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## Book Reviews

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Abstract

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W. David McIntyre, *The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and Impact 1869-1971*. Oxford University Press, 1977. 556 pages. £17.50.

*The Commonwealth of Nations* is the ninth volume in the ten volume series *Europe and The World in The Age of Expansion* (ed. Boyd C. Shafer, University of Arizona). The early volumes cover the European exploration and territorial expansion, the later ones cover the introduction of European values, practices and ideas, the growing European involvement overseas and the emergence of new nations and states in America, Africa, Asia and Australia.

In this volume Professor W. David McIntyre, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, presents a comprehensive survey of the British Empire from 1869 to 1971 and its transformation into the Commonwealth of Nations; an evolution of relationships from subordination to equality, from sovereignty or protection to free association.

Apart from sheer size it is this gradual political transformation that makes the British Empire unique in colonial history, and it seems reasonable that the author of this one-volume work has chosen to emphasize the political rather than the cultural or economic aspects of Commonwealth history. While the cultural impact may prove the most lasting it is for the time being partly outside the historian's domain. The economic impact is no doubt the most problematic, but also the most incalculable to-day. About the nature of Commonwealth history the author states in the introduction, that 'its central theme concerns the transformation of Empire into Commonwealth'.

The author has divided the subject into three periods: 1869-1917, 1918-1941 and 1942-1971 (Britain's entry into the European Community). The years 1917 and 1941 are taken as watersheds because the entry of the United States into the two world wars proved essential to the survival of Britain and much of the Commonwealth. Within each of the periods – in fact the rise, decline and fall of the Empire – a four-fold thematic division is used: 1) Dominions, 2) Indian Empire, 3) Crown colonies and protectorates and 4) the various keynotes of the periods: first the quest for expansion and imperial unity, then the growing economic insecurity and political unrest of the interwar years and the rapid decolonization of the final years.

The framework for the treatment of this enormous subject is well conceived. But the choice of the year 1869 as a starting point may seem a little haphazard.

In the first part of the nineteenth century British colonial rule began to assume two distinct forms. There was a representative type in which local assemblies were entrusted with local legislation under official executive control, – the ‘Greek’ type of colony. And there was a ‘Roman’ type, the new and authoritative system of Crown Colonies with legislative and executive authority concentrated in the person of the governor. In the ‘Greek’ type white settlers dominated in a sparsely populated or ‘empty’ land.

The acceptance in London of Lord Durham’s recommendations of responsible self-government in Canada in 1840 marked the beginning of the concept of Dominion and the growth of the idea of a Commonwealth. As Reginald Coupland has written, The Durham Report made it possible ‘for the second British Colonial Empire to escape the fate of the first and so convert itself in course of time into a community of free people’. In this connection the dividing year would be somewhat earlier than 1869, before which this movement into self-government was in progress in colonies in Australia and New Zealand and had reached a climax with the constitution of the Dominion of Canada in 1867.

‘In 1869 the British Empire was beginning to adopt that defensive stance which contemporaries called imperialism’, writes McIntyre. Others have argued, that the defensive/aggressive attitude was of little importance until it convincingly reached Government level, which did not happen until at least a decade later. Even if Disraeli changed the political tempo of Britain in its foreign dealings he was hardly a genuine imperialist. Wasn’t the opening of the Suez Canal (not mentioned) in 1869 a more important event than the colonial discussions in Britain during that year?

McIntyre views the Commonwealth as largely a by-product of the decline of British power. Unlike the marxist interpreters of imperialism he sees the climax of Victorian imperialism as a function of fear rather than confidence and greed. This was the point of view held by an independent observer in the 1920’s, the Danish professor C. A. Bodelsen in his book *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (reprinted 1960). It was adopted in the 1960’s by Robinson and Gallagher in their book *Africa and the Victorians*, which caused an interesting debate among historians.

In the economic field McIntyre leans on E. J. Hobsbawn’s book *Industry and Empire* (1969). In the 1880’s it was evident that the United States and Germany were surpassing Britain in many branches of manufacturing. Hobsbawn explains the territorial expansion in terms of the economic decline. Foreign competition became so intense that Britain made a ‘flight into her dependencies’, making a ‘retreat into her satellite world of formal and informal colonies’. Territorial expansion became a further source of weakness, it forced Britain to

deploy its strength over a still greater area. As another writer has put it 'The Empire, in fact, died as it grew'.

These points of view which continue to give ample material for theorizing and debate, have only been lightly touched upon by McIntyre. There are of course statistics indicating exploitation but he concentrates mainly on the political relationships. Here is a good deal of tangible evidence of the ways in which Britain liquidated its empire. Already in 1905 Richard Jebb proposed that the relation between Britain and the Dominions might more appropriately be called an alliance. The term did not catch because of the growing popularity of 'commonwealth', but as McIntyre adds 'in many ways it was an apt label'. After the Westminster Statute of 1931 the Dominions became full sovereign states, and it became the goal of the Crown Colonies to obtain Dominion status. After 1945 the importance of imperial defence co-operation dwindled gradually. The dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand entered into regional security pacts under American leadership.

In his versatile, varied and often detailed description of the long process of governing and the slow liquidation of the Empire, the author demonstrates the adaptability of the British colonial system, but also its inconsistencies and 'muddling through' policies. Sometimes, however, he seems a little too cautious or formalistic, for instance by distinguishing rather sharply between dominion status and other forms of self-government.

He does not seem to attach special importance to the example set by Ceylon, the first Crown Colony with a coloured population to obtain full internal self-government. Other writers have emphasized the importance of the Donoughmore Commission, comparing it to the Dürham Report; but, of course, Ceylon did not become a Dominion straight away.

Likewise in Southern Africa McIntyre distinguishes sharply between The Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, the former being a Dominion, the second not. He describes rather briefly the granting of the most fatal of colonial constitutions to South Africa in 1909, which did not give any political rights or even protection to the black majority. He continues, 'The Union of South Africa Act of 1909 was, however, the last occasion when the British delivered a majority population to the mercies of a white minority'.

This is either far too formalistic or simply false. Southern Rhodesia became a Dominion in 1923 in everything but name. The governor of this 'Crown Colony' was only a figurehead. The small white minority (1 white to 25 Africans) obtained authority over their own affairs and absolute control over one million Africans. No terms were imposed by Britain to broaden the franchise or admit Africans to the all-white parliament, and perhaps more significant is the fact that Rhodesia took part in all Dominion Commonwealth conferences from 1926 to 1964.

McIntyre mentions most of these facts, although still in a rather formalistic way, but later on he repeats his statement about South Africa being the last place where an indigenous majority were handed over to a settler minority. It has been proved to-day beyond doubt that Rhodesia and South Africa are the main examples of the consequences of a mistaken colonial policy. The author neither mentions the names of the British governments involved nor does he explain their responsibility for the South African constitution (Asquith) or for the development in Rhodesia, which ended in a deadlock with Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. On the other hand the book objectively analyzes the motives behind the Wilson government's equivocal attitude towards Ian Smith in the 1960's.

There are some gaps in the book, but it must be kept in mind, that McIntyre has not tried to write what he calls 'a compendium of 32 histories', although some of the chapters may be regarded as such. They increase the book's value as a reference book.

On the whole McIntyre has avoided the temptation to write an encyclopedic dull one-volume work on this enormous subject. Most of the book and especially the main chapters on changing keynotes are written with the scope and objectivity of the true historian. New views and studies are included and there is an abundance of well-chosen quotations, and also some exciting, funny or revealing anecdotes. Although lacking in tables showing, for instance, which territories constituted the colonial empire at various times, their population etc., the book has maps, notes, excellent bibliographical notes and an index. Although the book is up-to-date and useful in many ways, it seems too traditional and covers too little of the economic issues to amount to a real 'reappraisal' of its subject – as ambitiously claimed on the back cover.

To non-historians and especially to the minority who remember the inter-war years this book with its many data on the dramatic development within the Commonwealth during the last decades may well constitute a reappraisal. Much has changed since the days of the many outstanding personalities we meet in the book: Frederick Lugard, Joseph Chamberlain, Mohandas Gandhi, Winston Churchill, Kwame Nkrumah and many others. About 1971 the British dismantled the Sterling Area, withdrew forces from east of the Suez, joined the EEC and restricted Commonwealth immigration. The mother country was again 'little England'; the Commonwealth had become a forum for consultations of heads of government and for technical and cultural co-operation in over two hundred Commonwealth organizations.

SVEN POULSEN

Christine Pagnouille: *Malcolm Lowry. Voyage au fond de nos abîmes*. Lausanne, Editions L'Age d'Homme, 1977.

Christine Pagnouille belongs to the category of 'creative' literary critics. She has the sensibility of a poet, the elegant style of a true writer; she also has the modesty of those who can recognize a masterpiece and make themselves small in its shade.

Her title *Malcolm Lowry. Voyage au fond de nos abîmes* may be slightly misleading since the study does not deal with the whole of Lowry's *oeuvre* but almost exclusively with *Under the Volcano*. The only other work discussed is the collection of short stories *Hear Us O Lord From Heaven Thy Dwelling Place* examined in her first two chapters with special emphasis on 'Through the Panama' in the second. The author's intention is mainly to contrast the characters of these stories who all choose the way up, with the Consul in *Under the Volcano* who deliberately chooses the way down. Interesting though they are, these two chapters slightly mar the unity of the book. But after all one shouldn't complain of getting more for the same price!

The analysis of *Under the Volcano* is a model of close reading at its best. Christine Pagnouille discusses the novel chapter by chapter in twelve sections of her study. She examines the variations of point of view and narrative method, drawing attention to the influence of painting, film or music on Lowry's technique, noting for instance the syncopated construction of a chapter in which Hugh, a former jazz guitarist, is the central consciousness, or contrasting the realism of the parts devoted to Hugh or Laruelle with the hallucinatory character of those centred on the Consul. She underlines the interdependence of everything, the recurrence of motifs and images which she traces through the different chapters, leaving out all that is not strictly relevant to the general meaning – a selection for which we should be grateful for her book never ceases to be pleasant to read.

In her last chapter Christine Pagnouille gathers all these threads together and endeavours to reach a conclusion. She shows that if *Under the Volcano* is a convincing enough love story almost in the realistic tradition it is also a condemnation of the modern world. These two strands of meaning, subtly interwoven throughout, coalesce into the garden metaphor which Lowry takes up a last time at the very end: the garden of love is also the earth, man's possession, perverted and threatened by his hankering after power. In a world where all values are upside down the hero's quest can only end, like the life of a dead dog (a linguistic inversion of god) at the bottom of the barranca. We may perhaps see a possibility of redemption in the ambiguous ending and an intimation that all the polarities of life can only be transcended beyond total regression. But

like Lowry himself the critic leaves this question open.

We feel throughout that Christine Pagnouille is knowledgeable not only about Lowry's writings but also about the history of Mexico, the secrets of the Tarot or Cabbala, the myths of Faust and Prometheus, the Jungian archetypes. Yet she never flaunts this knowledge as is too often the case with well-equipped critics. She sheds her light on the novel in the most unassuming way so that it shines, undistorted, in the foreground. She refuses to fix or reduce it in any way, aware as she is that 'le Volcan ne peut se mettre en équations' (p. 128). Her lucid analysis preserves the rich aura of connotations, the multilayered significance of Lowry's masterpiece.

Christine Pagnouille has gone through *Under the Volcano* as one goes through *Ulysses* or *The Divine Comedy* and she invites us to do the same, mapping out the field to help us find our bearings. She considers that as a critic she can only escort us to the path that we must ultimately travel alone. That is why *Voyage au fond de nos abîmes* encourages us to re-read Lowry's novel and embark on the voyage for ourselves. What it offers is not just the interpretation of an intelligent and sensitive guide but the possibility of a personal experience 'dans le corps à corps d'une lecture solitaire' (p. 12).

JEANNE DELBAERE-GARANT

Stefan Makowiecki, *Malcolm Lowry and the lyrical convention of Fiction*. Uniwersytet A. Mickiewicza, seria Filologia Angielska Nr 8, Poznan, 1977. 84 pages. zł 32.

This essay by Stefan Makowiecki sanctions the long-standing belonging of the young Polish researcher and lecturer to 'cette étrange confrérie: celle des amis d'*Au-dessous du volcan*' (Maurice Nadeau). The fact that the study is based on a Ph. D. dissertation may account for a somewhat stilted style in some passages; it also accounts for perplexing cross-references to sometimes non-existent pages: Stefan Makowiecki was in Florida on a research scholarship at the time when his study was being printed and had thus no chance of checking the proofs.

A thorough reassessment of Malcolm Lowry's narrative work, mainly of *Under the Volcano*, is attempted in this essay in the light of the 'literary convention' provided by 'Ralph Freedman's study of the lyrical tradition in European literature'. In most respects this critical framework proves helpful in the consideration of Malcolm Lowry's novels. It accounts for some features that are often branded as weaknesses, such as poor character-drawing or the subjective

and markedly autobiographical trend of the writing.

There are points, however, where I find Stefan Makowiecki's insistence on the relevance of Freedman's categories slightly questionable. We shouldn't, for instance, overemphasize the solipsism of the protagonists: *Lunar Caustic* brilliantly anticipates what was to be known as anti-psychiatry; it is when Geoffrey finally breaks out of the 'prison of self' and takes in the 'external world' that he reaches his truly mythical dimension. We shouldn't ignore either the subtlety with which chronology is handled in *Under the Volcano*. It is partly true that there are several encroachments on a strictly linear time. Yet, although there are indeed 'sudden [shifts] in time and place without any marked signals in the narrative', and although past episodes are either systematically recalled (by Hugh and Yvonne) or haunting the present (of Geoffrey), the irreversible progression in time from seven in the morning to seven at night is most carefully plotted.

These few reservations should not obscure the obvious merits of this essay, which testifies to its author's intimate knowledge of the works examined. Stefan Makowiecki is to my knowledge the first critic in English who has stressed with such clarity the function of the ambivalence in the recurring images that underlie *Under the Volcano*, showing how it illustrates 'the central paradox' of the novel, namely that we are invited to see in the Consul 'a man who [is] the very shape and motion of the world's doom . . . but at the same time the living prophecy of its hope!' (*Malcolm Lowry*, quoted on p. 53). He makes some excellent comments on the use of language, as when he points out that the language used to render Geoffrey's hallucination is in no way 'meant to reproduce the inner texture of the Consul's consciousness', but through its very coherence invites the reader to 'probe deeper'. It was important too that a critic should state clearly the relevance of Lowry's novel to our predicament: that what matters in a work of art is not some abstract formal perfection, but the meaning it gives to our condition through shaping our experience and, in this case, through disclosing a view of the world that is beyond our ordinary perception.

CHRISTINE PAGNOULLE

Chris Tiffin ed., *South Pacific Images*. South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, 1978. Aust \$6 to members of SPACLALS; Aust \$7.50 to non-members. Available from the editor, English Department, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 4067 Q. Australia.

*South Pacific Images* contains sixteen of the papers originally presented at the inaugural conference of SPACLALS in Brisbane in May 1977. It is notably the first volume to group together critical responses to all of the literatures of the South Pacific, an area not commonly seen as one sharing important aspects of the literary experience. With five select reading lists appended, the volume provides an extremely useful conspectus of South Pacific Literature. Chris Tiffin's 'Introduction' discusses the interrelationships between cultural stereotypes and literary images and argues that the formation of national self-images is one of the common features which unites the literatures of Fiji and Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, Papua New Guinea and the New Hebrides. His essay is an excellent guide to early developments on a new literary field and to critical issues.

A number of the papers confront the problem of colonialism as it manifests itself in these literatures, Nigel Krauth exposes white colonialist attitudes in expatriate writing about New Guinea. Michael Cotter relates Patrick White's most recent novel *A Fringe of Leaves* to aspects of Australia's colonial past in a particularly illuminating way. John Docker's essay discusses the neo-colonialist assumptions which (almost inevitably) lie at the basis of our teaching of English literature. He points out that the unquestioning Anglocentricity of English Departments has produced an insidious post-colonial provinciality which should be challenged.

One of the most interesting essays – Vijay Mishara's paper on 'Indo-Fijian and the Giriti Ideology' – traces the image of the indentured Indian labourer in Indo-Fijian literature and formulates a model of Fijian literary history which is an exciting pioneering achievement. This article is complemented by Subramani's 'Images of Fiji in Literature' which takes a view of Fijian literary development. It discusses the particular multicultural context of Fiji and speculates about the predominance of Indians among Fiji's writers. He goes on to provide an introductory survey of contemporary Fijian poetry. Kirpal Singh and Harry Aveling each suggest preliminary versions of a canon of Singaporean literature, though their essays lack the theoretical basis which is such an impressive feature of Mishara's. The opening paper in the volume, Satendra Nandan's 'Beyond Colonialism: The Artist as Healer' is a wide-ranging essay urging the importance of the metaphysical role of the artist in a colonial society. He discusses the images of the artist presented by Naipaul, Soyinka, and White and argues that in the progress from history to myth to the realm of the aesthetic imagination is imagined the synthesizing and 'healing' power of the artist in a colonial environment. Bruce Bennett's essay directs attention to the range of Australian responses to Asian culture and discusses in particular those depicted by Hal Porter and Randolph Stow. One heritage of the colonial era has been the challenge of multiculturalism and Lolo Houbein writes about an

injustifiably neglected aspect of modern Australian literature. We have learnt to assess the responses of transported nineteenth-century English people to Australia, Ms Houbein shows how extensive and important is the work of the newer exiles, the non-English immigrants.

Tom Shapcott extends the familiar notion of 'The voyager tradition' in Australian poetry, showing it to be a continuing preoccupation among contemporary writers. He contends that it is still a potent vehicle for mythologizing the national and local sense of place. A complex essay on Gwen Harwood and John Shaw Nielson by Norman Talbot highlights hitherto unacknowledged similarities in the ways in which these two major poets have accommodated Australian ecological vision in their images of the artist.

In all of these papers there is a shared acknowledgement of the centrality of the artist, a crucial concern with defining and refining national self-images, and the recognition of the importance of adopting an accurate perspective from which to view national literatures. Those concerns make this an unusually unified volume of conference papers and they contribute to its considerable value as an introduction to the old and the new literatures of the South Pacific.

ALAN LAWSON

Patricia Grace, *Mutuwhenua: The Moon Sleeps*. Longman Paul, 1978. csd. \$7.95. pa. \$4.95.

'Stainless and shining, and as pure as the night of Mutuwhenua when the moon goes underground and sleeps'. So Patricia Grace describes the heroine of her second book and first novel, successor to her stories, *Wairiki* (1975). It seems the brief and simple tale, told with very considerable integrity, economy, precision, of a young Maori girl, only daughter, growing up in a Maori rural neighbourhood, say, somewhere on the west coast north of Wellington. Increasingly she becomes aware both of her own world and of distinction between it and that of the pakeha, yet she marries a pakeha teacher, Graeme, and, with him in the city, comes to an almost destructive realisation that if she is to be true to herself she can never belong to the pakeha world.

'Mutuwhenua' is that phase when the moon is not seen – but it is there, even buried in darkness like 'her' ancient mere, discovered, then bulldozed deeply over in a gully (out of pakeha reach) in chapter two. 'The stone was my inheritance. It would always be so, but [my father] wanted me to have another inheritance as well'. So the stubborn father accepts, welcomes, her pakeha marriage. Yet at the end of the book, after her psychological crisis in the city,

then her father's death at the time of her son's birth, she rejoins Graeme in the city, leaving their child with her family, and the final sentence of the book reads: 'I went, remembering that day of Rakaunui, the time when you can see the shape of the tree that Rona clutched as the moon drew her to the skies'. Rakaunui, full moon, is when the rakau, Rona's ngaio tree, can be seen plainly in the moon. Rona, going to the spring, cursed the obscured moon when she tripped. Patricia Grace's Ripeka (also Ngaio – 'her' tree at home – and, temporarily, pakehified Linda) remembers Dad's repeated words, 'you'll do right when the right time comes', and when that crisis comes upon her in the pakeha city, responds and recognises the ineluctable stone within. Unlike Rona's denial, she asks and accepts the gathered wisdom of her kin, and is neither drawn out of this world nor alienated as is Chicks in *Owls Do Cry* from her soul's dark yet luminous inheritance.

The division of Ripeka's world begins with the shock of menstruation, a two-fold division both into pakeha/Maori and into things seen/unseen. This latter theme develops subtly, first the mere, then careless impiety – and reactions and consequences – gathering seafood at Rakaunui, then awareness of Grandpa Toki's ghostly presence at his death (in a narrative context of Mutuwhenua), and then her major urban crisis, pregnant, far from her people. In the unfamiliar house she experiences increasingly strange nights – 'The dreams had in them a tall woman with moko on her chin a woman I didn't know, who beckoned from the corner of a room' and unendurable days that drive her out to walk the streets till Graeme's afternoon return, 'I felt strongly and certainly the iced touch, the chill pricking across my shoulders and head and down my back – and I blocked the welling scream with my hand'. From home they write, 'It must be a burying place for this to happen'.

This is a book that, very carefully, says what it means. Is this what it means to *accept* 'bi-cultural' literature, society? Other world-views, as other people, must no longer be converted, not even assimilated, but – accepted?

What impresses one is the variety, versatility, and verve of this short book. Though the book's base is rural the 'city scapes' are entirely adequate; in country or town Patricia Grace is mistress of her scene: 'a quiescent sea, burning silver from the flagellation of a full sun', 'Wooden footfalls of the hundreds of wooden people and their unheard crying'. The continuing comedies and errors of domestic trivia are exactly right. When she persuades her Nanny Ripeka to accept and attend her wedding, their spontaneous recitation of genealogies is a convincing and moving scene. The story moves swiftly, but can linger at need; the largely – by no means entirely – elliptic, oblique intrusion of the preternatural is tactful and delicately timed.

*Mutuwhenua* should also, with no pretension, be seen in a world perspective. In his book *An Introduction to Contemporary History* Barraclough writes: 'The

European age – the age which extended from 1498 to 1947 – is over, and with it the predominance of the old European scale of values'. I have heard both Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace suggest the phrase 'literature of reconstruction' to describe the conscious task of this decade's rise of Maori writing. This resembles the socially conscious, programmatic stance common in 'Third World' writing. *Mutuwhenua*, a book in no sense didactic but a serious tale most excellently told, seems as valuable a contribution as anything yet published in New Zealand.

PETER ALCOCK

Robert D. Hamner, ed., *Critical Perspectives on V. S. Naipaul*. Three Continents Press, 1977. 333 pages. n.p.a.

Three Continents Press' series of 'critical perspectives' on various writers and national literatures is a fine initiative: an editor uses his expertise in a specific field to gather a selection of the most valuable criticism on the topic in question, and thus can save the student or the interested reader (who *may* be identical) a lot of bibliographical trouble.

Robert Hamner, who has edited this selection of essays on and by V. S. Naipaul, is acutely aware of an editor's great responsibility:

The editor of a collection of essays must determine where to leave off expounding upon his subject and when to allow the material its rightful forum.

He makes his criteria of inclusion unmistakably clear:

selection for inclusion has been determined by an article's relevance to Naipaul's work and by the quality of literary evaluation rather than by whether a critic judged Naipaul favorably or unfavorably.

Unfortunately Robert Hamner seems to have found it difficult to maintain these highly respectable principles simultaneously: he opens the book with his own lengthy introduction (sixteen pages) which includes summaries of Naipaul's books and abounds in interpretations. In addition to this, he has contributed the longest essay in the book (thirty-four pages – one contributor, Gordon Rohlehr, is allowed twenty-six pages, the others between five and nineteen). This means that of the 207 pages dedicated to criticism on Naipaul, roughly 25% has been provided by the editor himself.

On the whole I do not find the editor's selection of essays on Naipaul at all

obvious, and this goes for both contributors and subjects: there are no articles by Kenneth Ramchand, Landeg White, George Lamming or Wilson Harris; there are five long discussions of *The Mimic Men* (three essays dealing almost exclusively with this novel), whereas there is only one short review of *Guerillas*, and *In a Free State* is only mentioned *en passant*. Alastair Niven's 'V. S. Naipaul's Free Statement' from 1975 would have been an obvious choice, being both a penetrating analysis of the novel and a critical discussion of Naipaul's increasing formal skill and of his vision in the latest works; criticism on these is generally underrepresented in this book.

The main merits of the book are the extensive annotated bibliography and the collection of a number of articles by Naipaul himself, which are otherwise unavailable in book form, but central for an understanding of his work, especially 'Conrad's Darkness' from 1974.

JOHANNES RIIS

Albert Marie Gomes, *All Papa's Children*. Cairi Publishing House, 1978. 113 pages. n.p.a. (Orders and further information may be obtained from Cairi Publishing House, 73 Beauchamp Rd., East Molesey, Surrey, England.)

*All Papa's Children* is the first publication of Cairi Publishing House.

The firm takes its name from the Carib name for Trinidad and intends to concentrate on West Indian literature. Appropriately enough, its first publication is a novel by Albert M. Gomes, former chief minister of Trinidad and Tobago. If *All Papa's Children* is an indication of the standard of the new publishing venture it promises well. Set in colonial Trinidad the book deals with the life of the Portuguese community, an area largely unexplored in West Indian literature. It describes a small group of people each of whom typifies an attitude to the complexity of Trinidadian life: the colour-prejudiced money-grabbing hypocritical shop-keeper Mannie Cuevo whose motto is that he 'doesn't give a damn who rules as long as they let him make his money'; his domineering wife Monica who sees through him, and though she has resigned herself to her dreary lot tries to uphold some moral values, and their twelve-year-old son who is sensitive and confused, but absorbed into the black community life of the island through the servants Dorothea and Esau. Dorothea epitomizes the dilemma of the black maid; working all her life for the same family she cannot afford to hate it, and yet the glaring injustice of the economic difference between her and the family cannot but make her bitter. She has

learned 'the art of subservience! – with all it entails: the endless salaaming, the bespoken smile, the mechanical high-spiritedness'. The insight that Gomes shows into Dorothea's dilemma and the sympathy and gentleness with which he treats her are symptomatic of this treatment of character and account for much of the success of the book. Esau is the black servant who was taken in as an infant by 'papa' and educated along with his own sons. After Papa's death he followed the daughter into her new home, and he thus feels more like a brother to Monica than a servant. Precariously placed between, on the one hand, his low status and colour and, on the other hand, his superior education and almost family status he is mainly concerned with preserving his dignity. The main character, Ernesto Montales, is the wayward brother of Monica who rejects the values of the Portuguese society, marries a coloured woman and goes to live in St. Babb's, a black slum. In the last chapter of the book Gomes switches to first person narrative and discusses his reasons for going into politics. It becomes apparent that Ernesto Montales is himself. This self-analysis is candid and appears exceptionally honest.

The main emphasis of the book is on description of character, the plot is very slight and serves only to link the characters together. The author has a good ear for the spoken language and this, combined with his character portrayal, makes *All Papa's Children* a book well worth reading.

KIRSTEN HOLST PETERSEN

Sol T. Plaatje *Mhudi* Heinemann, London 1978. 118 pages £1.20.  
David Cook, *African Literature. A Critical View*, Longman, London, 1977. 240 pages. £6.50.

Sol Plaatje's *Mhudi* is a classic, and its inclusion in Heinemann's African Writers Series will give it the large readership it deserves. Written in 1917 and first published in 1930 it is probably the first novel written in English by a black African. It deals with an incident during the Matabele Wars which took place in the eighteen thirties. Under king Mzilikazi the Matabele carved an empire for themselves in Central South Africa and reduced the other tribes to tribute paying vassal states. In 1830 the Barolong branch of the Bechuana tribe to which Sol Plaatje's family belonged killed Mzilikazi's tax collector. In retribution the Matabele sacked their town and put the nation to flight. They eventually moved along with other refugees to Thaba Nchu. Here they met the first voortrekkers with whom they combined to drive the Matabele out of the area.

In his excellent introduction to this edition Tim Couzens puts forward the

theory that Sol Plaatje is using this piece of history as a model for contemporary history which to him was the period centred around the 1913 Native Land Act. The subjugated people had combined to drive out the Matabele when the oppression became unbearable; the same thing could happen again. The warning is only implicit, but the text justifies the interpretation. The story of Zungu of old sounds the warning, 'he caught a lion's whelp and thought that, if he fed it with the milk of his cows, he would in due course possess a useful maistiff to help him in hunting valuable specimens of wild beasts. The cub grew up, apparently tame and meek, just like an ordinary domestic puppy, but one day Zungu came home and found, what? It had eaten his children, chewed up his two wives, and in destroying it, he himself narrowly escaped being mauled.' Likewise Mzilikazi's warning that 'when the Kiwas [whites] rob them of their cattle, their children and their lands they will weep their eyes out of their sockets' sounds prophetic.

In this connection it is useful to remember that Sol Plaatje was one of the founders of the South African Native National Congress, that he worked incessantly for native rights all his life and that he was a member of the deputation which Congress sent to London to appeal against the Native Land Act of 1913. Both his life and his other writings show him to be intensely involved politically, and this supports the model theory.

In his preface to the original edition Plaatje states two purposes: p. 21: 'This book has been written with two objects in view, viz. (a) to interpret to the reading public one phase of "the back of the Native mind": and (b) with the readers' money, to collect and print (for Bantu Schools) Sechuana folk-tales'. He makes this explicit by adding p. 21: 'In all the tales of battle I have ever read, or heard of, the cause of the war is invariably ascribed to the other side'. He is thus concerned with redressing the historical balance. This he does by re-writing the history from the point of view of the Barolong and the Matabele. In doing so he scrupulously avoids the partiality of the white historians by including good and evil characters in all the warring parties.

Another way of redressing the historical balance is to describe the native society and its way of life as dignified and valuable. Plaatje describes the daily work, meetings, dances etc. of his people, and in this setting he places Mhudi his heroine. Slightly larger than life, she is the black woman, mother earth, Africa, wise, beautiful and courageous, yet she is also individualized. She moves through the novel as a central intelligence embodying the human values which were also Sol Plaatje's.

Heinemann is to be congratulated for making this invaluable classic available to a large reading public.

David Cook's book is divided into three parts, **Broad Perspectives**, **Close-up**

Studies, and Studies in the Art of Persuasion. The first part contains David Cook's personal analysis of some important issues connected with African Literature; the second part consists of close textual analyses of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*, Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, Soyinka's *Three Plays* and two only 'partially successful' works, Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* and Peter Palangyo's *Dying in the Sun*. In the third part David Cook discusses non-fiction, 'works openly intended to influence our opinion' (p. 229): Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya*, Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Lewis Nkosi's *Home and Exile* and – as a transitional – Okello Oculi's *Prostitute*.

The book is a scholarly achievement. It is well researched and is characterized by careful attention to details, a logical and coherent organization and a lucid style. It shows the love and care for literature which is the true hallmark of a man of letters. Perhaps it also shows some of the shortcomings of such a person.

In 'Broad Perspectives' David Cook attempts to define the difference between the attitude of the individual writer to his society in Africa and Europe. The writer is an individual facing society in both parts of the world, but society differs. In Europe it is 'a computer-like system of social conventions and controls, restrictive beyond the furthest extremes of African social tradition' (p. 7); this is established by careful reference to writers like Hardy and George Eliot, whereas the African writer sees the body of society as 'healthy and consolidated' (p. 16). Thus the difference is simply this that 'One is born into a disjointed society and yearns for real human contact. The other is ordained to live in a contentedly conforming group and finds himself restless within it' (p. 16).

When summarized thus and divested of David Cook's scholarly style and reasoning this point of view seems somewhat simplistic; it is ironic that he should continue with a discussion of the culture clash. Talking about *A Man of the People* David Cook maintains that 'In *A Man of the People* this [being confronted by a 'mechanical administration'] is a new situation, not an inherited problem'. This, I find is begging the question. The African writer is a recent phenomenon, and he has surely inherited one of the most divided worlds ever to be left as a legacy with the inevitable result of alienation etc.

Seen against this background one could turn David Cook's assertion upside down. Modern African writers must surely have good reasons to envy their Victorian counterparts like e.g. Tennyson and Browning their easy acceptance into the 'contentedly conforming group' of their society. With regard to Hardy it should be remembered that he fought all his life to preserve the values of a vanishing rural society, a concern he shares with many contemporary African writers. To borrow David Cook's words about Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* 'he sings the swan-song of a tradition which is about to be transformed' (p. 67).

Whatever the differences between the attitude of African and European writers to their societies are, they cannot be defined in such simple terms. It would seem that in his obvious admiration of African society David Cook is blind to its complexities and flaws.

The close-up studies are, as I have already mentioned, rewarding reading, particularly the analyses of *Dying in the Sun* and *Jagua Nana* where the author's attitude to these 'lights which are partly hidden under bushels' (p. 128) is refreshingly un-cynical. So much has been written about Achebe's books that it is almost impossible to be original about them. In the article on *No Longer at Ease* one finds the germ of what is going to develop into a trend in the last section of the book; an unwillingness or inability to express a point of view on any matter which could be called controversial. In this case the problem concerned is why the Umuofian society helped Obi get an education. 'What, then, was Obi educated for by the elders of his clan? For his own good, or a vested interest' (p. 84). If the answer is 'a vested interest' it of course implies a criticism of traditional village society; if the answer is 'for his own good' this would contradict the text. Here is David Cook's answer; 'Perhaps the fairest way to put it is to say that he was educated by a group for the good of the group, including himself' (p. 84). This tendency takes on disastrous proportions in the article on *The Wretched of the Earth*. The idea of including non-fiction or 'the art of persuasion' is a good one; through a careful stylistic analysis David Cook seeks to discover the – hidden and otherwise – means and tricks of persuasion. This is interesting if a little repetitive in the section dealing with *Facing Mount Kenya* but because of the controversial nature of Fanon, and Cook's unwillingness to commit himself it falls apart in the chapter on *The Wretched of the Earth*. It is not so much that the centre cannot hold, but rather that there seems to be no centre. A stylistic analysis will reveal this. Almost every main clause is either preceded or followed by a qualifying minor clause thus neutralizing the impact and meaning of the statement in the main clause. Here are some examples; 'It is true that; but if; quite apart from; Fanon might be seen as; but after all this has been said; although he has; – he is far from;' (p. 208); 'If Fanon generalises a great deal, it is also true that he knows a great deal' (p. 204). The author even manages to fit this kind of doubleness into a single main clause, 'Fanon displays no false modesty in willingly adopting the role of a prophet' (p. 213). On the surface this sentence is praising Fanon – 'no false modesty' and 'willingness' are positive, but normal connotations with 'willingly' in connection with 'prophet' are negative, like in the following sentence; 'he willingly turned himself into the prophet of the movement' Qualifiers like 'self-styled' come readily to mind. Thus both admirers and denigrators of Fanon can be pleased. To the vexed question of whether Fanon's vision has actually been fulfilled in the fifteen years since he wrote the book Cook answers,

'Yet it is not implausible to attribute current problems primarily to failures in the areas he identified' (p. 213). The basic controversy of whether to accept a marxist view of history is solved in the following way; "'History repeats itself" is both true and untrue'. This amounts to the ludicrous. There is a fine line between, on the one hand an often courageous unwillingness to completely accept defined systems of thought and on the other, a total unwillingness or inability to express any point of view. Unfortunately David Cook crosses this line and in doing so mars an otherwise scholarly achievement.

KIRSTEN HOLST PETERSEN

Michael Thorpe, *Doris Lessing's Africa*. Evans Brothers. 129 pages. Csd £3.95, paper £2.75.

Most of the criticism written so far on Doris Lessing's works has been concerned with their value and purity as weapons for women's liberation. Because of that, Michael Thorpe's short 'critical commentary' on the Africa which looms so large in Lessing's production, the first part especially, is a most welcome contribution to the critical work on one of the most prominent present day writers.

In six chapters Michael Thorpe discusses Lessing's Africa as presented in (1) *The Grass is Singing*, (2) the Short Stories, (3) the Short Novels, (4) the *Children of Violence* sequel, and (5) *The Golden Notebook*.

The analyses of the three first mentioned (all of which are set in Africa only) are by far the most satisfactory and informative. The chapters on *Children of Violence* and *The Golden Notebook* are more dubious, and it is a question if the latter should not have been left out altogether and substituted with a brief thematic comparison between Lessing and white African liberals such as Nadine Gordimer and Alan Paton. This would have brought out more distinctly the sharpness with which Lessing saw the predicament in Southern Africa already in the early fifties. To try and isolate the Africa of *The Golden Notebook* for examination in a few pages is as absurd as it is impossible, and this comes out relentlessly. The author beats about the bush, resorting to rather futile digressions and accounts of e.g. the distorted chronology in B. S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates* from 1969, and what he does say about *The Golden Notebook* in general and on its Africa in particular is superficial and abortive, which is hardly surprising, also because Anna Wulf's African experience, by the nature of the novel, is naturally much more important as *experience* than as *African*. Lessing's conception of nature is by no means unambiguous or easy to handle,

but in his rather strained effort to make references (e.g. to Wordsworth) and show the transformation of the African landscape into an 'inner Africa', a 'despairing metaphor for Martha Quest's lost freedom' – essential as that is – it seems to me that Michael Thorpe generally fails to pay sufficient attention to Lessing's cosmic awe and awareness of ecological responsibility, which 'the thank God, still impersonal and indifferent African landscape' instilled in her when very young – and which is one element it would have been natural to focus on in a study like this.

JOHANNES RIIS

Saros Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1977. 205 pages. Rs. 60.

Saros Cowasjee, *Coolie: An Assessment*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1976. 62 pages. Rs. 5.

Saros Cowasjee is well known for his work on Mulk Raj Anand. This latest book is a major work of criticism. The author has very wisely restricted himself to a critical discussion of Mulk Raj Anand's novels; to attempt an assessment of all of Anand's output, his short stories, his essays and books on art, philosophy, education, contemporary civilization and the many other subjects he has dealt with would involve one in several volumes of criticism. Four of the five chapters in the book consist of detailed analyses of Anand's novels, from *Untouchable* (1935) to *Confession of a Lover* (1976).

The opening chapter entitled 'The Making of a Novelist' is particularly useful for the information it provides about Anand's life, ideals and attitudes to literature. Of especial interest is the section 'The Years Abroad 1925-45'. Here Cowasjee traces Anand's development as a writer and the influences upon him. He argues that too much has been made of Forster's influence on Anand and suggests that he owed a much greater debt to Bonamy Dobrée. He tells how T. S. Eliot and Anand met but never became friends. He then quotes Anand's review of *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* (1941):

But he is a most disarming critic. Under cover of his admiration for Kipling's truly great qualities as a versifier, Mr Eliot is able to pass him off not only as a considerable poet but as the dreamer of a great and noble dream of Empire, in spite of his own rather modest description of himself as 'I . . . the war drum of the white man round the world'. The publisher says: 'We need

not labour the significance of the fact that the selection has been made by a distinguished modern poet and critic at a time when all that Kipling prized is in danger'. . . So the volume may, from one point of view, be regarded as Mr Eliot's bit in the war effort. . .

It seems ungrateful not to accept 'this first citizen of India' whom Mr Eliot offers us with all the weight of his great authority, but he is better seen as he really was, the natural product of an expanding phase of Empire and complacency, than as a righteous innocent 'who didn't mean no harm'.

One understands the reason for the coolness that existed between them.

Whilst the author obviously has respect and admiration for Mulk Raj Anand and his writing he doesn't allow this to blind him to Anand's shortcomings. There are flaws in Anand's novels and Cowasjee is the first to acknowledge them. He doesn't refute the charge that at times Anand has written documentary novels. What he does show, however, is Anand's ability to make the documentary artistic. One of the best sections in the book is Cowasjee's discussion of *Private Life of an Indian Prince*. He regards this novel as Anand's finest achievement and presents it as a splendid example of the writer's ability to shape historical material into a work of art.

The final chapter deals not only with the three last novels but also with *Seven Summers*, *Morning Face* and *Confessions of a Lover*, books which Cowasjee calls dramatized autobiographies with fictional overtones.

Cowasjee regards the novels written since *Private Life of an Indian Prince* as unsuccessful but argues that it is necessary to assess them if Anand's achievement is to be placed in its proper perspective. He discusses the reason for the decline and agrees with Haydn Moore Williams that with the disappearance of the British 'enemy' Anand appears to have been left without a subject. Cowasjee suggests that a major reason for the success of *Private Life of an Indian Prince* was that Anand's personal predicament happily conjoined with a powerful theme. After this novel personal crisis and clear political vision never combined again to enliven any of his last three novels. With the departure of the British, Anand never again found an enemy who could draw out of him all the passions and the furies that were fired by the cause of Indian freedom.

This book is extremely well researched. A personal friend of the author's Cowasjee is able to draw on much interesting and previously unpublished material and on criticism not readily available to the average scholar. The latter will also find the *Select Bibliography* which contains over three hundred entries extremely useful.

*Coolie: An Assessment.* This small booklet is an excellent study guide for all

students of *Coolie*. The first two chapters, 'The Making of a Novelist' and 'Literary Creed', are an abridged version of the introductory chapter of *So Many Freedoms*. The bulk of the book is taken up with an analysis of *Coolie* and this is followed by a brief but useful note on Anand's prose style. Both books are welcome additions to the works of criticism on one of India's major literary figures.

ANNA RUTHERFORD

**Working Party on Library Holdings of Commonwealth Literature. A Handbook of Library Holdings of Commonwealth Literature. United Kingdom & Europe. Comp. and ed. by Ronald Warwick. British Library Lending Division. 1977. 123 pp. price. £ 2.25**

This reference book is a thoroughly revised edition of the handbook compiled by Gail Wilson in 1971 under the auspices of the Working Party on Library Holdings of Commonwealth Literature. The Working Party has also been closely involved with the new handbook which has been compiled and edited by Ronald Warwick, area librarian in the Library of the Commonwealth Institute in London.

The book has a preface by Dr. Alastair Niven, Director of the Africa Centre in London. Dr. Niven mentions the activities of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS) and its increasing number of members from Universities and libraries not only in Great Britain, but throughout Scandinavia and Western Europe, and he stresses the need for a checklist of library holdings of Commonwealth literature in Europe as well as in the U.K.

In an introductory chapter the compiler explains the aim and scope of the book. For the purpose of the handbook Commonwealth Literature is defined as creative literature written in English by a national of any Commonwealth country other than the United Kingdom. Critical works, reference works, biographies, etc. are included and collections of related interest (historical, sociological, political) have been noted.

The handbook is divided into two sections dealing with libraries in the United Kingdom and Europe respectively. The first section is prefaced by a general survey of library holdings of Commonwealth literature in the U.K. Problems of locating late eighteenth and nineteenth century literary material and difficulties in locating and providing material produced by local presses

within the Commonwealth are pointed out. The tendencies towards geographical specialization are reflected in the descriptions of the area-orientated collections in libraries with holdings from individual Commonwealth countries within the various parts of the world. The section covering the United Kingdom consists of forty entries. The entries are arranged alphabetically under the town in which the libraries are situated. Within one town the libraries are listed alphabetically. Not all collections are given a separate entry. In some cases smaller collections must be looked up in the index and found under the entry of a nearby larger library.

A library entry gives the following data: Name and address of library. Telephone and telex numbers. Name of nearest railway station, as well as bus or tram number. Hours of opening, rules for admission and loans, and information about availability of micro-readers and facilities for xerox copying. The running commentary following each entry deals with size of holdings, acquisitions policy, area of specialization, details of special collections, as well as availability of catalogues and publications.

The directory of twenty-two libraries in Europe is prefaced by an introduction to European collections. The compiler is rightly aware of the fact that information derived from a questionnaire only cannot give a satisfactory result. One would have welcomed a more detailed account of the organization of European and especially of Scandinavian libraries. As this has not been given, I shall advise visitors from overseas to do some background reading. A useful account of Scandinavian libraries has been written by K.C. Harrison, the former President of the Commonwealth Librarians Associations.<sup>1</sup>

It must be born in mind that libraries in non-Commonwealth countries have no obligation towards provision of Commonwealth literature. Nevertheless there is an interest in Europe in books in English by major authors irregardless of their nationalities. The growing awareness of creative writing from developing countries is also reflected in library provisions of national and university libraries as well as of public libraries. Scandinavian libraries have commenced action at governmental level in the field of library resources for immigrant workers.<sup>2</sup>

The entries covering Continental Europe is prefaced by short notes on smaller collections followed by an alphabetical arrangement under country and within country by the name of the library. The compiler has wisely refrained from bringing more than a few entries from Eastern Europe. Requests for copies of articles on Commonwealth literature from individual researchers in Eastern Europe are occasionally received in the State and University Library in Aarhus. This seems to indicate difficulties in obtaining such material from local libraries.

Although many important research establishments and libraries have been

included in the second part of the directory, the choice of entries seems rather haphazard. The directory would have been more useful if there had been entries from the Royal Library in Stockholm and the University Libraries of Uppsala and Oslo. They are libraries with more than two million volumes and with considerable holdings of creative literature in English including Commonwealth literature. Researchers with an interest in African affairs will be surprised at the omission of the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies in Uppsala. The Institute is a major documentation and research centre for current African affairs.

Due to some inexplicable misunderstanding the information about the State and University Library at Aarhus and the Institute Library of the English department of Aarhus University has been mixed together in one entry. The result is that neither of the libraries has been correctly described. This is rather unfortunate as the English Institute houses the Commonwealth Department which is a major research centre for Commonwealth studies in Europe. Its library can boast the the most significant collection of Commonwealth literature in Europe outside the U.K. The head of the department is Anna Rutherford, chairman of the European branch of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies.

Apart from the unhandy format (probably dictated by the need to economize) the handbook is easy to use. The index would have benefited from more cross references from the names of libraries in the vernacular to the forms of names in English.

The handbook is a welcome addition to the librarian's reference shelf and it should be available in all institutions with an interest in Commonwealth Literature.

VIBEKE STENDERUP

#### NOTES

1. Harrison, K.C.: *Libraries in Scandinavia*. rev.ed. 1969.
2. Unesco Bulletin for Libraries, Vol. XXXII, no. 1, 1978, p. 23: 'The immigrant worker and the Danish public library system'.

Dorothy Livesay, *Right Hand Left Hand*. Press Porcépic, 1977. \$6.95.

Dorothy Livesay is well-established as one of Canada's great contemporary poets. Especially during the last decade her collections of poetry and her readings throughout the country have won her an ever increasing audience. Twice

she has been awarded the highest official recognition: The Governor-General's Award for Poetry. We have come to know her as a deeply dedicated and sincere poet; her love poems have a frankness and an honest sensuality about them which is unique in Canadian literature. A recent volume of poetry, *Ice Age* (1975) subtly explores in a very personal and courageous way what it is like to grow old and to be acutely aware of the discrepancy between a zestful and alert mind and an ageing and frail body.

It is bound to create a stir when a poet like Dorothy Livesay publishes a volume of a very different order dealing with her life and work in the 30s, one of the most traumatic decades in the history of Canada. She came to maturity at a time when Canada, like many other countries, was hit by depression, unemployment, wide-spread social unrest and political polarization. With the help of two editors, David Arnason and Kim Todd, Dorothy Livesay has written a valuable book on the thirties seen, not through the objective and scrutinizing eyes of a historian or economist, but through the eyes of a deeply committed artist. The book reminds one of a collage; numerous widely different items brought together and controlled by a running commentary by Dorothy Livesay. We learn about her comfortable family background and the political climate that turned her into a very active socialist and feminist and a member of the Canadian Communist Party. Her personal development is reflected in the chosen material which not only consists of poems, stories and articles by Dorothy Livesay herself but of related letters, newspaper clippings, posters, photos and paintings.

In *Right Hand Left Hand* we watch the emergence of a committed socialist writer who courageously discloses social evils in Canada; we also witness the rise and fall of the Canadian Left. The book offers a first-class insight in the strong influence that the Russian model had on the intellectual Left in all Western countries. In this documentary collage Dorothy Livesay comes out as a political writer producing class-partisan literature in complete agreement with Lenin's view of the role of literature under the new order. There is an implicit defence of the Russian Proletkult (p. 230) at a time when Stalin through Zhdanov had already stamped out all artistic freedom. In 'The Beet Workers' a Soviet model is discretely suggested to solve a specific problem within the agriculture of Alberta despite the fact that even in 1936 the Western countries were well aware of the human costs of forced collectivization and of 5-year planning under Stalin. To this reviewer this suggests a certain degree of political naïveté. Nevertheless these pages also reflect a practical idealism whose prime target was, as the decade wore on, not revolution but the defeat of Fascism at home and abroad.

In *Right Hand Left Hand* we experience Dorothy Livesay as a political propagandist. It is important for its historical and biographical elements which

throw a light on Dorothy Livesay, the poet. And it is in her poetry, deeply rooted in the Anglo-American poetry of this century that she best brings out her universal message, and she has done so in such a manner that she has assured herself a safe place in the history of Canadian literature.

JØRN CARLSEN

Claude McKay, *Power Above Powers*, No. 2: *Trial By Lynching: Stories about Negro Life in North America*. Translated from the Russian by Robert Winer; edited and introduced by A. L. McLeod, with Preface by H. H. Anniah Gowda. 41 pages. n.p.a.

The Centre for Commonwealth Literature and Research of the University of Mysore has started a new series of books concerned with regional literature in English. With the world becoming increasingly integrated and one-dimensional, it would perhaps be apt to recall ancient dicta about the truth always being to some extent 'local' and residing in the 'nuance'. And the Mysore enterprise certainly brings to mind Cleanth Brooks once speculating in class that the really great literature of the 20th century would seem to be 'regional', coming to us from the provinces rather than from the metropolis: Yeats, Joyce, Frost, Hemingway, Faulkner were all of them regionalists, even Eliot was when he was at his youngest best and a 'real' poet, rather than a philosophical ruminator.

In the first volume of the new Mysore series the topic was South Pacific Writing (poems, stories, criticism). In this second volume we find three re-discovered stories by Claude McKay (1880-1948), who, born in Jamaica, became a literary father-figure in the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s with such lines as

If we must die, let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an unglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,

those famous lines written on the occasion of the Harlem race riots in 1919 and many years later recited, a little vulgarly perhaps, as a rallying cry by Winston Churchill and Senator Cabot Lodge, Sr., during the Second World War.

Like so many of his contemporaries in the Twenties, Claude McKay wanted to see what the future was like and in association with *The Liberator* and *The Masses* he went to see Lenin and Trotsky in Russia in 1922. McLeod recalls in

his introduction McKay's troubles with the American Communist delegation to the Fourth Congress of the Third Internationale, and then he goes on to explain about the background of the three stories in this volume: during his stay in Russia McKay published in 1925, in Russian translation, the three stories in a booklet *Sudom Lyncha* (*Trial by Lynching*). The booklet was discovered in the Slavic Section of the New York Public Library in 1973 and has now been re-translated into English. The stories, 'Trial by Lynching', 'The Mulatto Girl' and 'The Soldier's return', give interesting evidence about a young poet's struggle to move into another genre, that of prose narration. They reveal his anger barely and clumsily contained in irony, they show his first uncertain steps towards dramatic dialogue, they are in fact clearly a 'beginner's work'. But they are interesting for the light they throw on McKay's development as writer, they will be of interest to any theorist of literature preoccupied with *genres*, and with certain topical subjects (e.g. 'The Soldier's Return' describing the 'welcome home' given to black soldiers returning from the War in France and wearing uniforms!). These stories are of particular value to the cultural historian bent on recapturing the local nuance. That McKay was writing in a special context (cp. the Communist Party's interest in the American racial issue in the 1920s) and very much for a particular audience (he explains for the uninitiated reader about Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman* in 'Trial By Lynching') gives an added richness to the volume's particularity. The Mysore series is, indeed, a new and a welcome venture in university publishing.

ERIK ARNE HANSEN