

Chinese Studies at Leeds University, has also written a perceptive introduction on the current state of Chinese literature, and his biographical sketch of the writer that precedes each story is most useful to the general reader.

Swan P. Chong

**ROBERT and ROCHELLE
BONAZZI, ED.**

New Departures in Fiction:

Making a Break

Austin: Latitudes Press, 1975.

Pp. 243. \$4.50.

New Departures in Fiction is a collection of short stories, literary sketches, genre pictures, and fragmentary narratives by eleven contemporary American writers. Most of these works are of an experimental nature, but a few are neither modernistic, nor original in any way.

Among the pieces written by Brian Swann one finds purely lyrical sketches ("Stumbling," "Epiphanies") as well as abstract and extremely subjective ones ("Senario for a Farce," "Garden of Adonis"). In spite of the elegiac tone of his writings, Brian Swann is at times witty, ironic, and even grotesque. His "Home" is a poetic description of a hate-love relationship which ties a young man to his parents' home and brings him back to visit them in spite of a depressing paralysis of communication. This short story testifies to the author's superb narrative talents.

Charles Baxter's "Verdi in America" is an original story marked by a pleasant style and a great sense of humor. Verdi's imaginary trip to America, his stay with Dvorak at Spillville, Iowa, and his working on an American opera entitled "Wilderness," are depicted with wit and ingenuity.

From a narrative point of view, Henry H. Roth is undoubtedly a very talented storyteller. His "Cruz" stories ("Jose," "Rapping with Felicia," and "Victor's Damn Luck") depict the hopes, dreams, and adventures of three Puerto Rican brothers, and reflect—in a neonaturalistic manner—the tragicomic aspects of life in the slums. If it were not for the excessive use of obscene language, especially in the second story, these three episodes would have been remarkable.

In his four stories, especially in "The New Era" and "Making a break," Stephen Dixon clearly demonstrates his craftsmanship as a narrative writer; he is original, witty, and entertaining.

Among the not-very-impressive authors one finds Gomer Rees. His short pieces are unpoetic poems in prose; they add nothing new, inspiring, or controversial. Nina Khiney's "Two Tales" are mere *Fingerübungen* (the kind of music you play on the piano till someone finds your missing music book). Marvin Cohen's experimental sketches are parabolic ("The Transforming . . ."), surrealistic ("Pursued Like a Criminal"), and at times extremely abstract ("Hiding . . ."). He is too intellectual (read: overly serious) to be entertaining or even amusing. Elizabeth Tingon's "An Island" is a harmless little thing; it has nothing to offer, neither in content nor form.

Aside from the fact that some aspects of these "new departures" do not appeal to us, one has to admit that this collection includes a considerable number of highly rewarding pieces. Readers and writers interested in modernistic and experimental fiction would appreciate this collection. No doubt that soliciting, reading (sometimes deciphering), and selecting these untraditional and antitraditional writings is a very toilsome and expensive venture which requires taste, patience, and intrepidity. Robert and Rochelle Bonazzi (as well as Latitude Press) should be commended on this valuable collection.

S. Elkhadem

BIBHUTIBHUSHAN BANERJI
Pather Panchali: Song of the Road
Translated from Bengali by T. W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherji,
Bloomington: Indiana University
Press, 1975. Pp. 316. \$3.95.

To evoke sympathy untainted with patronizing condescension, to project peasant life without any romantic aura, to portray the innocence and wonder of childhood without overlooking children's many venial sins—these are the qualities that have made Bibhutibhushan Banerji's *Pather Panchali* one of the great novels of this century, and brought world recognition to Satyajit Ray, who produced and directed a film version of it. The essentially