and Lackington and the Development of Antiquarian Bookselling in Great Britain" is a straightforward account of their careers. Landon focuses particularly on the contents of their book catalogues and the sale of "great books" to wealthy and discerning collectors.

Paul Dutton's "Underwich [sic] Editions and the Radical Tradition" offers another escape from the mainstream. Underwhich, an unorthodox, Toronto-based publishing collective imprint founded by bp Nichol in 1979, has published a wide range of books, broadsides, chapbooks, one-folds, cassettes, and vinyl. Dutton's survey of the activities of Underwhich details its dedication to "presenting, in diverse and appealing physical formats, new work by contemporary creators, focussing on formal invention and encompassing the expanded frontiers of literary endeavour." Its authors have included all four members of the Four Horsemen (Rafael Barretto-Rivera, Dutton, Steve McCaffery, and Nichol), Victor Coleman, jw curry, Brian Henderson, John Riddell, Steven Ross Smith, Richard Truhlar, David UU, and other exemplars of the Canadian underground. Dutton's comments on the imprint's desire for an uncompromising editorial vision versus the strictures imposed by granting agencies (particularly the Ontario Arts Council) are especially interesting. And, like David Mason's contribution, Paul Dutton's work is most welcome because of its rarity. First-hand accounts of the operations of Canadian underground presses are rarely published in mainstream arts magazines.

The two parts of Descant: The Book are a zestful celebration, well worth examining. Karen Mulhallen and the contributors to the issues should be praised for their uncommon devotion to the promotion and study of the printed book, in all its glories and peculiarities.

DONALD W. McLEOD
University of Toronto


For the past 16 years my office has been in the Archives of York University. There I have watched and, at times, participated in the
growth of a collection that, among other things, is dedicated to Canadian writers. For decades before that, however, I was involved in archival research, first in records of the 19th-century writer, Anna Jameson, and then in the massive Deacon collection housed at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. I have encountered most of the problems voiced in the various articles published by Buss and Kadar, and I am vitally interested in all the experience of the various writers’ research. When I began Jameson research in the early 60s, I speedily found out that Canadian archives were in their infancy compared to great numbers of American collections. Simply because Anna had known and cultivated the friendship of many prominent 19th-century writers, Ottilie von Goethe and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, for instance, I found a treasure trove of her letters in many collections. I also found, what Carole Gerson is quick to point out in this collection, that archivists and special collections librarians are eager to help researchers, eager in fact to have their collections known, valued, and above all, used.

This collection of seven articles marks the beginning of a record of women’s archival research on Canadian women. All the papers are important and informative, giving heartening encouragement to the many others who will follow them. All of them are noteworthy in their practical detail. Some of them centre on methodology, some on analysis of material, with, of course, overlap in all cases. In “Locating Female Subjects in the Archives,” Carole Gerson, a pioneer in the field, gives invaluable practical information to novices, based always on her own extensive and intensive experience. Mary Rubio’s “A Dusting Off: An Anecdotal Account of Editing the L.M. Montgomery Journals,” is generous in both the body of the article and its footnotes, informing readers of the challenges, perils, and lessons to be learned from working with her colleague, Elizabeth Waterston, on that very arduous and wonderfully successful project. Gwen Davies, in “Researching Eighteenth-Century Women Writers: Deborah Howe Cottnam—A Case Study,” with the enthusiasm and verve of true a scholar-detective, tells the story of her long involvement with the resuscitation of Deborah Cottnam, who may well be Canada’s first woman writer.

The major overall lesson to be learned from these three articles is patience. Above and beyond all the practical and helpful tips for burgeoning researchers, it is the patient willingness to follow leads and discern possible new paths that ensures final success. Sometimes it can be counted in small numbers—Gwen Davies testifies that “it
has taken twelve years of putting bits and pieces together to be able to say that I now have nine Cottnam mother or daughter letters and seven poems of one of our earliest Canadian women writers." Rubio and Waterston, on the contrary, were faced with "some five thousand legal-sized pages of hard-to-read handwriting and they first had to be transcribed." Particularly valuable are Rubio's accounts of difficulties in obtaining the necessary grant and in having their editorial work accepted for public lending rights payments. In fact her entire article, its text and footnotes, is an invaluable primer for novices.

The articles by Buss, Kerr, Verduyn, and Kadar are analytic. In "Constructing Female Subjects in the Archive: A Reading of Three Versions of One Woman's Subjectivity," Buss demonstrates how differently biographical data can be interpreted and recorded according to the purpose and interest of the researcher. The differences in treatment of the courtship and marriage of Marie Rose Smith, a Metis, in her own account, that of her granddaughter, and the version edited for The Canadian Cattlemen's magazine in 1948-49, provide a fascinating range of possible interpretations. They constitute as well a valuable cautionary tale for researchers, who all too often are tempted to ignore the paramount importance of, in Buss's telling phrase, their subjects' "difference of historical moment." Rosalind Kerr's "Reading My Grandmother's Life from Her Letters: Constance Kerr Sissons from Adolescence to Engagement," is a personalized account of her own growth in understanding of and sympathy for her grandmother as she read her letters with increasing sensitivity. Christl Verduyn, in "Working with the Marian Engel Archive," faced a knotty problem as she worked on Marian Engels' archive. How do you justify, to yourself or others, your study of a writer who said she hoped to be found uninteresting until she had been dead "as long as Boswell." There is no easy answer, but there is an honourable compulsion to celebrate the work, and in so doing to begin the understanding of the always mysterious process of the transmuting of experience into art. Finally, Marlene Kadar's "An Epistolary Constellation: Trotsky, Kahlo, Birney" demonstrates what "began with an inquiry into the genre of life-writing and its status in cultural studies, and ended with the question of responsibility when reading and interpreting other people's private mail." The concerns her essay addresses are similar to Verduyn's and stimulate more questions than answers—but the questioning itself is valuable and a worthy and inevitable on-going project both for Kadar and for others who will follow.
My only quarrel with this excellent collection is the intermittent temptation its writers feel to lapse into theory jargon. This does not happen enough to obscure any of the articles' meanings, but it needs watching, for of course, such language is incomprehensible to a reading public which, in the interests of life-writing, is expanding daily. Among a group of writers who are keenly aware of their responsibilities to their subjects, a concomitant responsibility to potential readers, both academic and general, must surely also be a prime concern.

CLARA THOMAS

York University


This enumerative bibliography started out almost fifty years ago as a labour of love by a physician intent on developing the study of the history of Canadian medicine. Its first edition in 1984 capped a flurry of activity on the subject for Charles G. Roland after he burst onto the scene on his return to Canada in the early eighties as a full-time, tenured, well-supported chair in history of medicine at McMaster University. During this time, he organized the first scholarly conference in Canada devoted to the history of Canadian medicine (still an invisible topic internationally), then published a collection of essays from it. He led the preparation of an annotated bibliography of Canadian medical periodicals to 1975 and was instrumental in having these journals up to 1910 preserved on microfiche for future historians (they now form part of the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions collection). For three years, he took over the editorship of the only scholarly journal in the field in Canada, bringing to it a professional look. As revellers at a recent conference in honour of his retirement rightly pointed out, the field is indebted to Dr. Roland for his pioneering efforts.

This volume continues the work he first published in 1984. That bibliography was preceded by three tables of classification headings, era and place divisions, then was arranged by biographical, subject,