many more anthologies, and periodicals as well. Until such a beast appears, the advice of another reviewer makes sense: for an optimum search, use the Reference Press Index and the Dalhousie Index in combination.

GORDON RIPLEY
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A recent article in the American trade magazine Publishers Weekly [30 September 1988] describes the extraordinary growth of small, independent presses over the past twenty years. Holly Melanson has charted this thriving activity in Canada for the years 1975-85 in her present work for those presses she defines as English Canadian literary presses, those 'created solely to encourage and provide a forum for new Canadian poets, novelists, dramatists and other creative artists.' Her bibliography is intended to serve as a sequel to Grace Tratt's Check List of Canadian Small Presses, English Language (Dalhousie University Libraries and School of Library Science, 1974).

The compiler has identified 240 literary presses (each of which must have published at least two original literary works within the decade, while existing independently of large publishing firms), listing 4,300 titles which fall into the category of English or English / French adult literature. Space restrictions meant the exclusion of 'non-literature' titles from these same presses.

For each press, information is included on press history, ISBN numbers used, current address or city of operation if the press is currently inactive, comments, when available, gathered from various sources [usually the proprietor], bibliographic references and a list of titles issued with author, title and date of publication. Only a small number of the titles listed were examined by the compiler, bibliographic data for the remainder was gathered from secondary sources, including in some cases information provided by press representatives. Cross-references from variant forms of press name are included within the alphabetical listing of presses. Two indexes provide access to the entries by press founder and province, and an extensive bibliography lists references to the presses and to small press publishing in Canada.

The truly astonishing variety and number of presses operating in Canada are clearly delineated in this checklist. Venerable Canadian institutions, some of them already well-documented, such as Coach House Press and Talonbooks, appear in juxtaposition with little-known originals such as Coma Goats Press and Surrealist Poets' Gardening Association. I am full of admiration for the compiler's success in identifying so many of these obviously ephemeral imprints and her perseverance in gathering details of their publishing history in the face of the 'normal elusive nature
of small press publishers.' What could be more elusive than Crad Kilodney's Channel House, here detailed for what I am sure is the first time in print? The majority of presses have published only a few titles, many of them issuing just one or two before presumably fading away. Melanson's checklist of these imprints represents probably the most permanent record we will ever have of their existence. The entries for more significant and before now, largely undocumented, presses such as Véhicule Press of Montreal and Exile Editions of Toronto are equally valuable for their historical record of important literary activity in Canada.

Melanson makes a distinction between literary presses and private presses, including in this checklist only those private presses, such as the Brandstead Press, which she considers 'literary.' There is at least one important imprint missing from this checklist which falls into both categories, the Gauntlet Press of Richard Outram which since 1960 has existed to issue the work of this Toronto poet. I believe that some titles published by the Mad-Ren Press (Soren Madsen) and the Roger Ascham Press (George McDonagh) would also qualify for inclusion by the compiler's definition.

A much more serious problem with this checklist is the lack of an author index. I recognize that the checklist is intended to document the publishing history of Canada, but the titles listed have been specifically selected by the compiler as the literary output of their presses – novels, short stories, poetry, humour, literary criticism and memoirs. Surely in this case the author of each work is as important as the chronological sequence of titles issued, or the name of the press founder. What is particularly fascinating about the small press movement is how often these presses tend to publish the early work of authors who later become respected literary figures, and the convoluted relationships which can be traced between various authors, presses and proprietors. The compiler has provided us with two pieces of this puzzle, but has neglected the third. The usefulness of this checklist as a reference work for the study of the literary history of Canada or of the work of a particular writer is seriously hampered by this omission. If a sequel to this work is planned, I would recommend that the compiler definitely consider including such an index, and expanding it to include the present work retroactively.

Melanson's checklist is, nevertheless, a most welcome one because of the limited bibliographical information currently available on the small press movement in Canada. Her carefully researched contribution to this interesting field is certain to prove useful to students of Canadian publishing history and especially to libraries wishing to expand their holdings in this area.

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