writing on Klein' (p. ix), and he annotates each item, usually providing a short paragraph of quotations and paraphrase. There are 258 items in this list, and 110 'selected book reviews,' arranged as responses to individual volumes. Pollock includes theses, M.A. as well as Ph.D., so that students considering a dissertation on Klein can quickly determine the scope and direction of the work already done. Pollock notes that 'a substantial amount has been written on Klein in Jewish books and periodicals throughout the world and some items of this sort may have been missed' (p. ix). Nonetheless, to have a list of Canadian works on Klein, a list that (aside from the reviews) aims at completeness, is immensely useful, and the annotations in effect provide a guide to Klein scholarship.

The Klein bibliography is a major achievement and a worthy addition to the research tools published by ECW Press.

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Douglas Fetherling. *A Little Bit of Thunder: The Strange Inner Life of the Kingston Whig-Standard*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1993. xiii, [1], 386 pp.; \$24.95 (paper boards). ISBN 0-7737-2706-X.

The greatest difficulty the reader faces in coming to terms with this book lies in figuring out what its purpose is. Despite the author's claims in his preface, the book does not offer much in the way of a socio-economic analysis of the newspaper industry in Canada in the latter part of the twentieth century. The context of the study remains very broad and very vague. A more convincing argument can be made for viewing the work as a social/business history of a small but respected and long-standing individual newspaper. The author's treatment of the period to 1970 has all the ingredients of a standard business history presented in a rather conventional if not pedestrian manner. It is the story of the years after 1970, however, that catches the reader's imagination, and, because it forms almost half the contents of the book, characterizes the work as a whole.

The period from 1970 to 1992 is presented in terms of the dominant personalities that formed the management/editorial/reportorial group during those years. The author attempts to project the 'history' of the institution as an evolving psychological, social, and intellectual collectivity of disparately talented individuals guided by a dominant personality. This approach injects a dramatic energy into the narrative, but the author's recourse to what are essentially techniques of fiction creates problems of historical perspective and veracity.

In terms of perspective, the book has all the limitations of an anecdotal history spun from the gleanings of a series of personal interviews. As in antiquarian and local histories, the relative importance of individuals is highly distorted by the

confined context in which they are viewed. Commonplace achievements are overblown, mediocre intellect and talent are too highly valued, and psychiatric anomalies are offered as evidence of exceptional character. Everything is somewhat larger than life and, while this perspective may enhance the effectiveness of the story as such, there is a cost involved. Historical objectivity is compromised, and the reader is increasingly conscious of the manipulative hand of the author as it works obsequiously to please and entertain, rather than inform.

The issue of historical veracity is linked to perspective, but it also points to a rather more serious problem, one which casts a shadow on authorial intention. Efforts to dramatize events as if they were fiction tend to have a profound effect on the way events are conceptualized, organized, and interpreted in the course of presentation. In this case, there are at least two fundamental aspects of the way the narrative is structured that may flow more from a desire to sharpen the dramatic focus than from the realities of historical circumstance. The first aspect is the deliberate and conscious polarization between 'the bad guys' (Southam and its corporate business mentality) and 'the good guys' (independent newspaper-people with a vision of excellence). When the former ultimately undermines the influence and authority of the latter, the result is a kind of tragic denouement in which the potential for glory fades into the light of common day, and we finally realize why the whole sad process has been viewed through a nostalgic filter. The maintenance of the nostalgic tone mitigates against developing elements of critical objectivity in the narrative perspective. The second aspect involves the virtual deification of Neil Reynolds (super-editor) and Michael Davies (super-publisher). These are the heroes of the tale, around whom a group of lesser demiheroes cluster, all of whom ultimately fail in their various and intuitively inspired efforts to maintain the glory found in their collective genius, and who end up reminiscing nostalgically to an ingratiating, non-critical narrator.

While all this may sound like bad Tennyson, the effect is reasonably entertaining in a gossipy sort of way. Still, one develops an uneasy feeling that the dramatics of the story may well be obscuring important features of the actual historical pattern during these years, particularly where the author works to deflect criticism and culpability away from Davies and Reynolds for the newspaper's increasingly difficult financial problems. As a small-market newspaper, the *Whig* had historically survived by nurturing and cultivating a loyal local constituency, which had been assiduously expanded through merger and other means. Michael Davies's father and grandfather seem to have understood the importance of this relationship better than he — or perhaps they just understood the community better. Under Michael and his editor Reynolds, the newspaper aspired to speak to constituencies beyond the local, to constituencies that may have been more imagined than real. The most obvious effect was to attract and encourage a number of bright young journalists to 'trot their stuff' on an exaggerated stage that would occasionally attract national and international attention. The pay-off was the garnering of awards and prizes, a dubious and transitory form of honour and recognition in an ephemeral medium. Both management and journalist appeared to be driven, not by a vision of product excellence or a commitment to community/client concern, but by personal vanity and gratification of ego. The tradi-

tional constituency seemed to be taken for granted, a stepping-stone from which to reach a more important audience.

The gradual decoupling of the *Whig* from the sympathies of its real and natural constituency was hardly noticeable until the newspaper violated the sensibilities and implicit trust of the community. *Whig* loyalists were prepared to tolerate special-interest editorial views (left and right) and investigative journalism that focused on issues from pollution in Cornwall to war in Afghanistan. It was vaguely flattering that these stories emanated from a *Whig* reporter, rather than a wire service, but the issues (as the community perceived them) were essentially peripheral to real local concerns and did not address the complex of expectations that tied the majority of the readership to the newspaper. However, when the *Whig* turned those same reportorial forces loose on a local issue over which the community felt great embarrassment and a deep shame, the newspaper tapped into a reservoir of resentment of which it had been only vaguely aware. The issue was the Gallienne pederasty case. There was no question where community values stood on the matter and that justice was expected to take its course. Contrary to what this book suggests, the community at large made no extraordinary efforts to hide the truth or hide from it, but it had no wish to become a national spectacle, particularly where such sensationalism did not seem to serve the ends of justice in any significant way. When the *Whig* appeared to be working deliberately to project the issue onto the national stage, placing it alongside similar sensationalized instances in Newfoundland and elsewhere, a significant portion of the community felt betrayed. To one degree or another, it seemed to them that the *Whig's* interests in an imagined constituency that lay beyond Kingston was more important than their concern for the sensibilities of their traditional constituency. The newspaper appeared self-serving, intellectually self-indulgent, and arrogantly self-righteous. But these perceptions of the *Whig* had been incubating for years and simply emerged more distinctly around the Gallienne affair. Nor were they a product of the Southam takeover, which occurred at about the same time, but a reaction to the collective personality of the paper that had been shaped by the policies of Davies and Reynolds over a long period of time.

Because Southam's acquisition of the *Whig* and its corporate management did little to change things, it became (as in this book) a convenient scapegoat for explaining the troubles faced by the newspaper in the 1990s. But the crisis in confidence between the *Whig-Standard* and its readership had its roots in management and editorial decisions made early in the 1970s. If there is a dramatic story here, it lies somewhere in a complex mix of human frailties: poor judgement, vanity, arrogance, pretension, ambition, self-delusion. Fetherling's treatment seems a bit simplistic in the face of all that.

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