Mennonite town! Still, though most of his adulthood was spent elsewhere, the farm in southern Manitoba "remained something of an anchor" for him. It was "not friendly, but not threatening," a place where his Russian-Jewish father "actually owned what in the old country had been the forbidden symbol of security, land." The larger world into which he escaped introduced him to the realities of urbane anti-Semitism, a parallel universe where one drank better wines and joined—or was blackballed from—better clubs. Sirluck married a Gentile, is an avowed atheist, and had opportunities to deny his heritage. He chose instead to expose instances of social exclusion whenever he encountered them, expressing his Jewishness through his liberalism. He championed Jewish causes quietly but never timidly. As a lad, Sirluck acquired a fondness for firearms and was regarded by the townsfolk as something of a gun-slinger. It was an image he cultivated in order to discourage potential *pogromshchiki*. One senses that he may still see himself as a rifleman, not looking for a fight but ready.

"I've been told that I've mellowed," he writes in his concluding chapter, "and I frequently feel the generous glow that comes from acknowledging that someone else's opinion or judgement has as much chance of being right as my own. But I suspect that the generosity comes largely from not being responsible, not having to decide what is right in a contested situation. At my age it is not hard to be relativistic about distant matters, but in writing these pages and thus reliving earlier struggles I find myself as committed as before."

Gordon Dueck
Queen's University

Trehearne, Brian. *The Montreal Forties*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. x+381pp.

The Montreal Forties makes a number of significant contributions to a relatively narrow and neglected area of Canadian lit-

erature. In the first place, Brian Trehearne challenges the accepted view of rivalry between *Preview* and *First Statement*—two Montreal magazines that featured modernist poetry from 1942-1945. In the second place, Trehearne attempts to broaden his Canadian field of inquiry by placing the theory and practice of modernist poetry within an international context—mainly British, French, and American influences of Imagism and Surrealism. Finally, he examines exhaustively the poetry of P.K. Page, A.M. Klein, Irving Layton, and Louis Dudek whose work has not been entirely overlooked. In his structural analysis of many of their key poems, Trehearne demonstrates the complexity of their modernist aesthetics and their common strategies in dealing with the role of ego, society, and poetic form.

Of necessity, this review will focus on the intermediate chapters concerning Klein and Layton, and omit the first and last chapters devoted to the poetry of Page and Dudek; nevertheless, some of my comments on Klein and Layton apply to the other poets as well. As valuable a contribution as *The Montreal Forties* makes to our understanding of one chapter in Canada's literary history, this book raises problems that interfere with the reader's ability to grapple with the issues raised. Foremost among these is Trehearne's disconcerting style with its turgid prose, questionable rhetoric, and strained vocabulary. Even the author seems to be aware of these deficiencies when he acknowledges the support of several editors at the University of Toronto Press who copy-edited the manuscript's "failings" and "idiosyncracies."(x)

In his "Introduction" Trehearne suggests that he will offer some "reliable truths" (are there unreliable truths?) about the decade's poetry, but concludes his comments on Patrick Anderson and John Sutherland—the editors of the "little magazines"—with: "It may be my tactical error to suggest that Sutherland's surrealism and aestheticism help to liken him to Anderson, for there is just as much in Anderson to reverse the period orthodoxy"(38). Intrusive pronouns—whether "I,"

"we," or "you"—detract from narration, argument, and analysis. As idiosyncratic as these unstable pronouns are, double nouns (e.g. Anderson commentary, Layton criticism), use of passive rather than active voice, eccentric use of "remark" and "eccentric" itself, as well as terms such as "scenographic consensus," "theoretical acceptation," or "heteronormative antagonist" further interfere with the reader's ability to follow a thesis. In addition to these flaws, the reader encounters baffling syntax: "The two departures from Montreal and from vital poetic expression help us again to see, as will the prolonged middle silence of P.K. Page, the end of A.M. Klein's poetry in a tragic mental distress, and the mutual rejuvenation of Louis Dudek's and Irving Layton's poetry during 1953-4, that for these poets the 'forties' unconsciously extended, whatever the internal rhythms of the decade, from the inauguration of the two little magazines in 1942 until roughly 1954, and that is why my term 'forties' refers to that vital dozen years, '1940s' signalling a more literal reference to the decade."(39)

Integritas is one of the key concepts in Trehearne's discussion of modernist poetry in transition. Borrowing the term from James Joyce who had in turn borrowed it from Thomas Aquinas, he demonstrates its centrality in his study of "wholeness" in the poetry of the period. The term seems particularly appropriate in the case of Klein whose interest in Joyce's *Ulysses* has been well documented. Like the other poets of the forties, Klein struggled with modernist *integritas* in his efforts to integrate self, society, and poetic form, but this very struggle, combined with historical pressures of the Holocaust, led to his eventual silence. Trehearne demonstrates convincingly and incisively Klein's inwardness and his fear of invasion from external forces and strangers into house and body. Nevertheless he is aware of the limitations of any psychological explanation: "But having remarked already the later interplay of silence and anxiety over boundaries in Klein's mental life, I find it impossible to nuance the definiteness of his withdrawal from Judaica: especially since his speech continued elsewhere, while a rigor-

ous silence forced an exclusion of the matter—of the very men and women—that had given his poetry its fabric for twenty years"(125). What is the "matter" here? Is "nuance" a verb?

Trehearne reads Klein's "Shiggaion of Abraham Which He Sang Unto the Lord"(1940) as an affirmation of the poet's identity, but the root meaning of *shiggaion* implies the possibility of madness that recurs in other poems. Again Trehearne argues persuasively for the categories of anonymity, inventory, and vocation in Klein's final turn away from Jewish subjects toward portraits of Quebec in *The Rocking Chair*. He analyzes in detail patterns of accumulation and catalogues of metaphors in many of the poems, but once again he vitiates critical originality with his coinage of "cataloguism"(150) and intrusion—"I seem to require knocking on the head"(159). Given the author's structural emphasis, it is astonishing that nowhere in the book does he introduce either synecdoche or metonymy. The former device would be fruitful in interpreting the relationship of parts to wholeness or *integritas*, while the latter enters into a dialectic with metaphors that impinge on the poet's body and impersonality in objectivist poems.

While Klein's anonymity led to his final silence, Layton's vociferous ego developed during the same period. Layton's early poetry followed Imagist principles of objectivity and impersonality, but after 1953 he began imposing his Nietzschean ego in his lyric poetry. An early British influence on Layton was Henry Treece and the New Apocalypse. Trehearne explicates and evaluates several of Layton's poems according to his criterion of *integritas*. "The Swimmer" is Layton's most successful early poem while "Newsboy" suffers from an absence of *integritas*. By the early fifties Layton succeeds in establishing an ironic persona "replete with philosophical detachment and passionate vision" which "serves to make coherent the constituent images of the poem and to subordinate them to something larger than their status as mere phenomena"(207). The author is equally stimulating in his observations on "crown" and "clown" in Layton's poetry.

Trehearne insists that “a true Layton criticism never fully emerged,”(5) yet he fails to cite the examples of David Solway’s idiosyncratic “Framing Layton” or Mervin Butovsky’s model of grace and elegance. Trehearne encourages the discovery of earlier influences on Layton’s poetry: Did Tennyson influence “The Eagle” in any way? Why are Yeats and Stevens absent in this account of modernist poetry in transition? Are there not echoes of e.e. cummings in “The Black Huntsmen”? While Trehearne’s close readings of poems and modernist alignment would situate him within the tradition of the New Criticism, one wonders about pre-modern critical traditions that explore the relationships among self, objective world, and formal representation. These questions preoccupy Louis Martz in his study of the seventeenth-century’s meditative poem, while M.H. Abrams has charted these topics from neoclassicism to romanticism in the early nineteenth century. Also, Trehearne fails to take into account varieties of modernism that range from antisemitic attitudes of Pound and Eliot to the philosemitism of James Joyce.

Unfortunately the “Conclusion” of *The Montreal Forties* perpetuates the flaws that mar the book from the outset: “If I were to start the book again, now, having the preliminary work behind me . . .”(311) This structural instability contributes to “the less impactful analysis”(311) where the identical quotation from the modernist critic Hugh Kenner (unindexed) appears on both p. 69 and p. 226. How ironic that a book so preoccupied with *integritas* should lack that very quality, as well as *claritas*.

Michael Greenstein
McGill University (Adjunct)

Tzuk, Yogev. *History of the Jews in Canada: a textbook for High School Students*. Montreal: TOR Publication, 1993. vii+115pp.