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Gerecke, Kent (ed.). *The Canadian City*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1991. Pp. Xi, 269. Two illustrations. \$19.95 Paper
Bunting, Trudi and Filion, Pierre (eds.). *Canadian Cities in Transition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991. Pp. 555. Numerous illustrations. \$24.95 paper

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2. *The Informational City* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 351-2.
3. "Sentiment and symbolism as ecological variables", *American Sociological Review* 10 (1945), 140.

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Gerecke, Kent (ed.). *The Canadian City*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1991. Pp. Xi, 269. Two illustrations. \$19.95 Paper.

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The recent appearance of two books on the Canadian city, an unusual event, naturally prompts comparative review, particularly since both are edited volumes featuring prominent academic authorities in the field.

Gerecke's volume consists of an introduction and eighteen chapters, divided equally into six sections with brief prefatory notes. The recurrent theme throughout all sections is tension between the corporate city and local community interests. The editor is author/coauthor of six pieces; others are written by Canadian academics in planning and various social science fields, and urbanists otherwise employed.

This is, to be blunt, a shoddy book. It does not claim to be comprehensive, but acknowledges poorly its omissions. It is a republication of selected articles from *City Magazine*, with some promotion of that source, but no attempt to allow for their age (1983-90) or, with one exception, to update them. The fact that most were written before even the onset of the current near-depression clouds much of what is said—it is not clear that the

1990s will necessarily perpetuate the pattern of developer-community confrontation that is frequently regurgitated here. Beyond this: while the editorial introductions have some merit, there is no conclusion; and furthermore some section headings are frankly cynical, for they are followed by arbitrary collections of chapters inadequate to comprehend the field they address, Urban Theory being the most blatantly unsatisfactory (more corporate-community conflict!). In addition, referencing is variable and usually inadequate, certainly by the standards of most academics, a condition most convenient for the trotting-out of oversimplifications, sweeping generalizations, clichés and value-laden buzz-words too liberally—some, like "vision" and "empowerment" suggesting a specific political agenda. Related to this, style of writing is often too journalistic for the book to carry very much weight. Finally, the editor neither practices nor requires precise English grammar (misuse of apostrophes is one example) that would perhaps be more forgivable if he were equally unconcerned about the correctness of his feminist terminology.

In Part 1 (The Changing City), Reid's account of the New Middle Class somehow left out the present writer, who lives contentedly in the suburbs and views with critical detachment the return to inner-city values of which he is supposedly a part; but Reid's interesting generalizations may leave out a good deal more. Sewell's "two cities" (essentially inner/suburban) concept is a model of simplistic, value-laden, unreferenced, dated work. Foster's prescription for restoring "small talk" to cold mass society forgets to ask whether people actually want their privacy thus encroached upon, in the name of the community spirit beloved of most of the present authors. In Part 2 (Theory), Chorney's account of the capitalist takeover of our socio-economic system is a valid contribution but

is followed by more on the corporate city by Reid (who gives useful definitions, however) and by Nozick, who focuses on the alternative of Community Economic Development, which is questionably realistic and again overlooks the fact that communities, except perhaps for the most deprived, are not necessarily communities of propinquity. Part 3 (Planning) continues in the same vein, but Gunton gives a useful and well-referenced historical overview; Nasewich would reorder city planning (but with excessive repetition of Nozick); and Gerecke and Reid critique an external corporate-biased work so severely, and so questionably in this chapter, that one is left with an inverse empathy for the criticised author's perspective. Part 4 (Design) has chapters by Wolfe, Whitzman and Gerecke on detailed cases/issues that do not carry the theme very far. Part 5 (Housing) is the most substantial section, with contributions by Ley (on gentrification), Blumenfeld and Hulchanski (dated). Finally Part 6 (Green Cities), as the Introduction had acknowledged, gives little of the environmental thrust so important to any contemporary urban collection. Gerecke's article on Geddes would be better summarised as an introductory page. His article on empowerment, architecture and city planning entails grandstanding on issues not linked, as they could be, to the theme. The only "green" chapter, by Cholette, Gerecke and others, damages otherwise worthwhile ecological prescriptions by hijacking ecology for the feminist cause, on the unconvincing pretext that ecological concerns, like women (and natives) are common victims of (male) corporate exploitation.

Overall, this book is a failure, except perhaps for those who put political correctness before reasoned and substantiated argument. It is particularly sad that its inept management could backfire, by

generating an unmerited sympathy for the corporate demons who are its intended targets, and an equivalent disregard for legitimate issues because of the inadequacy of their presentation. For readers outside Canada, the book presents a biased impression of issues that confront the Canadian city, without any systematic consideration of how far they are distinctively Canadian rather than the stuff of an international political agenda.

Bunting and Filion's volume is superficially similar but very different in substantive value. It contains twenty chapters, organised as an Introduction and five thematic parts, followed by appendices of definitions and statistics and an author index. Its contributors are mainly academic geographers leading in their fields; like the minority of (mostly) planners, their disciplinary perspective is one that synthesizes wider academic viewpoints. The editors have produced a soundly managed publication in which each chapter is equipped with notes, further reading and references, and is as up-to-date as normal publication constraints allow; no initial general criticism is prompted. In considering the specific contributions, note that many are useful synopses/updates of key material that would otherwise demand much effort to assemble.

The editors' introduction identifies the comprehensive objective of the book, explains its organisation, offers an interpretation of the city based upon the cardinal principles of spatial proximity and temporal permanence, and identifies paradigms evolved for urban study. Part 1 (National Perspectives) opens with Bourne's overview of contemporary views, trends and issues. Mercer's chapter is a derivative of his seminal work with Goldberg (1986) which explored the distinction between Canadian and American cities: This not only sets the scene but cross-references other chapters to

an extent most commendable in an edited collection. McCann and Smith follow with the historical evolution of the national urban system and identity thus defined, from outposts of empire to a metropolitan-dominated heartland/hinterland urban-economic structure. Simmons then examines the dynamics of the urban system, stressing its openness and the tendency for this to increase with growing internationalisation of the economic system to which it is integral. Gertler continues, on the relationship of information technology to the development of cities, as focal points of communication, identifying policy options for the urban system that computer-based technologies permit. Part 2 (Regional Perspectives) opens with Preston's summation of recent evolution in the overall system and its regional components, relative to central place theory. This leads to Yeates' discussion of the focal region, the Windsor-Quebec Corridor, considering the accentuating growth differentials within it over this century, and the spatially varying problems of stagnation versus rural land loss thus engendered. This flows logically into Bryant and Coppack's consideration of the city's countryside, focussing upon its urban relations, form, environments, attributes and future. Part 3 (Intra-Urban Perspectives) opens with Olson's vital consideration of the evolution of metropolitan form, involving interaction between natural environment and the investment cycles that have brought waves of construction, evolving with changing technology to low density forms with negative feedbacks to the natural environment (energy consumption, waste generation). Hutchinson's essay on metropolitan transportation examines the evolution of the circulation system integral to urban form and land use, and considers its planning. Bunting's chapter summarizes theoretical concepts re social differentiation; it provides the balanced assessment of suburban reality so lacking in the Gerecke book. Ley's chapter on the

inner city is an encapsulation of its development and complex contemporary diversity by the Canadian authority best equipped for the task. Part 4 (Urban Functions) commences with Harris on a multi-faceted examination of housing, and continues with Jones' extensive overview of a retail system that has grown much more complex since its first recognition in the 1960s. Filion and Mock look at manufacturing, in the context of the post-industrial forces in Canada. Gad's chapter on office location extends his work on inner/suburban Toronto office patterns to the national stage. Part 5 (Social Issues and the Public Sector) entails Sancton on municipal governance, relative to provincial control and specifically municipal reorganization at the metropolitan level; Perks and Jamieson on the growth and future of planning, touching on urban renewal and historic preservation, *inter alia*; and finally Milroy, who examines social disadvantage with balanced attention to the gender dimension, in her discussion of marginalized groups. There is no conclusion; the book's introduction and its necessary length justify the omission.

It would be particularly unrealistic to expect perfection in an edited volume. Bunting and Filion falls short in two areas of active contemporary concern: first, ethnic relations within the evolving city structure; and secondly, the interrelated issues surrounding perceived amenity in the built and natural environments (especially "heritage" and the waterfront), its marketing to the now-pivotal tourism industry, and the commercial complex generated by it. Both areas receive multiple mention and are satisfactorily set in the larger context, but both merit more attention. In the latter field, the shortfall may be partly because (among others) the present author's Canadian contributions have largely been in external publications (notably Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990), but Jones' retail perspective

would profit by reference to those published in Canada (e.g. as cited by Ley). The fact remains that the book is already over 550 pages of well-ordered, valuable material with very extensive reach and no significant redundancy. It is an outstanding \$25-worth, unquestionably of benchmark reference value for urbanists outside geography, and absolutely indispensable to those within that discipline. It is the Gerecke volume's misfortune to appear simultaneously, but that may be poetic justice.

References

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**Bell, John, ed. *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait*.
Lawrencetown Beach: Nova Scotia:
Pottersfield Press, 1992. Pp. xxviii, 224.
\$15.95 paper.**

On a parlour table in Victorian Ottawa, one might have found a stereopticon offering the visitor views of the city—the Ottawa River seen from the bluffs behind the Parliament Buildings, the Chaudière Falls, Rideau Hall and Colonel By's Canal. In *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait*, editor John Bell offers us thirty-one views of the city in prose and poetry. He has not restricted his selections to the picturesque, for in the selections we catch glimpses of the pollution created by the lumber mills of nineteenth-century Ottawa and the life of the poor in Norman Levine's Lower Town Market area and in Brian Doyle's Uplands, site of an emergency shelter in the Second World War.

For all the beauty of its setting at the meeting of the Ottawa and Rideau rivers, further graced by the curve of the Rideau Canal and the blue vista of the Gatineau Hills, Ottawa—the "subarctic lumber village turned into a political cockpit" in Goldwin Smith's contemptuous phrase—has not always enjoyed a favourable press. And, as Sandra Gwyn intimates in her introduction, many an Ottawa resident has often seen him or herself as a transient, a bird of passage subject to the caprices of political, diplomatic or journalistic terms of tenure. Accordingly, it is fitting that *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait* offers selections from some of the city's famous visitors. In 1861, visiting English novelist Anthony Trollope commented on the new Parliament Buildings, then under construction, with Victorian solemnity:

... I have no hesitation in risking my reputation for judgment in giving my warmest commendation to them regarding beauty of outline and truthful nobility of detail (p.36).

Fifty years later, William Dean Howells, whose sister Annie married into Ottawa's francophone literary circles, praised the Market area and deplored the sawdust and effluvia of Ottawa's lumber mills. One gets a little tired of the repeated praise of the bluffs of the Ottawa River, but overall Bell has succeeded admirably not only in giving a sense of the nineteenth and twentieth-century city but of the various approaches to it: along the Ottawa River from Montreal, down the Gatineau Hills, or along the Rideau and past the Hog's Back Falls.

The social makeup of the city is also covered in the anthology. Lumbermen, merchants, vice-regal society ladies, soldiers, and even a tramp (none other than novelist Jack London) are encountered in its pages. Yet when one com-

pares this volume to Bell's *Halifax: A Literary Portrait* (1990), one realizes that the more amorphous a city, the more difficult it is to capture in a volume of this sort. From lumbering days, Ottawa has always had a large francophone population. Bell points out that there is an equivalent French language anthology for the capital—*Bing sur la ring, bang sur la rang; l'anthologie française de l'outaouais* (1979) and he provides us with two works by francophones Robert Fontaine and Naim Kattan, the latter in translation. But there is an unavoidable feeling of partialness to a unilingual anthology in a bilingual community. Bell, moreover, does not supply any literary portraits of Ottawa from the Italian or Lebanese communities, two important groups in contemporary Ottawa, perhaps because these communities have not yet produced a chronicler of the sort Norman Levine is for the Jewish community of Lower Town or Arthur Bourinot for the woods of Kingsmere. Unlike the Halifax Explosion of 1917, Ottawa's Great Fire of 1900 (a lesser catastrophe to be sure) produced no memorable descriptions like those of Hugh MacLennan or Thomas Raddall in Halifax.

Bell has included those quintessential literary Ottawans, the local branch of the Confederation group of poets, with works by Duncan Campbell Scott, Archibald Lampman and Wilfred Campbell as well as their gifted female contemporary, poet and fiction writer Susie Frances Harrison. Yet, because Bell's selections from these four writers are all brief poems, the view of Ottawa gleaned from them is slight and impressionistic, and out of proportion to their impact on the literary life of the city. For a solid prose picture of Ottawa, Bell might have turned to Scott's *Untitled Novel* (published nonetheless) with its depiction of a strike at the mills.¹ One writer who is very much missed here—Elizabeth Smart—has given us in her journals something of the froth and