will be solved in other ways: by appealing to theatrical convention, by

deciphering the implied stage directions in the dialogue, by recognizing the physical limitations of Elizabethan playhouses. In summary, "the interpreter's task is to maintain his imagination and his discretion in proper balance." This is the only rule that Craik formulates; the rest of his argument proceeds by example alone.

After its first five years of publication, it would be fair to ask that this annual volume live up to the standard set by its two principal rivals in adjacent fields: *Renaissance Drama* and *Shakespeare Survey*. Although there are exceptions, the articles in *The Elizabethan Theatre* on the whole suffer by comparison. Why should this be so? Perhaps the annual publication is tied rather too closely to the event it commemorates — the regular Conference on Elizabethan Theatre at the University of Waterloo. Too many of the speakers engage in the kind of genial namedropping that academic conferences are famous for, but that printed books should avoid. Too many of the contributors are obviously playing old angles that they learned years ago, or else promoting the sales of their recently published books. In an elegant introductory comment, G.R. Hibbard recreates the spirit of the conference at which these papers were delivered. I would suggest, however, that an editor may allow himself to be less cordial and more exacting than the host of a conference. The host must please only his guests, of course, but the editor is responsible to a wider public.

Dalhousie University

Ronald Huebert

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*Snow Job: Canada, the United States and Vietnam (1954 to 1973)*. By Charles Taylor. Toronto: Anansi, 1974, Pp.209.

Despite its fatuous title, *Snow Job* is a serious and important book. It is serious in the sense that author Charles Taylor seems initially at least to have recognized the need for criticism of Canada's foreign policies to be based on historical evidence rather than mere prejudice. It is important in the sense that certain criticisms Taylor makes are directed at continuing patterns rather than particular incidents.

The subtitle of the book is more descriptive. While he does describe and assess the Canadian diplomatic performance in Vietnam, Taylor's real focus is Canadian-American relations. He begins in 1954 when a somewhat reluctant Canada agreed to serve on the original International Control Commission (ICC), follows Canadian involvement during the American force build-up and massive bombing campaigns, and closes with the Canadian enlistment to and withdrawal from the ICC's ill-fated successor, the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS). Taylor highlights the major diplomatic moves between Ottawa and Washington, and does bring together a certain amount of fresh historical information and often revealing analysis. But the driving force of the book is the polemical, not the historical or the analytical. Taylor in fact unloads such a barrage of charges that *Snow Job* makes the angriest of earlier critics look tame indeed.

His mildest comment is certainly the judgement that Canadian political leaders made "mistakes" — in itself probably unassailable. Not withdrawing from the original ICC was one of these mistakes. But the same leaders also "fooled themselves" and were guilty of "bungling and misjudgement". They held "simplistic and inaccurate" views about the war itself, and were "naive", "misguided", "timid and short-sighted" about the Canadian position. Overall, Canada provided "active support" for American policy at every stage, since this support was "offered freely and out of conviction" we were "deeply and hypocritically implicated". Throughout the 1960's Canadian officials were guilty of "blatant partiality", "complicity" and "duplicity", and through the ICC and arms sales to the U.S., played the role of "apologists", "collaborators", "surrogates", "accessories", and "accomplices". After the signing of the 1973 Paris Agreement, Canadian "open mouth diplomacy", Taylor says, "deliberately drove the ICCS into deadlock", "ruined Canada's reputation for peacekeeping", "perhaps" hurt the cause of peacekeeping, "facilitated Saigon's avoidance of the Agreement", and even "increased the chances for greater violence in South Vietnam". Perhaps the most serious charge of all, assuming the book's title reflects Taylor's strongest criticism, is that Ottawa deceived the Canadian people about Canada's role as an American accomplice; officials did a "snow job" on the public, intentionally misrepresenting our real actions and motivations, if not throughout the 1954-1973 period then certainly during the short-lived ICCS experience.

As is perhaps inevitable with such a far-ranging set of ringing indictments, the historical evidence Taylor marshals is not always convincing, even to a moderately sympathetic reader. Too often he appears to be clutching at straws, or at least to be greatly overstating his case. Too often he ignores possibilities or facts that, if considered, would at best raise doubt about his conclusions, if not completely discredit them. And too often, perhaps caught up in his pursuit of villainy, he simply contradicts himself. These contradictions are annoying. Taylor refers at one point, for example, to the use by Canadian officials of "the illusion of an active and secret diplomacy", despite the fact that a major portion of his book is devoted to documenting the very real, behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts of Blair Seaborn, and later Chester Ronning. Nevertheless, while the profusion of Taylor's criticisms makes it inevitable that he begin to stumble over them himself, it is the abuse of historical evidence that renders the book an ultimately unsatisfactory and largely unconvincing effort.

One of Taylor's most controversial claims is that Prime Minister Lester Pearson "*did* have advance knowledge of the plan to bomb North Vietnam and that he did approve it" at a private meeting with President Johnson in May 1964. "The evidence", says Taylor, "is strong and detailed", "it leads almost inescapably to [this] conclusion". However, the evidence (a quotation from a telegram included in the Pentagon Papers) is not at all "strong" and it is most certainly not "detailed". As a result, the conclusion is far from inescapable. The only evidence Taylor can apparently marshal to prove that there was in fact a bombing "plan" is reference to what was almost certainly a "contingency" plan of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. A reading of the Pentagon Papers for the ensuing months makes it clear that this was



an example of just such a standard military procedure and not a finally and officially approved course of action. Taylor mentions, but chooses to ignore, the unambiguous assertion of George Ball, former Acting Secretary of State, that "there never was any plan at the time they [Pearson and Johnson] met". If there was, indeed, no plan in the sense that Taylor would like to think, Johnson could not of course have been seeking, and Pearson could not have given, his "approval".

To be sure, even if there were no official plan, Johnson could still have been testing Pearson's reaction to the *possibility* of American bombing. If this were the case, then Pearson's reported response must, first of all, be seen in a different light — as a response to a hypothetically posed situation, perhaps mentioned, as Johnson was wont to do, amid a flurry of other points. Secondly, and more importantly, Pearson's reported response, even as summarized in the telegram, amounts to much less than a clear approval. Pearson is reported to have drawn a distinction between nuclear and conventional bombing — certainly a reasonable distinction to draw — and to have said he would "understand" an American resort to "punitive striking of discriminate targets" should there be no "alleviation of North Vietnamese aggression". Such a precise and carefully worded statement, while hardly the utterance of an outright pacifist, does not represent open and unequivocal approval for the sort of massive and extended bombing campaign the Americans ultimately chose to wage. And it certainly does not, as Taylor argues, "indicate that Pearson's approval of the bombing plan [sic] was given without any qualification".

Taylor notes, moreover, that the source of the telegram was probably McGeorge Bundy. Although he seems only too willing to accept Bundy's recent statement to the effect that there was "no reason to suppose that the cable was not an accurate summary", doubters might not be so easily persuaded. Bundy was an acknowledged hawk on the war, and the telegram in which the summary was enclosed was sent to another well-known hawk, Ambassador Lodge in Saigon, during a period in which the future direction of American policy was under debate. Given these circumstances, is it not likely that Bundy would attempt to interpret Pearson's statement in a manner as favourable as possible to his own position? Even without direct misinterpretation, or misrepresentation, is it not possible that the context, and even most of the details, of Pearson's conversation with Johnson could have been omitted from the brief summary? Taylor the critic does not allow Taylor the analyst to consider such questions.

Similar examples mar many of the other arguments in *Snow Job*. Taylor is, however, rather more convincing in his analysis of the Machiavellian diplomatic manoeuvring undertaken by Ottawa and Canadian ICSS representatives to extricate this country from that unwelcome and unrewarding duty. Yet some readers might be forgiven if they found themselves less able to arouse moral indignation over the rather transparent rhetorical cover provided these manoeuvrings than over the blatantly materialistic justifications earlier provided by the Liberal government for the manufacture of American arms in Canada. Also very convincing, and probably more important in the longer term, is the argument that a lesser power's attempts at mediatory diplomacy in a great power's wars are unlikely to be successful. "The Americans", Taylor concludes, "have little interest in our earnest expressions of

private dissent and scant patience with our polite attempts to sway them from the path of their latest folly". This argument strikes at the essence of the myth of Quiet Diplomacy – Canada's presumed special "influence" in Washington. Whether or not this influence ever really existed on issues of any importance, and Denis Stairs' account of Canadian diplomacy during the Korean War (in *The Diplomacy of Constraint*) suggests it did not, Canadian influence most certainly was totally lacking in the case of Vietnam.

Taylor is also convincingly on target when he documents the more day-to-day tribulations and frustrations of dealing with the Americans on what is to them only the periphery of a core interest. The examples are the sort of thing that etch themselves on a lesser power's consciousness: McGeorge Bundy lying to Paul Martin over the dinner table in Ottawa about an American decision to make POL air strikes against North Vietnam; George Ball sabotaging the "Canadian channel" to the North Vietnamese by publicly discussing Ronning's visit, despite an understanding that it should be kept confidential; the State Department assuring External Affairs that Canada was the only "missing piece" in the ICCS puzzle, when in fact the other three proposed members were not yet certain; Henry Kissinger graciously telling reporters in the White House that the US regretted but understood the Canadian decision to withdraw from the ICCS, one hour *before* Mitchell Sharp was due to announce it to the House of Commons.

In *Snow Job*, Charles Taylor has mounted one of the major, and certainly one of the most sustained, attacks on contemporary Canadian foreign policy. Some of the challenges he raises are fundamental. The pity is that the book is so impaired by polemical excesses and historical faults. And because it is so flawed, however sustained its attack, it will ultimately fail to contribute much to a re-examination of either the intellectual or practical bases of that policy.

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*Silent China: Selected Writings of Lu Xun.* Edited and translated by Gladys Yang. London: Oxford University Press, 1973. Pp.196. \$2.95 (paperback).

As a writer of fiction, Lu Xun (or Lu Hsun) is undoubtedly the most translated and the most studied of modern Chinese writers in the West. Since his death in 1936, several anthologies of his short stories have appeared in English translation, and his skill in the art of narrative and the unique appeal of his stories have been highly acclaimed. But it is little known in the West that Lu Xun is also a fine poet and a great essayist. Up to now, very few of his writings other than works of fiction are available in English. Because of this, *Silent China: Selected Writings of Lu Xun*, in excellent translation, is particularly welcome.

Born into an impoverished middle class family in 1881, Lu Xun first received traditional schooling in classical Chinese. In his early youth, he was interested in modern science and technology and was later sent to Japan on a Government scholarship for further studies. While pursuing his studies for a medical career, he happened to see, amidst the clapping and cheering of the Japanese students, some

news slides of the Russo-Japanese War. One showed an execution of a Chinese convicted as a Russian spy by the Japanese military, with a group of robust but thoughtless Chinese viewing the incident in complete apathy. Lu Xun was so staggered by this humiliating scene that he soon abandoned his medical studies, choosing literary activities instead. When recalling this experience many years later, he wrote in his famous Preface (1922) to his first collection of short stories *Call to Arms*: "From that moment I felt medicine was not the important thing I thought it was. The people of a weak, backward country, even though they may enjoy sturdy health, can only serve as the senseless material and audience for public executions. In comparison, to die of diseases is not necessarily so unfortunate. Our first task was surely to transform their spirit, and I thought at that time that literature could best meet the task of spiritual transformation." When back in China, he devoted his time and energies to teaching and writing. His literary output includes three collections of short stories, one volume of prose-poems, one volume of personal reminiscences, and fifteen volumes of essays.

The present volume contains a well-balanced selection of Lu Xun's writings which are arranged in chronological order and in groups: stories, reminiscences, poems and prose-poems, and essays. This beautifully produced book covers the author's entire writing career, beginning with his first story "A Madman's Diary" in 1918, and ending with a moving essay called "Death" in 1936.

The five selected stories include the most anthologised "A Madman's Diary" and "The True Story of Ah Q". "A Madman's Diary" is a landmark in the history of modern Chinese fiction. Using the indirect method and powerful prose, the author through the acute sensibilities of a madman exposes the human cruelties and abuses of the old, patriarchal family system. It is essentially a bitter attack on the man-eating old culture and a plea for a new way of treating fellow men. "The True Story of Ah Q" is the author's most important and best known work. Using the 1911 Revolution in China as the background, the story depicts the ills and pathos of rural life, and touches on the meaning of peasant protest. It focuses on the humiliating and comic life of Ah Q, an ignorant and well-meaning farm laborer who typifies two traditional thoughts generally found with the Chinese people: a tendency to take pride in the glorious past and a self-complacent way of enjoying moral victories when facing defeat. The story is a remarkable literary achievement for its fusion of romanticism and realism. "In the Tavern" and "The White Light" are two short pieces, but are of equal interest. They both in a different way depict the inadequacy of the individual and the destructive forces of old traditions and social systems. "Leaving the Pass" is a historical story with topical significance. It is a satirical, witty and controlled rendering of the two ancient sages: Lao Zi and Confucius. This story should be studied in connection with "My View on Chastity" and "Silent China", two powerful essays analysing the causes of China's backwardness and demonstrating the pressing needs for a change of men's attitudes.

The four reminiscences border on the genres of personal essay and short story, and hence have a special kind of human appeal. They mainly deal with the unhappy experience of the author's childhood in an unsympathetic adult world and reflect a Dickens-like concern for the well-being of children. Like all Lu Xun's writings,

these pieces are marked by his vigorous style and sardonic humour. They display the author's extraordinary ability to recapture the vanished world with perception and understanding.

The poems and prose-poems show another side of the writer's talent: his skill in using stark images and understatements to evoke emotion. Although written from the first person point of view, they are not merely poems of personal agony. They are, by and large, poems of social observations, expressed with a genuine compassion for the abused and the oppressed. Some pieces are meditations on the harsh life in China and the nature of human conditions in general. A sense of urgency or anxiety runs through all these pieces. But in spite of his anguish and indignation, Lu Xun never loses his artistic control. There is a kind of intrinsic poise and rueful equanimity about his poetry, as seen in these lines:

Dismayed by a world in the grip of autumn,  
 How is my brush to be dipped in the warmth of spring?  
 Passions drowned in this grey ocean of dust,  
 Wind chilling the officials departing their posts.  
 Returning, old, to a marsh naked of reeds,  
 I fall in dream through clouds that freeze my veins;  
 Waiting for cockcrow I hear only the night's silence,  
 Rising I see the Dipper low in the sky. (p.133)

To make a selection representative of Lu Xun's essays, which number more than six hundred pieces and which are mostly polemical in content, is by no means an easy task. The translator, however, has done an admirable job. She has wisely chosen the essays which are topical or in which the English-speaking reader, because of their Western affinity, can see the force of the writer's arguments and the subtlety of his allusions. These essays not only acquaint the reader with some of the grave issues facing China in the twenties and thirties, but also enable him to see some Chinese views of the world. Moreover, they are stamped with the author's distinctive, caustic wit, and in retrospect, there is something prophetic about them. For instance, in "Hung by the Heels", he writes: "Because kind-hearted Westerners hate seeing cruelty to animals, anyone who carries hens or ducks upside-down in the International Settlement [in Shanghai] is penalized. The penalty is merely a fine, and if you are willing to pay you can go on as before. Still, you have been penalized. This has roused the indignation of certain of our compatriots, who say the Westerners are kind to animals but cruel to Chinese, ranking us even lower than poultry. But this is to misunderstand the Westerners. They despise us, true, but not as lower than beasts. Of course hens and ducks, come what may, end up in the kitchen to be dressed for the table; and even if you carry them the right way up that cannot make amends for their ultimate fate....There is no rule against cruelty to Chinese in the International Settlement precisely because we should be able to look after ourselves — we are not hens and ducks." (pp.181-82)

This book will be of value to anyone who has an interest in the social and intellectual history of modern China; and for someone who views literature or ideas from a social or utilitarian standpoint, it will prove especially useful. As a realist and a purposive artist, Lu Xun wrote with serious intent. All his writings have a direct bearing on common life, and are intended to promote human and social values. Taken together, the pieces in the volume vividly mirror the pains and struggles of life in the turbulent times in which he lived.