

blank spaces for the engaged reader. As a source and reference book it has obvious merit. Unless it is used imaginatively by both teacher and student, I am less certain of its value as the basis for a course in composition.

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Don Gutteridge.
MOUNTAIN AND PLAIN.
Ian Underhill.
FAMILY PORTRAITS.
Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978.
Each: 95pp. \$3.75.

Mountain and Plain and *Family Portraits* are the first two titles in a new series entitled "Casebooks in Canadian Literature." Three more titles are to follow, presumably using the same format, which consists in grouping a selection of short stories, excerpts from novels, and poems around a theme. That these are textbooks destined for a high school readership is made clear in the Preface reproduced in each book: "It is not the purpose of this series to presume to tell high school teachers how to proceed with literary analysis, but *to bring together the cultural and critical resources that have not been available in one volume in the past*" (p. 6., emphasis added). A high school audience is implied as well in the structural arrangement of each book, divided not in chapters but in 'units': five units to be precise. Unit one refers to the selected texts; units two and three are excerpts from critical works, chosen so as to provoke discussion on the texts, followed by questions meant to provide a framework for the discussion; unit four suggests further reading of three novels whose themes continue in expanded form the concerns addressed in unit one; finally, unit five outlines topics for extended projects (seminars, assignments, etc.) which the previous units lead to in evolving fashion.

The pedagogical structure is a sound one. The choice of critical comments, the questions raised by the editors, and the outlining of areas for research reflect a meticulous care, an attention to detailed analysis, and an underlying consideration for the high school reading audience which are commendable. No less praiseworthy is the avowed design to make Canadian literature accessible, readable, and relevant. Yet, if this series aims at precluding the writing of

another *Survival*, and if it aims at answering the Symons Report's wish by a sort of back-to-the-basics approach, then Messrs. Gutteridge and Underhill owe us an explanation or two regarding their method of selection and their understanding of Canadian literature. Of the seven texts by Grove, Laurence, Nowlan, Ross, Mitchell, Elliott and Birney — a somewhat conventional selection — chosen for *Mountain and Plain*, there is not a single one written by a French-speaking Canadian. Of the fifteen texts written by, among others, Mitchell, Atwood, Bowering, Munro, Layton — a more off-beat selection — in *Family Portraits*, room is found for only *one* token excerpt from Gabrielle Roy. (Yet, Alden Nowlan has *three*; and Gutteridge, the series consultant, perhaps well-known in the field of education but less in the field of Canadian literature, is rated at a par with Roy.)

At any rate, not one French-speaking Quebec author is included in either book. (Gabrielle Roy was born and raised in Manitoba.) I find such an omission deplorable. Possible reasons for the editors' choice cannot include copyright considerations, availability of texts, translation problems, or even the "John Moss shuffle" (that is, that Quebec literature is best left untouched when discussing Canadian literature). Roch Carrier, Anne Hébert, Ringuelet, Roger Lemelin, André Langevin, Jacques Godbout, Marie-Claire Blais and so on have all been translated, and one can see quite easily where the editors could have chosen, in *Is It the Sun Philibert?*, *Kamouraska*, *Thirty Acres*, or *The Town Below*, chapters suitable for the themes of family life and landscape.

The two books then present a lopsided view of Canadian literature, which is all the more unfortunate since the editors seem to be either blind to or innocent of its literary, let alone cultural, implications. What are we to make of a claim to bring together "cultural and critical resources" which ignore, but for one exception, the contributions of French-speaking Canadians? One hopes that the next three titles will not suffer from the "Ontariocentrism" which undermines the otherwise genuine merits of *Family Portraits* and *Mountain and Plain*. But the possible damage of these two books is such that I would not recommend them for use in the classroom, if it means that generations of young Canadians will again grow with a warped knowledge of their country and its peoples.

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