

at once very risky and difficult to take them seriously." It is mind-boggling to consider 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 composed 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 attitude and phrase between the editor's introduction and the foreword from Earle Birney indicate that, as an Italian venturing upon new literary territory, Giose Rimanelli looked for advice from his academic 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*  
New York: Norton, 1972. Pp. 673.  
\$5.95.

Norton Press has done it again: issued a literary volume which will be massively sold among (primarily) non-specialist university professors and general Arts students. 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 bibliographical 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 bibliographies 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 cull 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 supplements to the main essays; and the completeness of coverage is indubitably demonstrated in the four page listing of abbreviated 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. Meriweather 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. Unfortunately, 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)*  
Cairo: The Egyptian General Book Organization, 1973. Pp. 102.

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-Mahmoud 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.