

foundations of his arguments. In the author's attempt to cover so many novels and literary theories, he presents enough material to develop another book. Whereas DiAntonio succeeds in giving an interesting and good overview of modern Brazilian fiction, he fails to develop some of the questions which he himself raises. Nonetheless, DiAntonio's work has, among other qualities, the merit of calling the American reader's attention to an unfamiliar national literature.

Saad Elkhadem

CANADIAN ADVENTURES OF THE FLYING EGYPTIAN

Translated with a critical introduction by Saad El-Gabalawy

Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1990. \$6.95

Reviewed by A.F. Cassis

This is a cleverly conceived and carefully executed novella that is at once intriguing, revealing, delightful, and innovative. It is a demanding novella that taxes the reader's imagination and calls for undivided attention and close reading.

The novella is essentially the story of the protagonist, Hasan Gum'a Rajab, as he emigrates from Egypt following the Six Day War, or, as the fictional novelist calls it, the "six hour war." The story narrated by the fictional novelist is presently being published posthumously by King's Press, Cairo, with the Editor's comments clearly identified by square brackets. What is not so clear at first, however, is the distinction between the fictional novelist and his protagonist, for both their streams of consciousness are revealed by the literary convention of the interior monologue. It soon becomes apparent that the stream of consciousness of the fictional novelist is signaled by the use of the interior monologue in the form of address: "You must finish it somehow," as the opening sentence suggests, or by the first-person plural: "We must decide." The subconscious free movement of thought and emotion of the protagonist Hasan Gum'a is generally brought out by the indirect interior monologue: i.e., by using the third-person past tense to report his experiences in Egypt prior to his departure and upon his arrival in Canada. There are moments, as in the Café at the end of Jacques Cartier Bridge, when the protagonist narrates his experience directly using the first-person singular.

The experience rendered throughout the novella is a tribute to Elkhadem's total awareness and understanding of the social, economic, and cultural realities in both Egypt and Canada. Whether it is the fictional novelist attempting to create fictional situations or "complications" to further the development of the protagonist's story and justify his emigration, or whether it is Hasan Gum'a Rajab's own brush with the authorities in Cairo in the late sixties, his revulsion at the prevalent corruption, his frustration and predicament when he lands in Canada, his marginal life in the "potato island" and bewilderment at the FLQ crisis, these experiences are sensitively and perceptively realized with great economy and compression. The fictional novelist's monologue is fascinating, to

say the least, because it affords the reader the occasional glimpse into the creative process at work. It should be noted, however, that the fictional novelist's revelation of self is not necessarily autobiographical of the author. The "Editor's" notes are cleverly designed to give the traditional "party line" or viewpoint conditioned by years of propaganda and servitude. Because they are easily recognizable as such, the "Editor's" notes anchor to reality what Professor Saad El-Gabalawy has aptly described as the "strange mélange of fact and fiction." This is especially so in the fictional illusion of painstaking research indicated by the "Editor's" comments, including his explanatory notes, and the fictionally authentic but stereotyped vision of the "Republic of Canada" from the distant perspective of the Cairo resident, as well as the cleverly devised inaccuracies regarding the "states" of "Columbia," "Albertina," and Nova Scotia.

In this novella, as in his earlier work, *The Ulysses Trilogy*, Saad Elkhadem is reacting against the pedestrian realism of much of contemporary Egyptian literature as he attempts to render the actual feel of life that stems from his close observation and profound understanding of the immigrant's plight. Once again, in this bilingual edition of the novella, Saad El-Gabalawy has successfully captured in the English translation most, if not all, of the nuances of meaning without taking undue liberties with the text. Except for one minor slip on page 12, the translation is almost flawless and reads smoothly. This is one more *tour de force* by Professor El-Gabalawy, and his critical introduction is illuminating, perceptive, and insightful.

Djelal Kadir

QUESTING FICTIONS: LATIN AMERICA'S FAMILY ROMANCE, THEORY AND HISTORY OF LITERATURE.

Intro. Terry Cochran. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986

Pp. 13 + 163

Reviewed by James E. Holloway, Jr.

As Terry Cochran notes in his *essential* foreward to *Questing Fictions*, Djelal Kadir's text makes exceptionally difficult demands on the reader. Basically, he challenges the conceptualization of Latin American literature set out by Roberto González Echevarría in his noted study *Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at Home*. Both find the birth of Latin American culture in a belated "second beginning," a discovery and origin initiated when the world was already old, by cultures well on their way. But while González Echevarría argues that Latin American literature's driving force is a thirst for the cultural "home" from which Latin American writers sense they have been excluded, Kadir claims that this thirst is self-motivating, continually unfulfilled, and desired, so that the process of questing itself may be perpetuated. The quest, then, is not for an object, but becomes itself the object, and the Latin American fictions are "family" in that although they show diverse responses to the socio-historical and literary conditions which generate them, these diverse responses all express the unfulfilled quest.