at once very risky and difficult to take
them seriously.” It is mind-boggling to
counter how Rimanelli could conceivably
have written the above had he actually
read such a Roberts’ short story as “The
Young Ravens that Call Upon Him.”
One can only conclude that his familiarity
with Roberts’ work in prose is about on a
par with his knowledge of Haliburton, of
the chronology and geography of New
France, and other matters of a similar
nature. Had, for instance, he really been
looking for “that tension of high adventure
that we find in Kipling,” surely he would
have given us one of Ernest Thompson
Seton’s stories from Wild Animals I Have
Known.

To give Rimanelli his due, where he
has read and liked authors, his judgment
and literary taste are excellent, and the
body of Modern Canadian Stories is com­
posed of very fine stories.

I feel, however, that the predominance
of recent twentieth century stories in the
anthology, the predominance of Western
writers represented, and a congruity of atti­
tude and phrase between the editor’s intro­
duction and the foreword from Earle Birney indicate that, as an Italian ventur­
ing upon new literary territory, Giose
Rimanelli looked for advice from his aca­
demic colleagues in British Columbia as to
what to read and what not to read and
that he followed it. I am one reader who
wishes that he had set out on a more
eclectic journey of discovery entirely on
his own.

Fred Cogswell

JACKSON R. BRYER, ED.
Sixteen Modern American Authors
$5.95.

Norton Press has done it again: issued
a literary volume which will be massively
sold among (primarily) non-specialist uni­
versity professors and general Arts stu­
dents. In this case the work, a review of
research and criticism updated in 1973
and originally published by Duke Uni­
versity Press in 1969, is, for the most
part, an extremely useful reference tool
deftly guiding the reader through the
tangled forests of criticism and bibliographi­
cal data which have grown up around the
major American writers of the twentieth
century. The best of the essays in the
volume by “leading scholarly authorities on
the figures they are discussing” point out
and annotate the better published bibli­
ographies and biographies (omitting the
standard yearly, quarterly, or monthly
listings in the basic periodicals), relate the
condition of manuscript research, evaluate
the existing editions of the author’s work,
and call out the best of the criticism in
both English and foreign languages—in the
most significant instances annotating it
carefully. The “figures” covered are
Cather, Crane, Dreiser, Eliot (reclaimed)
from his British classification in PMLA),
Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Frost, Hemingway,
O’Neill, Pound, Robinson, Steinbeck,
Stevens, Williams, and Wolfe. Sixteen
Authors, greatly expanding the scope of its
archetypal predecessor, Eight American
Authors (1956), is thus itself a timely work
of bibliography and criticism collating and
synopsizing most of the published materials
on modern American literature when the
careers of its chief architects are all now
complete. Updated surveys of criticism on
each of the authors are provided in supple­
ments to the main essays; and the com­
pleteness of coverage is indubitably demon­
stated in the four page listing of abbrevi­
ated periodicals drawn upon in the text.

The essays themselves vary in usefulness
and quality. Walter B. Rideout’s tracing of the various currents of Sherwood
Anderson criticism over a half century is
valuable, sensitive, and superb as is Richard
Ludwig’s annotation of the significant Eliot
commentary. The discussion by James B.
Merriweather of complex editorial problems
throughout the entire Faulkner canon is a
masterful, lucid, and very informative piece
of writing. Joseph N. Riddle’s survey of
Wallace Stevens criticism and of the state
of biographical research on this writer not
only provides a sure guide to the best
books and articles representing all the
multifarious approaches taken by critics
on Stevens, but is also itself a rich, many-
faceted study of Stevens’ poems. Unfortu­
nately, the same excellence does not mark
the essays on Hemingway and William
Carlos Williams. Frederick J. Hoffman is
too emotional and laudatory of Hemingway
to obtain the detached and synoptic over-
view of that author's work which would do justice to the more negative critics of the Hemingway canon, and I find Linda Wagner's analysis of Williams' materials too sketchy, her evaluations of the criticism too terse and undistinguished, to be of use equal to that of her fellow contributors.

Ultimately it must be said that any really competent professor of American literature would provide in his own annotated bibliographies given to his students the essential data contained in Sixteen Modern American Authors. The book remains as a valuable enriching supplement to this essential foregoing provision.

Allen Bentley

FATMA MOUSSA-MAHMOUD
The Arabic Novel in Egypt (1914-1970)

Although the history of Arabic literature goes back as early as the sixth Century, Arabic prose writing did not play any significant role within this literature until the eighth Century. Narrative writings in particular, with some very few exceptions, did not occupy any noticeable place in Arabic literature till the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War.

The first Arabic novel of literary merit, Zaynab, was written in Paris between 1910 and 1911 by a young Egyptian lawyer, Mohammad Hussayn Haykal (1888-1956), and was published in Cairo in 1914. In 1926 Haykal's example was followed by other writers; Taha Husayn started his autobiographical novel as a series of articles which he published in 1927 as the first volume of al-Ayam (the second volume followed in 1939, the third in 1972). Soon other writers like al-Mazni (Ibrahim el-Katib, 1931), Tawfik al-Hakim (Awdat al-Roh, 1933), and 'Abbas al-'Aqqad (Sarah, 1938) tried their hands at this "new" literary form.

It was clear from the outset that Cairo, which had played a major role during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the rise and dissemination of many popular prose romances, would be the literary center for this newly imported genre.

When Professor Fatma Moussa-Mamoud therefore gives an account of the origin, rise, and development of the Egyptian novel in her book, The Arabic Novel in Egypt (1914-1970), she is, in fact—although she did not claim this—presenting the history of the Arabic novel in general.

Had she considered the very few significant novels that have been published in Lebanon and Syria during the last decade, and had she included and examined some of these "fine young novelists" she refers to at the end of her book—instead of devoting so many pages to Saleh Morsi's minor work Zuqaq el Sayed el Bolti (1963)—this study would have been a complete and extensive history of the Arabic novel.

But the authoress justifies these shortcomings when she says in the preface that, although "much reading and research" went into this book, the material, which was "originally prepared as a series of radio talks . . . has been presented in a form that would suit the reader with little or no previous knowledge of the subject" (p. 3).

In spite of this defence, we still believe that something should have been said about the style of these writers, and that the so-called "new techniques" and "new daring forms" (p. 79) should have been examined more closely. We also believe unacceptable the claim that writers who "command a very wide reading public particularly among educated or half educated women" (probably the very popular Ihsan 'Abd el-Qadus and Youssef el-Seba'i are among these writers), should be completely ignored only because they "seem untroubled by all this excitement over technical innovations" (pp. 79-80). And how does she explain the fact that she overlooks two major literary figures like Taha Husayn and al-'Aqqad? Note too that she has not referred to the impact that 'Uthman Jalal's translation of Bernardin de Saint Pierre's Paul et Virginie had had on the early readers and writers of novels in Egypt.

Brief Mentions

159