Shapiro's "War" Well Done But Characters "Miss Boat"

"THE SIXTH OF JUNE" by Lionel Shapiro. (Doubleday & Company, Inc.) Garden City, New York. Reviewed by LOIS L. WILSON

To some individuals the Second World War may already seem like ancient history and the Jordan-Israel skirmishes of today more pertinent for the intelligent person to be thinking about.

However, it seems to me that Lionel Shapiro has gained much in objectivity and perspective by waiting to write this, his third novel, from an 11-year vantage point. The book was planned during the D-Day landings when the author was on hand as a war correspondent.

Winner of the Governor General's Award for fiction for 1955, the author worked for the Montreal Gazette after graduating from McGill. He also served for a time as correspondent in New York, Washington, and Hollywood before going overseas as a war correspondent. The sharp clarity of good reporting crackles through his descriptions of the mass of vessels moving off the shores of England toward the Normandy beaches.

Shapiro's best writing occurs when he focuses on the actual encounter with the enemy, on those beaches. He calls every sense of the reader into active participation in the bloody, smoky, confused mess.

The novel is well constructed and the subject matter of inevitable appeal. It is only when the author turns to the personal relationships of his characters that he begins to slip.

Lt. Parker of Malton, Conn., is leaving a good home, a promising career and a young wife whom he loves, to go off to the wars. He hardly lands in England before he meets a girl, Val, whom we are given to understand he loves more than ever he did Janie, the wife, who was alright when he left her. So that's war, the reader shrugs, while wife Janie receives no letters and finally has a nervous breakdown.

Infidelity during war time is not a new story. That it can be well handled and remain at least emotionally understandable is ably demonstrated in Sloan Wilson's recent best seller, "The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit." Shapiro's attempt to develop the same theme fails miserably. He fails to give us either humor or well developed minor characters. He does, however, give us the stark drama of the "big build-up" as well as D-Day itself — and this he does extremely well.

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THREE ATTRACTIVE MODELS representing cultures from Asia and Europe transplanted to Canada to help demonstrate Book Week being observed in Canada this week. Left to right: Dorothy Howe, China; Rita Harris, Poland, and Olga Weres, the Ukraine. Miss Weres holds a poster with the announcement in 10 languages. (CP Photo)

Record of Moravian Missionaries Big Addition to Early Canadiana

Wilderness Christians (Macmillan) is an important addition to the history of early settlement in western Ontario. It is an absorbing record of the work of Moravian missionaries among the Indians in North America in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Elma E. Gray of London, Ont., a member of the Ontario Historical Society, is the author. Her husband, Leslie R. Gray, collaborated in preparation of the material. While visiting Pennsylvania, Mrs. Gray came across some Moravian church archives and the book is the result of six years of pain-staking research.

Chief interest for Canadians lies in the second portion of the 333-page volume which deals with the settlement of the Moravians and their Delaware Indian followers in Kent county, Ont. Engulfed by the revolutionary war, they had filtered north from Pennsylvania and Ohio.

They settled in Fairfield in 1792, but a peaceful existence in the new colony was short-lived. The village was destroyed about the same time as the Battle of Moraviantown in 1813 resulted in the death of the great Indian chief, Tecumseh. Scattered in the fighting, the Moravians and their Christian Indians returned to the area when peace was signed.

For 99 years the Moravians worked among the Indians in western Ontario. Then in 1902 they returned to Bethlehem, Pa., after turning over their lands and buildings and the fruits of their work to the Methodist Church of Canada, now merged in the United Church of Canada.

The Moravian Church, also called the Church of the Brethren, originated among followers of the 15th-century Bohemian reformer, John Hus. Its early missionaries in North America were dedicated to the Evanlegization of the Indians—the Delawares in particular.

Study of Conservative Party Published by U.S. University

DURHAM, N.C.—A study of the activities and fortunes of Canada's Conservative party has just been published by the Duke University Press.

Written by Dr. John R. Williams of the West Virginia University political science faculty, the 242-page book is entitled "The Conservative Party of Canada: 1920-1949."

Dr. Williams describes the party from its reconstitution in 1920 following the period of Union Government up to its defeat in the election of 1949.

"In a sense this is a chronicle of decline," he writes. The Conservative party had the greatest record of service to Canada by the end of World War I, but since 1920 "the party has suffered frequent defeats and exerted less and less influence upon the course of Canadian government."

Dr. Williams, a native of Detroit, Mich., received the A.B. degree from Lawrence College, the A.M. from Johns Hopkins, and the Ph.D. from Duke.

Book's Impact Lost on Army

NEUBERG, Germany (AP)—The United States Army's base library here recently acquired a book called Three Weeks to a Better Memory. The first borower forget to return it in time.

Use Want Ads—They Pay

THE BOOK CORNER

Watch Your Language . . .

By Will Hankinson

SEEKING INFORMATION:

The Chinese Proverb says: "The wise man learns from experience; the wiser man learns from the experience of others." . . . Thanks to language and our mastery of it! The sources of information are many but we might consider three general categories::

First of all, there is the field of written sources. Encyclopedias, books of knowledge, text books, magazine articles, pamphlets, and even publicity and advertising hand-outs can be scanned for material gathered by others in the field.

Second, there is first-hand experience by sight. One visits the factory or the site; one sees what is going on and is able to say: "I was there and saw for myself."

Third, there is much to be learned by personal contact. Almost any person we meet knows something or has had experiences that are outside our own experience. Why do we not more often take advantage of the knowledge of those about us? Is it because that knowledge is so badly presented to us or because we are so anxious to talk that we have not cultivated the art of listening? Because it is an art and requires skill to listen well, to absorb accurately, to draw out by questioning.

Included in one or perhaps two of these sources is the medium of writing for information to those who are supposed to be experts in the field. Many people are not only willing but eager to share with those who are equally eager to learn.

Although much of the information we gather in conversation must be subjected to question before it can be accepted and although we may well run into more subjective opinion than objective fact, it is also useful to match one's own ideas against those of others. One emerges from such encounters destroyed or strengthened for other encounters.

For any given subject, time, or place, perhaps very few of these sources may be available. The important thing is to remember that information lies all about us: it is well to take advantage of what lies to hand. As we do we grow in information and linguistic strength.

Next week: Organizing Material.

WORD USAGE

Many interesting questions have been raised about word usage. It might be an idea to take up one of these points from time to time. Whether or not you care to accept the writer's views in cases of dispute, it is worthwhile to bring such points to our attention.

Don't confuse IMPLY and INFER. IMPLY means to inject or intrude a certain meaning into what one is saying; INFER, on the other hand, means to presume or suppose a meaning in what someone else says. (cf. IMPLICATION, INFERENCE.)

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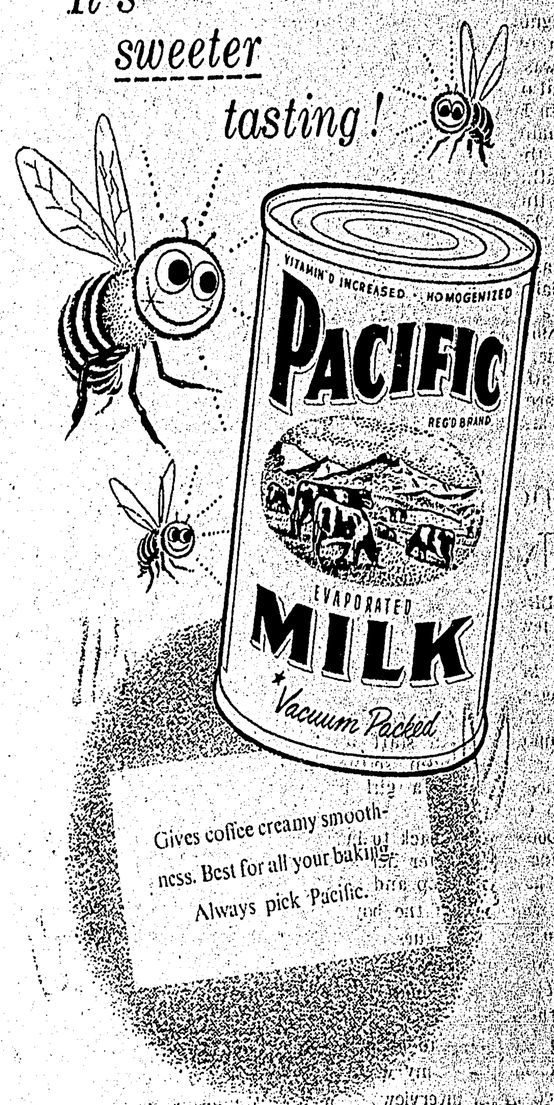

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