

Reviews

have combined a series of games, puzzles, discoveries and other activities to form **A SOURCEBOOK FOR SUBSTITUTES AND OTHER TEACHERS**. The materials in this book have been tested and proven to enrich the students' view of "It can be fun to learn." The materials can be used by the regular teachers as well as by substitutes and may even be fitted into the students' regular curriculum.

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Jack Weiner and
John Lidstone.
**CREATIVE MOVEMENT
FOR CHILDREN:
A DANCE PROGRAM FOR
THE CLASSROOM.**

New York:
Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969.
111 pp. \$8.95.

Joyce Boorman.
**DANCE AND LANGUAGE
EXPERIENCES WITH
CHILDREN.**

Don Mills:
Longman Canada, 1973.
64 pp. \$4.25.

Until comparatively recently, female authors appeared to dominate the field of writing about children's dance. Indeed the teaching of dance itself has, unfortunately, been almost exclusively undertaken by women. It is, therefore, encouraging to find this book, written as the result of Jack Weiner's experimental dance program "sponsored by the Queens Youth Center for the Arts at a public school in New York City."

Weiner presents the stimuli that he has found successful in his work with children. It is by no means an exhaustive list of possibilities; indeed it appears somewhat limiting in nature to me. Some readers may also find the nouns used, "piano," "clay," unrelated to the movement qualities and actions described. If one can overcome this problem, the text provides information on the wide range of movement — varied use of the

body, qualitative changes, use of space — that children are capable of experiencing and understanding. Weiner also gives some insight into his philosophy of teaching and his general understanding of the developing child.

Lidstone's accompanying photographs are superb, many of them showing the sensitive work of boys. In several instances the photographs convey more than the text and it really is for Lidstone's contribution that I recommend the book to anyone interested in children's involvement in creative activity generally and movement in particular.

Boorman's first two books, *Creative Dance in the First Three Grades*, and *Creative Dance in Grades Four to Six*, are very practical in nature, showing the teacher specific ways in which children can explore movement in an expressive way. This third book is, in contrast, a "sharing" book — Miss Boorman writes very personally of experiences she had with groups of children when she was working in the States. She tells of "happenings" that occurred when the relationship between language and movement was explored. She illustrates her text with a wealth of examples of the excitement arising from the sensitive selection of words and poems as stimuli for creative dance. Her concern, however, is not only with the movement resulting from the stimuli, but also the concurrent "use and exploration of words. Words which serve not only as the verbal tool of teaching and learning, but also the rich heritage of expression and communication which should belong to all children." (p. xiii)

The book has four chapters, each one exploring words in a different way. The first chapter is concerned with "the imaginative use of language in both creative dance and creative writing." Examples are given of the children's creative writing done following each dance session. Chapter Two uses "jingles" — short rhymes concerned with pure movement experiences, they do not tell stories

or describe moods. They may be the stimulus for the dance or they may result from the dance; for example,

*Skip skip
curl up small
spread way out
and roll like a ball! (p. 26)*

Chapter Three rediscovers the joys of nursery rhymes and the final chapter links poetry with creative dance.

The book is well illustrated with photographs which have captured the vitality of children's movement.

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A. J. M. Smith,
THE CANADIAN
EXPERIENCE.

Agincourt: Gage, 1974.
299 pp. \$2.95.

THE COLONIAL CENTURY.

Agincourt: Gage, 1973.
261 pp. \$3.95.

THE CANADIAN CENTURY.

Agincourt: Gage, 1973.
652 pp. \$6.95

Whenever I have been visiting the United States and happened to catch the weather forecast, I have always been strangely disconcerted by the absence on the map of anything north of the 49th Parallel. This has suggested to me either a colossal disregard of their own environmental condition by the American forecasters, or a Kafkasque miasma which shrouds or even obliterates the whole of Canada. Perhaps the paradox of Canada as Northrop Frye says, is not so much, "Who am I?", as "Where is here?". Now A. J. M. Smith has put us on the map! In three softbound editions, he has put together in chronological sequence a fine collection of Canadian prose by English-speaking writers dating from 1769 with Frances Brookes' somewhat arch *The History of Emily Montagne*, which recounts in diary form the daily life of one Colonel Rivers

who has "gone to people the wilds of America..." (*The Colonial Century*, p. 4) through to many of our best contemporary writers.

Smith writes in the introduction to *The Colonial Century* that his intention is "to illustrate the special character that geography, climate and politics imposed upon the sensibility and thought of the Canadian people" (p. xiii) and he seems to me to have succeeded precisely because of the chronological organization of his material and because he has let the original writers speak for themselves. He has avoided the philosophical problems of identity, or the more metaphysical one of a national ethos, managing survival in the literary bush by leaving criticism to the critics and including only a short prefatory note on each of the writers.

The Colonial Century and its sequel *The Canadian Century* are more comprehensive than the earlier anthology by Carl Klinck and R. E. Watters (useful as that has been to students of Canadian literature) because Smith has included the writings of the Canadian explorers and fur-traders, writings with strength and freshness, and a pertinence to the evolution of a national literary consciousness which makes their inclusion appropriate.

The Canadian Experience, although greatly foreshortened, still includes Samuel Hearne's vivid first hand account of "the Slaughter of the Esquimaux" and David Thompson's beautiful exposition, "Two Distinct Races of Beings — Man and the Beaver," which could well hold its own beside the writings of Rachel Carson. Of Hearne's writing, J. B. Tyrell has commented that it "is chiefly valuable... not because of its geographical information, but because it is an accurate, sympathetic, and patently truthful record of life among the Chipewyan Indians" (*The Canadian Experience*, p. 25). Both pieces are as topical and interesting today, with public attention focused as it is on our Northland, as they were in the 19th Century.