

Reviews

This approach would also reduce the teacher's problems in obtaining suitable texts by enabling him to use any of several chronologically arranged anthologies.

Underhill emphasizes that any course must be developed out of the individual teacher's reading; his own proposals presumably reflect this pattern, and while valuable for their suggestions regarding the treatment of twentieth-century Canadian literature in the classroom, they slight the literary ancestors of preceding centuries.

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Paul Robinson.
AFTER SURVIVAL: A TEACHER'S GUIDE
TO CANADIAN RESOURCES.
Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977.
319 pp. \$8.95.

Irony is a powerful literary device which can bring its audience to an awareness of the difference between what should be and what is. As I searched the 60,000 library holdings of McGill's Faculty of Education for Margaret Atwood's excellent, five-year-old overview of Canadian literature, the title of which (*Survival*) gave rise to that of Paul Robinson's book, the only reference I found to "Atwood, M." was

Atwood, Mark. An Anthropological Approach to Administrative Change: the Introduction of a Guidance Program in a High School.

(And a 1960 Columbia University Ph.D. dissertation at that.) *Touché*, Paul Robinson!

The reader may recall Paul Robinson as the feisty curriculum planner in the Northwest Territories who incurred the wrath of the Federal Government for his efforts in the late sixties and early seventies to develop curricula to suit the needs of native communities. Now at the Atlantic Institute of Education, Robinson has taken on the herculean task of providing Canadian teachers with a book of made-in-Canada topics and learning materials.

What he has managed to provide is impressive in its breadth, although it is hardly encyclopedic. Unfortunately, one weakness of *After Survival* is its sometimes unfathomable organizational structure. Essentially, the book concentrates on twenty-five curricular areas found in Canadian schools. These range from "Art" to "Vocational", and include such topics as "Counselling", "Indians-Inuit-Metis", and "Ukrainians and other Unknown Canadians." It will be obvious that no individual could be expected to command all the subject matter that the book addresses.

(Just as well, or this review would have had to have been written by a committee.)

Those who are upset by the absence of suitable reference to Canadian contributions to the cobalt bomb or the electron microscope, or those who find their favourite poet given short shrift (I for one hope that it wasn't George Bowering's passion for baseball that led to his virtual exclusion) will have to be satisfied with the author's warning that "the bibliographic information be viewed as departure points." Overall, my evaluation of the book is that those of us concerned about the presence of Canada in school curricula have been given appropriate beginnings.

The author makes clear what criteria he has used to select topics and learning resources: he has a strong sense of social purpose, he is committed to Canada's national survival, he is disquieted about the publishing industry in this country, and he wants to challenge the teacher to be more active in curricular decisions. Because Robinson makes no effort to hide his passion, politics, and pedagogy, *After Survival* will not sit easily with many of the people it seeks to address. Academics and professionals of "ed biz", as well as the multi-national publishers who dominate the industry, will probably accuse the book of shallowness or chauvinism or activism. In doing so, Robinson's critics will make his case.

Most teachers would not want a C.R.T.C.-like content rule for schools. Yet *After Survival* should persuade them of the need to seek an appropriate place for Canada in the curriculum. As Tom Symons put it,

If a Canadian is to seek the self knowledge that is essential for both health and wisdom, he must have access to a wider self knowledge of his historical community and its contemporary circumstances.

After Survival presents a variety of opportunities for teachers and students to achieve this aim.

Lest I have communicated too great a cynicism about my colleagues' concern for things Canadian, and allowing that my confrontation with Irony may have been traumatizing, let me end on this note of hope: the Faculty of Education's library does have *To Know Ourselves*, from which I quote above. And it has been signed out twice in the last year.

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