

Book Reviews

"Paradise Lost" and the Genesis Tradition. By J. M. EVANS. Oxford: The Clarendon Press (Don Mills: Oxford University Press), 1968. Pp. xiv, 314. \$8.00.

This fascinating study is even more restricted than its title would indicate. Its real topic is stated in the first paragraph of its "Introduction": "What does an enquiry into the history of the Fall story contribute to our understanding of *Paradise Lost* as a poem?" The author's terms of reference do not include the poem's debt in style and structure to the classical and Renaissance epic, nor the War in Heaven, the cosmology of Milton's universe, the chronology of the celestial cycle, the infernal Trinity in Books II and X, the snaky metamorphosis of the rebel angels, and many other major aspects of the work. Mr. Evans is not even interested in Book VII as a hexaemeron (based on the first chapter of Genesis). It is "Man's First Disobedience" that engages all his attention.

At the outset, Evans notes that the composite nature of the Hebrew text creates unusual difficulties. In the so-called "Priestly" account (chaps. i, ii: 1-3), *Elohim* is used as the name of God. This Deity creates all things by fiat; He is clearly omnipotent and omniscient; He makes man in His own image (i.e. perfect), and obligates man only by the command to propagate his kind. A very different document, which extends from the fourth verse of the second chapter to the end of the third chapter, calls the Creator *Jahweh*. This version "is a full-blooded myth, and legendary elements such as the speaking serpent and the magical trees play a prominent part at every stage of the plot. . . . Jahweh is not merely described anthropomorphically; his very nature is revealed by his shortcomings to be more human than divine. . . . He is, in fact, the complete antithesis of the benevolent and omnipotent Elohim of the Priestly document." From the conflict of the two incompatible versions come most of the questions discussed by both the Rabbis and the Fathers: "the two documents offered profoundly contradictory views of the natures of both God and Man, the first idealistic, the second primitive. While each view was perfectly consistent within the framework of its own suppositions, once the two collided they struck off problems like sparks."

The Jewish and the Christian treatments of these problems differed greatly. Explicit references to the events in the Fall story are completely lacking in the rest of the Old Testament. Prior to the military destruction of Jewish national life by Titus and Hadrian, the existence of evil in the world was blamed on the defection of the lustful Watcher angels in Genesis vi; while thereafter we have

sin explained by a rabbinic theory of *yezer-ha-ra* (evil imagination), a sort of *libido* implanted in each man at birth. This concept later enters into Christianity with Augustine's similar doctrine of concupiscence. But it had been the Apostle Paul (e.g., I Cor. xv: 21-22; I Tim. ii:14) who first "set the Fall opposite the Redemption", and thereby initiated the idea that sin entered the world with disobedience in Eden.

Four chapters (IV to VII) are devoted to the Fall in the successive literary traditions of neo-classical Latin epic, the heroic treatments in the vernaculars of the Germanic North, the scholastic commentaries and their vernacular versifications, and the dramatic versions (medieval and Renaissance). Each of these phases of the theme's literary development helped to enrich the resources with which Milton fused and transcended them all. Such poets as Victor, Dracontius, and Avitus took over the pagan concept of the Golden Age (as found in Ovid, Vergil, and Lucretius) and applied it to the primordial Garden; they also showed psychological and dramatic insight into the emotions and actions of Adam and Eve. The most important of the Germanic treatments, according to Evans, is the *Genesis B*, in which "the Jahwist's laconic myth" is expanded with original explanations of the motives and interrelationships of the characters. The scholastic treatments range from Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* (in Latin prose) to William of Shoreham's English poem *On the Trinity, Creation, the Existence of Evil, Devils, and Adam and Eve*, and in them we meet with such ideas as that "The Devil was not only thwarted; he was outwitted to boot." Drama demanded from the playwright the invention of both incident and speech, and "The history of the Fall plays is largely the history of increasingly sophisticated attempts to cope with these difficulties." Evans gives special importance to the five-act Latin tragedy, *Adamus Exul* (1601), by the Dutch scholar and later diplomat, Hugo Grotius. "Milton, if I am right," he avers, "adopted Grotius's new pattern as the skeleton of *Paradise Lost*."

The final 74 pages of the book are devoted to an examination of the blending of the traditional and the original in Milton's treatment of the ancient myth: "Indeed, the most extraordinary single characteristic of the poem is the immense richness of its intellectual and poetic content. Of the patristic interpretations, for instance, Milton incorporated the allegorical and typological as well as the literal. With them he blended notions derived, directly or indirectly, from rabbinic commentaries, apocryphal documents, Christian-Latin Biblical epics, medieval legends, and recent plays, poems and tracts on the same subject. What is more, he synthesized all these heterogeneous elements within the framework of a coherent narrative structure modelled partly on the *Aeneid*, partly on *Adamus Exul*. The conceptual control necessary to organize this wealth of ideas would be remarkable in any poet; in a blind one it is little short of miraculous. . . . In the final analysis, Milton's version of the Fall is distinguished not by its indebtedness but by its profound originality."

In Chapter X (which is all too brief), Evans's knowledge of what is original and what is traditional pulls the rug out from under such denigratory critics as B. Willey, C. C. Green, and even (at times) E. M. W. Tillyard. "So what Willey has called 'Milton's own explanation' had been current for at least twelve centuries before *Paradise Lost* was composed, and came down to the poet as part of the theological tradition attaching to the narrative." . . . Or again: "The garden will not remain perfect of its own accord, and if Adam and Eve stopped working the wilderness outside would soon engulf it. . . . Consequently, to maintain, as Tillyard does, that Adam and Eve's unfallen life is idle and purposeless is to ignore the most strikingly original feature of Milton's treatment."

Three minor slips in erudition may be noted. (a) On page 11 he refers to "the use of the generic term *Elohim* (the Lord) rather than the proper name Jahweh (Jehovah) for God." On the contrary, *Elohim* is never translated as "Lord" or "the Lord." Gesenius's *Lexicon* renders it only as "God", "a god", "a deity", "gods", or the like. The term "Lord" is used rather for *Jah*, *Jahweh* (Yahweh), *'Adhon*, *'Adhonay*, the Septuagint *Kurios*, and some minor terms. (b) A footnote on page 41 begins: "A *magi* is a Zoroastrian. . . ." The singular, of course, is *magus*, Greek *magos*. (c) A third slip is his classification of *Beowulf* and *Hildebrand* (p. 155) as examples of "the Germanic Saga". Even a casual reading of W. P. Ker's *Epic and Romance* (which the author cites as a reference on page 300) ought to have made clear the gulf in time and style between the "Teutonic epic" (Old Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, and Eddic *poetry*) and the incomparable prose "Sagas" that were the later creation of the Icelanders alone.

Acadia University

WATSON KIRKCONNELL

The School of Shakespeare: The Influence of Shakespeare on English Drama 1600-42. By DAVID L. FROST. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [Toronto: Macmillan of Canada], 1968. Pp. xi, 304. \$8.75.

Of all the ways of coming to art, perhaps the least rewarding is through the influences that might have shaped it, and of all the ways of coming to Shakespeare's successors the most dangerous is through the master himself. Not only is the approach a disservice to Shakespeare, but it also does the successors no good. "The Jacobean dramatists make better sense if seen as working in Shakespeare's light," Frost says, but the fact is that they can hardly be seen at all, so drenched are they in his dazzle, and so blinded the spectator by his brilliance. What is more, however bright the light, the proofs available to put under it are so insubstantial that even a microscopic examination turns out rather less than satisfactory. But this fact hardly dismays Frost, for he quickly turns the issue inside out and presses ahead on the basis that "since our evidence is so fragmentary, no conclusion ought to be drawn from the lack of it."

Happily, Frost's procedures are not so outrageous as such a defence makes them sound. In fact, once the preliminary rationalizations are over, he gets down to some first-rate analysis of earlier seventeenth-century drama. Although he rather too often departs from his declared purposes in order to indulge in antiquarian or biographical or polemical delights (did not Dr. Johnson advise us long ago that "No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown"?), he shows that the critical study of influences can reveal many aspects of an author's craft: his independence and originality, his ability to handle ready-made themes, his response to conventions, his linguistic limitations, and the like. Although, too, the dramatists in Frost's report are not all as minor as he suggests, judging them as he does in terms of Shakespeare's rather than of their own merits, he avoids exalting them unduly and in the process provides many a stimulating insight into their works. Middleton, he manages to convince us, was the "true heir" of Shakespeare, evolving in his career to produce two tragedies "not unworthy" as tributes to the master. Except for some indebtedness in one play, Massinger is denied membership in the school (but the strictures keeping him out could almost as easily be applied to Middleton). Webster and Ford are portrayed as anti-Shakespeareans, while Marston and Beaumont and Fletcher are revealed as imitators of conventions initiated by Shakespeare in the Revenge play and the Romance.

Even though one may still be allowed to doubt there was truly a School of Shakespeare, even in Frost's limited interpretation of that phrase—much of the "influence" could have come from the Elizabethans in general rather than from Shakespeare in particular—there is a good deal in this book that validly challenges established views. That *Hamlet* was variously and often unsuccessfully imitated is well argued. That Shakespeare's Romances provided forms and techniques for a generation after his death is also convincingly explored. Most important, however, is the demonstration that his influence was far more significant than such scholars as G. E. Bentley have for many years allowed us to believe. Although it would seem axiomatic that Shakespeare should have excited emulation and reaction of one kind or another in the seventeenth century, the axiom has been too long denied, so that *The School of Shakespeare* comes at last as a welcome corrective to a flourishing antilogy.

University of Manitoba

S. WARHAFT

The Diary of a Country Parson. By the REVEREND JAMES WOODFORDE. Edited by JOHN BERESFORD. Oxford: The Clarendon Press [Don Mills: Oxford University Press], 1968. Five volumes. Pp. lxxviii, 1,982. \$31.50.

The reprinting of the Diary of the Reverend James Woodforde, out of print for nearly a quarter of a century, brings to life for a new generation of readers one of the most remarkably unremarkable of Englishmen—unremarkable for having lived

without distinction the obscure, stable, and contented rural existence of a bachelor parson; remarkable for having kept a record of the details of almost every day of that existence for forty-three years (1758-1802). The Diary, ably edited by John Beresford in 1924-31, is largely a collection of trivia—as are most of our lives—but a collection which, taken day by day and year by year, gradually builds to that mass which is the life of a man, a man whom we end by knowing not as we know our families, but as we know ourselves. For Parson Woodforde is a man of disarming directness (even of naïveté), and he appears to have regarded his journal as a repository for *all* his actions and thoughts: because his mind and life are so uncomplicated, we get to know him very well over the years, and the impression is quite clear that he has nothing to hide. The few matters that are concealed (probably from the accidental eyes of his household) in thin Latin or Anglo-Greek disguises are of such a trifling nature that one finds it hard to believe that anything worthy of omission or more artful concealment ever ruffled the surface of his quiet life. The result is that the reading of the Diary becomes a genuinely intimate and vicarious re-living of a life that terminated over a hundred and sixty-five years ago.

It is because these are the mundane details of prosperous rural life of a century and a half to two centuries ago that we are fascinated as Woodforde moves from student days at Oxford (“Mr. Hearst . . . turned me out of bed and locked me out of the room naked”) through curacies in Somerset to his taking up (in 1776) of the New College living of Weston Longeville (“the worst singing I ever heard in a church”) in Norfolk, where he remained until his death in 1803. The Weston years, which constitute the bulk of the Diary, are filled with the busy, but temperate and cheerful, doings of the Parson: frequent visits back and forth with neighbours and friends; evenings at whist, cribbage, and loo; summer thunderstorms and winter gales of unreasonable terror, lush harvest seasons and winters that freeze the milk in the Rectory kitchen; enormous meals (virtually all protein); many trips to nearby Norwich and some to London, and to Bath and elsewhere in Somerset; moderate alarms as the French monarchy falls, as the Fleet mutinies at Spithead and the Nore, as Napoleon marches across Europe; sessions of melancholy, of piles, of gout; condescending—and occasionally rowdy—annual “frolics” at the Rectory when parishioners pay their tithes; county elections, gossip, farming, quarrels, church-going, scandal, almsgiving, fishing. . . .

Parson Woodforde's social relations are rather at a distance, his only close companion being his niece Nancy, who for most of the years at Weston is the object of warm and respectful affection (though she is sometimes “rather pert and saucy”) from the aging bachelor. Nancy emerges as a lively friend to her uncle, to whom she retains the youthful feminine charm with which she enters the Diary: the reader almost fails to realize that Nancy is a 45-year-old spinster at the time of his death. Outside the family, the principal acquaintances are a series of curates, some assiduous and some delinquent, neighbouring clergymen, and Squire Custance, who is

a frequent host and visitor. The parson's servants also become well known; their physical and moral health, as well as their service, are of direct and familiar concern. Ben, the parson's "farming man", is the highest paid (£10 per annum) and of longest service; the footman, Briton (£8), is younger, more capricious, and chiefly a messenger; the senior maid, Betty (£5.5), is a lively dairy lass who distinguishes herself in 1800 through an apparent pregnancy (Ben is suspected) that fortunately comes to naught; and Sally Gunton, housemaid, notable chiefly for having had the audacity in 1801 to ask for an increase (denied) on her annual £5.5. There are these and many more who pass, always as individuals, in and out of a crowded but calm rural landscape that looks like what one might expect of an eighteenth-century Breughel.

"Reading the Diary", wrote Beresford in 1923, "is like embarking on a long voyage down a very tranquil stream. There is no grand or exciting scenery; there are no rapids, nor is there any ultimate expectation of the sea. But there are green fields on either side, and . . . there is the harmony which comes only from controlled movement and there is peace".

Dalhousie University

R. L. RAYMOND

The Life and Lyrics of Sir Edward Dyer (formerly entitled *At the Court of Queen Elizabeth*). By RALPH M. SARGENT. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968. Pp. xiv, 229. 42s.

Like the foregoing, this is a volume in Oxford's series of reprints of standard studies that for the most part appeared under the Oxford imprint before the war and have been out of print since shortly after it. Sargent's biography is of Dyer, colourful Elizabethan courtier, poet ("my mind to me a kingdom is"), diplomat, merchant-venturer and alchemist who moved among such giants as Sidney, Frobisher, Leicester and the Queen herself with the ease and familiarity that gave this work its original title.

Dalhousie University

R. L. RAYMOND

Apartheid: A Documentary Study of Modern South Africa. By EDGAR H. BROOKES. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul [Don Mills: General Publishing Co.], 1968. Pp. xxxvii, 228. \$8.50.

This documentary study of *apartheid* in modern South Africa is a volume in the *World Studies Series*. The aim of the series is to "provide students in sixth forms, Colleges of Education and Universities with a range of contemporary material drawn from many sources, not only from official and semi-official records, but also from contemporary historical writing and from reliable records".

In *Apartheid*, Edgar Brookes has used his extensive knowledge as a leading academic opponent of *apartheid*, and his experience as a "natives' representative" in the South African Senate, to assemble an impressively comprehensive selection of documents. The first section of the book deals with the meaning of *apartheid* in South Africa; the second discusses the implications which the doctrine has for religion and education; and the study closes with a section which illustrates the social consequences of *apartheid*. The material ranges through speeches by Nationalist ministers introducing *apartheid* legislation, press commentary, quotation from scholarly monographs, and statements of all kinds by opposition groups. Protests from the Archbishop of Cape Town and the National Union of South African Students mingle with relentless and elephantine ministerial arguments, to give a well-rounded impression of the variety of opinions and attitudes in South Africa during the twenty years of Nationalist rule.

In his introduction, Dr. Brookes discusses the history of the racial attitudes of white settlers in South Africa from 1652, when the Cape was settled by Jan van Riebeeck, until the Nationalist party came into power in 1948. He describes the dependence of the colonisers on coloured labour, and shows how the development of Afrikaner Nationalism, from the earliest days when the settlers were reacting against a Dutch colonial administration, was spearheaded by the frontiersmen who were farthest from such centres of civilisation and culture as there were in the country. When the British occupied the Cape at the end of the eighteenth century, and brought imperial law and order to the frontier, the same Dutch frontiersmen saw themselves involved in a war on two fronts which gave the emotional impetus to much Afrikaner Nationalism.

Struggling against British codes and the rule of law on the one hand, and against the black indigenous races on the other, the frontier farmers began a century and a half of struggle which was to culminate in the establishment in 1961 of a Republic dominated by Afrikaners, and dedicated to pitiless racial exploitation.

After his introductory interpretation the author introduces the documents without comment in order to represent as fairly as possible the arguments for and against *apartheid* legislation. The effect of allowing the documents to speak for themselves is to provide a chilling insight into the laborious insensitivity of Nationalist political theory. In contrast, the arguments against *apartheid* are characterised by the clarity, perception, and humanity of liberal South African thought, an element in the depressing history of the last twenty years which it is all too easy to overlook. The book documents carefully and accurately the nightmare of *apartheid* and its callous and complacent exponents. Reading it should be a sobering experience for those who talk glibly of totalitarian politics in the United States.

Dalhousie University

ROWLAND SMITH

The Early Poetry of Ezra Pound. By THOMAS H. JACKSON. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press [Toronto: Saunders of Toronto], 1968. Pp. xvi, 262. \$6.95.

This is a first-rate book on an unpromising subject. Most of Pound's poetry before 1912, which is what Professor Jackson mainly concentrates on, was very bad. Jackson is not out to resurrect it, however. He is concerned to show Pound learning his craft and to pick out from his prose and verse the main threads of his "strangely inarticulate poetics", which he sees, quite rightly, as pointing straight towards the *Cantos*. Essentially the book is a challenge to the view of Pound as "an unshakably objective mimetic artist", and it demonstrates conclusively that Pound "rests firmly within the tradition not only of Romance, but of [inspirational] romanticism."

The most important relationships that Jackson examines are those with Browning, Pater, Yates, the Decadents, and Rossetti—especially Rossetti—and in the course of tracing the uses Pound made of their work and the ways in which he diverged from it he brings out very interestingly "the subjective religiosity and the Platonic [or neo-Platonic] orientation of Pound's aesthetics. . . ." His exposition is scrupulous, sensitive, and at times agreeably tart (e.g., "As a youth Pound wanted to become a poet in the way small boys want to be firemen . . ."). Among the problems in Pound's work, both early and late, about which he is especially illuminating are the plethora of voices Pound uses, the uncommonly high value he places on the visual, and the way in which his "concern with fleeting surges of significant emotion" results in "a feeling of allusiveness: the presented moments imply an emotional context outside the poem." All in all, the book is probably the best on Pound so far.

There is, however, a puzzle in it. When Jackson claims that the *Cantos* "are the culmination of forty years of thought and experimentation whose coherence need not be questioned," it is not entirely clear what valuation he intends. To this reviewer, what he describes so well in the book appears an absolute witches' brew of questionable assumptions and procedures. Not only do we have the conventional notion of the Poet-as-Seer, for example, but we have the "total subjectivization of reality implicit in [Pound's] identification of 'the real' with the self [, which] can lead to a remark like 'a man's message is primarily his *façon de voir*, his modality of apperception'. . . . This *façon de voir* constitutes the poet's only operative and 'sincere' conception of reality." Furthermore, "until he invents a language truly his own, the poet cannot tell even himself what his real feelings are." And what is that language to be? "Our best hope [for communication and shared experience] is not conceptual discourse, for obvious reasons, but . . . the *image*." If ever there was a poetics calculated to produce intellectual irresponsibility, it is surely this!

Jackson himself, to be sure, appears a shade uncertain about The Image, if one can go by the relative opacity of such remarks as "the poem [is] a perfect

imitation of the experience, not a recreation in which we may participate but a mimesis we observe." It is all the odder, however, that he did not probe rigorously and determine unequivocally how true he took Pound's main contentions and assumptions to be. (A little comparing of Pound with distinguished poets very different from him might have helped.) The explanation may of course be that he considers it a sufficient justification of them that they led to the *Cantos*. To this reviewer, on the other hand, the *Cantos* simply point up the badness of the road Pound chose.

In his early poems Pound was indeed beginning "a fairly unified attempt to lay open to the imagination a world beyond everyday . . .," and it is broadly true that in the *Cantos* he presents "two worlds, a world of beauty and permanence, and one of ugliness, perversion, and flux." Yet how *thin* that "world of beauty" is, how conventionally pastoral its "Mediterranean" qualities in contrast with, say, the Provençal and Italian worlds of Giono and Lawrence. For that matter, how relatively thin the "everyday" world is too in the *Cantos*. And the two kinds of thinness, as Jackson's book helps to bring out, are interrelated. Pound's early and continuing ranging across cultures in search of "moments" of beauty and high energy may have made him for a few years the most important literary critic in England, since his sensitivity to certain kinds of vitality and beauty was very great. But his increasing indifference to the complexities of the cultures in which they occurred was poetically stultifying. Uninterested in anyone except artists and a handful of thinkers, and patronising towards all complex systems of thought, he increasingly couldn't see life—or show it—with the kind of precision and richness demanded by his ambitions. And at the same time he was becoming more and more paranoiacally certain that things were exactly as they appeared to him and indeed simply needed *pointing* to. It is plain from the disastrous *Guide to Kulchur* and the *Cantos* of the later thirties that had it not been for his incarceration at the end of the war his deterioration would have proceeded unchecked.

Yet that is not quite the whole of it, of course. Inferior though his vitalism was to Lawrence's, Pound's "grace under pressure" when the pressure came was undeniable, and one can think of few other literary men who could have survived so well those long years in St. Elizabeth's Hospital. In part, of course, this may have been due to the absence of certain sensitivities in him. ("I have been hard as youth sixty years" was his own shrewd diagnosis in the *Pisan Cantos*.) But it was also due, presumably, like the spontaneous charm that flashes out in much of his work and that helps to make him so much more interesting a figure than Eliot, to a still insufficiently defined zone of health in his value system. One of the virtues of Professor Jackson's excellent book is that it enables one to see the dynamics of that system much more clearly.

Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight". Edited by DENTON FOX. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall [Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada], 1968. Pp. 115. \$3.95.

Denton Fox, the editor of this book, has selected from the sea of *Gawain* criticism (which, like that of other forms of medieval criticism, daily becomes deeper) an assortment of fairly brief modern comments, often difficult to find separately, to form another volume in Prentice-Hall's series of recent interpretations designed to facilitate studies in literature ranging from *The Frogs* to *The Waste Land*.

The first group of criticisms, a set of eight under the heading of "Interpretations", includes an extract from Dorothy Everett's invaluable *Essays on Middle English Literature*, a part (but unfortunately only a small one) of J. A. Burrow's *A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and pieces by Marie Borroff and John Speirs. Worthy of note, too, is an article by Gervase Mathew on "Ideals of Knighthood in Late-Fourteenth-Century England", a most useful study for an understanding of Gawain's background, which is too frequently taken for granted.

The six "View Points" of Part II provide brief suggestions for over-all approaches from such widely differing critics as C. S. Lewis, Cecily Clark, and A. C. Spearing. There is also an interesting attempt by R. W. V. Elliott to identify the exact location of the Green Chapel in the "wilderness of Wirral".

Within the limits presumably imposed by the publisher, the editor has both chosen wisely and organized well. It is unfortunate, however, that the book should have been confined to a mere 115 pages. There is more that should be said, both by some of the present writers and by others, and this selection whets the appetite but does not satisfy it. Furthermore, the bibliography provided is quite inadequate. Six critical works, even though they are the best, are not enough; the editor owes it to his public to give much more detailed assistance to those who wish to follow on from this book.

University of King's College

R. MACG. DAWSON

Canadian Books

Wild Grape Wine. By A. W. PURDY. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968. Pp. 128. \$3.95.

Poems for All the Annettes. By A. W. PURDY. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1968. Pp. xii, 101. (Paper) \$2.50.

Selected Poems 1956-1968. By LEONARD COHEN. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968. Pp. x, 245. \$5.95. (Paper) \$2.50.

The Animals in That Country. By MARGARET ATWOOD. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1968. Pp. x, 69. \$5.00. (Paper) \$2.75.

The Collected Poems of Anne Wilkinson. Ed. by A. J. M. SMITH. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968. Pp. xxii, 212. \$4.95.

Al Purdy is now recognized as the dean of Canadian poets, the faltering Irving Layton having passed the torch to him. Purdy carries the honour easily, perhaps because he doesn't take it too seriously: he is only too aware of the pomposity that accompanies self-importance. It has made Layton a living fossil, rock-bound and frozen in inflated attitudes.

On the back cover of *Poems for All the Annettes* we find praises from Robert Weaver ("Purdy is the hottest poet in the country.") and Charles Bukoski ("One of the very few good poets since 1900.") which would certainly, if he believed them, lead him dangerously close to self-adulation. But this is not likely to happen, for one of Purdy's greatest assets is his honesty, especially when he turns the bright eye of his wit upon himself. Yet Purdy is not just a humorist. He can be that, but his finest poems come from something deeper in the man than his sense of humour alone. Purdy is continuously aware that

every decision, word, thought, positive act,
causes the sum of the parts of a man's self to change,
and he betrays himself into the future day after uncertain day
("Collecting the square root of minus one").

Many of his best poems attempt to map these betrayals, to pinpoint the acts that mark the change. Such cartography is often achieved in both the books that are dealt with here.

Poems for All the Annettes is a revised earlier collection and contains all the work previous to 1962 which Purdy feels is worth keeping. Canadian readers should feel very grateful to House of Anansi and to Purdy for making this poetry

available again, for there are many poems here which are really exciting. *Wild Grape Wine* contains more recent work.

One does not go to Purdy to be impressed by his self-conscious technical facility (his technique is sufficient only unto his poetic ends, nothing more), but for the imaginative release his intense word-wanderings can effect. Purdy's imagination careers all over the universe. His poetry manages to contain everything his imagination can touch: fantasy worlds, beauty wed to ugly reality, the careers of fossilized centuries, the minds of history, the organization of stars and planets, the myths of men. Inanimate things, cars, trains, tools, have hallucinatory lives of their own in his poems; and he will watch them on the move, circling for the kill. He will often concentrate his attention on the manner in which things *appear* to happen.

All this would suggest that Purdy is a very personal poet, and so he is. Many of his best poems derive from personal experiences or insights. And yet, one of the finest poems in *Wild Grape Wine*, "The Runners", is a dialogue between a brother and sister, two Gaels sent out by Lief Ericson to explore the new found land and investigate the nature of the country. This poem captures the fear this huge country could implant in Celtic imaginations: it sends shivers up the spine. Purdy is not afraid of feelings, nor of expressing them: he can be overwhelmed by what he learns through the process of creation, his exhilaration becoming ours:

My god what an agony to be subdivided like
this and to be continuous and to be every-
where like a bunch of children's blocks
disappearing inside each other my god
and not being also migawd
also what grandeur

If you are looking for a "poetic" sensibility and finely-crafted work, Purdy might be too undisciplined, too wild for you. But his is a genuine talent; his imagination, honesty of vision, gusto, and bravura, raise him high above many minor craftsmen.

Selected Poems is a gathering from Leonard Cohen's poetry since 1956. In *The Spice Box of Earth*, one of the classic and beautiful 1961 Frank Newfeld-designed poetry books, Cohen's shimmering imagery, his evocative power, and his sensitivity to passing beauty won him a large and passionate readership. He has never looked back, but has gone on to win ever wider audiences with his novels and songs. *Selected Poems* contains work from all his books, including the early *Let Us Compare Mythologies* as well as some recent uncollected poetry. It is a fascinating book because it enables one to see that, despite many superficial changes, Cohen's vision, his essential poetic attitude, has remained constant. The themes are the same throughout his work: love, violence, martyrdom, sex, art, their intertwining in time with guilt, and the continuing search for an ecstatic nirvana by any or all of these means. He has always been able to present the arresting image: "The

sun is tangled/in black branches,/raving like Absalom/between sky and water", and his poems have a kind of dark heraldic splendour, lacking in many of our modern, tough poets. It is Cohen's conscious, almost mannerist, romanticism, which has made him a cult personality, but it has not harmed his best work, it has even, perhaps, given it its special, idiosyncratic lustre.

In 1964, on the cover of *Flowers for Hitler*, Cohen stated that he had begun to write a new poetry. This was not so. He had merely sought a more public rhetoric to express themes that had been with him from the beginning. But he failed, I think, because the language, in this case the language of liberal politics cleverly subverted to his own ends, failed him. It sounds false, an ill-fitting coat, not his own skin. The early poems, especially those of *Spice Box*, are superior, and not "prettier", because the voice hidden in them is his own. The very fact that the enigmatic and terrifying "It swings, Jocko" appeared in *Spice Box* disproves Cohen's later contention that he had been too "pretty" until *Hitler*, for it truly captures the horror and emptiness of contemporary city life in a way the later, looser, more rhetorical poems do not.

It appears that Cohen recognized this, for he has returned to a poetry of enigma, where often it is impossible to know what is happening in the poem even while it exercises its charm upon you. Now there are poems which are also songs, such as the famous "Suzanne takes you down", which is perhaps the most beautiful song of this generation. Most of the recent poems, however, are not up to the earlier work. This is partly because Cohen no longer devotes most of his time and energy to poetry. Yet, such a strange little poem as "Edmonton, Alberta, December 1966, 4 am" has its own peculiar effect. It is brilliant and shows what Cohen can still do. *Selected Poems* is an absolute must for anyone who is interested in contemporary Canadian poetry and does not own any earlier Cohen books. The Cohen fan will already have it.

Margaret Atwood's first book, *The Circle Game*, won the Governor-General's Award for 1966. *The Animals In That Country* is not likely to repeat that feat, but it is a good book, and represents a real progression from the severely personal poetry of the earlier volume. Miss Atwood has always been concerned with the shattering lack of connection between her inner worlds and the many outer worlds which exist apparently only to destroy her grip on things. In her new book she has found a public voice to articulate the similar attitudes of others. This public voice represents a new development which may lead to very exciting work in the future. Even now it can be sardonic and biting intelligent as the poem about hunters, "The festival", shows:

They must be waiting
for the god to appear,
crossed in the sights of their rifles

(it is the ceremony
they say, that gives a sacramental
meaning to butchered meat)

the man with antlers,
hoping to shoot, at the right moment,
so the year will die properly.

Nobody has told them
they are in the wrong century,
the wrong
country.

There are still a number of first-person poems, expressing Miss Atwood's sense of loss as she crosses into the "real" world. "Have I lost/ an electric wisdom/in the thin marooning air?" she asks, remembering, once again too late, that for such journeys one must take proper provisions. Her persona has been continually marooned, an isolated character lost in some new country where nothing happens as she feels it should. She feels trapped, locked in, as in "A night in the Royal Ontario Museum", where another brain, "that ornate/golden cranium", "repeats its memories" and drags her to "the mind's/ deadend". This is a good poem, but it is much too familiar to readers of her earlier book. It is poems such as the brilliant "Progressive insanities of a pioneer" that demonstrate her increased range. The "pioneer" is one of a number of subsidiary characters she has created to help carry the burden of her vision. He has many affinities with her persona, but he is able to represent new aspects of the inner-outer struggle, while allowing her to adopt a strictly objective tone in discussing it. Moreover, his defeat comes about because he stubbornly refuses to recognize the "green/vision, the unnamed/whale" which she *knows* is waiting outside.

Margaret Atwood has a firm grip on technique; her sense of rhythm and of the sound value of words is very fine. And in such poems as "Arctic syndrome: dream fox", she knows that she can use the rhetoric of address for special effects, as when her dream addresses us: "My citizen, I hear you/deducing me from my/footprints: hunting the fox/reek of me". Then she ends this poem with the terrifying simplicity of "In the neck/of the sleeping hunter/my teeth meet."

Finally there is a new tone in the love poems in this collection. In *The Circle Game*, everything was dangerous, and even the word, love, was something to be avoided. The other person was nearer to being an enemy than a lover. But "I was reading a scientific article" moves in a new direction. There is danger, still, but it is the danger of delight, beauty, and too much to grapple with at once.

your heavy unbelievable
skull, crowded with radiant
suns, a new planet, the people
submerged in you, a lost civilization
I can never excavate:

my hands trace the contours of a total
 universe, its different
 colours, flowers, its undiscovered
 animals, violent or serene

its other air
 its claws

its paradise rivers

The last poem in the book, "Axiom", is also a love poem, and these two are among my favourites.

Margaret Atwood is still a young poet, but her first two books indicate that she is well on her way to becoming a major Canadian poet.

There will be many readers for whom *The Collected Poems of Anne Wilkinson* will be their first encounter with this brilliant poet; certainly I must confess that this was true for me. Miss Wilkinson published two small books of poetry, *Counterpoint To Sleep* (1951) and *The Hangman Ties the Holly* (1955), before her death in 1961. This collection contains all the poems from those books, plus poems published in periodicals before her death and a number of poems from her notebooks. There is also a delightful prose memoir of the author's youth. A. J. M. Smith has done an able job of editing and contributed a fine essay on Miss Wilkinson's poetry as an Introduction. But what counts is the poetry. This book offers a cornucopia of varied delights.

Anne Wilkinson was a much more traditional poet than any of the others that have been dealt with here. There are many writers today who would dismiss her very quickly on that account, but they would be missing a very special reading experience if they did. Miss Wilkinson was a very able and very modern poet, but she differed from many younger poets in her use of ancient symbol clusters. She had a sure technique, and this book contains everything from ballads to free verse. Yet the control of a master craftsman is continually evident. This is not to say that she did not grow and mature in her art: she did. One of the delights of reading this collection is to watch how her control grew between the first two books. In 1951, she was a bit too eager to indulge in verbal horseplay for its own sake and to copy, rather slavishly, some of Dylan Thomas's more obvious tricks. By 1955, however, she had all her many influences firmly under her thumb, and the result was a quite dazzling collection of poems, many of which were chock-full of metaphysical wit. It is perhaps this very "metaphysical" tag that would make her anathema to many of today's young poets. But she did not attempt to create huge verbal puzzles for scholars to pore over, and, although certain later poems, such as the long "The Anatomy of Melancholy", are very learned in the best sense of that word, her poetry on the whole speaks very directly to the emotions and the senses.

Anne Wilkinson was obviously a very much alive poet, full of zest for the

natural world, the continual shift of the seasons, young lovers and old, all the things that poetry has concerned itself with time out of mind. "From head to toe/My blood sings green," she says; or, to her children: "Teach one commandment, 'Mind the senses and the soul/Will take care of itself,/Being five times blessed.'" This was her credo: in following it she created poems of great beauty and force. Her poems encompass every emotion: there are lovely dirges, witty and tragic tales, hymns to all things, songs of all ages, poems of the earth and sky. What remains, after the book is put down, is a rich sense of living, of accepting the things which are, which is almost religious in its intensity and commitment.

There is so much of Anne Wilkinson's poetry that one would like to quote. One short poem from the notebooks will offer a glimpse of the riches which await the reader:

"March, April, June"
 The month that pocks the earth with scabs of snow
 With my blood rhymes;
 The juice that navigates the veins of trees
 Tours all my trunk, explores my slumbrous limbs
 And in my ear a hush awaits the crow.

The sun that kills with kindness failing ice
 Heals wounded faith;
 An upstart shooting green above the ground
 In my bed shoots and buries shoddy death
 And on my pillow moons and April kiss.

This June that takes the city to her breast
 Is my year's dower;
 As lovers rushed with sap relax their thighs
 At bursting excellence of fire in flower
 So am I burst by sun, and sired my seasons rest.

It is to be hoped that the publication of *The Collected Poems* will bring Anne Wilkinson the recognition she so fully deserves as one of the finest poets of her generation, and indeed, one of the best poets in Canada in this century. I think it should.

University of Toronto

DOUGLAS BARBOUR

Vision and Indecision. By PATRICK NICHOLSON. Toronto: Longmans Canada, 1968. Pp. xiv, 387. \$11.50.

In this interesting and highly readable account of the political leadership of John Diefenbaker and Lester Pearson, Patrick Nicholson makes good use of his own impressive background and unique contacts from more than twenty years as a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and an intimate of many major political

figures. To his "on the spot" observations he adds an independence of judgment which makes this book one of the most valuable of the current spate of writings on the politics of the turbulent and often confusing era which ended with the selection of Stanfield and Trudeau as the chief players on the parliamentary stage.

Nicholson apparently had closer contacts with Diefenbaker than with Pearson and may therefore be inclined to more sensitive compassion concerning his failings and failures; but in his final summation of Pearson he makes a shrewd and doubtless enduring appraisal: "True Pearson did not possess Meighen's towering intellect, nor Mackenzie King's adroit political footwork, nor Bennett's administrative capability, nor St. Laurent's dignified aloofness from the partisan bickering, nor Diefenbaker's gift of compelling oratory. But he perhaps had a more winsome quality: immense personal charm. As a likeable man, warm, witty, and indeed loveable Lester Pearson towered above those five predecessors" (p. 370).

Leo Durocher once said that nice guys finish last. Surely Pearson's survival denied any such adage. The record of his administration as documented by Nicholson with rare narrative skill and thoroughness is far from glorious. The blunders, scandals, and general ineptitude of the Liberal government might well have submerged any Prime Minister. But because he was regarded by so many as a "nice guy" Pearson was exonerated from responsibility for the faults and failings of his ministry.

Diefenbaker, who dominated every scene, became on the other hand the object of all the frustrations of those who had nursed great hopes for the Progressive Conservative party from 1957 onwards. His inability to delegate responsibility or authority, his unwillingness to trust those about him, his indecision in the face of major situations, brought Diefenbaker's party to a state of disillusionment which led eventually to the repudiation of the man whose brilliant campaigning had once thrilled the party and the country. Nicholson attributes the rapid decline in Diefenbaker's immense popularity after 1958 in part to high-handed treatment of the press and almost total insulation from social contacts.

As one of those on the Ottawa scene since 1957, I subscribe to many of Nicholson's appraisals, but not to his interpretation of some major events of 1966. In 1963, Nicholson had been the confidant and associate of Robert Thompson and of those Conservatives who sought to save the party from defeat and decline. The price of Social Credit's parliamentary support was the head of John Diefenbaker. But at that time disaffection with the Conservative leader was largely confined to certain cabinet ministers whose inept efforts at his overthrow merely served to strengthen the Chief for his vigorous "back to the wall" election campaign.

Three years later, after the disenchantment had permeated all levels of the party, Nicholson seems less firmly convinced of the nature of the problem. It should have been apparent that the Progressive Conservatives had been on a downward slope for a long time. In 1962, before any ministers had departed, the party

had sustained an unprecedented loss of seats. In 1963, the failure to establish some rapport with Social Credit (shades of Meighen!) precipitated a defeat first in Parliament and then in the country. In 1965, after a major exercise in unity involving all the provincial leaders and the return of the dissident ex-Ministers, the party under Diefenbaker lost again. While some wondered that the Pearson government had not obtained its cherished majority in November, 1965, the marvel was that such a government, with such a record, waging such a lack-lustre campaign, should have won at all. After all these reverses, could leaders of the Conservative organization be expected to do otherwise than react to the grim and painful realities of the situation?

On the role of Dalton Camp, the author departs from his usual objectivity and impartiality and gives currency to quite discreditable "reports" of the activities of those who supported Camp for re-election to the party presidency and who believed that in the light of the results of the preceding three elections the party should be given an opportunity to express itself on the vital question of leadership. It is doubtful if anyone at the annual meeting of 1966 feels anything but sorrow at the Monday night session. The President's moderate address was interrupted by heckling and jeers. When the party leader began his address with a bitter denunciation of the party president he too was heckled. At other times during the three-day meeting ill feeling and bad tempers erupted. But, while there was much to deplore on both sides, the reports that the Camp-for-President organization imported mercenaries to heckle and boo Mr. Diefenbaker were unfounded, and their dissemination was unhelpful to any analysis of the Conservative party's difficult period of decision and redirection.

Apart from these details of the stormy 1966 meeting, it should be pointed out that while Dalton Camp won by only 62 votes over the popular and establishment-supported Arthur Maloney, the proposal that the party hold a leadership convention was overwhelmingly endorsed by the annual meeting. When the leadership re-appraisal was made ten months later, 88 per cent of the votes cast in the first ballot were for candidates other than the incumbent leader. It would appear that Dalton Camp's view on the need for a leadership review was widely shared by his fellow Conservatives.

But while he may have been less than fully informed on or appreciative of the efforts of the party's President, Nicholson is otherwise an astute observer. His appraisal of the background of Pearson and Diefenbaker, his revelations of his own role in the efforts of Robert Thompson in 1963, his account of the influential roles of Mr. Diefenbaker's mother and of both his first and his second wife, make this book a work of genuine value. This account of the turbulent period of the 1950s and 1960s is a "must" reading for any careful student of Canadian politics.

House of Commons, Ottawa

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The Clergy Reserves of Upper Canada: A Canadian Mortmain. By ALAN WILSON.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968. Pp. vii, 267.

For some sixty years of the history of Upper Canada, the ever-recurring problem of the Clergy Reserves provided a jousting ground for differences of opinion—ecclesiastical, economic, and political. In this the most recent in the Series of Canadian Studies in History and Government, Professor Alan Wilson of Trent University provides the long-needed definitive analysis of this question, which has been more talked about than understood. He follows it from its earliest stage, when it was simply a matter of economic and, if possible, profitable land management, through its development as the bone of contention between the forces of state-churchism, headed by Bishop John Strachan, and the Reform Movement, with its emphasis upon voluntarism, secularization, and eventually the complete abolishing of the Reserves.

Professor Wilson supports his findings and conclusions with meticulous and accurate documentation, testified to by some 33 pages of finely-printed bibliography and footnotes. The information provided will quite possibly supply the answers to any and every question that might be asked by historians, scholarly researchers, and students of history. This aspect of the author's work makes for somewhat formidable reading in the early chapters of his book, in which he lays the solid groundwork of necessary information. Nonetheless, like those bone-shattering roads of early Upper Canada which had to be traversed (if often cursed) in order to get anywhere in the early Colony, this area of study must be covered in order to arrive at any understanding of this important period in Canadian history. Incidentally, the author discounts the generally-accepted opinion that the Clergy Reserves were unpopular because of the obstacles they offered to roads and other forms of local improvement. In Professor Wilson's opinion, the Reserves were no more restrictive than other large areas of unimproved land, such as school and Crown reserves, and others held by speculators awaiting an appreciation in land values. While Dr. Wilson agrees that they reached their apogee as the "cause célèbre" in early Upper Canada, primarily as a religious issue, in his judgment they were even more important in that they bore a direct relation to the see-sawing yet persistently progressive and eventually successful struggle for responsible government.

Professor Wilson's pleasant and vigorous style detracts not one whit from his mature judgment and his ability to place the subject of the Clergy Reserves into proper perspective. Pungently homely and oftentimes humorous comments and comparisons make for exhilarating reading, especially in chapters eight and ten, where he deals respectively with the Reserves on the Eve of Rebellion and during the Sydenham Period. He supplies memorable, if rather wry characterization of those early successive colonial governors, Gore, Maitland, and Colborne, all of them second-rank and rather obtuse aristocrats, with little insight into North American attitudes. Of blustering and hot-tempered Gore, we learn that he returned to

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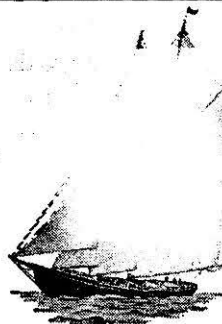
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Canada after the War of 1812, and on re-settling himself in the Governor's residence "found the old dust beneath the carpets". In stressing the realism of Governor Sydenham as compared to such men as Maitland, Colborne, and Strachan, Wilson describes these latter as "ones who pursued the vision of 'establishment' like elderly postulants clutching at the anonymous cowl to cover over a lifetime of public sinning". And he pinpoints Governor Head's over-developed penchant for the theatrical by describing him as that "flamboyant pistol-packing vigilante", who "today might be the aspiring president of some obscure Little Theatre Group". Equally, he satirizes the Governor's generally foggy thinking in one short but effective sentence: "It was a drop of insight in a bucket of bad judgment."

Professor Wilson also provides an outstanding characterization of that stubborn and doughty cleric, John Strachan—insignificant in stature, but certainly not in influence, nor wanting in subterranean devices to achieve his ends, who in the end was defeated by his total insensitivity to changing public opinion. Nonetheless, unlike Canute, he succeeded in holding back for some forty years the advancing and eventually irresistible wave of democratic and responsible government. To him, John Macaulay—a member of the Legislative Council and a Strachan supporter—might have applied the remark that he is reported to have made about his brother, the Rev. William Macaulay: "William lacked so much insight he should have been a bishop."

In view of the reactionary and obstructive role that Strachan played in all fields—religious, political, and educational—one is tempted to indulge in conjecture on what might have been the course and character of Canadian history had Strachan returned to Scotland, as he has explained he was tempted to do, immediately after arriving in Upper Canada in 1799. In his detailed documentation of the part that Strachan played in the conflict over Clergy Reserves, Alan Wilson has set down the basis for a memorable biography of this highly controversial personality.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

MARGARET K. ZIEMAN

Twentieth Century Interpretations of "The Portrait of a Lady", edited by PETER BUITENHUIS. Englewood Cliffs : Prentice-Hall [Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada], 1968.

A valuable addition has been made to the Twentieth Century Interpretations series in this collection of essays, edited by Peter Buitenhuis, Professor of English at McGill University. The longer "Interpretations" were all published, either separately or as parts of books, between 1957 and 1966; the shorter "View Points" are also of fairly recent publication and elaborate further on the theories presented in the main part of the collection. Professor Buitenhuis has selected essays from a wide range of both established and younger critics, and these express a variety of opinions on

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the character and motivations of James's famous heroine as well as on his skill in presenting her. Ethical, psychological, and symbolic interests predominate in the various analyses of Isabel's decision to marry Osmond, her well-known scene of midnight meditation (chapter forty-two), and the controversial conclusion of the novel. At the same time, matters of form, structure, and style are not neglected.

In the first essay, entitled "The Lesson of the Master" (from *The American Novel and its Tradition*, 1957), Richard Chase deals with "the conscious assimilation of romance into the novelistic substance of the *Portrait*", while also establishing one of the themes and symbolisms most frequently treated by the other critics: Isabel's "fall from innocence", according to Chase, is "metaphorically mirrored in the heroine's mind by this imaginative conjunction of the garden and the ancient house, in which the garden stands for Isabel's Eve-like innocence but has acquired . . . the whole involved and valuable accretion of culture." The Miltonic overtones and Eden symbolism of the novel are mentioned again in articles by Richard Poirier, R. W. Stallman, and Tony Tanner. In "Some Rooms from 'The Houses that James Built'", (1958) Stallman, who regards *The Portrait of a Lady* as "Second to *Moby Dick* . . . the richest perfection in American literature", develops the "house-garden and the dark-light ambivalence" of Isabel's "double consciousness", linking it with the motif of Appearance versus Reality. This latter idea is treated in a rather amusing and refreshing manner by Manfred Mackenzie who agrees with Poirier in seeing Isabel as "theatrical" in some ways, and who analyses the "ironic melodrama" of the story by referring to the heroine as "an Emersonian St. Joan" who imagines Osmond as a Monster and herself as Betrayed Innocence. Since practically all Jamesian critics have seen Isabel's final choice of a husband in a very sinister light, this view that his blackness might be partly a projection of his wife's own mind could certainly provide some new insights. The influence of Emersonian transcendentalism on Isabel as reflected in her Romantic and somewhat Puritan idealism is referred to by several critics in this edition. Maxwell Geismar in "Nostalgic Poison" (1962) describes Isabel as a "symbol of Puritan conscience", but he takes a rather negative view of the novel, seeing the characters mainly as stereotypes. In addition, Geismar, along with Dorothea Krook and with Professor Buitenhuis himself at one point in his Introduction, provides a definite psychological approach. We might, in fact, feel that he goes too far in this direction when we read such a statement as "This great 'analyst' of modern American fiction, and of modern criticism, was aware of everything except his own inner springs of creative action." It is to the "unconscious" element that this critic attributes what he sees as a contradiction between James's characters and situations and "the conscious purposes of his craft". Marion Montgomery possibly has a similar idea in mind when she proposes in "The Flaw in the Portrait" (1960) that James sacrificed character to form, thus creating two separate portraits of the heroine. Whether or not we agree with these two latter critics, their inclusion prevents this book of essays from having an almost purely

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eulogistic tone. In the Introduction the editor writes that James was quite well aware of Isabel's (and his own) "sexual coldness"; and he puts forth the suggestion that through his heroine, the novelist is, like Hawthorne, making a criticism of "the effect that American life has on some of its citizens in suppressing and distorting natural sexuality". Dorothea Krook, in the last essay of the group (1962), concentrates on the problem of why Isabel goes back to Osmond as well as on "The Sexual Theme". Castigating modern critics for ignoring the "historical and dramatic" context, she relates Isabel's almost "sacramental" view of marriage to the sexual theme as she defends James's heroine from the frequent charge of frigidity as a result of her rejection of Caspar Goodwood. (Miss Krook also adds that he is "too crude".) This critic, however, does see the fear of sex depicted in Isabel as having its source in her creator, who illustrated the threat of passion, particularly to the artist, in his group of stories which includes "The Lesson of the Master"—although she also maintains that his attitudes towards the subject had changed in the most important works of his late period.

Tony Tanner is, perhaps, the critic who deals most directly with the central essence of the novel. Put with necessarily unfair brevity, the argument of his "The Fearful Self" (1965) is that by choosing the wrong house and the wrong partner Isabel has in a sense spoiled her life but given birth to a conscience which will enable her to become "a Jamesian artist" in living. The theory is that the heroine's Emersonian and typically American over-spiritualization keeps her in fear or ignorance of her real self and ironically forces her to descend from the "world of ends", as represented by Gardencourt, to the "world of means", where she is merely an accessory to Osmond, who is her "anti-self". Similar implications are made in Christof Wegelin's analysis of the novel as largely a conflict illustrating the need for harmonious balance between "American vitality" and "European discipline"—or in Quentin Anderson's distinction between "preserving appearances" and "moral spontaneity". Professor Buitenhuis sums it up in his key statement that "Part of Isabel's moral education in Europe is to learn to modify that individualistic doctrine, to find out that freedom is always subject to conditions."

The editor's Introduction is by its function more useful and informative for the general reader than any of the articles in this collection, but it is at the same time no less provocative and stimulating. After a comprehensive commentary on the novel, its author, and its critics, Professor Buitenhuis concludes by referring to *The Portrait of a Lady* "in its largest sense" as a premonition in some ways of cultural encounters between Americans and those of other countries that have since taken place throughout the world. In this connection he cites Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*, written in 1955. Seen in this light, the novel takes on a vital contemporary and universal significance, and the final comment in the Introduction gives much scope for speculation: "Isabel's faults could lead to little more than her

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personal tragedy; today, as Greene's novel shows, those same faults can lead to actions that are nothing less than global in their effects."

York University

GWEN MATHESON

Masters of Sail: The Era of Square-rigged Vessels in the Maritime Provinces. By STANLEY T. SPICER. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968. Pp. 278. \$7.95.

Although it contains much interesting information, this book lacks the scholarship, completeness, and style required to make it an adequate account of the salt-water history of the Maritimes to the end of the era of wooden ships under sail. The author, descended from a noted ship-building and seafaring family, has obvious enthusiasm for his subject, but his researches—a "centennial project" with assistance from a Canada Council grant—vary from minor but generally new local information to sketchy and scattered accounts of subjects of interest and importance that have been given more thorough treatment elsewhere. Only one page, for example, is given to the language of the sea, and half a page to the superstitions of seamen. Two pages on "shanties" (to which the author gives a spelling and derivation that are not generally accepted for sailors' work-songs) add little, if anything, to familiar or readily accessible information. However, there are some redeeming features. The opening chapters provide a sound if prosaic introduction to the development of shipping in the Maritime Provinces; and there are scattered bits of information that will be new even to the expert. Extracts from correspondence and ships' logs, and most of the thirty-one illustrations, add life and authenticity to a largely first-hand if not always first-rate account of the most important era in the maritime history of the Maritime Provinces.

Halifax, Nova Scotia

J. L. BENNET

Companion to Chaucer Studies. Edited by BERYL ROWLAND. Don. Mills/New York/London: Oxford University Press, 1968. Pp. viii, 409.

The corpus of Chaucer criticism is very large, and, in common with all other forms of literary production today, it shows a startling rate of growth. Both instructor and student often find it difficult to know where to begin in studying an area of Chaucer, since the views of the older, traditional "names" have long since been modified, if not totally superseded, and new articles and books appear before the ink is decently dry on the last ones.

Part of the solution must lie in the collections of critical matter which have been appearing with increasing frequency in recent years. Such works as L. E. Nicholson's *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism* and E. Wagenknecht's *Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism* are invaluable, since they gather worthwhile articles

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into an easily accessible form, and there should be many more of the same kind. Also indispensable are specialized bibliographies, particularly those published annually.

Miss Rowland's book represents an attempt to combine criticism and bibliography. She has organized and combined the work of twenty-two contemporary Chaucer experts, each of whom has written a chapter on a subject of particular interest to him. Such well-known names as those of D. S. Brewer, R. H. Robbins, D. W. Robertson, Jr., and L. K. Shook appear over a series of articles which cover a very wide range of topics from the French influence on Chaucer to Chaucer's influence on fifteenth-century poetry, from Chaucer's prosody to his irony, and from the *General Prologue* to *Troilus and Criseyde*, including the lyrics. Each of the contributors has summed up Chaucerian scholarship in his area, made an attempt at evaluation, and supplied a good selective bibliography.

The result has been a very readable book, a very interesting book, and a highly successful one. Although they present individual views, the authors all appear to have been remarkably objective. They do not always agree, of course, amongst themselves, they overlap to some extent, and their approaches and techniques are widely varied, but all offer fair evaluations with ample opportunity for discussion. Here is a book which will prove invaluable for those who wish to learn more about Chaucer—which includes most people—and need some guidance on where to start and where to look next. It should thus be an indispensable adjunct to the graduate seminar, both for the instructor and for the student.

Although this is an admirable book, living up in every way to its title, it has one major shortcoming: it lacks an index to help sort out multiple references. Searching for materials on, say, the *Wife of Bath*, one must first decide in which of the essays she is most likely to appear and then read through the entire chapter. An index, if only of names of characters and of critics, would be very useful.

The academic world needs books of this type. There is room for several in the medieval field alone, and it represents a major improvement on the "case book" and the simple anthology. It is true that the very nature of the contents tends to an early obsolescence, since the ever-increasing flow of scholarly criticism demands re-thinking of the authors' positions, but perhaps the work and bibliographies could be periodically updated. It would be interesting to see what the same authors would say ten years from now, assuming that they themselves were not by that time considered hopelessly old-fashioned. At this moment, however, we have been given the cream of modern Chaucerian scholarship.

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Vanishing Halifax. By L. B. JENSON. Halifax: Petheric Press, 1968. \$2.95.

The immediate value of this book lies in its illustrations, reproduced on fifty sheets of art paper, with a "spiral" binding that allows them to lie flat. It is the second in a series that is being issued by William McCurdy, Halifax printer and publisher, to record the history of a city and province that are notably rich in tradition. Reproduction by an offset lithograph process makes the drawings practically indistinguishable from the original work in pen-and-ink, executed with delicacy and precision, and with a creative eye for point of view and perspective, as well as for the omission of the historically or artistically offensive. Opposite each page of drawings is a brief description by the artist.

Like the earlier *Founded Upon a Rock*, produced under the auspices of the Heritage Trust, this work reflects the spirit, the loyalty, and the historical sense of dedicated groups of Halifax citizens who wish to record while yet they remain—in memory if not in fact—the earlier architectural features of the first city of mainland British North America. The drawings include wharves, warehouses, cottages, forts, churches, and government buildings, as well as such details as cornices, corbels, mouldings, gargoyles, and sculpture. A two-page spread shows, in three rows, some fifty single and composite buildings, including the "Round Church" and the graceful spire of St. Patrick's. Clear and precise in architectural detail, it gives a panorama of the east side of Brunswick Street, and some of the west, "possibly the most varied and interesting concentration of domestic architecture of the nineteenth century remaining intact in Canada". These drawings were carried over from an historical, architectural, and sociological survey presented to the Halifax City Council in a Report made by the Civic Advisory Committee on the Preservation of Historic Buildings. Others were based on photographs in the report, or made on the spot, or taken from early public, institutional, or family records.

Like the work of the Heritage Trust, with which it has much in common, the official report was made from the voluntary work of a number of individuals and civic groups, and earned practical consideration from city authorities as well as the interest of a Federal housing commission. Now that the passage of time and the needs of a growing population combine to threaten the character and charm of an ancient and honourable city, it is heartening to know that modern housing and social amenities are being planned with proper respect for the dignity and integrity of the past. Making its appeal to artistic and historical interests, *Vanishing Halifax* subdues the statistical and sociological elements of the Report, but it is equally inspired by civic pride and by social concern, and will do much to have "modernization" carried out with all possible respect for earlier history and architectural distinction. In its union of private initiative and official planning, the Brunswick Street project is unique in Canada. *Vanishing Halifax* shows how much else

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in the city is worthy of respect and preservation. Of what has already gone, or can not much longer be preserved, it is a fitting memorial.

Dalhousie University

C. L. BENNET

Ensign Prenties's Narrative: A Castaway on Cape Breton. Edited by G. G. CAMPBELL. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968. Pp. xix, 90. \$4.95.

In November, 1780, Ensign Samuel Walter Prenties of His Majesty's 84th Regiment of Foot sailed from Quebec with important confidential dispatches for General Clinton, then commanding the British forces in New York. Prenties, whom Dr. Campbell describes "an importunate youth, fertile of grievances, a law to himself, disdainful of military protocol", had managed on grounds of ill-health to escape the rigours of a winter in Quebec with permission "to winter in a southern climate". His ship, the brigantine *St. Lawrence*, was ill-found and the captain more concerned with his own comfort and profit than with the safety of his passenger, crew, and vessel. She encountered violent storms before leaving the Gulf, and was wrecked on Cape Breton Island. Most of the nineteen survivors remained on the spot, which Dr. Campbell has identified as Margaree Harbour; but in a bitter December Prenties with the captain (who was still a handicap) and four others, set out in a leaky and broken ship's boat in search of aid. Their journey, interrupted whenever ice thawed out of the seams and breaks in their boat, took them around the northern tip of the island, with no sight of human life or habitation until the end of February. Toward the end, just before they encountered some friendly Indians, they were seriously considering cannibalism and arguing whether the captain should be elected as the first victim or given his chance, by lot, with those for whose dangers and hardships he was responsible. The rigours of the journey are not easy to picture from a summer tour of the scenic Cabot Trail which now follows the route by land. Dr. Campbell has made the journey, on foot and by boat, as nearly as possible as it was made by Prenties. Except for modernized punctuation, the narrative, from the fourth of five contemporary editions, is as Prenties wrote it. Dr. Campbell's research, by land and sea and in libraries, was exhaustive; his notes are scholarly and enlightening; and this may be taken as the definitive edition of one of the most remarkable accounts of human courage and endurance that have ever been written.

The grim facts of the narrative speak for themselves and for the personal courage, endurance, and leadership of Prenties, but there are some coincidental points of interest. Prenties and his party had their first hope of escape from death by long overdue starvation when they reached St. Ann's Bay, from which Norman MacLeod was to lead the semi-final stage of his unique series of migrations from the Scottish Highlands to New Zealand. After meeting his Indians there, Prenties was

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soon comfortably settled in officers' quarters in the garrison at Sydney; he made his only departure from a strict record of fact by writing a romantic interlude, typical of the age, of idyllic life among the noble savages. Miles Prenties, the father of Samuel Walter, was landlord of the House of the Golden Dog, which gave its name to the well-known historical novel by William Kirby and took it from the inscription below the gilded image over the door, which read (in part and in free translation from the French) "The time is not yet but soon will be/ When I will bite who has bitten me." It is unlikely that Prenties recalled this couplet when debating whether to have the captain murdered or to wait until he died. Faced with the hardest imaginable facts, the ingenious and plausible young ensign had little opportunity for reflection; but his narrative provides much for his readers.

Dalhousie University

C. L. BENNET

Miracle at Indian River: Stories by ALDEN NOWLAN. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1968. Pp. 132. \$3.95.

One of the hoariest clichés of criticism holds that a decent work of literature cannot be paraphrased; its meaning determines its form, and the literary work represents the most forceful and economical possible statement of its theme. Yet any reviewer knows that many a book which can only be described as good is still lacking in this luminous sense of completeness. The cliché trips over such books as Jacques Hébert's recent *The Temple on the River*: honest, readable, carefully constructed, the book can nevertheless be dismantled intellectually, examined, and re-assembled for comment without making the reviewer feel like a literary rapist.

Perhaps the cliché only operates on masterpieces; and if so, *Miracle at Indian River* contains some certifiable masterpieces. "A Call in December", for instance, tells the story of a father and son's charitable Christmas call on an impoverished and mentally retarded young mother living in that kind of incredible squalor which is the personal meaning of the dry term "depressed area". The seamless circle of poverty and its causes and effects, the irritation of the sensible townsman, the irascibility which seeks to mask the father's compassion—these things and so many others are evoked by the father's outburst as the two return to their car ("Why in hell does a man have to build his house in a bog hole?") that the subtleties of the story defeat the crudities of commentary. About a third of these eighteen stories have this quality, and what can a reviewer say about them that they have not said brilliantly themselves?

Even *The Canadian Forum's* choleric little Piquefort (Canada's answer to Colley Cibber), who is out to flay Nowlan, New Brunswick, winners of the Governor-General's Award, critics of Hugh Hood, and sundry innocent bystanders, recognizes the force and authenticity of several of these stories. He is heroically



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anxious, however, to make the point that the danger of Nowlan's approach to the short story is that ordinary life and simplicity of manner can easily produce sentimentality, and it is true that Nowlan does not always escape: "The Girl Who Went to Mexico", in which Nowlan's rather condescending affection for his characters is balanced neither by objectivity nor by humour, is a case in point. But better a writer with too much affection for his characters than a reviewer who is not embarrassed to sign himself "Pique".

Admittedly, too, some of the stories are slight. "The Innermost One" is at best a pleasant satire on a certain kind of spiritual passage to India, and the title story, though entertainingly told, is based on a stale trick which one finds here and there in the religious life. But does it really matter very much that Nowlan, like all writers, has the odd goose among his swans? The important point is that so many of the good stories are swans indeed. Any writer could be proud to have achieved the frightening pathos of "The Gunfighter", or the terror of "At the Edge of the Woods", or the Kafka-like disorientation of "The Foreigner."

In the best of Nowlan's stories, the impact grows out of the objectivity with which people and events are presented, and the selectivity of the details by which they are evoked. Nowlan isolates a sequence of events and recreates them without distractions, as though he were framing a little panel of life. Each small stroke adds to the completeness and relevance of the picture, so that one has at last the effect of events speaking for themselves. This is not to say that his fiction is not fiction: but the solidity and authenticity of these stories are as persuasive as the authority of fact.

A cheer in passing for Canadian publishers who recognize that the short story still has its devotees among writers and readers alike. In the past year five publishers have brought out volumes of short stories, and a form which serves the Sunday writer admirably (and that means most Canadian writers, since few can afford to be professionals) is evidently back in business after a long slump.

Of the possibilities of the form, *Miracle at Indian River* affords a good illustration, ringing the changes from entertainment to a subtle and evocative art. Nowlan's finest stories strike painfully deep into common experience, and stand confidently beside the work of Callaghan, Ross, Margaret Laurence, Ethel Wilson. This puts him in very good company, since it is in the short story that Canadian fiction has probably already achieved cosmopolitan standards. With a Governor-General's Award for *Bread, Wine and Salt*, and the publication of this fine collection of stories, 1968 was clearly Alden Nowlan's year.

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