

human relations — and its characteristic manner — an alternation, as she sees it, of lyricism and emotion on the one hand and compensatory flatness on the other. Wilson informs us of the genesis of *Lilly's Story* (inspired by a passing reference in *The Innocent Traveller*), discusses an early ending for the story, provides alternate endings for *Love and Salt Water*, and assesses the merits of various pieces (including several now lost) for possible inclusion in *Mrs. Golightly*. One letter seems to describe the storm which provided the inspiration for Mr. Cunningham's ordeal in *Swamp Angel*, permitting us an opportunity to compare originating impressions and final artistic transformation. We also receive Wilson's sometimes conflicting evaluations of her works, often moving from initial reservations to greater confidence but, in the case of *The Innocent Traveller*, expressing an abiding affection. Throughout, in her sensitivity to life's contradictoriness, her insistence on the centrality of voice, her strong feeling for the sentence as the essential bridge in writing (she even refers at one point to "eloquent prepositions" in a Chinese poem and firmly, unapologetically defends her own "sparing eccentricity" in punctuation), we see the sophisticated intelligence which gives her work its exactness of style and tone.

Given Wilson's articulateness about what she is doing, her concomitant, extravagant self-deprecation — the "abject humility," as she herself puts it, with which she downplays her writing or invites delay and rejection or dismisses her comments as mere "vaporizing" — strikes a decidedly odd note, at least from our perspective in time. Like the "slight attack of the shivers" that she acknowledges as an under-educated person writing for a learned journal, it can perhaps best be understood as a psychological reflex in no way interfering with her speaking of her mind. As she points out in that journal article, "one soon resumes the pleasure of ordinary conversation." The pleasure Wilson takes in this informed and thoughtful conversation is one the reader shares.

University of Lethbridge

HELEN HOY

Alberta: Studies in the Arts and Sciences, Volume 1, Number 1. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1988.

In the face of warnings from the very originators of the concept of "limited identities" as an approach to the study of Canadian history and society, can we continue to welcome new provincial or regional journals? As early as 1980 J. M. S. Careless feared that after a vogue of only a

decade “limited identities threaten to take over, and settle the matter of Canadian national identity, by ending it outright. . . .” Five years ago Ramsay Cook declared that “‘regionalism’ is a concept whose time has gone.” Now for many Canadians the decentralizing thrust of the Meech Lake Accord raises new apprehension about the consequences of embodying “limited identities” in the constitution. Conversely, the accord may provide fresh justification for the study of provinces and regions. Or do historians and social scientists exaggerate their own importance if they ask whether they have contributed to “consciousness raising” in “distinct” societies other than Quebec, and have thus helped to create a climate congenial to the acceptance of Meech Lake?

Evidently the founders of *Alberta* are uninhibited by such doubts or questions. The editorial in this first issue declares the journal’s aim to “provide the means of seeing Alberta as distinctive not in some accidental particular such as resource revenue or Social Credit but in a unique interaction of the natural and cultural forces that have shaped other regions of Canada.” *Alberta* is intended to be “actively . . . multidisciplinary” and its interests “will radiate outward to national and international issues of concern to Albertans.”

In format *Alberta* resembles a museum year book or catalogue more than the usual scholarly journal. Excellently printed on glossy paper, its 250 pages contain a wealth of illustrations, many in colour. This reader regrets the journal’s adoption of American spelling, as in “center” and “theater”; the defence of Canadian spelling seems to be a lost cause, at least in western Canada.

Although the journal is published by the University of Alberta Press and a majority of the editors and members of the editorial board are academics, several are from museums and other cultural agencies, and the editors note with evident satisfaction that two-thirds of the contributors to the first issue are drawn from the intellectual community outside the universities. To appear twice annually, *Alberta* will publish one issue each year with a special focus, while the other will feature the best articles submitted on any subject from any discipline. Every issue will include bibliographies, bibliographical essays, research notes, book reviews, and a “response section” for the promotion of dialogue among authors and readers. Altogether this is an ambitious plan.

How well does the first issue meet the journal’s stated objectives? This one focuses on Alberta’s dinosaurs, and especially on the foundation and work of the Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology in Drumheller. (Next year’s theme issue will be on popular culture in Alberta.) Since it opened in the

fall of 1985 the Tyrrell Museum has achieved considerable international recognition as a major centre for the study of dinosaurs and as a museum embodying state-of-the-art architecture and display technology. The present reviewer can understand the current fascination with dinosaurs among members of the general public, ranging from young collectors of "dinosaur cards" from cereal boxes to adult fans of dinosaur movies, but has no qualifications for judging the scholarly value of the contributions to this issue. However, I can report that all but the most specialized held my interest, from the article on the extent and scientific importance of Alberta's dinosaur deposits, which are among the richest in the world, through the account of the Dinosaur Project being conducted co-operatively by Chinese and Canadian scientists in Central Asia and in Alberta and Canada's high Arctic.

Reflecting the breadth of the journal's interests, not all of the articles in this issue are concerned with palaeontology in its strictest definition. One article deals with the planning and building of the museum, another with its architecture, while yet another offers a tentative assessment of the economic impact of the museum on Drumheller. One whole section containing five articles is devoted to "The Dinosaur in Art." Whether imaged in sculpture for museum display, in paintings and murals, or providing the integrating theme of Robert Kroetsch's novel, *Badlands*, the artist's presentation of creatures who survived for over two hundred million years and died some seventy million years ago must make a profound impact on our understanding of human history. To some it suggests the possibility of another cataclysmic end in which we "go the way of the dinosaur" through our failure to adapt to a changing environment. "For others," to quote Kroetsch, "especially for those who build cities and plan conservation and create schools, Alberta is no longer a promise but a fact. Theirs is the historical view; and for them, man must make his own and continuing destiny."

The birth of *Alberta* will not settle the "limited identities" debate. On the evidence of the first issue the journal promises to portray a particular region in a large context, to be provincial in scope yet not parochial, and for that it is to be welcomed.

University of British Columbia

MARGARET PRANG