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Adam, Ian. *Glass Canyons*. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1985. Pp. 190. \$17.95 cloth; \$7.95 paper

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temps sur les historiens . . . et leurs idéologies. Il faudrait trouver une version de ce livre écrite en 1980, en un temps ou des convictions coloraient encore les pages imprimées, pour faire la comparaison . . .

Quel jugement porter sur cet ouvrage? Il a les défauts de ses qualités. Il fera la joie des professeurs, des étudiants et d'un certain public cultivé, puisqu'il témoigne bien de l'état de l'historiographie québécoise, fait le point sur nos connaissances dans un effort de synthèse habilement figolé. Et bien sûr, les vides, l'impression que l'on a parfois que le Québec commence à Sorel pour se terminer à Valleyfield, sont à reprocher largement à l'état des recherches: après tout, la majorité des chercheurs en histoire oeuvrent à Montréal . . . Et j'y pense, la majorité des lecteurs s'y trouvent aussi! Enfin, l'ambition de tout traiter donne à l'ensemble l'allure d'un «patchwork»: il y est question de tout, ou presque . . . mais on ne trouve sur un sujet précis qu'une toute petite pièce.

Le «patchwork» est cependant superbe, l'ouvrage remplira magnifiquement son objectif, et il est déjà promu «manuel» dans mon cours d'histoire du Québec!

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Broadfoot, Barry. *The Immigrant Years: From Europe to Canada 1945-1967*. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986. Pp. 240. \$22.95.

*The Immigrant Years*, the most recent collection of oral interviews by Barry Broadfoot, documents an important immigration era that Canadian historians are only beginning to examine. Broadfoot limits his book to British and continental European immigrants whom he views as sharing a common interest in escaping the aftermath of the Second World War. These immigrants also constituted the majority of admissions before the removal of open racial discrimination from Canada's immigration policy in the 1960s. Although a few excerpts from interviews with immigrants of the 1960s are included, most stories are told by immigrants who arrived in the years immediately after the war: war brides coming to join husbands whom they hardly recognized in a foreign environment; displaced persons seeking a new home; and others attracted by reports of better economic conditions in Canada. Several who talked to Broadfoot, including a German who had fought against the Canadians in the war, chose Canada because they had been impressed by the conduct of the Canadian troops.

The reader may dip into this book at any point as each excerpt is a separate unit. Nevertheless, certain themes do

emerge from the stories. Immigrants describe the networks they used to facilitate migration and adaptation. Repeatedly, both British and continental European immigrants comment on receiving assistance from relatives or friends in Canada. European immigrants without personal contacts often found comfort and support in ethnic neighbourhoods or associations. A number were directed to Kensington Market, Toronto, where shop owners welcomed newcomers, helping to arrange employment as well as providing services in a familiar way. A Winnipeg landlady noticed ads for Ukrainian social clubs in the *Free Press* and obtained the address for her unhappy lodger who spoke no English. Other immigrants found a social centre at their church. Those who sought companionship through ethnic associations fared better than the lonely Greek immigrant who tried to get a date by approaching young women at a University of British Columbia bus stop.

Post-war immigrants quickly learned that ethnic prejudice and discrimination against immigrants still existed in Canada. British immigrants were surprised to encounter hostility from Canadians who regarded them as unwelcome competitors for jobs. Continental European immigrants from professional or skilled backgrounds resented being considered inferior and only suited for menial jobs Canadians did not want. Women working as maids felt insulted when employers carefully explained to them in elementary terms the use of equipment in Canadian homes. Others, including those who were children at school, remember the hurt of being stigmatized a "dumb D. P." Yet the discrimination is in part offset by stories of unexpected assistance from people met by chance, from authorities, or from neighbours.

The immigrants who told their experiences to Broadfoot survived and succeeded in their new country, usually through very hard work, sometimes coupled with a spirit of enterprise and strategies to circumvent restrictive regulations. Some, like the British war brides who took the Thousand Dollar Cure, only became satisfied with their lives in Canada after a visit home. All contribute to the growing interest in post-war immigration. Unfortunately, the accounts are not as useful as they might be had Broadfoot identified at least the background, age, and year of arrival of the speaker. This important biographical context could have been supplied without compromising the anonymity of the person interviewed.

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Adam, Ian. *Glass Canyons*. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1985. Pp. 190. \$17.95 cloth; \$7.95 paper.

Since Northrop Frye asked his classic question, "Where is here?" we have come to recognize the primacy of place in establishing a Canadian identity. As Canadian readers we are familiar with many landscapes: MacLennan's Halifax and Montreal; the several Torontos of Morley Callaghan, Hugh Garner and Margaret Atwood; the prairie towns of Margaret Laurence, Sinclair Ross and W.O. Mitchell; the West Coast of Margaret Laurence and Malcolm Lowry. Yet while we have a literary concept of Winnipeg, Vancouver and even Edmonton, Calgary still needs to be written, set down in literature for audiences at home and abroad. In his new anthology *Glass Canyons*, Ian Adam proposes to describe Calgary as a contemporary city, to "capture its particular reality of restless progress as this has implanted itself in the consciousness of individuals" (Foreword). For those who have equated Calgary with its self-proclaimed image as perennial cowboy country, this book will reveal a much broader and more interesting heritage, multiple faces of a multi-cultured entity.

The fifteen short stories and twenty-two poems represented here have been chosen carefully to balance male and female writers, familiar and new voices and traditional and contemporary styles. Readers will recognize the names of many of the authors: Christopher Wiseman, Andrew Suknaski and Claire Harris in poetry; W.O. Mitchell, Sam Selvon, Aritha van Herk, Ken Mitchell, Joan Clarke and Edna Alford in prose. Several others are currently becoming better known and a few are relatively new to a national audience.

Reflected in these stories and poems we see a "city of illusions," as Adam notes; the illusions of permanence, wealth and ambition are set against the current realities of poverty, disillusionment and alienation. Calgary, Adam concludes, would "rather always be transforming itself than settle for a stable identity." The title of the collection is taken from Andy Suknaski's poem sequence "floating dream 1984." The "canyons of glass" suggest a world separated both from nature and from humanity. Suknaski juxtaposes the new world of plenty and affluence as represented by the imposing towers of the oil capital with the actuality of the poor, the hungry and the despoiled speaking through the voices of the Inuit and the suffering in Biafra, Cambodia and Nicaragua. The theme of a lost Eden is dramatized by W.O. Mitchell; in "Hercules Savage" he contrasts the dreams of Stoney Indian heritage with the squalor and commercialism of the city at the foot of the "Devonian Tower" where Archie Nicotine is picked up for relieving himself behind the Empress Beer Parlour and Norman Catface pimps for his sister Gloria, the late Miss Northwest Fish and Game.

"Glass Canyons" also measures the city against the permanence and universality of nature. "This City by the Bow" contrasts the background, the "great bowl of sunlight," the blue afternoon, purple mountains and green grass with the sordid foreground: "This conglomeration/ of streets and

houses/ skyscrapers/ traffic jams/ garbage trucks/ muggers/ hookers/ and fire hydrants." In "Ballad of the City of Cars," the use of a natural image, the "Niagara roar" of traffic, accentuates the mood of the solitary wanderer who has come west to the land of oil and riches to find only unemployment. His "anonymous face" represents the disillusionment of many.

In establishing a new place, naming is a primary act. As Rudy Wiebe remarks, the telling makes us real. These poems and stories evoke for their readers the names and places of Calgary: the Husky (or Calgary) Tower, Mount Royal, Heritage Park, St. George's Island, the North Hill, the Stampede Grounds, Deerfoot and Shaganappi Trails. These settings are often employed ironically. Heritage Park, Calgary's recreation of a 1910 Alberta town, is viewed objectively through the eyes of a busload of Chinese tourists ("The Acrobats of Canton"). We attend the races at Stampede Park with Sam Selvon's Ralphie, fresh from Trinidad and blistered under the Alberta sun. The names themselves may be ironic. Bruce Hunter contrasts Crowchild and Shaganappi Trails with the reality "paved four lanes wide," built over Indian bones by those whose "tongues are awkward to your names" ("Wishbone"). Edna Alford in "Transfer" calls a litany of street names and bus routes as her mad protagonist journeys back and forth across the city in quest of a rapist she thinks is escaping. At the Stampede Grounds, evoking a simpler and more naive era, the prostitutes charge from fifty to sixty dollars a night and undercover police prowl in hopes of surprising their clients or perhaps obtaining free services.

The stories, like the poems, represent multiple viewpoints and range from urban realism to light comedy or fantasy. The themes are familiar ones: sexual initiation, the crises of adolescence and mid-life, female identity, comradeship and betrayal, the interactions of society, the metamorphosis of the artist. But these become new in their relation to the Calgary setting. At one pole of realism Michael Rose's "The Demilitarized Zone" looks at the violence which erupts when a large family of Vietnamese move into one area and bring out the bitterness and violence in their unemployed neighbours. Bruce Hunter's "Private Property" recreates Calgary of the 1960s on the other side of the tracks as the narrator recalls his boyhood friend, a young man who has ended a life of crime in suicide. More Gothic and surreal, Edna Alford's "Transfer" evokes the world of madness and terror as observed by her sexually repressed heroine. In direct contrast to these, Sam Selvon's "Ralphie at the Races" provides a light comic perspective on the perplexing world of new immigrants from the West Indies; underlying this humour, however, is a serious comment on our society and its expectations. Aritha van Herk's zany comedy "Waiting for the Rodeo" is also set in the Stampede Grounds where the female hero, an escaped magician's apprentice, finds freedom and a new identity as a hot-air pilot. My favourite story, Beverley Harris' "Queenie" merges fantasy with realism. The protagonist's dream of a life of beauty, simplicity and order is

realized when she takes up permanent quarters in the information booth at the entrance to the university. The story ends in a mood of regret and despair, however, when her lover discovers her refuge and moves in too.

These stories and poems attempt to create of Calgary a "geography of the mind," in Margaret Atwood's phrase. They depict a new mental landscape, a more contemporary one which reflects the city's constant change, its vitality and cultural multiplicity. The old image of Calgary is breaking down. Statistics Canada reported several months ago that the city has the highest percentage in Canada of those taking post-secondary education while the Calgary Public Library announced more recently that its circulation per capita is the second highest in the country. Ian Adam's *Glass Canyons*, along with recent novels such as W.O. Mitchell's *Since Daisy Creek* and Aritha van Herk's *No Fixed Address*, are a forecast of the Calgary to come in the Canadian literary imagination.

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Bourassa, Guy et Léveillé, Jacques, sous la direction de, *Le système politique de Montréal*. Montreal: L'Association canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences, 1986. Pp. vi, 600. \$12.00 paper.

For those who pay close attention to academic and journalistic accounts of Montreal politics, this collection contains little new. Its chief virtues are that it brings some fairly obscure material together in one volume and that, in some cases, authors who wrote useful pieces many years ago are given the opportunity to bring their work up to date.

For those who are not Montreal specialists, the collection is of dubious value. Much is assumed and the limited efforts of the editors to provide introductions and continuity are unlikely to be of much help. The main market for this book will be in university courses focusing on Montreal, the instructors of which will still be burdened with placing the various articles in some wider context.

A more serious problem is the lack of any attempt to define the book's scope. The title and the first page tell us only that it is concerned with "Montreal's political system." Judging from the book's contents, to understand this system we need to know something about the demography of the Montreal metropolitan region; a great deal about the governmental institutions of the City of Montreal and the *Communauté urbaine de Montréal* (C.U.M.); almost as much about political parties and voting behaviour within the City; quite a bit about what all levels of government have

attempted concerning regional planning, urban renewal, and the 1976 Olympic Games; and we should have a nodding acquaintance with the many problems surrounding Montreal's economic future.

This list is all right as far as it goes. But there is no systematic treatment of intergovernmental relations or of the political process in any of the C.U.M. suburbs or in any of the powerful local special-purpose bodies, such as the boards of education, the health and social services institutions, the transit commission, or the public security council. Perhaps the editors do not consider such items part of "Montreal's political system." If so, they do not tell us; they certainly make no attempt to justify their position.

There are two common practical justifications for omitting such matters. The first is space. Since this book contains thirty separate contributions totalling six hundred pages, this excuse is scarcely credible, especially when the reader is subjected to page after legalistic page describing the authority of the City's executive committee and its various administrative departments. Seven pages are taken up listing the names and addresses of the members of the C.U.M. committees; all of this redundant information already being out of date.

A possibly more valid justification is the absence of available French-language research. This case does not hold for school boards, but perhaps it is true for some of the other missing topics. To the extent that it is, Bourassa and Léveillé, in their brief description of a future research agenda at the end of the book, unfortunately make no reference to the need for further work on such subjects as Montreal's suburbs or local special-purpose bodies.

*Le système politique de Montréal* appeared shortly before the victory of the *Rassemblement des citoyens et citoyennes de Montréal* (R.C.M.) in the municipal elections of November 1986. The new regime in Montreal has provoked high hopes and expectations. Because this collection does not systematically analyze the functional limitations and constraints facing the City of Montreal's government, its readers might well believe that major policy changes are inevitable. The point, of course, is that, even if the R.C.M. were to drastically re-orient City programs and expenditures, there would still be many important local functions that would remain quite untouched, public schools and social services being the notable examples.

Unfortunately, however, there is scarcely any mention of the R.C.M., except in articles analyzing voting behaviour and in Louise Quesnel-Ouellet's 1982 piece on "Les partis politiques locaux au Québec." It is true that accounts of the R.C.M.'s earlier, more radical, policies are readily available elsewhere and that those interested in subsequent developments can turn to the more recent collaborative efforts of Léveillé and Jean-François Léonard. Nevertheless, let the