

tions of architectural drawings, renderings, historical photographs, portraits, and beautiful contemporary shots of the College in its restored state. These are numbered for ease of reference within the narrative. The text is attractively laid out, well-indexed, and well-referenced. The work on a whole is highly recommended for anyone interested in University College, Canadian architecture, and nineteenth-century campus planning.

The book has its faults, however. Given the degree to which religious rivalry affected the early history of the University and influenced public discussion regarding higher education in Upper Canada in the first half of the nineteenth century, a few pages devoted to the history of denominational colleges should have been included. A chronology of the University and a bibliographic essay of the primary sources used in the authors' research would have been helpful as well. However, better editing would have eliminated the book's most glaring flaws: a propensity among the authors to rehash information that has already been covered in the text and the appearance of many confusing and misleading caption statements. In the latter case, the collection from which the illustration was drawn is routinely presented in capitalized letters and given precedent over all subject information—an annoying practice that works against the effectiveness of each caption. At times, the captions do little to broaden the readers' understanding of images, or worse, provide inaccurate information. In the worst instance of this, the caption identifying a full-page photograph (on page 48) prefacing the critical chapter in the book, "Toronto University and University College: The Grand Design," discusses the issue of "gigantic trees" in the surrounding woods, despite the fact that the photograph fails to show a single large tree. The caption is all the more puzzling for the reason that Richardson states that the photograph was taken during the building's construction in the 1850s (when, according to Richardson's own narrative, the photograph must have been taken after the fire of 1890). This unfortunate error should have been caught before the book went to press.

Archivists will find *A Not Unightly Building: University College and Its History* a useful model for the day when fate calls and enables them to bring out a book of their own on materials they have come to appreciate intimately in the course of their duties. Certainly, it also stands as a sensible (and marketable) approach to the publication of institutional history, especially for those institutions that boast notable collections of cultural properties. In its greater context, the work serves to satisfy Eric Arthur's hope, expressed thirty years ago in his classic work, *Toronto: No Mean City*, that the story of the building of University College would someday be fully told.

Mark A. Coir

Archives and Cultural Properties, Cranbrook Educational Community

George Grant: A biography. WILLIAM CHRISTIAN. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 472 p. ISBN 0-8020-5922-8. \$39.95.

George Parkin Grant was the descendent of a line of formidable Canadians. One grandfather, George Munro Grant, the beloved Principal Grant of Queen's University, turned that small Presbyterian college into the national institution it is

today. The other, Sir George Parkin, was a former headmaster at Upper Canada College and later the founding secretary and organizer of the Rhodes Scholarship Trust. W.L. Grant, George Parkin's father, was a professor of history at Queen's and later became headmaster at Upper Canada College. All three men had a strong sense of Canadian nationalism. They promoted ideas such as, "The New Nation," where intellectual achievement and social morality would dominate. This desire to promote social causes was far more important to them than the pursuit of money. In fact, when one of her daughters married the very wealthy Vincent Massey, Lady Parkin was quite clear in her own mind that it was the Methodist manufacturers and not the Parkin family who were honoured by the event.

George Grant followed the family tradition through Upper Canada College and Queen's and on to Balliol. At Oxford he read law, not classics as his late father had done, because his mother felt that he would be of far greater use to Canada as a lawyer than as a classicist. Unfortunately, Grant was bored by law; he wanted to study the big questions. While he continued to pursue the same objectives that his forefathers had sought, he increasingly followed his own course.

Following the War he studied theology, not law, became a university professor, an educator, and a thinker—not a man of great affairs. His mother considered him a failure and so it seems did he. But if the amount of writing about George Grant and his thought since his death is any indication, he stands a fair chance of becoming far more influential than all the rest of his family put together.

I first encountered George Grant in the Philosophy and Religion 1A6 course at McMaster University. We were treated to all the Grant trademarks that term, the unkempt dress, never ending cigarettes, and the unfinished sentences. He was supposed to teach both Plato and Aristotle but really only managed to find time for Plato. Despite his reputation for shunning undergraduates, he was a superb teacher. Often, when he was exploring an idea it seemed that his mind was working faster than his mouth so that he was always dropping his sentences unfinished as he moved on to the next idea. It was as if we could see his mind working. This could have been a bit of an act (his mother did accuse him of being a great poser), but what a way to teach eager young minds. My friends and I all became Grant converts, long before his *Lament for a Nation* was published.

Grant was given, at times, to explaining that he did not understand a certain point because to do so would require the wisdom of a saint, which he was not. The man presented to us here is no saint, but one who smoked far too much, drank to excess, and often hurt others with his unthinking remarks. He could also charm a lecture theatre full of undergraduates, attain a following of theologically conservative Christians, gain the adulation of a generation of student radicals, and still hold the respect of academic colleagues. Christian talks about Grant's deep commitment to his faith and his attachment to his mother. Sheila Grant, his wife, is the hero of this piece. It was she who gave her husband a comfortable home, six children and if she never managed to ensure his neat personal appearance, well, at least she tried. More importantly, she had a great deal to do with the neat turn-out of George's written work, which she often edited and sometimes even ghosted.

Christian has not been quite so successful in presenting us with Grant's philosophical ideas. In attempting to give us a fair representation of the man's thought

he has erred on the side of the uncritical. Moreover, Grant died a very few years ago, in 1988. It is a bit soon to expect an objective criticism of a body of work that he was still creating at the time he died. This is a biography of a fascinating man, with fascinating ideas. The future will make its own judgement about his ideas; Christian has brought us the man behind those ideas.

George Grant did not believe that philosophers needed biographies. Their work was enough, it was all that mattered. In fact, for a man who had started his university career studying history at Queen's, he had a very ambivalent view of the historical record. Christian recalls one occasion when Grant and Murray Tolmie, a former student, were discussing the subject. Grant suggested that certain records should have been destroyed. Tolmie argued the conventional line: history demands that documents be retained, etc. "Fuck history, Tolmie!" exploded George. "Just fuck history!" True to his convictions, Grant made no provision to place his papers in an archives and they passed into Sheila Grant's care. Fortunately, Sheila is very much her own woman. She has chosen to disregard her late husband's views in this matter and has given Christian very nearly complete access. In fact, Christian's use of archival sources is in itself a good reason for archivists to add this book to their shelves. He has, of course, mined the Parkin/Grant papers at the National Archives, as well as a number of other sources. He even, it seems, has created his own considerable George Grant fonds in the making of this volume.

The real value of this work for an archivist, however, comes from our need to understand more about the society that we seek to document than a knowledge of records scheduling and *RAD* can provide. This book gives us a perception of a part of the nation's intellectual and cultural history. It is for this reason, more than any other, that William Christian's biography of George Grant is worth our attention. That and the not inconsiderable fact that it is also a very good read!

Stewart Renfrew

Queen's University Archives

The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission. PAUL LITT. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. 331 p. ISBN 0-8020-6932-0 (paper)/0-8020-5003-4 (cloth).

"To promote high culture was to defend the liberal democratic civilization of the West. It was only through the type of education provided by high culture that the individual could become an aware and responsible democratic citizen." This belief which, according to Paul Litt, motivated the work of the Massey Commission, immediately arouses the interest of archivists; for enabling an informed and responsible citizenry in a democracy is one of the *raison d'être* of archives.

The Massey Commission has generally been epitomized as the symbolic beginnings of Canadian cultural activity. In this scholarly and well researched volume, Paul Litt examines the origins and activities of the Massey Commission by placing it in an historical context and presenting the political and social forces that had such a powerful impact on it. From documentation in archival papers, Litt proposes that initially, the commission was created as having a broad mandate in order to act as the government's "Trojan Horse." Its covert task was to sound public opinion on