

BOOKS *in* CANADA

VOLUME 1, NO. 11

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THE DAY OF THE WORLD

CATHOLICS

BRIAN MOORE

McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$4.95; 105 pages

reviewed by Val Clery

THE ONLY flaw I can find in this new book from Brian Moore is in its description as "a novel" on the dust-jacket and the title-page. And that can probably be laid at the door of his publisher. At 105 pages it falls so short of the accepted novel length as to invite prosecution for misleading packaging. *Catholics*, in length and style and structure conforms to the classic dimensions of the novella, a noble literary form made almost extinct by merchandizing publishers and bulk-hungry book clubs. Moreover, it happens to be a superb novella, worth double its published price to anyone concerned with the declining excellence of fiction writing.

True to the form, Moore employs depth rather than length, allusive subtlety rather than measured explanation, the spare illuminating phrase rather than the fleshy descriptive sentence. And with these tools he has shaped an elegaic parable on the threat posed to spiritual values by the conceptual juggernaut of Humanity.

over

The story is set a decade in the future. The Catholic Church, before the ecumenical pressures from without and within, has compromised its dogmatic authority in the cause of a mundane Christian unity. The Latin Mass has been abandoned in favour of a form of folk mass in the native language of each congregation. The arcane ritual of raising the Host has been stripped of its miraculous implications and humanized. Private confessions have been replaced by a group act of contrition. And the new reformation is not over. An imminent conference in Bangkok promises the interpenetration of the Christian and Buddhist faiths. But a threat to this revolutionary progress has appeared.

A community of Albanian monks, living in an ancient monastery on the obscure island of Muck off the southwest coast of Ireland, has been offering to its parishioners on the mainland the old form of Latin Mass. Pious pilgrims from all over the world have begun to congest the area. The appetite for controversy of the British and American television networks has already been whetted. And now the rot must be stopped.

The abbot of the community has ignored the demands of his Father Provincial in Dublin that he return to the new ecumenical ways. The Father General of the order in Rome decides that he must intervene. He appoints as plenipotentiary a young radical Irish-American priest named Kinsella and, with the approval of the Amsterdam Ecumenical Council, despatches him by jet to get the reactionary monks back into line.

His encounter with the anachronistic ways of Ireland and his confrontation with the traditional Catholicism of the abbot and his small community lasts less than 24 hours. In dialogue Moore catches exactly the subtle teasing charm of Irish word play, the devious unwillingness of the Irish to accept any reality at face value. The hustling plenipotentiary, so with-it in his war surplus fatigues, is first confounded by the boatmen from the island who refuse to recognize him as a priest and so to ferry him across to the secluded monastery. He is obliged to charter a helicopter to get across.

In the ageing abbot he finds himself confronted by a man who, for all his isolation, is more conscious of the inner logic of the event than is Kinsella himself. Secretly the abbot has been tormented throughout his religious life by the very absence of faith in God that has become almost the hallmark of the new religion. But he has found his mission in serving as protector of the faith of those monks in his community who do have a true vocation.

In the end, perhaps because he recognizes that obedience is the remaining act of faith left open to him, the abbot simply agrees to abandon the Latin Mass and the old ways, to conform. The young emissary of revolution flies off oblivious to the inner truth that he has been the loser. And the abbot turns away to the task of sustaining the faith and the spiritual values of his monks through the new (and perhaps ultimate) Dark Age.

Catholics, despite its title is not a parable for the conventionally religious. In a recent interview Brian Moore, while admitting himself to be a lapsed Catholic, expressed the deepest pessimism about the possible effects of the increasingly humanized Church. On another level, however, he seems to be contemplating the cruel and crucial cycles of human destiny. The haunting ironies and implications that he raises in this novella far outrange the effects of any of his earlier novels. □

DIGGING THE ROCK SCENE

EXPLORING MINERALS & CRYSTALS

ROBERT I. GAIT

McGraw-Hill Ryerson
cloth \$7.95; illustrated; 119 pages

reviewed by Ziba Fisher

IF YOU GET off one of the liners that ply the inside passage to Skagway, you can meander north on Main Street to the Sourdough Cafe. It's on your right.

There, a hand-made sign encourages one and all to go to the old saloon up

the street to attend "Klondike Night" — a FUN-FILLED FROLIC FOR FOLKS!

And it's quite an evening. They give you some play money and let you go to it at the games; dancing girls even get Pops out of his place in the ring of collapsible chairs for a sashay-round. The climax of the evening is supposed to be the acting out of the shooting of Dan McGrew, but for the purple-haired set in tennis shoes, it's the showing of the gold.

It's certainly done with flair.

Incredibly huge chunks of gold adorn a fantastic watch-fob, which is draped round the ample girth of a scarlet-vested, top-hatted shopkeeper. These are, we are told, some of the largest single pieces of naturally occurring gold ever discovered. They were collected, the story goes, by the owner's father during the Klondike gold rush, and are insured for vast sums with Lloyds of London. England.

We can't really expect the Associate Curator of Mineralogy at The Royal Ontario Museum to be quite so splendid. For one thing, *Exploring Minerals & Crystals* fails to indicate that his father even so much as drank in a Skagway saloon, much less owned one.

In spite of such an obvious handicap, Dr. Gait has assembled a superbly illustrated manuscript. His text clearly and smoothly takes the reader from the simple to the complex and from the general to the specific. It's a delight to browse through a book such as this one — particularly because it so easily could have been merely some pretty photos (they're dazzling, actually), sandwiched into a confusing jargon-filled catalogue.

When faced with subject matter that ranges in size from the atomic to the stuff we throw on icy porches, an author must choose his examples carefully. Dr. Gait entices the reader further into the intricacies of mineralogy and crystallography by understatement, supported by good diagrams and graphs. And, of course, the plates so beautifully produced by A. B. F. Williams provide a colourful counterpoint to the text. □

ZIBA FISHER is the director of the mobile learning program at Toronto's Seneca College, where he teaches geography.

THE NEWS that book-publishers in the four Western provinces hope to set up a trade association of their own has been largely ignored throughout Canada. Not surprisingly. With newspapers everywhere inflated by the print-outs of federal electioneering, publishing, does not stand out as a crucial or a politically profitable issue.

The Western initiative, which emerged from a conference on regional publishing held early in September in Vancouver, should not be ignored however, particularly by the book industry elsewhere in Canada or by those provincial and federal officials whose concern is the growth of Canadian publishing. If an effective association does emerge in the West, its practical and economic advantages to publishers there, to their writers and to their customers, should not be allowed to obscure the wider prospects implicit in this development.

The accidental pattern of Canada's growth have given Ontario and Quebec dominant roles in the publishing of books for our dual culture. In the case of French-language publishing, serving a compact culture and market, there is little to be criticized in this situation. But the very occurrence of this regional initiative in the West implies a certain

dissatisfaction with the concentration of English-language publishing in Toronto, and with its nationally orientated contentious trade associations.

The preoccupation with the question of Canadian ownership at the centre of the industry, which has virtually destroyed its common sense of purpose and has shaped federal and Ontario policy on book-publishing (and to an extent limited and impeded it), is of secondary importance at the remove of Nova Scotia or British Columbia. Both writers and readers in Halifax and Vancouver are far less interested in who owns a particular publishing house than in how well it serves their specific talents and needs. The self-styled national publishing houses of Toronto have not shown a general ability to serve the vastly dispersed market of English Canada efficiently. And with a growing demand for a Canadian culture composed from all our sources of talent, it needs to be asked if so centrally concentrated publishing industry is desirable or necessary any longer? The dilemma should not be unfamiliar to students of our political system.

Northrop Frye, whose thoughts so often seem as apposite to questions of practice and politics as to questions of culture, has had this to say:

... It is not always realized that unity and identity are quite different things to be promoting, and that in Canada they are perhaps more different than they are anywhere else. Identity is local and regional, rooted in the imagination and in works of culture; unity is national in reference, international in perspective, and rooted in political feeling...

"There are, of course, containing imaginative forms which are common to the whole country, even if not peculiar to Canada... But most of the imaginative factors common to the country as a whole are negative influences. Negative, because in our world the sense of a specific environment as something that provides a circumstance for the imagination has to contend with a global civilization of jet planes, international hotels, and disappearing landmarks — that is, an obliterated

environment. The obliterated environment produces an imaginative dystrophy that one sees all over the world, most dramatically in architecture and town planning (as it is ironically called), but in the other arts as well. Canada with its empty spaces, its largely unknown lakes and rivers and islands, its division of language, its dependence on immense railways to hold it physically together, has had this peculiar problem of an obliterated environment throughout most of its history. The effects of this are clear in the curiously abortive cultural developments of Canada.

"The tension between the political sense of unity and imaginative sense of locality is the essence of whatever the word 'Canadian' means. Once the tension is given up, and the elements of unity and identity are confused or assimilated to each other, we get the two endemic disease of Canadian life. Assimilating identity to unity produces the empty gestures of cultural nationalism; assimilating unity to identity produces the kind of provincial isolation which is now called separatism..."

The imbalance of power within the Canadian publishing industry that has prevailed up to now seems to have exposed it to the effects of both the diseases Dr. Frye describes. Unlike other industries, publishing is not obliged to centralize around fixed resources of talent or specific areas of market. While undoubtedly a densely populated Ontario will always produce and consume more books than say, Nova Scotia, there is no longer any reason (given the advances in print technology and communications) that Toronto should hold a virtual monopoly over the publication of books addressed to Canadians generally.

The regional organization of Western publishers, if it is taken up by publishers in other regions, and if the trend is encouraged and supported both by the provincial governments and by Ottawa, could well bring about a restoration of publishing in some form of regional confederation, from the sterile environment of cultural nationalism to the fertile regions of cultural identity. □

VAL CLERY

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THRESHING IN MUDDLED WATERS

A WHALE FOR THE KILLING

FARLEY MOWAT
McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$6.95; 239 pages

reviewed by Norman DePoe

LIKE MOWAT'S earlier books, this one is vividly written, keen-eyed reportage. Like some others, it is polemical, evocative, provocative — and suspect.

Mowat lived through it personally — an episode in 1967 during his sojourn on what he persists in calling the Sou'west coast of Newfoundland. A female fin whale was cast up by a whim of the sea (and watch out for Mowat's sloppily emotional and ponderous philosophizing about dat ol' debbil sea) in a shallow, almost land-locked arm near Burgeo.

The whale — despite its sex nicknamed by newsmen and others "Moby Joe" — swallowed all the herring available in the small basin and began to sink into death by starvation. It was also subjected to ferocious cruelty — pelted with stones, shot scores of times by men with high-powered rifles, driven into frenzies by young Newfoundlanders speeding around it in motor boats just for the hell of it, suffering a deep gash driven into its helpless hide by a keel. At the time, Mowat used all his journalistic talent — and it is formidable — to raise a storm of publicity against the sadism that hastened what probably was in any case the whale's inevitable death.

His eye-witness account is an awesome indictment of the streak that lurks in all of us — the urge to move in like jackals or vultures on a dying giant, prance upon the moribund body, and scream our manhood in the prancing and kicking and wounding.

Where the book becomes suspect is in Mowat's attempts to put a sociological and philosophical gloss on the incident. He sets up an emotional picture of the outports as they were —

all fine, independent fishermen, clinging precariously to the rocky shores, all with respect for animal and marine life, and all crackerbarrel philosophers. Well, anyone who has been in Newfoundland knows that these things are, by and large, reasonably true. But when he writes that as recently as 1957, "men and boys were still fishing in open, 17-foot dories in winter weather of such severity that their mittens often froze to the oars," and then equates this with some obscure form of human dignity, I fail to follow him.

Let's put down some of the rest of the facts: it was a miserable life, with the sea taking many men, and accidents maiming others. The tiny outports, with inevitable inbreeding, produced the inevitable results of that. Diet was inadequate; ailments stemming from bad nutrition were commonplace. The odd cheerfulness of the outporter is more a tribute to man's stubbornness in clinging to a bad thing once he thinks he's stuck with it than anything else.

Mowat will have none of this. His villain in the piece is, for God's sake, Joey Smallwood. It was Joey, you see, who "decreed" the end of the outports to turn the sons of the sturdy fishermen into wage hands at places like the fish-packing plant in Burgeo. Mowat denounces the "slave" wages of 10 or 20 dollars a week, and in almost the same breath says it was these wages that enabled the young men to buy the rifles and outboard motorboats which were their tools in the savage killing of Moby Joe. Modern life breaking down the old ways? It might be noted that these are the sons of men who went out to the ice pack, clubbed baby seals, and skinned them while they were still alive.

To this farrago of Rousseauvian nonsense, Mowat adds the romantic notion of a "whale nation," pursued and persecuted by the human nation; in his view the huge mammals think their own dark thoughts as they plough the deep. His proof that they think? Well, it's obvious, because we can't understand their thoughts. The same argument could be applied to a stone.

Despite all that, it makes mostly fine reading. Just be suspicious, and remember that Mowat couldn't hack

the outports himself after a couple of seasons, and returned to be a killed *enfant terrible* on the mainland. □

NORMAN DePOE is not only the most widely known reporter and commentator of CBC's national network but also the most widely travelled.

REAL DREAMY

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE BAGEL FACTORY

DON BELL
McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$6.95; 208 pages

reviewed by Gordon Black

MONTREAL'S CLASH of French and English has spawned a strange Third Culture, part ethnic, part underground; part earthy, part mystic. Don Bell's exuberant excursion into fantasy journalism breathes the frenzied dance of life into maybe two or three of its many offbeat characters, and infuses a warm sentimentality into a couple of its choicest locales. But the book's a bit uneven, the journalism soon wears thin and the author tends to stereotyping and no-holds-barred reverie.

These are flesh and blood people. I have known the painter Luigi Scarpini, "the gentleman Bohemian from Perugia" since 1960. Never has he expressed the slightest desire to become mayor of his native city. Yet this petty ambition is made to dominate the entire sketch. Passages like: "The concubines and maidens are waiting too, with their legs spread wide open . . . He . . . the real mayor of Perugia, will be flying angel-winged over the Appian way, and as the trumpets are sounded gloriously in the sweet Italian morn, as lightning jolts the earth, he will enter into the city . . ." have nothing to do with Luigi.

Bell should have made much more of Scarpini's Montreal harbor forays, his shipboard feasting with captains and crews, his \$10 cars, his love affair with Scandinavia, his political discus-

sions, from the fall of the Roman Empire and rise of the Papacy to inside gossip about the Union Nationale and the Ottawa Conservatives. As for holding office, nothing less than Caesar's post would suit him.

The far less complex Balloon Man is a tour de force of poetic realism. Bell sees his "pageant of balloons fluttering in bright ecstasy above shoppers heads" (outside Woolworth's) as a symbol of the new Montreal. It might also symbolize escapism from the culture clash — just as the author's Anti-Serious Society foolhardily infiltrates the 1969 McGill confrontation with a sign reading "After the riot, eat at Joe's."

Behind his rubbery image and raspy "two f'a quartuh," the balloon man is a hermit. Not invited to his apartment, Bell fantasizes the poor man to death, imagining his pad as one gigantic balloon — balloons on the ceiling, in his bed, in the refrigerator, in the dish washer. By the same analogy he might see Toronto's buck-toothed mayor as a rabbit living in a hutch, indulging in a nightly lettuce orgy.

Another good character is Eddie-do-nothing Baker. Eddie's indolent life and keen cerebration in cafés and below-ground cafeterias is amusingly drawn. But is it so unusual for a philosopher-poet, arch member of the Third Culture, not to seem to do very much? The constant "bong... bong... bonging" makes for powerful imagery, but turns Eddie into a robot. One of Bell's cruellest weapons is onomatopoeia. Color him Ding Dong.

The title story is warm and humorous. Everyone drops into the bagel factory after the Saturday night show for a rich honey-soaked bagel (a kind of crisp Jewish doughnut). Time to slough off the week's cares, enjoy matzoh-ball philosophy, flirt with the upstairs widow, josh with the owner. There's little cruelty: the bagel's a symbol of good luck and the life cycle.

Other scenes have been done better by Runyon, Saroyan and Tom Wolfe — moochers, baseball players, gypsies, theatrical agents, pop singers, god-freaks, café society. There's one sympathetic portrait of a wrestler and his agent, though.

Unfortunately in many sketches the media murders the message. Cam-

eras whirr, tapes spin, microphones intrude, film techniques louse up promising descriptions... and everywhere Bell plays the virtuous newspaperman with his disorganized notes and \$50 handouts to needy interviewees. Third Culture photographer John Max is dragged into almost every piece, yet the only illustrations are some infantile drawings by David John Shaw.

In future Bell must choose between pure fantasy and realistic reporting. *Saturday Night at the Bagel Factory* straddles a thin line between the two. □

GORDON BLACK, freelance writer and broadcaster, was a longtime resident of Montreal and co-author of a guide to the city, *Ma Grande Ville*; he now lives in Toronto.



GOODIS GRACIOUS

HAVE I EVER LIED TO YOU BEFORE?

JERRY GOODIS

McClelland and Stewart
cloth \$7.95; illustrated; 168 pages

reviewed by Bob Farrelly

WE ALL HAVE our opinions of the ads that assail us every day, but most of us don't know much about the people or the companies that make all these commercials. Jerry Goodis sets out to remedy this deficiency.

As president, co-founder and part owner of Goodis, Goldberg, Soren Ltd., the seventh largest Canadian-owned agency, he feels he has the credentials to tell us about *Canadian* advertising and its problems. However, he does a much better job of telling us about the rise of the Goodis agency than he



Give a private picture gallery of Canadian Art

A magnificent art book representing the work of 125 Canadian artists in 127 full colour plates and 72 black and white.



Four Decades

Pat David

\$24.95

Clarke Irwin / Canadian Publishers since 1930

does of informing us of the Canadian advertising scene.

His description of how he started his agency and its rise to fame and fortune is both fascinating and informative. He tells us that the "Goodis" brand of advertising is based on respect for the consumer; something he learned as a child in that "rowdy swarming area of Toronto that is looped by Bloor, Spadina, King and Ossington."

It was here that he picked up his dry critical humour, which makes this book worth reading. His description of some of the TV commercials warms a consumer's heart; my favourites are his comments on Josephine "the dyke plumber" and the "blond capon," better known as The Man? from Glad.

Unfortunately, his discussion of Canadian advertising is less satisfactory. He makes his points in an easy-to-read and sometimes humorous fashion —

but important things are left unsaid or are glossed over.

For example, he insists that advertising must be truthful, tasteful and humane but he does not tell us how we can get such advertising. At one point he seems to imply that it is up to the advertisers to insist that their agencies produce such advertising; but it's difficult if not impossible to produce good ads for poor products.

Experience suggests that manufacturers will not withdraw such products. On the contrary, more and more dubious products seem to find their way onto the market. As long as there is a profit to be made, some advertising agency will produce commercials for such dubious products as vaginal deodorants; we will be lucky to get honesty and taste from such commercials.

In his demands for better advertising, as well as in his comments on the

media and the American take-over of Canadian advertising agencies, Goodis stops short of suggesting any significant change in the system. In view of his success in the current system, this is not surprising. But it does leave his arguments unfinished.

Goodis is aware of his ambiguous position. He finishes his book with the note that when the young go to the barricades, he will be with them, "if he can get a sitter." This left me with the feeling that Goodis, like most of the advertising agencies, will go where the profit is. It's to be hoped that honesty and taste are compatible with profit; if not, we all know what will go. □

BOB FARRELLY is a former market research manager currently engaged in sociological research at University of Toronto.

PAGING MISTER TRUDEAU

reviewed by *Philip Sykes*

PARADOX: Trudeau as Prime Minister

ANTHONY WESTELL

Prentice-Hall
cloth \$6.95; 272 pages

THE TRUDEAU QUESTION

W. A. WILSON

General
paper \$2.95; illustrated: 96 pages

CONVERSATIONS WITH CANADIANS

PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU

University of Toronto Press
cloth \$8.50, paper \$1.95;
illustrated: 214 pages

TRUDEAU & FOREIGN POLICY: A Study in Decision-Making

BRUCE THORDARSON

Oxford
paper \$2.95; 231 pages

I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN

MICHELLE LE GRAND

& ALLISON FAY

Greywood
paper \$1.00; unnumbered pages

IN THE Trudeau Industry, if nowhere else, unemployment is down. If that is a predictable trend of election season publishing, so is a degree of inflation. The industry feeds at such times on topicality, real or imagined, with quality often running second.

How many of these publishing boomlets are useful? What, now, do we want to read about the PM? Not, surely, more of his speeches — even the elegant ones. And certainly not witless photo-gags about his presumed licentiousness, egoism and advancing baldness.

No, the consumer, I'd guess, is in the market for straight political assessment. The sycophants have given him enough Trudeau, Philosopher King, the polemicists enough of Trudeau-Mephisto. This is a real man. He's been running the country four years and is asking — now — for another four in the job. How well, how badly, has he performed?

Antony Westell, Ottawa columnist for the *Toronto Star*, and W. A. Wilson, Ottawa editor of the *Montreal Star*,

provide such assessment. They're seasoned and careful Trudeau-watchers.

Wilson's book, a frank election "quickie," moves briskly through 14 aspects of the Trudeau years and delivers revealing vignettes of the Prime Minister at work.

In Cambridge Bay, for instance, where Arctic Eskimos are being drawn into increasing dependence on the money economy, Wilson saw Trudeau look at the packaged breakfast foods stacked in a settlement and falter in his assumption that modernization necessarily improves the life of the natives. "You wonder why we are doing all of this," he said. At the end of the tour, Wilson concludes, Trudeau did not know how the danger to Eskimos could be avoided . . . "but alone among Canadian prime ministers he had gone out to find whether they were in danger." A plus there.

Reviewing the War Measures period, Wilson quotes a speech Trudeau delivered to the Liberal convention one month after the crisis, a time, in the author's judgment, for "winding down"

Canadian tension. Trudeau used the occasion for a repetitive attack on FLQ terrorists—"throwbacks; obsolete dark vestiges of prehistoric animals . . . the tailings of history."

Such words, says Wilson, would be justified if used to rally a frightened or uncertain nation. Coldly planned for a political meeting weeks after a traumatizing crisis, they were "an inflammatory appeal to emotion," part of "a mood of controlled hysteria." A big minus.

Wilson's final chapter is called "The Vision Darkens." After four years of power, the leader who emerged as a "genuinely contemporary man" interested in enlarging individual liberty is musing on the menace of disorder and society's need for more individual self-discipline. "He is an elitist who rose to power as a populist, and then reverted to his normal approach to the world around him."

Antony Westell's book, more ambitious, more orchestrated to large national themes, is of more than passing electoral interest. Approaching his subject with immaculate fairness, he draws the political sores of Trudeau rule into daylight with the gentle persistence of a careful surgeon peeling off bandage.

Always understanding, even sympathetic, Westell yet shows that Trudeau's promise of 1968 has not been fulfilled. Wider "participation" in government has "barely begun." Canada's economy has operated in "entirely conventional" ways. "Tinkering" with the constitution has led nowhere. And national unity — the challenge that launched Pierre Trudeau four years ago — is more remote than ever.

"National Disunity" is a fine chapter — a perceptive account of the rise and fall of Trudeau's policy of One Canada with Two Official Languages. It was promoted with enough power and skill to smash "two nations" and "special status," to discredit any idea of a half-way house between federalism and Québec independence. It was a political winner. Yet its impact on Québec was a barren polarization. The political middle was ripped out, leaving Trudeau and René Lévesque to glower across a chasm.

Rather surprisingly, Westell nowhere suggests that perhaps Trudeau, like many an ideologue, misjudged his time,

that a formula that could conceivably have excited the Québec contemporaries of Louis St. Laurent might hold little meaning for those of Bourassa and Castonguay.

Bruce Thordarson's study of Trudeau's foreign policy is for a more specialized audience, though it echoes the others in one interesting way. Even in foreign affairs, it shows, the Trudeau period was marked by a deceptive appearance of radical change, without much substance to match.

Conversations with Canadians is an authorized compilation of "segments" of Trudeau speeches and interviews.

Though superior rhetoric, they read flatly when divorced from their speaker and context. Most of them are soliloquies before reverential hearers — not conversations.

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden is a caption-bubble picture book I found tasteless and unfunny. Perhaps it represents the cheap-and-nastiest product line from this year's Trudeau Industry. By fuddle, I hope it does. □

PHILIP SYKES is a political commentator and editorial writer with the *Toronto Star*.



THROUGH THE DARK GLASSILY

THE GREAT CANADIAN NOVEL

HARRY J. BOYLE

Doubleday
cloth \$6.95; 343 pages

reviewed by Douglas Marshall

OF COURSE, ONE'S first reaction to the title is to wince. Surely what we have here is parody. The search for this Northwest Passage of literature has become a joke in such bad taste that even *Spring Thaw* dropped it from the repertoire years ago. But no, Boyle is in passionate earnest. *The Great Canadian Novel* is about a man preoccupied with The Great Canadian Novel who one day finally decides to stop talking about it and write it. Significantly, he arrives at this decision during a week-long binge in New York and executes it during a week-long drying-out period in Mexico. What do they know of Canada who only Canada know...?

It is also about a man struggling to come to terms with three obsessive forces: awakening nationalism, half-abandoned Roman Catholicism and omnipresent alcoholism. It is about growing up in a Prairie whistle stop, running away from poverty, and making it in the big city. It is about the banalities of the advertising business, the prostitution of the CBC, the temptations of the Big Apple. It's about sex and faith and drugs and lost innocence and what it feels like to be 50 in 1970 and too many other things.

It is not *The Great Canadian Novel* or even *a Great Canadian Novel*. It's just a good novel, with virtues and flaws like any other good novel. And God knows, that's achievement enough.

Shane Donovan, well-known Toronto advertising lush, pillar of the Nonentity Club, father of wild-flowered toilet paper — "wipe your fanny with a pansy" — is in the middle of the journey of his life. Next stop: New York, to be feted by his peers as the first Canadian to win the coveted Hiram Aldred Award (a naughty dig by Boyle) for creativity. An esprit de

corks prevails. For five east-side, west-side days Donovan is more or less smashed all around the town. Between gulps he manages to get laid, try drugs, talk incessantly about Canada, help precipitate a suicide and torture himself with memories of sins past.

What Donovan is suffering from is a dyspeptic conscience concerning his existence. Echoing the slob in the Alka-Seltzer commercial, he can't believe he lived the whole thing with so little to show for it. Sour scenes from all his yesterdays keep eructing like morning-after heaves. One of the strengths of the novel is the skill with which Boyle shifts his straightforward dramatic narrative between time zones, juxtaposing past and present for maximum effect. Although the descriptive writing is flat, even embarrassing...

He was oblivious to the people in the lobby. It was as if he were suspended in a timeless void.

... Boyle has a good ear for dialogue and much of the story unfolds in crisp, truncated admen's jargon. We believe in the situation, share the tensions mounting up around Donovan.

Unfortunately, and this is a fundamental weakness, it is almost impossible to believe in Donovan himself. Oh, all the background is there. If anything, we're given more than we want to know about what is supposed to have shaped his character, what makes him tick. But it doesn't add up.

This is a falling-down drunk. He blacks out every now and then for lost weekdays. His doctor tells him he is "pitching for membership in the Graveyard League." Yet is he ever a bore, let alone a boor? Hardly at all. In fact he is venerated as a philosopher-king by everybody who knows him (except

his wife and a neurotic anti-Canadian rival). Lubricated, he becomes more lucid. In moments of alcoholic impotence, he can still ejaculate witty metaphysical seeds; \$20,000 marketing ideas are pulled out of a Scotch-and-soda mist; he is altogether too smug about knowing what's right and wrong with the world to justify the crisis of confidence he seems to be experiencing.

Donovan, in other words, is in the tradition of Shaw's pathetic fallacy — a mouthpiece trying to pass as a human being. Boyle obviously had a multitude of ideas he wanted to get off his chest. By loading them all onto poor Donovan, he splits the personality he is at such pains to bring to life. Toward the end, Donovan-Boyle is literally reduced to speechifying in order to hammer some of these ideas home:

America is sad. From being a benefactor of mankind in the post 1939-45 years, it has moved to where it is regarded as an oppressor... Sad, too — is my country. Because while it has the opportunity like a younger brother to avoid the mistakes of an older one, it is often traumatized and fascinated either into easy acquiescence or imitation. Instead of developing those unique qualities with which heritage and environment have endowed us, we are too often passive and defeatist...

(Give 'em hell, Harry, and damn the platitudes.)

Sad, too, is *The Great Canadian Novel*. Because all the nationalistic and political moralizing, none of it any fresher or more profound than the last issue of *Maclean's*, is just so much damp wood. What keeps this book flickering, sometimes flaring, with true literary heat are the passages describing Donovan's bouts with the bottle. It's all there — the little lies, the humiliations, the thirsts that breed thirsts, the retching and the slow ruin of relationships — mixed with the honesty, conviction and understanding of motives that distinguishes good creative writing from moonshine.

The reason this book miraculously survives its title is that it refutes itself. There is no such thing as *The Great Canadian Novel*. There never was and there never will be. There are just novels about people. Some are good and some are bad and some of both will continue to be written by and about Canadians. □

hockey shock...



DEATH OF A LEGEND

SUMMER 1972
TEAM CANADA
VS. USSR NATIONALS

Edited
and written
by Lenk W. Hoppener

Death of a Legend -- the Canada-Russia hockey games seen in retrospect. The stories behind the series -- why they came about, the Hullabaloo, the N.H.L. position, and, more important -- why we almost lost! *Death of a Legend* is the history of the games as written by the best journalists, illustrated by the best photographers, and expanded by quotes on facts, rumours, and personalities.

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AMENDED GENDERS

IN TIMES LIKE THESE

NELLIE McCLUNG

University of Toronto Press
paper \$2.95; 125 pages

WOMEN UNITE!

VARIOUS

Canadian Women's Educational Press
paper \$3.00; 191 pages

reviewed by Storm Reynaud

THE PAST five years have seen a great surge of writings by women, for women, about women. You can now walk into almost any reasonably well-stocked bookstore and see at least a whole shelf devoted to books like Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*, Caroline Bird's *Born Female*, Robin Morgan's anthology *Sisterhood is Powerful*. So we all have heard about Emmeline Pankhurst, Mrs. Bloomer and Carrie Nation. But who is Nellie McClung?

The University of Toronto Press has filled that particular gap in our knowledge by reissuing *In Times Like These*, first published in 1915, by one of Canada's best-known feminists and social reformers who also happened to be "the only woman at the Canadian War Conference of 1918, an MLA in Alberta, the first woman member of the CBC's Board of Governors, and in 1938 a Canadian delegate to the League of Nations." A careful reading of her arguments for women's rights shows how she managed to get everything done: with zest, with disarming and deceptively effective wit, and above all with a logical working out of a few basic principles.

Unlike many feminists today, she felt that "every normal woman desires children" and saw this nurturing "instinct" as proof of female superiority. Using her opponents' concessions on this point, Mrs. McClung boomeranged their arguments about women's purer natures by reasonably suggesting that creatures possessing such admirable traits were desperately needed in the world of action where men had bungled everything so badly.

The economic dependence of women, the smugness of the comfortably-married female, the drudgery of never-ending housework — all these subjects she attacks with relish and energy. No political radical, she is at her best when demolishing the time-sanctified clichés and prejudices inevitably trotted out by the keepers of the status quo. And that, according to the more recent *Women Unite!*, makes her an agitator for women's rights rather than a believer in women's liberation.

The laudable aim of *Women Unite!* is to provide Canadian materials for those women dedicated to the idea of liberation in a Canadian context. Up till now, almost all the models have been American, with strategical analy-

ses firmly grounded in the realities of life in the United States. Only the fit here isn't always perfect.

Distinctions between women's rights and women's liberation, the radical feminist perspective versus the Marxist analysis of a class society, conflicting ideas about what to do next — all this ferment is well-represented. There is also a bibliography of writings by and about women. And yet (my one real qualification), it's all so terribly dreary. Perhaps what we need now is a bit more of Nellie McClung's keen sense of ridicule and her engaging buoyancy. □

STORM REYNAUD, who grew up in Quebec, has worked in publishing in Britain and Toronto.

FAST AND LOOSE

SURVIVAL: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature

MARGARET ATWOOD

Anansi

cloth \$8.50, paper \$3.25; 300 pages

reviewed by Fraser Sutherland

A RUSHED QUALITY pervades Atwood's often-commendable guide to the themes of Canadian literature. Not that she rushes to judgment; her conclusions are consistently well-founded. Nor is there any sign she has neglected her homework: she has read and, far more important, assimilated a great many books, even if one finds a disproportionately large number of Anansi titles among those she considers. Indeed, the only Anansi author who is not discussed at length — regrettably — is the outstanding Canadian poet, novelist and critic Margaret Atwood. The prevalence of Anansi titles is of course no major flaw — so long as the books she selects bear out her thesis. For the most part they do.

The thesis, simply put, is that "every country or culture has a single unifying and informing symbol at its core." For America, it is "The Frontier"; for England, "The Island"; and for Canada, "Survival." The obsession with survival and the persistent inability of persons and groups in Canadian literature to

survive gives Canada the image of a "collective victim." The victimization is manifested in four "Basic Victim Positions." Condensed somewhat, they are:

One, the denial that your experience is that of a victim.

Two, the assertion that you are victimized by some greater force, e.g. fate.

Three, the acknowledgement that you are a victim, but that the role is not inevitable.

Four, the assertion that you are a "creative non-victim."

As a way of life, the last is preferable to the others, Atwood says, though it does not necessarily produce the best work of art. With that fact firmly fixed, she takes the reader on a tour of the constants in Canadian literature — a litany of losers: frozen explorers, toppled moose, futile heroes, starved Indians, barren wives, and paralyzed artists.

The model is ingenious, and flexible enough to encompass everything she

considers. But one wishes she had chosen evocative phrases — as she does in her splendid comparisons of national symbols — rather than numbers. On occasion, mercifully rare, the book reads like an Arthur Murray dance lesson. In consequence one finds passages like this:

... there comes a point at which seeing yourself as a victimized animal — naming your condition, as the crucial step from the ignorance of Position One through the knowledge of Position Two to the self-respect of Position Three — can become the need to see yourself as a victimized animal, and at that point you will be locked into Position Two, unable to go any further.

This, if a pun may be forgiven, is circumlocutory prose. As the book goes on, the references to Positions become fewer, as if Atwood herself were growing tired of the device.

Atwood never tires of asides. Some of them are delightful. Commenting on the role of animal victims in our literature, she says, "Irving Layton's 'Cain' is a meditation on a frog he has himself killed with an air-rifle; presumably the title makes the frog his brother." Others are frivolous; after an Edmund Wilson quotation she parenthesizes, "(Right on, Edmund.)" Most annoying are the numerous road-signs she inserts: "(See Chapter Nine for more failed artists.)" Such asides are a sure indication the writer is improperly co-ordinating her material.

Another hint of a bumpy surface is the set of quotations — as many as six — with which she prefaces each chapter. Surely most of these would have been better incorporated into the text. The same stricture applies to the appendix she sometimes scotch-tapes to a chapter.

Perhaps the most conspicuous structural tic is — to use Atwood parlance — The Hungover Lecturer Syndrome. The syndromes are introductory phrases like: "So far we've been looking at . . . Now we'll look at . . . This chapter looks at . . . In the last three chapters I've been talking about . . ." This kind of thing is all very well for a Grade B English professor but it has no place in prose by a writer of Atwood's calibre.

In some respects, Margaret Atwood is Canada's answer to the prolific American, Joyce Carol Oates, though

on the whole, I think, a better writer. Oates trades on her high-tension sensibility; Atwood on her superb intelligence. All the more reason why this book — good as it is — ought to have been better. The crisp precision of her poetry and fiction is missing here, though her analysis — informed by the work of George Grant and Northrop Frye — is challenging, witty and stimulating. Other reviewers undoubtedly will amply and justifiably praise her. It's my contention, however, that Atwood's brilliant ideas and considerable wit are dispersed in a form just slightly better than slipshod. □

FRASER SUTHERLAND, who lives in Montreal, is a freelance writer and is editor of *Northern Journey*.

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR AVON

RENOWN AT STRATFORD

TYRONE GUTHRIE &
ROBERTSON DAVIES:

with drawings by

GRANT MacDONALD

Clarke, Irwin & Co.

cloth \$9.50; illustrated; 128 pages

reviewed by *Wilder Penfield III*

FOR WHOM is a book subtitled *A Record of the Shakespeare Festival in Canada — 1953* being reissued?

It is for the 66,000 people who saw *Richard III* or *All's Well That Ends Well* that first season, many of whom missed the first edition.

And for the millions who have visited Stratford theatres since, accepting their existence as the natural course of things, without realizing how close we came to never having them.

And for students of Shakespeare seeking intelligent commentary on two of his less familiar plays.

And for devotees of drama in general who know little of theatre crafts in this country.

With most of these people, simple awareness of the book will prod them to check it out. The general reader, though, will most likely pass over this small offering. And why not? What's in it for him?

People, mostly. Stimulating people. There's the late director Sir Tyrone Guthrie who writes here as though he were sharing special memories, alive with enthusiasm and humor, over an after-dinner cognac. His section deals with the pregnancy and birth of the Avon tent theatre, a good story in any reporter's hands, but through his recounting of it, much more. The breezy informality ("goodish going"), the alertness for odd details (the behaviour of sparrows in the rehearsal shed), the memory for good anecdotes (the trials of Skip, the Tent Man), and the directness of the presentation ("In Canada it is idle to expect many people to have had professional [dramatic] experience except in radio") — all combine to give rich texture to the narrative thread.

Then there's Robertson Davies, who "begs to be regarded not as a critic but as an informed lover of the theatre." Fair enough, for his discussion of the plays is less a guided tour than a "showing-around." Like Guthrie, rather than lecture about facts, he confides enthusiasms about people. His emphasis, therefore, is more on the players than on the plays, more on audience reaction than on critical assessment, more on the creator than on his creation.

It is too early for nostalgia about what still seems to be a brash, youthful theatre. This is instead a commemoration, atmospheric rather than judicial, which allows intervening years to dissolve without crystallizing into long-range perspective.

Moreover Davies is not a picker of nits — the occasion stirred him to rethink not only the first season, but also the arts in Canada, the role of the director, the universal attraction of the villain, the merits of modern-dress productions, violence and sexism then and now, the requirements of comic acting, Was Shakespeare a snob? and so on and so on. Side trips in this profusion are lethal to a sense of direction, but this is not a reference work;

it's a conversation, and it's the company that counts.

And finally there's Grant Macdonald, an artist who cares about people. Twenty-four colour-stained drawings of characters in the first two plays are here, and in many cases the personalities of the actors seem to rise from the page. To get to know them is to have a feeling for the kind of excitement that only live drama can bring.

It is Macdonald who makes of this bound collection of essays a coffee-table book for small but proud coffee-tables. It is Davies and Guthrie who make of this art book an entertainment with lasting savour. □

WILDER PENFIELD III is a member of the editorial staff of *Rainbow*.

SOMEHOW IT BAFFLES BRAINS

THE LORD'S PINK OCEAN

DAVID WALKER
Collins
cloth \$5.95; 158 pages

A STRANGER IN MY OWN COUNTRY

GLEN FRANKFURTER
Longman
cloth \$8.95; 288 pages

LITERATURE, LIKE LIFE, is not fair. Mr. Walker, best-known for *Geordie*, has dashed off a flip piece of fantasy about ecological disaster. The writing is pedestrian, the characters puppets. Mr. Frankfurter has realized a novel about a one-man company town in northern Ontario at the beginning of the 1950s. The atmosphere is convincing, the writing is often inspired and the people live. It is a far deeper book than Walker's, a multi-

dimensional evocation of an important part of the Canadian experience.

Yet slight and slipshod as it is, *The Lord's Pink Ocean* has a curious elevating power that obscures its defects; while *A Stranger In My Own Country*, for all its loving craftsmanship, somehow lacks the emotional punch its various assets should have delivered.

We don't believe in Walker's situation for a minute. A lethal algae has turned the oceans pink and most of the earth grey. As far as we know, humanity survives in a verdant, freshwater valley in New England. By contortions of plot mechanics, Walker contrives to make one family of survivors black and the other white. Moreover, through further contortions, they have regressed to superstitious peasants in the space of one generation. Then out of the northern skies splutters an airplane carrying jolly Eskimo missionaries. Apparently there is still civilization up beyond the Dew Line...

So far so ridiculous. What happens next defies logic. But like all fairy tales, the plot generates its own fascination. We are led willingly down the garden path of Walker's imagination like children hypnotized by a surrealistic cartoon. And when the trip is over, odd images return to haunt us.

Frankfurter's plot is drawn from that tough Old Testament standby, the decline of the patriarch and the return of the exile to bring new life to the land. David Balster comes back to Sparrow Lake after five years to repossess his wife and take control of his father-in-law's feudal lumbering operations. A symbol of hope for the inhabitants, all gauntly portrayed, he spends a winter resolving the crises his reappearance triggers within the community and within himself. There is a splendid climax, crackling with cold and framed in weather-beaten Gothic, and by spring he is master of himself and those around him.

Perhaps the weakness here is that the structure is too perfect, the symbolism too neat. Frankfurter's accretion of detail harks back to Hardy but there is no brooding pessimism to tug at our heart. Walker carelessly flashes a vision in the pan and for a lucky moment we are back with Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. As I said, it's damned unfair. □ DM

WRITING ON THE WALL

THE SHOUTING SIGNPAINTERS

MALCOLM REID
McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$8.95; 315 pages

QUEBEC — ONLY THE BEGINNING: The Manifestoes of the Common Front

Edited by DANIEL DRACHE
new press
paper \$3.75, cloth \$7.95; 279 pages

CHOOSE

PIERRE VALLIERE
(Transl. Penelope Williams)
new press
cloth \$5.95; 112 pages

HISTORY OF QUEBEC:

A Patriot's Handbook
LEANDRE BERGERON and
ROBERT LAVAILL
(Transl. Philip London)
New Canada Publications
paper \$1.00; illustrated

reviewed by Beverley Smith

MALCOLM REID's title is borrowed from a collection of poems by Paul Chamberland, *L'Afficheur hurle*. It refers to that group of *Parti Pris* writers who saw themselves as "sign-painters", writing political slogans on walls, and who attempted to arouse the social and political consciousness of their fellow Quebecers regarding the state of colonization affecting all aspects of their daily lives.

The author, long active in socialist movements, and a first-hand observer of the province's political scene (as a bilingual reporter for various English-language Quebec dailies), takes a very personal look at the novelists, poets, dramatists and chansonniers who helped bring the Quebec left into being during the 60s. He examines *Parti Pris*' role, both as a political organization and a

publishing house, and shows its effectiveness as well as its limitations in reaching the Quebec populace.

What is outstanding about this presentation is the sensitivity and understanding that Reid, as an English-Canadian, brings to bear on his subject-matter. Many of the people he speaks of he knows personally. The author closely examines the family and educational backgrounds of such writers connected with the *Parti Pris* movement as Paul Chamberland, André Major and Gaston Miron, and outlines the evolution of their social, political and literary ideas. Combining historical documentation and personal anecdotes, interviews and well-chosen excerpts from their works, Reid skilfully blends his material to provide us with a vivid depiction of the main forces at work behind the Quebec revolutionary movement.

But Quebec's revolutionary nationalism is not viewed simply as an isolated phenomenon. Instead, the author is careful to point out some of the more important outside influences which helped shape its development.

Among the main works of the "literature of colonization" which strengthened Quebec's feeling of solidarity with the underdeveloped nations of the world are Albert Memmi's *Portrait du colonisé*, Franz Fanon's *Damnés de la terre*, and Jacques Berque's *Dépossession du monde*; thus, Pierre Vallières' *Nègres blancs d'Amérique*, as well as describing a concrete situation, follows a certain "Third World" literary tradition.

Besides the demonstrations, strikes and other manifestations of social unrest which accompanied the growth of revolutionary thought in Quebec, we see woven into Reid's account the pubs and cafés of old Montréal with their bohemian "révoltés", English factories where French-Canadian workers are "colonized" in their language of work, the slums of the East End with their winding staircases and broken beer bottles, and the inevitable delinquents who steal consumer items which English advertising urges them to acquire.

One of the main pre-occupations of the *Shouting Signpainters* is, in fact,

the "degeneration" of the French-Canadian language, due to the influence of English. The whole first chapter, ironically titled "Watch out, tu vas vvere", is devoted to this subject. In it, Reid attempts to interpret, for the English-speaking reader, the pronunciation and vocabulary of certain common "joual" expressions, in everyday use. The point he is making is that English words and forms, far from being graceful cultural borrowings, signify the imprint of an English-language industrial system, owned by English-speaking Canadians and Americans, on the French in Quebec. Thus, for Reid, the role played by *Parti Pris* in introducing "joual" into Québécois literature as a literary medium cannot be over-emphasized. Jacques Renaud's *Le Cassé*, the story of a "poor devil" from the East End, first published by *Parti Pris*, marks the first attempt by a Quebec author to "tell it like it is." Renaud, renouncing his ambitions to be "sub-Faulkner" in America or "sub-Robbe-Grillet" in France, chose to be himself in "joual", and set a precedent for other writers who came after him.



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TASTE OF ENGLAND: THE WEST COUNTRY by Theodora Fitzgibbon — Sixty 19th Century photographs of West of England life and matching recipes. Companion volume to *Taste of Scotland; Taste of Ireland*.
\$13.95

J. M. DENT & SONS (CANADA) LTD.
100 Scarsdale Road, Don Mills.

While Reid's account is erudite in its documentation (he provides the reader with a bibliography, index and a glossary of the *Parti Pris* vocabulary), and methodical in its presentation, it is far from being dispassionate. The author does take sides. The people he writes about are viewed, for the most part, with sympathy and affection. In this regard, Reid cites Chamberland's reply to a critic who attacks his poetry for being too "political," and lacking in "style": masterpieces don't tend to come from colonized communities, he states.

Reid shows his predilection for certain Québécois writers such as Jacques Ferron, whom he admires for his humanity and his understanding of Quebec history and politics; while he has not much patience with those like Hébert, Ducharme, and Blais, who, writing in a world of fantasy, and often geographically absent from the Quebec scene, reject regionalism and anything pertinent to it in their works.

The *Shouting Signpainters* is an intelligent, witty, and very thorough account of Quebec revolutionary nationalism by an English-Canadian who not only understands it well, but is capable of putting it into a very readable form for the benefit of his compatriots, who cannot afford to miss it.

If, after the *Shouting Signpainters*, the reader is still skeptical about the popularity separatism is gaining among those concerned about the survival of

the "French fact" in North America, two other recent publications, which are more aggressive in tone, might drive the point home.

Quebec, Only the Beginning: The Manifestoes of the Common Front, edited by Daniel Drache and published by Toronto's new press, is the first of a new series of mainly political studies on Quebec, aimed at "promoting the understanding of Quebec in English Canada".

These manifestoes present a new stage in the Quebec independence movement: a call to working-class politics. They reflect the policy positions adopted by the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), the Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ), and the Quebec Teachers' Corporation (CEQ), respectively. The very titles of the manifestoes set the tone: "It's Up To Us" (CSN); "The State is Our Exploiter" (FTQ), "Phase One" (CEQ).

The second publication in the "Studies Quebec" series is a powerful and thought-provoking work, entitled *Choose*, by Pierre Vallières. Those who anticipate an about-face in Vallières' political position will be disappointed. For the choice is not one of the options open to Quebec (separatism or no), but of the tactics by which independence is to be achieved. For Vallières, *Choose* represents a surpassing of the beliefs he expressed earlier in *White Niggers of America*, and not a betrayal of them. It is an

attempt at self-criticism: "The true revolutionary", he states, "finds the right strategy and tactics for the existing objective situation . . ." It is precisely because he is interested in achieving the maximum effectiveness in the Quebec liberation movement, that Vallières has chosen to reject the terrorist tactics of the FLQ and to join forces with René Lévesque's Parti Québécois.

In *Choose*, Vallières comes across as an extremely pragmatic individual. He is not so naïve as to believe that independence will be achieved overnight, or that it will miraculously eliminate internal struggles; if the Chinese, in 1971, acknowledge that class struggle hasn't ended in China, he remarks, it's a certainty it won't end in Quebec on the day of independence. Nor does Vallières underestimate (as he accuses some of his fellow-revolutionaries of doing) the counter-offensive to independence that can be expected from English Canada and the United States. He sees Quebec's struggle as only the beginning of a long, hard, world-wide effort of liberation from "imperialism", and realizes that Quebec can never achieve socialism in a "vacuum".

The theme of colonization and class exploitation is given a new twist in the lighter-veined *History of Quebec, A Patriot's Handbook*. It is, as its authors point out, "historical, comical, or dramatical (your choice)".

The comic-book format and exaggerated illustrations embellish this

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tongue-in-cheek version, in 20th-century jargon, of the rise of capitalism in Europe, and its transplantation in America with the arrival of the first French explorers. Everyone is familiar with the ensuing evils that this entails: the fur companies exploit the "coureurs de bois" who exploit the "red men"; the European buyers exploit the merchants who exploit the artisans; the King uses the Church for his own ends, which, in turn, controls the "habitants" and the Indians. The colonizers pit Indians against Indians, until

— finally — there's no one left to be exploited. No group seems to emerge unscathed from this rollicking version of Quebec's history, which fluctuates to the whims and foibles of those in power. It makes easy bed-time reading, complete with violence, sex, ribald humour, and whatever else you might care to read into it. □

BEVERLEY SMITH, who studied in Québec and France, and now lives in Toronto, is a translator and writer.

GOLD & STEEL & ROUGH DIAMONDS

THE GREAT RAILWAY ILLUSTRATED

PIERRE BERTON

McClelland & Stewart

cloth \$17.50; illustrated; 336 pages

KLONDIKE (Revised Edition)

PIERRE BERTON

McClelland & Stewart

cloth \$10.00; illustrated; 472 pages

reviewed by Jim Christy

THE OPENING of the North West. This is our great story. The major chapter being of course the building of the railway that spanned the continent, dominated our history for 15 years from 1871 to 1885 and made us, in theory at least, one. In *The National Dream* and *The Last Spike* Pierre Berton documented this incredible story — until just this year and the start of work on the Road Through Hell, the Trans-Amazon Highway in Brazil — probably the most awesome construction project of modern times and shaped it into epic form. Now there appears *The Great Railway*, a condensation, with photographs, drawings and maps, of the previous two books. It is an admirable job because the story of the CPR is made much more accessible to the general reader in this shorter version.

In a review of *The Last Spike* George Woodcock pointed out that a better history could still be written. He meant, of course, a more academic

and objective history. Berton as reporter has told the story in terms of people, in terms of "human interest." Although the two volumes were exhaustively researched and true to fact, a standard history would focus more on the political and financial maneuverings which Berton has placed in the background.

But this is of minor significance. Berton has chronicled our Great Story better than anyone else, not only the major chapter of it but also the most exciting and colourful one: the last great gold rush, 1896-1899. *Klondike* is still Berton's best book, a fact which is obvious when reading the new revised and expanded edition along with *The Great Railway*.

Both books are tales of adventure with great numbers of men pursuing their destinies in a struggle with nature, but *The Great Railway* focuses on leaders, self-made men most of them but bosses nevertheless. It is a story dominated by politicians, engineers,

explorers, managers, and money men, by Macdonalds, Mackenzies, Flemings, Van Hornes and Smiths; the sub-sub contractors, the workers in the survey crews, the navvies, the men who drove every spike except the last one, go unnamed as do all the characters and camp followers along the line.

The gold rush ended a depression, opened up the North West and an age of prosperity, created new communities and tripled the size of established ones. Berton captures the frenzy of the time, but more than that he recreates those people whom the frenzy attracted from the ends of the earth. This is why *Klondike* is Berton at his best. The gold rush after all was a gaudy episode — from August 17, 1896 when George Carmack staked his claim on Bonanza Creek until July 27, 1899 when the scene shifted to the gold fields of Nome, Alaska — an episode when history's unnamed, those characters and camp followers, had their hour. There was the Rag Time Kid, the Montana Kid, and the Evaporated Kid, Swiftwater Bill, the Sydney Cornstalk, Diamond Tooth Gertie, the Uncrowned King of Rumania, Vaseline, Glycerine and Sweet Marie as well as more established figures in the community like Sam Steele, the Lion of the Yukon; Soapy Smith, and Arizona Charlie Meadows. At the Pavilion Dance Hall, the Palace Grand or the Monte Carlo there was a good chance of rubbing elbows with the likes of Jack London, Hamlin Garland, Joaquin Miller and Rex Beach and perhaps a boarding house keeper from Toughnut Street in Tombstone, Arizona, an ex-marshall from Deadwood, a gunfighter from Laredo or even Calamity Jane herself. You might meet the man who would own Madison Square Garden, or Grauman's Chinese Theatre, or the Tanforan Race Track, or the man who would go on to make Mack trucks. It seems that at least one each of God's human creatures made it up to the Yukon in those years and each struts across the pages of *Klondike*, which is not our national epic, but certainly our best tale. □

JIM CHRISTY, a journeyman writer and film-maker from the United States who has settled in Canada, edited the recently-published *The New Refugees*.

DREADFUL PROSPECT

KNOWLEDGE PARK

STEPHEN FRANKLIN
McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$5.95; 191 pages

reviewed by H. G. Levitch

"*Knowledge rubs off like soot on a chimney sweep.*" — Franklin (Stephen, not Ben, p. 136)

WHAT, OH WHAT, is this book about? Remember how dull *Walden Two* was? And that, at least, had B. F. Skinner for comic relief. *Knowledge Park* is neither 1984 nor *Animal Farm*. Few novels of ideas aspire to Literature. They have better sense. And the perfect cop-out. After all, they are merely "vehicles" for the superior purpose of teaching us poor literary yokels something profound. Remember the worst of G.B.S. Think kindly of the later Wells' fantasies. Repress a giggle for Stephen Franklin.

How sad to try to write a novel of ideas — while lacking any good ideas to write about. Unfortunately, this drawback doesn't stop Mr. Franklin. Being artful, he obviously sees bounty when there is only famine. He seems to be the sort of intellectual who has to concentrate hard when reading the Insight Section of the Toronto *Star*. Nor should we overlook the corrosive influence of Maharishi McLuhan. Franklin didn't think of all this by himself.

This book is about "Knowledge." Uh, it sees the necessary interrelatedness of "Knowledge," "Information," "Communications," "Retrieval Systems," and "Micro-electronics." You may well wonder why other people haven't seen these relationships, too. They have. They simply haven't bothered to contrive a quasi-Utopian hash for them to squat in.

Besides, most of the gadgets — poorly described at best — are quaint and old-hat to Science Fiction buffs. Which is not to deny Mr. Franklin's effort at least one distinction: he makes Harold Robbins seem like a natural, instinctive story-teller. Consider this stylistic sampler:

Long before Canada became the world's major producer of films and videotape cassettes and Knowledge Park Press the dominant print publisher, Helsinki prided itself on the largest bookshop in existence and a public library system eight times as great as Canada's. (p. 16)

The first short monorail line had its inaugural run in the German town of Wuppertal in 1899. Sixty years later it was the talk of visitors to the Seattle world fair. In miniaturized form, it was an outstanding feature of Montreal's Expo 67.

An oil pipeline stretching one thousand miles from the Texas panhandle to Chicago was the talk of 1931. By 1960 Canada had constructed both the longest crude oil pipeline and the longest natural gas pipeline in the world. The introduction of solid freight capsules and multipipe were no more than refinements of the system.

Multipipe not only transported freight capsules in the largest diameter pipe, but also power, coaxial cable, fossil fuels, water, sewage and recycling slurry in its attached cluster of smaller pipes." (p. 20)

Say hello to the hero of this book:

He phoned the 24-hour kitchens and ordered breakfast: a large thermos jug of coffee, brioche, butter and some Bulgarian apricot jam. The Bulgarian had more almonds in it than any other apricot jam. (p. 135)

Sanda did not need to be equipped with a noise suppressor. She moved with a delicate and silent grace, spoke softly and had the gift of timeliness.

"Why is it that the only love which lasts is unrequited love?" Harris asked.

"It is not unrequited. It is only unconsummated," said Sanda and moved away from the back of his chair. "Arla is on the picture phone," she added.

"My father would have loved you too," said Harris unexpectedly. He would have. Andy MacNeil had been a journeyman printer with two passions in life which were not always compatible. One was for Bodoni Bold and . . . (p. 14)

Don't forget to tell your friends about this book. Choose one or more of the following to describe the hero:

1. He has the personality of a non-returnable beer bottle.
2. He is as likeable as a cancelled postage stamp.
3. He possesses the depth of a piece of cellotape.
4. He flashes with the wit and humour of a dull pencil sharpener.
5. He sparkles with all the panache of a rusty coat hanger.

Do I make the hero sound too interesting? Look at the heroine:

He watched Arla's face. At sixty-two she retained the translucent com-

plexion he admired so greatly the day they met. It was '58, the summer they blasted Ripple Rock out of the narrows between the mainland and Vancouver Island; the largest non-nuclear underwater explosion in history. Harris covered it for the magazine. After he filed his story he took the weekend off to troll for tyees. Maybe it was the explosion, but the king salmon weren't biting and in disgust he put in to Sointula. There was a Finnish colony on the island and he had never been there before. (p. 15)

The heroine deserves a few kind words: quick, recycle her before it's too late. I've seen better characterization on the back of a totem pole.

Don't miss this book. No, you won't miss it after you throw it into the fireplace on a cold winter's evening better spent rereading the collected works of James Michener. □

H. G. LEVITCH is a freelance writer from Louisiana who has settled in Toronto; he has been involved in a writing project for the Government of Ontario and has contributed to *Saturday Night*.

A RADICAL ROMANTIC

SELECTED POEMS

AL PURDY
McClelland & Stewart
paper \$2.95; 127 pages

reviewed by Robert Weaver

READING THROUGH this selection you might come away with the impression that, like some weathered wood fence rail in an Eastern Ontario township, Al Purdy has been around for generations. There is such a permanent and rooted feeling to his best work. Yet Purdy is really a poet of the 1960s. He published a first, fugitive book in 1944, it was more than 10 years before a second small book appeared, and it wasn't until *Poems for All the Annettes* in 1962 that he seemed unquestionably to discover his own voice. As poets go he has been a slow learner, and maybe all the better for that.

The mature Purdy uses a long line to compose what George Bowering calls an "open poem." His tone is casual and ironic; he is a romantic

disguised (thinly) as the anti-romantic plain man. In *Love in a Burning Building* (1970), an earlier selection of poems, he brought together his love poems and what might be called his household poems. In this new book are his historical meditations that move out from descriptions of what the early days may have been like in Roblin Mills, Prince Edward County, Ontario, to imaginative glimpses even of the country's pre-history; and poems from travels to Greece and Cuba, Mexico and the Far North; and poems about public figures (Castro, Kennedy).

"Lament for the Dorsets" is a poem from our pre-history, an elegy for an unusually tall Eskimo people who were extinct by the 14th century:

*Some old hunter with one lame leg
a bear had chewed
sitting in a caribou-skin tent
— the last Dorset?
Let's say his name was Kudluk
and watch him sitting there
carving two-inch ivory swans
for a dead grand-daughter
taking them out of his mind
the places in his mind
where pictures are . . .*

When I re-read "Lament for the Dorsets" in the *Selected Poems I* assumed that it was from *North of Summer*, the book that Purdy published in 1967 after a trip to the arctic on a Canada Council grant and with the assistance of the Hudson's Bay Company. In fact it is from his next book *Wild Grape Wine* (1968). There are some fine descriptive poems — and a good deal of Purdy's quiet irony — in *North of Summer*, but nothing, I think, quite as lovely and profound as "Lament for the Dorsets."

Purdy seems to need to travel and of course to write poems about his travels. But the most memorable work in *Selected Poems* usually comes from his roots in Eastern Ontario or from that powerful historical imagination that seems to have exploded in him in recent years. It's tempting to say that the Ontario Government should declare him to be an historical monument so that he can work steadily in Ameliasburg taking poems out of "the places in his mind/ where pictures are . . ." But what would that do to Al Purdy's sense of irony? □

ROBERT WEAVER is editor of *Tamarak* and executive head of CBC Radio Arts department.

SUMMING US UP

THE CANADIAN IDENTITY

W. L. MORTON

University of Toronto Press paper \$2.95; 162 pages

CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES:

The Civil War Years

ROBIN W. WINKS

Harvest House paper \$4.50; 432 pages

A HISTORY OF THE WAR BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

GILBERT AUCHINLECK

Pendragon Press cloth \$12.95; 408 pages

UPPER CANADA: The Formative Years 1784-1814

G. M. CRAIG

THE UNION OF THE CANADAS: The Growth Of Canadian Institutions 1841-1857

J. M. S. CARELESS

THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES: The Emergence of Colonial Society 1712-1857

W. S. McNUTT

Volumes 7, 10 & 9 of *A History of Canada*

The Canadian Centenary Series (McClelland & Stewart) cloth \$12.50, paper \$3.95 each

reviewed by Glen Frankfurter

IN BRINGING out the second edition of Professor Morton's *The Canadian Identity* the University of Toronto Press has provided us with a symbolic cover: a mirror, somewhat clouded, upon which is incised our heraldic leaf. In his note for the new edition Professor Morton modestly says that the book attracted more interest than expected. But I am not surprised at this interest for *The Canadian Identity* is a kind of moral compass for us and I should think that any sensible Canadian would keep a copy in his haversack as he tries to make his way out of the woods.

Ironically the bulk of the book was written for Americans and delivered as a series of three lectures in 1960 to students of Commonwealth History at the University of Wisconsin. With these the author has included his presidential address to the Canadian Historical Association later that year. Now in this new edition he has added a chapter on the Sixties.

The book is a *tour de force* of historical analysis and compression, clear-eyed and comprehensive. It traces for us the characteristics of Canadian life, the development and persistence of our northern nationality. And it affirms its moral significance. It is Canada's tragedy that the substance of these lectures, made for Americans, cannot be taken for granted by Canadians; that we need them too, and desperately.

And yet I wish that Professor Morton had not republished them. I wish he had woven these same threads into a new fabric, one less rooted in its academic origins and, to borrow a telling phrase of his, one with a more ringing tone. The Commonwealth, in the terms in which Professor Morton discussed it in 1960 hardly exists today. And the monarchic principle and its function, the idea of power and responsibility devolving downwards from a collective and mystical bond, must surely, in the cold light of the 70s, be firmly separated from the idea of

Royalty and given a new and existential interpretation, simply in order to continue it as a saving presence in Canadian life.

This is, I think, implicit in Professor Morton's statement that though Canadian nationality is rooted in a Canadian allegiance it "has never been a country royalist in sentiment any more than Canadian society has remained formally hierarchal in structure." Nevertheless he says, "Allegiance means that the law and the state have an objective reality embodied in the succession of persons designated by Parliament and hereditary right." It is these last three words that seem to be called into serious question today and one of Canada's problems is to secure that succession without the hereditary right. Such terminology was obviously useful in explaining to those American students why Americans, those people of the covenant, "by being Americans, are in a measure precluded from understanding Canada." But I would have wished for something that faced up to our national anachronism, if only because it may put off those who will not look beyond the surface of what is a most profound and moving insight.

Since we are, for now, denied that ultimate blessing I can only hope that every honest patriot will find a copy of *The Canadian Identity* in his Christmas stocking.

Professor Winks' book, *Canada and the United States: The Civil War Years*, like *The Canadian Identity* was originally published in the United States in 1960. And like Professor Morton's book it seems to me to be much more useful and important to Canadians than to Americans. What we have here is a picture of Canadian life under pressure in the years just before Confederation — the years of the American Civil War — pressure caused by being at one and the same time American and British. Its pages not only document the year to year shifts in public opinion but clearly show the enormous personal — ought we say despotic — power wielded by the Governor-General, in spite of the fact that the colonies had supposedly achieved responsible government.

Then, as now, our relations with the United States were more domestic than foreign and vital concerns for the

colonies and their governments. But Lord Monck continually decided these "imperial" issues for himself and transmitted these decisions to the American Secretary of State through the Foreign Office in London and via the British Ambassador in Washington. This was a tremendous limitation of the responsibility of the Colonial governments, and given the state of transatlantic communications was intolerably slow and cumbersome.

The book reaches its climax in one remarkable paragraph: "The first four months of 1865 were decisive ones in the history of North America. Between January and March the Canadian Parliament met to consider among other things the desirability of Confederation and the means of protecting the Canadas from the 'American Menace.'" In April a delegation left for London to discuss the entire question of maintaining the British connection. In the troubled nation to the south the same months witnessed the collapse of the Confederacy, the abrogation of America's first attempt at reciprocal trade, and the death of a revered leader. In these four months one nation — the Confederacy — died and two were born."

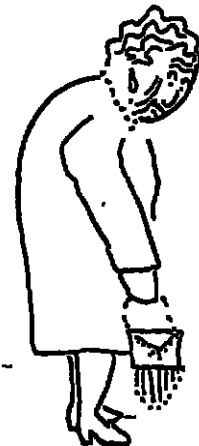
The preceding pages have detailed the struggles of British North American society to thread its way through the shifting balance of power on the continent during the civil war years. Through an industrious search of the colonial press, public speeches and government despatches Professor Winks shows how an instinctive feeling that a Southern victory would restore the balance of power on the continent made the colonials anti-northern, in spite of their sympathy for the slaves. When it became clear the north would win the Canadians had to act, to confederate and expand. It is fascinating stuff and, though there is little evidence of the witty Robin Winks who fashioned that wonderfully entertaining book *The Historian as Detective*, it is the total mass of the material that counts and that makes its impact. In its inexpensive new format I hope it reaches far beyond the study of the student and the specialist.

I am not sure why we needed a reprint of Auchinleck's *A History of the War Between* etc. etc. and certainly

I'm sure we don't really need it at \$12.95. Still there are lots of things we don't need that are offered to us at much greater cost so perhaps I ought not cavil. It's a reprint, nay a reproduction complete with small type and double columns, of a book published in 1855, which was itself a reprint of a series of articles written for the *Anglo-American* magazine by a British journalist, an industrious British journalist, who spent less than four years in Canada and then, apparently, vanished. It is a detailed account of the war, with lots of "first person" narrative and all presented in the "good guys and bad guys" tradition so dear to the hearts of Victorians. Since we are the good guys and I was carefully weaned on G. A. Henty I found it lots of fun. But I'm not sure who else will?

A much more serious business is the appearance in paperback of three volumes in the Canadian Centenary History series. Now if only someone could persuade Professor Ouellet to deliver volume 8 on Lower Canada in the same period (roughly the first half of the nineteenth century) we would have a complete and detailed survey of the social and political life of settled Canada during its most important years, the years when it was being made by history. As they stand though, we now have a lot of expert coverage by three of the seeded players in the game of Canadian historiography — three books written with skill, and authority. No one has any excuse any longer for ignorance. □

GLEN FRANKFURTER's novel, *A Stranger In My Own Country*, has just been published by Longman and his revision of Canadian history, *Bane-ful Domination*, appeared last year.



PETIT FOUR

ANGEL

ELDON GARNET
cloth \$3.95; 64 pages

THE TOPOLOBAMPO POEMS

TIM INKSTER
cloth \$3.95; 64 pages

BUMBLEBEE DITHYRAMB

JOE ROSENBLATT
cloth \$6.95; 128 pages

TALES

GILLES VIGNEAULT
cloth \$7.95; 80 pages

All published by press porcepic
\$10.00 the set

reviewed by Douglas Barbour

THIS LATEST small press adventure by Dave Godfrey, unlike new press, is dedicated to purely creative work: poetry for the most part, although perhaps the most interesting of its first four books is the translation of Gilles Vigneault's *Tales sur la Pointe des Pieds*. All press porcepic books are hardcover, and they range in price from \$3.95 for Tim Inkster's and Eldon Garnet's books to \$7.95 for the Vigneault book. There's a nice hooker though: you can get the set for only \$10.00, adding a nice three inches to your Canadiana shelf at one fell swoop.

Eldon Garnet's *Angel* is, for me, the least interesting of the lot, despite the blurb from press porcepic: "Canadian poets in general have long been accused of a kind of dull, grey sexlessness — Garnet . . . shows both how different he is as an individual from the stereotype of the Canadian poet and how far Canadian poetry has moved in recent years towards a confidence in self." Leaving aside the total wrongheadedness of the first part of that statement, I can only say that I hope Garnet will soon get over his apparent awe at his own "difference" and get to work on the real stuff of poetry. The first section of the book, "Superman" is, I hope, a series of ironic mask-poems concerning a blatant sexual "hero," but the poems are too obvious, their wit deriving from an all too unsubtle use of language.

"Waiting in 31 Parts" is an interesting sequence-poem which demonstrates Garnet's potential as a poet: the short gnomic poems manage, in context, to evoke some fine referential feelings about being alone, and without someone special, in an alien landscape. But Garnet's gains in this sequence are quickly dissipated in Part 3, "The One Wing Angel," for here, with no indication of irony, he returns to a rather puerile group of cocky sex poems in which the wit flags and the rhythms are flaccid.

Tim Inkster's *The Topolobampo Poems* is another first book, and it suffers from the same faults most first books do; it could be shorter, many of the poems are blatant apprentice works; the whole is more interesting for the promise it shows than for the accomplishment it presents. Yet *The Topolobampo Poems* is interesting, especially the long title sequence in which Inkster attempts to deal with a private mythology at some length. Some of the poems in the sequence, "Yet another love song," "With a .22 caliber nikkon," and "A Festival of Toxcati" especially, are very fine.

As is everything in Joe Rosenblatt's *Bumblebee Dithyramb*, which is by far the most accomplished and exciting book of poetry on porcepic's list. With a number of Rosenblatt's own witty and provocative drawings, the book contains practically every kind of "poetry" going. It's fitting that b p nichol should have drawn the delightful "Introduction After," for Rosenblatt, like nichol, inhabits the area of poetry known as "border-blur" a good portion of the time. His drawings, for example, are really poem-cartoons, and many of the poems in the book are chants and concrete sound poems of one kind or another. Rosenblatt's interest in the animal world, demonstrated in his first two books, *The LSD Leacock* and *Winter of the Luna Moth* (a few poems from which are reprinted here for those unlucky enough not to own the earlier books), is still the major focus of his vision. The whole series of bumblebee poems here reveal a new fascination with insect and plant sexuality which is completely delightful.

"The Uncle Nathan Poems" and a number of other fairly straightforward poems are also important, especially

when, as in "The Bee Hive: an elegy for Che Guevera," and "Cockroach Poem," which was written in response to the invoking of the War Measures Act, they reveal a harsh, ironic, political sensibility. The "Cockroach Poem" is a savagely brilliant attack on Trudeau's action, expressed in Rosenblatt's own animal-world terms:

*Make your peace with the cockroach
he's home grown, bilingual
was educated at Oxford, the
Sorbonne . . . Yale . . .*

*—then of course, Goebbels—
roach in cap and gown
had a PhD.*

*The bug
found in the ulcerated stomach
of middle America
sings 'O Canada'
with passion . . . passion!*

As I have already suggested, Gilles Vigneault's *Tales* is an important and most worthwhile book and it is especially noteworthy that these short, sharp, witty sketches have been published in a bilingual edition, for they are both simple enough to make an attempt at the French versions worthwhile and complex enough to make the translation very helpful in getting the feel of them.

Vigneault is interested in re-fashioning the old-fashioned fairy tale and moral tale. He's also fascinated by the magic of imagination itself, especially the imagination of mythology and literature. The story of little Julie and her books, and her secret of releasing the characters from the books to life, is a definitive Vigneault story, I think, enjoyable in itself, but full of subtle reverberations which linger in the mind long after the story has been put aside. Indeed, it is very similar to Borges' "fictions," as are many of these tales, although not as carefully worked out or argued as the Argentinian's great works. At any rate, despite its stiff price, it is a book I would unhesitatingly recommend.

Two out of four is a pretty good average for a brand-new publisher, especially when the two, *Bumblebee Dithyramb* and *Tales sur la Pointe des Pieds*, are so good. I hope press porcepic keeps up the good work, for we need every adventurous publisher we can get: more power to them all. □

DOUGLAS BARBOUR, poet and editor, teaches English at the University of Alberta.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GOING DOWN SLOW

JOHN METCALF
McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$6.95; 177 pages

reviewed by Isaac Bickerstaff

IT IS A COMMONPLACE among teachers of literature that they are so busy *teaching* the stuff that they never have time to *read* it. The fact of the matter is, however, that given the choice most would rather go bowling. Which explains why this witty novel about the joys and the miseries of a randy young high school Eng. Lit. teacher in Montreal is sure to be badmouthed in staffrooms throughout the country strictly on the basis of evidence garnered from book reviews, the allusions of literate students and the misanthropic giggles of that one peckish instructor in every school who still delights in reading.

Going Down Slow is likely to be proscribed officially by at least five of the provincial teachers' federations on each of two counts. It depicts high school teachers as the consummate dullards that so many are and it presents sympathetically and honestly a rollicking carnal liaison between the young English teacher, David Appleby, and Susan Haddad, a clever and attractive person in Grade 11.

There are few environments more stultifying than a high school staffroom, where the only talk even remotely consequential probably concerns the recent hike in school cafeteria prices to 25 cents for a full course meal. David Appleby, whose gifts do not include forbearance, is in his second year of teaching at Merrymount High School, where, during a typical lunch hour, "In the Men's Staffroom, Henry Jockstrap was arm-wrestling with another oaf; Mr. Margolis was talking about his pension; Mr. Renfrew was reading the answers in the back of the Grade 10 algebra text; Mr. Bardolini was extolling to Mr. Healey the virtues of the *Wonder Book of Universal Knowledge* which he sold on commission in the evenings to local parents." When Appleby retreats

to the washroom, he is joined at the urinals by Mr. Weinbaum, who declares, "So this is where the nobs hang out!" Precisely.

The protagonist, who has his full share of foibles — not all of them forgivable, has come to Canada from England and is still having to cope with culture shock. Fortunately, however, there is as consolation the lovely Susan who is a marvellous companion both in and out of the sack. The two of them share a curious reverence for *passé* pop culture of the order of Bergman films and Pete Seeger songbooks that suggests the novel is set in the mid-1960s before Viet Nam became our chief art object and Sergeant Pepper blew our minds out in a car. Susan is wrongly suspected of drug addiction by the school administration when she and a friend are caught filling an ink cartridge with a hypodermic stolen from biology. This would constitute a false note in a novel set in the '70s — when any kid with Susan's disposition for bucking the system would have experimented with all manner of chemicals and would be suspicious of anyone who refused to share a joint.

Nevertheless, as a fictional character Susan is a consistently successful creation. The brightest kid at Merrymount, she is a strong-willed free spirit who in Grade 8 used to keep a gallon of wine in her locker and once broke into the Vice-Principal's office to steal the strap and the punishment-book. She skips classes to visit the museum, reads good novels rather than work on assignments, and responds to a poem on a literature examination with, "I don't want to waste my time writing about bad poetry." When David admires a facsimile of the Quarto *Hamlet* in a shop window, Susan, whose generation is out of touch with the Book of the Month Club, says she'd

rather have the paperback. When he attempts to persuade her that she'll need a degree to get a decent job, she says, "I don't give a shit. I'd rather be a secretary or work in Eaton's. I'd exchange a piece of my time for money — and that's all. And then they can't touch me." As for university: "Look, I was born on Drolet in the east end; right? And I'm not going to let anyone turn me into a nice middle-class McGill girl who knows all about Shakespeare's fucking will or some bunch of horseshit." An exact rendering of the feelings and the language of our most perceptive juveniles.

David's own response to The System is considerably more ambivalent. On the one hand, he is bedazzled by security and some of the good things a teacher's income can purchase. On the other, he is temperamentally unsuited to following the rigid, priggish and unimaginative guidelines established by the Greater Montreal Protestant School Board. He snitches uncatalogued books from the school library to give to Susan and the three students in his Grade 11 classes who read. He decorates his room in which he lives with lewd photographs from *The Family of Man* including one of a pregnant woman lying on a bed and another of a



family of Australian aborigines. He insists on supplying an anxious class that wants to know only what's going to be on the final exam with all the material bowdlerized from the authorized school edition of *Two Solitudes*. There is his strange behaviour on the first floor with a water pistol. And there is the matter of his unorthodox relationship with Susan.

Their affair is not really all that extraordinary, of course. After all,

sexuality does persist in raising its restless head in classrooms from coast to coast despite every endeavour on the part of the education industry to ignore and deny it. Male teachers covet their sweet young classroom captives and exploit their own position as adult authority figures to encourage flirtations, taking care to squelch the resentful acned competition with sarcasms and extra homework. Every year, one suspects, thousands of the more desperate and foolish among them go the whole route, risking their jobs and reputations for the sake of illicit Humbert Humbert romance. The author's achievement is in airing the matter without suggesting that it is either ludicrous or reprehensible.

Eventually, David is discovered in his several unorthodoxies by Merry-mount's Vice-Principal and has to make a choice between Susan and the security represented by a permanent teacher's certificate. This major crisis and its resolution are not explored as fully as they might have been and lead to a climax that, while valid enough, is somewhat out of keeping with the first two-thirds of the novel.

All such minor quibbles aside, *Going Down Slow* is a joy to read. Based four-square on sordid reality, its examination of the education game through David Appleby's horrified eyes provides countless uproarious passages, including the description of a visit to Merry-mount High by the McGill Chamber Orchestra which performs to an audience composed entirely of "Practical Classes and the basement inhabitants of the Wood, Metal, and Auto Shops. These retardees had then been regaled with a programme of Bach and Vivaldi while he and three of the basement men walked the floor trying to prevent whistles, groping, match ignition, and loud speculations on the sexual habits of the lady cellist."

It's rather a pity that educators haven't the time to read this novel. Even the most jaded would have a tough time stifling the occasional guffaw. □

ISAAC BICKERSTAFF is the notorious mask adopted by Don Evans, journalist, caricaturist, and teacher; he is also writing a novel.

AUGEAN STAPLES

SHOVELLING TROUBLE

MORDECAI RICHLER

McClelland & Stewart

cloth \$6.95; 158 pages

reviewed by Chris Scott

IN THESE DAYS of evil times among publishers, it is a revelation to find Richler blurbed as "engaging and engrossing" (*in grosso*, in the lump, by wholesale . . . *grossa*, large writing), and that these "essays first appeared in magazines such as *Commentary*, *Nation*, *New American Review of Books*, *Maclean's*, and *Saturday Night*." What, no *Paris Review*; no *New York Review of Books*?

It really makes no difference. Dullness is international. So, unmaking Norman Podhoretz, Richler weighs in as "something of a country cousin" (come up to the city to learn how to swear); indiviously compares that Norman with Samuel Boswell (no doubt this monstrous parallel is supposed to be original), announces his "continuing interest in the works of Trilling, Dwight Macdonald, Mailer, Fiedler, Baldwin, Podhoretz," his "reverence" for *Ulysses*, his "inability" to create anything as splendid as the same. The distinction between lives and works is well taken, as it is supposed to be. But Richler is too pure, too smug. Either that, or else he is struggling to create the impression of simple naiveté. Hence: "On and on it goes, the titillating trivia, the snitching, without dignity or relevance." Or: "If, as we were once told, opinions aren't literature, neither is gossip criticism." Richler's continuing interest, his reverence, his inability, these are the merest professions — not, certainly not, criticism.

Take the lead essay, "Why I Write". Richler doesn't like confessionals, and proves it by adding nothing to the voluminous literature. George Orwell is allowed to do Richler's work through extensive quotation, and we are given some dull thoughts on that non-starter. Is the Novel Dead? "Dead again?"



Bickerstaff

enquires our author, but his wit fails him.

What else is there to talk about? Ah yes, movies are cheaper: "Given any rainy afternoon who wants to read Doris Lessing fully-clothed for forty bob when, for only ten, you can actually see Jane Fonda starkers, shaking it for you and art, and leaving you with sufficient change for a half-bottle of gin?" Given such a dilemma, I would opt for a full bottle of gin. So would Richler, I suspect.

"On and on it goes . . ."

Neither as hairy as Hemingway, as pushy as Podhoretz, as manic as Mailer, Richler has seized the main chance with this one, a collection of bread and butter scribblings, refurbished for our edification. Like everybody else, he's had his Paris days, left bank then, right bank in '67. The Good Old Days: memories of "Terry Southern, Alan Tempo, Alfred Chester, Herbert Gold, David Burnett, Mavis Gallant, Alexander Trocchi, Christopher Logue, Mason Hoffenberg, James Baldwin, and the late David Stacton." A touch of mortality there; Richler's getting old.

Who are all these people? What bliss it was in that dawn to know them, and be known.

Change of scene: "Let me say at once that I hadn't the foggiest idea who Edward Gordon Craig was when I met him in 1952." Christie's fall guy? "Country cousin," you say, Richler?

Kitsch: *Bond*. Amis got in first, but Richler has things to say about the



Ask not what you can do for your country, but what your country can do for you.

cross-over between Fleming-Bond (stable-topic) and on Bond-Fleming's latent or not so latent anti-semitism. Which brings him to *The Holocaust and After*, wedged between '007 and Podhoretz *et al*. Those with a vested interest in guilt will enjoy shovelling trouble over this "essay."

Richler mentioned Boswell. Here's David Hume: "But should I endeavour to clear up . . . any doubts in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident this reflection and pre-meditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phenomenon." For "moral philosophy" read writers on writing.

A last objection: the title should have been more explicitly Saxon. □

CHRIS SCOTT, who grew up in England, settled in Toronto after a period of teaching in the U.S.; last fall he published his first novel *Bartlett*.

WHYSPY

THROUGH THE DARK AND HAIRY WOOD

SHAUN HERRON
Random House
cloth \$6.95; 206 pages

THIS SUITCASE IS GOING TO EXPLODE

TOM ARDIES
McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$5.95; 234 pages

reviewed by Douglas Marshall

THE MODERN SPY thriller, which Erskine Childers invented in 1905 with *The Riddle of the Sands*, is facing a crisis of purpose. For most of this century there have been enough obviously villainous nations or régimes around to maintain a steady supply of credible heavies; first Germany, later Japan, and more recently Russia and China. But since the early 1960s, that convenient black-and-white situation has deteriorated steadily toward a achievement of international goodwill — a goal spy fiction regards as the basest

anarchy. Today all is flux and confusion. No bad guys, no good guys, no cloak, no dagger, no story.

Ian Fleming met the challenge by phasing out the Russian SMERSH organization and conjuring up a multinational SPECTRE, a powerful criminal cartel without a country. That idea sank giggling into Maxwell Smart's CHAOS. Then Le Carré and Deighton began to explore spying as a sleazy psychological game that nobody wins. By flirting dangerously close to the truth, they quickly exhausted the limited possibilities of that approach.

So where do we go now? Apparently down Kipling's road to En-dor, "the craziest road of all." Both Tom Ardies and Shaun Herron have been forced to go Moriarty-hunting out in the lunatic fringes. They evidently stumbled on the same trail, the now-familiar one that leads to an insane extremist plotting atrocities against his own side in the hope that the nincompoop moderates will be tricked into launching an all-out attack on the other side.

Now this is a difficult theme to bring off for a couple of reasons. One, the suspense depends on the subtle development of the villain's character from one-of-the-gang to fanatic madman and that requires the skills of a writer rather than someone who cuts cardboard. Two, despite rumours about the Reichstag fire, there is no available evidence that such harebrained plots have ever worked in real life — or indeed been seriously contemplated.

Herron comes closest to achieving the illusion, mainly because he deals with the current conflict in Northern Ireland where insanity reigns and suspension of disbelief is a daily necessity. (Needless to say, neither of these ostensibly Canadian books is set in Canada. Who would ever believe that sabotage, kidnapping and political murder could happen here?) *Through the Dark and Hairy Wood* is the third adventure featuring John Miro, a cynical retired British agent but, *pas à Le Carré*, far from disillusioned with life. Herron can write. He also knows his Ireland, knows the smell of the land, the language of the people and the well-springs of the pitiful, persistent religious bigotry they practise. If he ultimately fails to make any of it

comprehensible, it's partly because he has been overtaken by events and partly because nobody could. This is a thinking-man's thriller.

This Suitcase is Going to Explode hinges, as Smart might observe, on the old nuclear-bomb-in-the-suitcase trick. But who put it there and where is it going to explode? Charlie Sparrow, making his second appearance as a member of Washington's ambiguous ASPIRE agency (yes, it's one of those books), sallies forth into a milieu of sex and neuroticism to find the answers. The chase ends in Honolulu and the countdown begins. Ardies scribbles conventionally slick prose with both eyes on Hollywood. The story has two or three good twists and is moderate entertainment. Only in this case, don't try to think at all.

Neither book, however, holds out much hope for the spy thriller's future. Extremism can be pushed just so far. Either the world gets into a fight with some absolutely evil Martians or the genre is doomed. □

MINOR LEAGUE BALL GAME

THE BEST OF FRIENDS

JOY FIELDING

Longmans
cloth \$6.95; 214 pages

MY CLOSEST chum, Mc —, used to make quite a respectable living doing abortions on his pre-Confederation White Pine kitchen table. For one reason or another, business hasn't been any too brisk lately, so he's currently supplementing his income with a line of plump homemade sausages, generously spiced and tasty as can be. In these hard times, what this country needs is more enterprising self-starters like Mc —, fiercely proud and with sufficient ingenuity and determination to earn their livelihood with their own

two hands, a good kitchen table and the salt-sweat of their brows. As Henry Fielding observed in *Shamela*, "But a good pantry table, as hath been discovered by some great man or other (for I would by no means be understood to affect the honour of making any such discovery), hath this excellent advantage, that whatsoever should be manufactured upon it will surely please a starving leper well enough."

Joy Fielding (no relation) says that, having carried the germ of her novel for some months, she managed to get rid of it on her parents' kitchen table in three short weeks — an achievement that makes Mc — look a mere idler by comparison. The result was well worth the effort. In all, there are fewer than a dozen typographical errors, the binding is sturdy and the type, which is almost three-quarters of an inch high, makes it possible to read the book from a distance of 500 yards in a rolling fog. The style is mock-moronic, the diction monosyllabic and repetitive: by actual count, "fuck" is randomly inserted a

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total of 217 times in addition to being employed as a transitive verb on 43 separate occasions.

There is a plot, too. Caroline is ordinary and cries a lot. Her one true friend, Cathy, is blonde and beautiful. Unhappy Caroline tells her psychiatrist all about how Cathy is poised and confident and likes to be gang-banged. She also tells him about her own ex-husband, Richard, and what he used to make Caroline do to him all the time. Then she starts to tell about Cathy's abortion. But the wise psychiatrist makes Caroline admit that she has only made her friend Cathy up:

"Caroline, listen to me. You don't need Cathy anymore. She's tired. She's tired of carrying all these problems around. They're wearing her down. She's tired. You're both tired. Only you're stronger now. You don't need her anymore. She's served her purpose. Caroline, Caroline, listen to me. Illusion... illusion is a wonderful thing sometimes. It helps brighten up all sorts of unpleasant situations..."

Illusion doesn't help brighten up this unpleasant book, though. In the next 13 explicit pages, Caroline proceeds to describe her very own abortion. And that's the end of the story.

Any *Books in Canada* reader wishing my review copy need only contact Mc — , unless he's already ground it up as sausage filler. □ DE

PAPA AND MAMMON

PATERNALISTIC CAPITALISM

ANDREAS G. PAPANDREOU

Copp Clark

paper \$4.50; 190 pages

reviewed by *E. A. Beder*

THIS IS an important book. It represents the revolt of an academic against the patent falsities of the prevailing theories which are advanced in the effort to maintain a belief in the capitalist order.

In Europe and even in the United States such an attitude is not unknown but in Canada it marks almost an innovation in the fields of academe. But before we permit our breasts to swell with pride at this evidence of Canadian maturity, it should be remembered that Prof. Papandreu is a Greek.

What is brought into focus as a start in this work is the inadequacy of our economists to produce a reasonable understanding of the power situation that rules our economic life. The author refers to this as a "distortion of vision" and goes on, "each discipline has erected tenacious fences around the analytical and empirical territory it claims for itself." In simpler terms, the point made is that the aggregate of all these professional views not only does not make sense but is put forward in an established ideologically-biased manner.

Papandreu hastens to say, "I am not suggesting the prevalent views are not genuinely held," which may be a way of letting our entrenched academics down rather easily, but the fact remains that however arrived at, the views of our top professionals in these fields do not coincide with the reality we have all experienced.

A good example was the pronouncement of the Economic Council of Canada, made in its first year, that the Canadian economy was due to rise at an annual rate of 5.5%, seemingly to infinity. We all recall the boom that followed this glowing forecast and the subsequent bust.

Did the Council plant such figures as a service to Canadian capitalism? Of course not, but its inherent bias toward a free enterprise system gave it the motivation to see the future only in terms of the conventional beliefs.

This is the sort of thing the author has in mind in making his protest "against the system" and his comment and analysis carries forward over a wide stretch of ground. There are chapters on "The Myth of Market Capitalism," "Neo-Marxist View of the Capitalist

Metropolis" and so on to his main thesis, "Paternalistic Capitalism."

From a discussion of the views of Baran and Sweezy, Keynes, Galbraith and others, he reaches the point where he is prepared to label the existing form of capitalist rule with the title given to his book.

Paternalistic capitalism represents a further development of near-monopoly capitalism now spread out in multinational corporations and giant pools of interlocking capital over an international terrain. All this in an attempt to achieve the needed stability to maintain its dominance and ultimate existence. (The author emphasizes that he uses the term paternalistic "stripped of any implication of benevolence.")

Despite the legitimate points the author makes in recording the manner in which the development of a multinational escape hatch the giant corporations have devised for their continuance, he might well have gone much further afield for an ultimate conclusion.

This is the fact that competent observers are now suggesting that we are approaching the disintegration of the capitalist system. An observation that has been made before and yet is not without substance.

Certain signals may be monitored — what remains is to determine what to make of them.

The dominant one that has baffled orthodox economists and politicians since the late 1960s is the fact that inflation and unemployment are now running in tandem. We may see other manifestations as the current cycle proceeds.

Papandreu rightly points out the multi-national character of corporate capitalism, but this is not due to any belief in neighbourly beneficence; it is merely an attempt to escape the inherent imbalance of capitalist production that is embedded within the national sphere. But in the manner in which such an escape is now sought, further and unavoidable instability is produced.

The currency crises that have plagued the leading capitalist nations with the formation of the multinational enterprises may very well be evidence of a new by-product that has entered into the situation. So that we

can have statistical proof of national recovery brought into inconsequential significance by the breakdown of the world currency system.

While he does not go so far, Papan-dreou seeks for some sort of logical and planned process to superimpose upon the radical ideologies now current.

Whether this can be achieved or not, there is a great deal here for the

interested citizen as well as the student. And a great deal more which I haven't the space to touch upon. Andreas Papan-dreou deserves well of Canada. □

E. A. BEDER has written and lectured on political and economic affairs over many years; he has recently published *The Missing Political Party*.

NOTES ON THE RHUBARB CROP

THE CANADIAN VOTER'S HANDBOOK

Edited by JIM McDONALD & JACK MacDONALD
Fitzhenry & Whiteside paper \$1.95; 247 pages

THE MISSING POLITICAL PARTY

E. A. BEDER
Wilton Agencies cloth \$4.95, paper \$1.95; 110 pages

THEIR TURN TO CURTSEY — YOUR TURN TO BOW

Edited by PETER C. NEWMAN & STAN FILLMORE
Maclean-Hunter Publications paper \$1.50; 160 pages

reviewed by Richard Liskeard

IT IS USEFUL to be reminded occasionally of the vapid state of Canadian political writing. General elections serve this end well, acting as they do as fumigators, bringing all the old and new creatures scurrying out of the wainscots in a disoriented fashion.

A bookstore on Toronto's Yonge Street deals exclusively in Canadian books (a defiant but questionable act), and throughout the campaign displayed in its large window at least a dozen different books of purported interest to Canadian voters — election handbooks, portraits of Trudeau, concerned pleas for change, and a smattering of declarations that this is only the beginning in Quebec. It was a profoundly disturbing sight coming upon this window so unexpectedly. Somehow, of course, one always knew they were around, these books, since they occasionally pop up on remainder sale for 29 cents at Coles. But to bring them all together was an unnecessary cruelty.

There are those who hold that our political writing is pedestrian because our politics is pedestrian. This is a Jesuit's argument. The French, for example, have the most tedious politics conceivable, yet retain a vibrant culture of political writing. Besides, the excuse that our writing is bad because our politicians are stupid presumes that other countries have more intelligent politicians, a proposition that would require serious examination before it were given wider currency.

The answer, I suggest, is not at all complicated, and does not require another fundamental examination of our national psyche. Observe: Canadian political writers are almost invariably journalists. Our newspapers are among the worst in the world. Our publishers are drawn from the same class as contractors, developers and hardware merchants. From this vantage point, their hand-picked political star-writers can hardly be viewed as ever having

been promising. Men like George Bain, James Eayrs and Walter Stewart occasionally provide relief from this rule.

There are, however, two exceptions to the pattern that political writers are bad journalists moonlighting: Academics and ex-politicians or activists. I will have to pursue this unpromising route briefly because the authors of two of the books under review fall into these categories.

The Canadian Voter's Handbook is described on the cover by some effervescent blurb-writer as "brilliant and timely." It is admittedly timely. The book is a sincere collection of term-papers written by 10 Parliamentary interns. Reading the collection allows one to imagine what it's like being a political science lecturer at the University of Manitoba correcting essays on a Friday night. A Parliamentary intern is someone who gets chosen to work for a year with an MP so as to become intimately acquainted with the day-to-day functioning of government. Invariably such a person tends to be like that funny little fat fellow in your old PoliSci 101 class who ran around beer parties telling Mackenzie King jokes. The essays are uniformly serious, competent and virtually devoid of anything that a close reader of the papers doesn't already know. However, it clearly has its uses, and is probably the best book of the election crop.

The Missing Political Party by E. A. Beder, an old CCF veteran, argues circuitously and obtusely for a "Radical Party" of intelligent persons that would replace the outmoded and obstructive parliamentary system. Impressed by the breathtaking sweep and scandal of his own suggestion, Beder bores the reader with 11 chapters reciting the inefficiencies of parliamentary government, employing a genial combination of unreliable logic and mediocre writing. Only morbid curiosity would lead someone to purchase this unfortunate book.

I come at last to the product of the fighting presses of Maclean-Hunter Publications Ltd., *Their Turn to Curtesy — Your Turn to Bow: The Power, the Glory, the Men and the Issues*, edited by that would-be Rasputin of Canadian politics, Peter C. Newman.

First, let me say how lamentable it is to see a country so reduced in cir-

circumstances as to have *Maclean's* as its national magazine.

Peter C. actually suggests in his characteristically florid introduction that "This collection of essays (was) written for *Maclean's* by Canada's most distinguished political commentators . . ."

Who are these giants?

Well to begin, there is Peter C., who avails himself of the opportunity to discharge yet another anguished essay asking what Quebec really wants. (It's replied to by Claude Ryan, who makes it clear that he doesn't know.)

Secondly, there is Christina Newman, who will be recalled as the author of the most trivial and irrelevant account of the Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union. Her relentless national quest for trendy new Canadian sexual stereotypes (viz. Nova Scotia Soul) in a subsequent edition of *their* magazine catapulted her to the pinnacle of social and political vacuity. Her essay in the book deals not unintelligently with the history of the recent Canadian nationalist movement, but amounts to little but a moist-eyed glorification of the Committee for an Independent Canada. This essay contains a precious passage that stands as a gem of Toronto political incest. Discussing a lunch at the King Edward Hotel between Peter C., Abe Rotstein and Walter Gordon, she offers this observation: "A longtime visceral nationalist, Newman had been brooding on the issue for months, and during that lunch which is now mythologized in some branches of the movement as

The Beginning, Rotstein and Gordon agreed with Newman's conclusion that the formation of some kind of strong crosscountry, extra-parliamentary pressure group held the only hope . . ."

Hugh MacLennan contributes another of his essays suggesting that the crossroads of civilization's march lies at Peel and Ste. Catherine. It's being said by some that he lives in the suspicion that he might be the FLQ's next kidnap victim, a slur on the FLQ that even I consider completely unnecessary.

Bruce Hutchinson, the Rod McKuen of Canadian nationalism, has an open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau, which contains the line: "All this, I confess, is rather hazy flocculent stuff such as dreams are made of. But then, what else is Canada made of?" There is little here that could not be found in the Collected Speeches of Vincent Massey.

Donald Creighton's essay is far from his best, but Creighton, certainly one of the great living English-language historians, is always worth reading. The mini-biography of Trudeau by Ann Charney is superb. The rest of the articles range from the mediocre to the serviceable.

An intriguing omission from the book is the article on Kierans' resignation from the Liberal cabinet, a political bombshell and the best available description of the workings of the Trudeau cabinet. It was published in *Maclean's*, but does not appear in this book. □

RICHARD LISKEARD is one of the editors of *The Last Post*.

ONLY THE TRUTH IS TRUE

SELECTED POEMS

RALPH GUSTAFSON
McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$5.95; 128 pages

IN THIS selection of 121 poems, most of them shattering the intellectual chains of today's perfected mediocrity, Ralph Gustafson establishes himself as one of Canada's more accomplished poets. His breaking of the image of human complacency might be summed up in the timeless adage: "The wisdom of man is real foolishness . . ."

To maintain such an unpopular metaphor without the help of gospel-singing a poet must resort to irony. He must also do a good public relations job for that forgotten reality we know vaguely as Nature. In doing just that, Gustafson has founded his consistently ironical vision in history's myths. He has to re-echo the stupor of our pitiful Agamemnons, suspect virgins, Troys, commercialized crucifixes, and theories of life which are as lifeless as mathematical formulae.

The result, while just another assembly-line ideology, is the strong reminder that the Tower of Babel has endured. Man's tongue is dust and all the rest is garbage.

Ethics is what concerns the poet. These flimsy laws, the basis of judgment, are set against a blind, debatable progress. What emerges is a view of human life eternally sacrificed by fools on the altars of intellectual poverty. Given such anti-reason he reduces past events, by his systematic and undefiled pragmatism, to the colossal joke that makes hindsight wit.

He stands humbly but scoffs before arcane architecture; he contemplates deaths from ships, train windows and holy ground, and, surprisingly, finds them all the same. Incredulous as prayer, he confronts cathedrals, monuments and presbyters of the Lord thy God with the confusion of their double-talk.



"P before Q except after Q"



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As an example here are the choices for three months.

... in OCTOBER

● READERS UNION

A WEDDING MAN IS NICER THAN CATS, MISS

A Teacher at Work with Immigrant Children
Rachel Scott
192pp

\$1.75

This book is about little Indian and Pakistani children who have been switched from their village homes in the Punjab to a manufacturing town and their efforts to come to terms with a strange new life.

● VICTORIAN BOOK CLUB

HUMAN DOCUMENTS OF THE AGE OF THE FORSYTES

E. Royston Pike
336pp including 16pp plates \$2.05
The Forsyte Saga says little about the classes below the Forsytes — the 30s-a-week clerks and the factory girls for example. Here they all are. The Forsytes have their showing, and the opening chapter will appeal to all who enjoyed the Television series.

● SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB

CANDY MAN

Vincent King
191pp

\$1.50

After a millennium of comfortable dependence on machines, in a world city which has rebuilt itself in successive layers over the earth and now stands on a night-black, rotten structure of supporting girders, degenerating humanity is at the mercy of the Machine.

... in NOVEMBER

JESUIT CHILD

Macdonald Hastings
276pp including 24pp plates \$1.75

At a time when so many institutions are in disarray, the Jesuits, too, say that they are off course. The formidable body of men, who did so much to mould history and its culture, are themselves searching for new causes.

THE THIN RED LINE

John Selby
270pp including 76 illustrations and 12 maps \$2.05

The Charge of the Light Brigade was only a vivid firework display on the fringe of the main action at the Battle of Balaclava. It was the Highland Brigade, the 'Thin Red Line' of the title, who really saved the day.

INTERFACE

Mark Adlard
191pp

\$1.50

With industrial processes becoming more and more sophisticated, the not-so-distant future could well be the battleground of another but different Industrial Revolution. 'Interface is a first novel by an English writer of considerable promise.' — Times Literary Supplement.

... in DECEMBER

NAPOLEON

Vincent Cronin
492pp including 12pp plates \$1.75

The first major biography of Napoleon for almost twenty years makes extensive use of much new material. 'As an explanation of the past in personal terms, this is probably the best-life of Napoleon we have.' —

The Economist.

LIFE IN EDWARDIAN ENGLAND

Robert Cecil
223pp incl. 130 illustrations \$2.05

The Edwardian era is seen by most as an Indian summer, an interlude between Victoria and the disappearance of the old order — swallowed up in the mud of Flanders. Whilst the landed gentry uneasily watched Lloyd George, the confident middle classes had never had it so good.

THE ICE PEOPLE

Rene Barjavel
205pp

\$1.50

John Wyndham once remarked that all science fiction plots were used by H. G. Wells in his various novels. Certainly the plot of The Ice People is familiar: an unknown artifact discovered deep beneath the Antarctic ice and a team of French scientists sent to investigate.



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Condemned to preach but never practise, you "love and lose your profit." But, "each death is ours," as Donne and Jesus held: which is a savage ideology if we should look around the world.

But then Gustafson reminds us of the "latest funeral column," and he enquires, "Are you in it?" He is playing with your fears.

Further, insolently and with disgustful reason, he adds:

*Oh I would be less hortative
As my critics ask, but less
The man.*

*And what this asks is joy.
Knowledge of sorrow is what I mean.
By grief I mean joy. I talk
To you flippantly in paradox.
Understanding is lack of death.*

To you who are death to the world but still alive to it, this kind of raving will enlighten.

It is the method of the spiritual physicist laughing to heaven at these worthless atoms, stones, amoebae, the soiling stink of materialistic wonder and the souring of words.

Gustafson conjures up his gaudy images from the premise that the

biggest fool is to be beheld in the mirror, if only he would dare to look.

This superbly limitless horizon, unlike "the god's tool, foreskin back" at Delos, reprimands the past for its vanity, the future for its naivete: yet he does not have us settle within that triviality of sight. For he goes on and outside established concepts to find the beauty of life. He organizes it as painfully as one would an explosive commodity, and sets it to do battle with perverted philosophy and science.

Having no confidence in the so-called glory of human achievement, he leaves us with a frown rather than a futility:

*And yet, coming on sun across
An alien street, stand suddenly surprised—
As Galileo, before his midnight window,
Cloak about his shoulders, coldly chose
A fatal planet—first, listened while
The solitary wagon passed along the road—
Then aimed his contradictory lens.*

Surrounded by error and persecution, all these tragedies become truth. But the truth is to tell the truth. And this Gustafson sings. □ CH

them alien, they belong to no country and every country.

Animals, mythological and real, are the inhabitants of the actual and ideal worlds Charles Pratt is trying to reconcile in "Day Hunt". It is the fox in the title poem who is burdened with the responsibility of outwitting darkness and death. The poet himself is the bird whose feathery instrument etches words on a quixotic sky. The bird observes the real world with a stunning freshness, but is awkward and trite in the magic garden of the mythological unicorn. Because he is mortal, he fails to step out of time.

The country boy's sensitivity to the rhythms of nature is the substance that Charles Pratt shapes into poems. When he doesn't interfere too much, ("The poet is no wizard, he must coax and pull"), the poems are carried like waves and seasons to their own natural utterance.

Time is running out for the young man and rural America "too much in the limbo between concrete and asphalt." The poems are moulted like feathers in the changing seasons. Every shining summer is black edged with the prospect of fall and the promise of spring is distorted by the slow death of the world. Even madness and Alice's trip into the magic garden are no escape from the seasonal pull. Death is as inevitable as the melting wax on Icarus' wings.

The poems of Hudson White, a draft dodger who has been in Canada for three years, are crude and friendly, like bear prints in the snow. Big and clumsy, they occasionally reveal the finer truths of human experience.

The poems, which read like songs to be sung, do not live on the page. The singer is missed in "Childhood Sketches and Other Poems." A kindly face is visible behind the transparent mask of words. The words are an impediment to the personality that manages to survive the translation from being to verse.

White is a storyteller, and such poems as "The Great Green Gilded Frog" are the organic trail of the wandering minstrel, the entertainer. "The Human Loving Ball", a mad, romantic, funny poem, is as mediaeval as 1972. The poet, sensitive and flawed, is very much in the folk tradition.

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THREE TRAILS

CHILDHOOD SKETCHES AND OTHER POEMS

HUDSON WHITE
Coach House Press
paper; 64 pages

MY BARENESS IS NOT MY BODY

DON BAILEY
Fiddlehead Books
paper \$2.00; 80 pages

DAY HUNT

CHARLES PRATT
Ladysmith Press
cloth \$2.25; 34 pages

reviewed by Linda Rogers

DRAGGING BEHIND the baggage of their past, ("Sun by sun we watch the past outgrow our future"), three young poets are making different kinds of impressions on the Canadian landscape. Two of them, Charles Pratt and Hudson White, are Americans. Singers out of key with the terrible times that made

White's humour has an edge of suffering. One hopes his poems will assume the roundness of his experience. His "Poem on the Death of My Father" and "... And the Orderly", written from his own hospital experiences, are so full of love and compassion as to be too deep for tears. Whether or not Hudson White is a successful poet, he is a successful human being.

There are no jokes, divine or otherwise, in the painful vision of Don Bailey, whose title *My Bareness is Not Just My Body* describes the descent of a naked soul into hell. Bailey turns himself inside out and describes the human landscape with brutal honesty. His poems are needles in the mind, sharp and pointed. By turning inward, Bailey has come closest of the three poets to finding his own voice.

It is a bitter voice that grates, gets right through the bone to the marrow.

Tracks in a mental blizzard, his poems are a chilling counterpoint to the Canadian summer. Bailey shows no mercy to his parents, his estranged wife, his child, and, least of all, himself. His is a bleeding world, where "peace is found in eating your enemy". And the fool eats his own flesh.

A Catholic, Bailey is caught in the dilemma of holy virgin as mother, saint as whore. Saint Ann is a frigid motif who teases the nerve ends with sterility and empty sexuality. Bailey's is a cruel picture of human sexuality, untempered by love. The body and the soul, like the man and wife, are divorced and sent to damnation.

The bare mind of Don Bailey is a rugged place, but worth visiting. □

LINDA ROGERS, who formerly studied and taught at UBC, now writes poetry for friends, letters to editors, and articles for *Canadian Literature*; she lives in Vancouver.

THE TRUE NORTH STRONG AND WEAK

I MARRIED THE KLONDIKE

LAURA BEATRICE BERTON

McClelland & Stewart paper \$2.50; 231 pages

THE SILENCE OF THE NORTH

OLIVE A. FREDRICKSON (with BEN EAST)

General Publishing Co. cloth \$6.95; illustrated; 209 pages

reviewed by Peter Kelly

BOTH OF THESE books are by septuagenarian ladies, both are about life in the Northwest around the turn of the century, but there all meaningful similarity ends.

I Married the Klondike by Laura Beatrice Berton was first published in 1954. It has been deservedly reprinted several times since then, the latest edition this year.

In 1907 at the age of 29, Laura Thompson left a comfortable Edwardian life in Toronto to go and teach a kindergarten class in Dawson City. Drawn to the frontier life of the Yukon by a pioneering spirit of adventure no doubt, but with a most engaging and sometimes devastating

honesty which glows on every page of her book, the author states that her main reason was the fact that the job in Dawson paid four times as much as she got for teaching in her hometown.

By the time Miss Thompson arrived, Dawson City was already doomed. Sure, it was to be a lingering death. Some of the tinsel and much of the gaiety still remained and there was still as wondrously varied a population as one might hope to meet. But you could no longer mine a million in six months' work and fortunes were no longer wagered on the turn of a card; that had gone.

Miss Thompson threw herself headlong into the social life of the Paris of

the North. She travelled a lot and kept her eyes open and she writes about it all so well that we come to know the town and the surrounding country and above all the people, many of them genuine originals, one of a kind.

On first meeting one man in the nearby town of Granville, Miss Thompson writes "There was another curious man known as 'Doc', who worked Algebra problems for entertainment in his cabin at night, read Shakespeare and the Greek classics to school children in a quiet cultured voice, and on rainy days carved swords out of boxwood and gave everybody fencing lessons."

The man was Frank Berton and, after a suitably long and beautifully described courtship, the two were married. For the next 20-odd years until they left the Yukon, Mr. and Mrs. Berton lived there happily. They never had a great deal of money, but that fact never seemed to stop them getting full measure from life.

I Married the Klondike is pure Yukon gold. A fascinating well written account of the last days of the single most exciting era in our history. It brings the Klondike back to life in all its crazy, gaudy, heartbreaking, rollicking splendid glory.

The Silence of the North by Olive A. Fredrickson is an entirely different kind of book and while Mrs. Berton was encouraged by her son Pierre, Mrs. Fredrickson collaborated on her book with Ben East, who is described as a veteran outdoors writer in the jacket blurb. It is because of Mr. East, that instead of a purely personal story by a very courageous lady we get a book aimed directly at the readership of an outdoor magazine in which animals are never just shot. They are shot with "an old Winchester 30/06 with a bad barrel that was as likely to send a bullet keyholing wide of the mark as on the true course." And on one occasion "John wound things up with a 180-grain softpoint in the side of the bear's head." If hunting is your bag, this book is for you. There is just too much killing to suit my taste and more than that the authors seem to assume that all animals are enemies. Mrs. Fredrickson hates wolves because of the way they kill. She hates wolves for doing wolf things and to me that just doesn't make any sense.

There are redeeming passages in the book where one detects more of Mrs. Fredrickson's story than Mr. East's. Moments of clarity and appreciation of the Stuart River country of British Columbia where Mrs. Fredrickson spent most of her life. There are some harrowing stories of a woman's fight for survival in the unforgiving climate of the North after her first husband had died tragically in a canoeing accident. The author was left — in her own words "26, a homesteader trapper's widow with three little children, 160 acres of bush-grown land, almost

none of it cleared, a small log house, an old 30-30 Winchester and precious little else."

But the lady survived and later remarried into a more comfortable and easier life. She wrote her book at the age of 70 and that in itself is a testimony to her zest for life. □

PETER KELLY is a distinguished producer of films with CBC; many of his programs have dealt with the Canadian North.

NATIONAL INCOME

STRANGERS WITHIN OUR GATES

J. S. WOODSWORTH
University of Toronto Press
paper \$3.95; 279 pages

reviewed by Clyde Hosein

THIS is a reprint of the original 1909 work in which Woodsworth, one of the founders of the CCF, attempted to create an understanding of problems of Canadian immigration.

It is therefore a historical document, but its accomplishments beg the natural comparison between arguments on immigration attitudes in Canada then and now.

After some 60 years, witness the immutable rhetoric of Commissioner Watchthorn, quoted at the head of Woodsworth all-important chapter 17, 'The Problem of Immigration':

There are two classes who would pass upon the immigration question. One says, 'Close the doors and let in nobody'; the other says, 'Open wide the doors and let in everybody.' I am in sympathy with neither . . . There is a happy middle path — of discernment and judgment.

The persistence of those opposing views from which the Commissioner extricates himself is entered and filled by Mr. Woodsworth's Christian socialism.

His cause is just and his intentions are steadfastly humane. So whatever follows cannot be hollow criticism. It is mainly this: his text is the reminder that such ideas and such men do still

exist, and yet the 63-year-old problems, too, still exist.

Moreover, the increase of their intensity and intricacies is proportional to the colossal changes that have occurred in the thinking and possibilities which have descended upon mankind since 1909.

The Judeo-Christian tradition has not solved much of the immigration dilemma, but its struggle to accomplish this is pre-eminent in the desires of its advocates. So, at least, the struggle is heartening for those wretched people who desire a country and a life. This indestructible humaneness has been recently evidenced in the Canadian government's decision to open the doors to thousands of Asian Indians, robbed, persecuted and booted elsewhere.

But what Woodsworth has prescribed is dangerously subject to invalidity; particularly because of two factors:

- (1) The pressures of superiority, manifested in hysterical nationalism and racism, have inflated the warlike nature of world population movements;
- (2) The resulting critical social abrasiveness, further sharpened by frenetic competition and individual survival, is

so increasing that the self-same humanity, typified by Christian charity, stands in danger of being tossed on the rubbish-heap of time.

Woodsworth really wanted brotherhood and charity — a form of supernaturalness: in fact, Godliness. How Canada responds to that ambition rests with the immigrants who have been fortunate enough to obtain their Canadian citizenship.

Prejudice and narcissism are central to human life; so much depends on the quality of immigrants to Canada, far more than Woodsworth envisaged. The world is almost MacLuhan's "global village", with people of vastly different features and cultures clamouring for a sojourn or home here.

The burden of Canadian immigration policies in such a world is bound to be economic by desire — in terms of the productive ranges and capacities of incumbent manpower allowed in — and culturally integrationist to its sociological effects.

But, even greater, it is ethical by the conscience at the heart of democracy and jurisprudence.

So, for the majority of the Canadian mass, Commissioner Watchthorn's "happy middle path" and the 1901-10's bogey of "the inferior racial type" will have to be resolved if that conscience is to continue to exist. Woodsworths of 1972, see-sawing between the "opened door" and "closed door" might consider Woodsworth's own ironically questioning insight:

What does the ordinary Canadian know about immigrants? He classifies all men as white men and foreigners. The foreigners he thinks of as men who dig sewers and get into trouble at the police court. They are all supposed to dress in outlandish garb, to speak a barbarian tongue, and to smell abominably.

Future Canadian policy can be an example to the world. Referring to Woodsworth, it might be that he wished things to be different. For, after all, he had to indulge in painful classification to understand the ethnic melting-pot in his day. One can achieve an improvement on that telling classification. □

CLYDE HOSEIN, a poet, critic and broadcaster, has recently come to Canada from Trinidad.

YOU GOTTA HAVE HEART

SELECTED POEMS

GEORGE BOWERING
McClelland & Stewart
cloth \$4.95

GENÈVE

GEORGE BOWERING
Coach House Press
paper \$3.00

reviewed by Stephen Scobie

GEORGE BOWERING speaks of language being "lifted out of the ordinary into the illumination of poetry," which is a fine description. But there is perhaps some question whether such an illumination does occur in the lines:

*Language lifted
out of the ordinary
into the illumination
of poetry.*

This question may serve to indicate some of the reservations that one feels about Bowering's large and admittedly impressive body of work. That it is impressive, and that Bowering is one of the more important poets of the last ten years in Canada, cannot be doubted: and *Touch* performs a valuable service in bringing together in one readily available volume a wide selection of Bowering's early work, a good deal of which is otherwise out of print. (One minor quibble is that the reader without access to the earlier books might have appreciated some indication of the poems' dates, or which of the earlier books each poem was first printed in.)

Bowering's main technique for lifting his language out of the ordinary is rhythm, and in his *In True Diction* he rightly insists that the poems must be read aloud, with a careful observation of the line ending. Certainly his poems are carefully crafted from this point of view: in a piece like "Walking Poem" the tensions are built up, the step from one line to the next generates its energy, and the hesitations of the line

movement are nicely resolved in the final two lines, bringing the poem to a satisfying sense of completion. But at other times — as, it seems to me, in the lines quoted above — there is no tension, no illumination; the words are merely chopped-up prose.

One aspect of the problem is that the very close attention to line division, and the kind of intricate sound-patterns which this builds up, are best suited to short poems — poems, that is, where the reader can hold the complete rhythmical pattern in his head at one instant, and can see the setting up and resolution of its tensions and harmonies — whereas Bowering has been moving compulsively towards longer and longer poems. And the longer poem demands not only a looser and more varied rhythmic form, but also other resources, other levels of resonance to evoke that illumination of poetry.

Bowering is not especially noted for the vividness or the strength of his visual images; nor is he, in any extensive way, a descriptive poet. Thus, to seek levels of imagery, or resonance, he is forced back onto his subject-matter, and when, as in some of the later poems in *Touch*, that subject-matter is predominantly at the level of intellect, or abstract idea, the texture of his poetry becomes rather thin and tenuous. What he needs is a very solid subject matter, a complete set of images, physical facts, references, on which to base the poem. Thus, among the best poems in *Touch* are those on the history of his family. This is due partly to the current Canadian search for roots, or whatever, the kind of backward-looking impulse which has produced Margaret Atwood's poems on Susanna Moodie and Barry McKinnon's splendid work-in-progress on his family history; but it also fits into the general pattern of Bowering's poetry, the search for an image structure outside himself. (For it seems to me that Bowering tends to be least successful when he is most personal.) This is the pattern of the Indian legend poems, such as the very fine "Hamatsa," and also, on the more popular level, of "Baseball." No writer can create his own mythology, he can only work within what his society gives him: and sport, in its contemporary mass-audi-

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SINGLES

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drawings by David Shaw



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ence media-dictated manifestations, is surely capable of providing the poet with a whole, ready-made, mythic world. It is in fact very surprising that there have not been more poems written on sport, especially since there are many valuable analogies to be drawn between sport and art. Perhaps the reason is simple snobbery; if so, Bowering is to be greatly congratulated for avoiding it. I think his poem is tremendous, even though personally I can't stand baseball.

In *Genève*, Bowering's most recent book-length poem, we find again the reliance on an exterior system of imagery and resonance, in this case the Tarot pack. But Bowering does curious things with it: he omits almost entirely the traditional meanings and symbolic significances of the Tarot cards, and also all their literary associations from *The Waste Land* on, and attempts instead to come at them without any preconceptions (not even the Freudian ones for lance and cup), and describe simply the literal, direct impact of the cards' visual imagery. The results, held firmly together by the serial form, are fascinating but in the long run unsatisfying: the artificiality of the situation works against any emotional response. The reader might not be entirely blamed if he finished the book and said, "That's nice. So what?"

And this brings me to a final reservation about Bowering's work, another element in what I feel to be the tenuousness of much of its fabric: and that is the lack, at times, of a strong emotional imperative. A poem such as "Far from the Shore" tends to stand out for me in presenting an overriding emotional involvement on Bowering's part. *Genève* is a fascinating poem, but it never quite escapes the aura of being a very clever exercise. One gets the feeling (perhaps unjustly) that the poem is not indispensable, either for writer or reader. It is this tenuousness of the texture of his poetry which continually hinders my admiration for Bowering's work, and raises my doubts as to the fullness of the illumination he provides. □

STEPHEN SCOBIE teaches English at the University of Alberta. He is on the editorial board of the *White Pelican*, a poetry and prose quarterly.

OTHER VOICES OTHER RIMES

40 WOMEN POETS OF CANADA

Edited by DOROTHY LIVESAY,
assisted by SEYMOUR MAYNE

Ingluvin Publications
paper \$3.00; 141 pages

reviewed by Marian Engel

WOMEN'S LIB tries to tell us there are no fundamental differences between men and women; but I wonder, and I disagree. Perhaps, if the battle continues, all differences except the physical ones can be erased in 1,000 years — but even the physical differences change our imagery, our feelings, our aspirations. And look at these poems. They are not men's poems: Dylan Thomas says he always had to look up the names of the flowers.

From Leona Gom:

*I remember my mother
at home
under the lamp
with its moth-soft mantles
making kindling
the butcher knife sliding
easily, gracefully
into the billets
shaving off long slim slices . . .*

There is a way you watch your mother when you know that you will play her role one day, and that look is here.

She continues,

*Can I never leave then
am I still there
alien among my books
watching, fascinated
the keening knife
slice down
through that white
that white
white
vulnerable
wood.*

A knife means a lot of things and here its meaning is not freighted with any masculine fears: human meanings are here, certainly, but not male meanings.

Dorothy Livesay:

*My father lived lusty but fearful
I am lusty and fearful.
My father spoke his mind
sharply
I am sharp.*

You could say *Vive la difference*, but not many women would, and that is sad.

I'm not used to reviewing poetry; I wondered how I would do this book, it's been so long since I wrestled with a poem. So I sat down, remembering what we did in university, and made a Caroline M. Spurgeon graph of imagery. Fortunately, I have now lost it: women know the names of trees and flowers, and love hunted animals. They are, as male critics say, more often particular than general — these 40, anyway. And sometimes sentimental.

But listen: from A. Szymigalski: "When the walls split we fell into this trap/ And we are stranded in the Bitter Lakes . . ." in a poem that ends, beautifully, "I Want to see my mother in her cheap felt boots/ Dancing on the grey snows of March."

Women's imagery, then, is different: more flowery (their mothers taught them all the names of flowers), less, perhaps, formal. But first-rate is still first-rate, and history has not taught us that it is superior to be general and political. You take your Al Purdys and your George Jonases: there's nothing in them as intense as Margaret Atwood's incandescent imagery: "a bird/ lit on both branches/ his beak split/ his tin scream forked in the air . . ."

For men, women's wombs are honeycombs; for women, the image removes itself to men's heads. (Pat Lowther)

So there is a difference, and when a woman's poem is mediocre I am more angry than if it is a man's: it belongs to my kind and from my kind I want excellence, so I'll be moved to make excellence too. And there is excellence here. The editing is particularly good. Even from poets who are best-known for Canadian-Nature writing, Dorothy Livesay chooses the hardest, darkest poems, the not-necessarily feminine. There are tough and amusing conceits (Elizabeth Brewster's "Munchhausen in Alberta," all Gwendolyn MacEwen's poems), and new voices and old songs. The women's ties — that fondness we have for modifiers like "fantastic" and

"immensely" — are balanced by some very rich poems from people like Miriam Waddington and Anne Marriott. The political poets are mostly American (unless someone in Canada now is burning things along Twelfth), and the Jewish poets are the richest in their imagery.

The book, in its presentation, reminds me of Virginia Woolf's comments about women's colleges at Oxford. It lacks comfort, it lacks pretentiousness. But we all know, now, what smartness is about: it's better to make poems, and these are good ones. Wish they had been encased in a book that was entitled "40 Poets of Canada";

or would they have met a bigger market? □



MARIAN ENGEL, who lives in Toronto and has published two novels *No Clouds of Glory* and *The Honeyman Festival*, has just completed a third.

poems read on the A side it may be difficult at a normal level of concentration to distinguish at first between the poems and the comments preceding them — a problem that could have been lessened somewhat in the manufacture of the record if more time had been allowed between the cuts. Once or twice during the reading of "In Memoriam: Claude Orser (1894-1968)," an elegy for an ignorant, kindly backwater tinker, Nowlan's voice seems to falter, just slightly, with emotion.

The selections themselves are well chosen, covering probably the full range of his poetry and a wide span of years. Among the poems are two of his best, "The Last Leper in Canada" and "The Mysterious Naked Man" (the second the title poem of one of his Clarke, Irwin books) which have an inferred mystical flavour and show perhaps the direction in which his talent, in its peak moments, is travelling. The final poem is "Ypres: 1915" which Nowlan recently chose as his favourite. Quite moving (though it is just barely on the right side of corn), it is a sort of half tribute to those Canadian soldiers who held fast during the first German gas attack while all about them fled. Nowlan's reading of it, or parts of his reading of it, confirm an old suspicion that the poet's line breaks and spacings sometimes have nothing to do with the way he actually expects his poems to be read but are what seem appropriate to the moment and the medium. The World War One poem is followed by Bruce Armstrong's reading of the story "The Gunfight," which is from Nowlan's 1968 book of short stories *Miracle at Indian River* and which is one of his poorer pieces of fiction. *Alden Nowlan's Maritimes*, a good buy except for that, has liner notes by the CBC's Robert Weaver. □

THE SPOKEN WORD SOUNDING TIME AND PLACE

ALDEN NOWLAN'S MARITIMES

ALDEN NOWLAN
CBC Learning Systems
LP Album \$5.00

reviewed by Douglas Fetherling

IT SEEMS impossible when listening to *Alden Nowlan's Maritimes*, the CBC's latest LP record of Canadian poetry, that the New Brunswick poet is only 39 years old. Not only does his voice sound like that of a man about 60, it is also the craggy, timeless voice of imagined metaphysics — a quicker, muddled version of the voice of the ghost in pursuit of the person who can put his soul at rest; the off-camera voice in the Hammer film that comes from beyond the grave. All this, one would think, is in distinct contrast with the kind of poetry he writes, but no. There is something about his reading that brings to the 24 poems on this record an element not realized when the same work is encountered on the page. The poems are nearly all about people and places in New Brunswick and his native Nova Scotia, generally the aged, sick or otherwise pathetic people and the rotting little places that history has left only its scars and oppressions with none of its

security or pride. And Nowlan's voice, in some peculiar way and without any apparent effort, gets this across as much as his words do, lifting the poetry from the grooves and implanting it in the mind of the listener. One must conclude that it is a natural result of the writer's affinity with both the material and its sources since as an actual performer Alden Nowlan is no great hell.

No actor could be found today to read the way he does. He has a noticeable, fascinating accent which comes to the forefront in the pronunciation of such words as "poem." He does not say pome or something close to it, like most of the rest of us, or poe-em, like the purists. It is something closer to poe-awm, uttered with the sibilant slur and the mumble which, on first listen anyway, make a copy of the texts a good thing to have on hand. He does not declaim the poems at all, but speaks them as he would talk into a telephone. Indeed, during the early

DOUGLAS FETHERLING, journalist and poet, is the editor of *Tabloid*; he has recently completed a study of Hugh Garner.



FUMBLING THE BALL

FOR LOVE, MONEY, AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

MEL PROFIT (photographs by TERRY HANCEY)
D. C. Heath of Canada, cloth \$10.95; illustrated; 192 pages

reviewed by Jack Hutchinson

MEL PROFIT stood out from the moment he arrived to play football in Toronto in 1966, even on an Argonaut team widely celebrated for its menagerie of bizarre and colourful people. First, he was a very good football player, one of the best in Canada at his position. Second, he was not only large and muscular, good-looking and single, he was also long-haired and sometimes bemustached, oddly dressed by conventional standards, and, after three years, the operator of a men's boutique specializing in kaftans and other eye-catching apparel. Third, Profit quickly established himself as a talker, a rare football player ready to spew forth torrents of words, phrases, sentences and, on occasion, entire coherent paragraphs on a variety of subjects.

Profit did well in Toronto. Some of the more blithe spirits among his colleagues departed, a new coach named Leo Cahill arrived, and Profit helped the Argos finally to achieve respectability again after years in the sewers of the Canadian Football League. He didn't just play football, he also wrote about it for the *Telegram*, that ex-newspaper published by one J. Bassett, who was also by some strange quirk of coincidence his football employer.

Not that it was all smooth sailing aboard the good ship Argonaut. Profit was a spokesman for the veteran players when they went on strike for training camp pay. He conducted his own well-publicized and successful holdout. And he continued to talk.



Naturally this talent led to his discovery by the Toronto-centered media, and *Profit* appeared on every radio and television show that required an articulate jock. Never noticeably reticent about expressing his opinions, Profit gathered publicity and popularity not so much for his football exploits as for his outspoken public pronouncements and his apparent fearlessness (or at least carelessness) about the consequences.

In short, Profit was an iconoclast in a game not generally lauded for its tolerance of oddball behaviour. Privately and publicly, he questioned the values not only of professional sports in general but also of professional football in particular. It didn't matter that many of his anti-establishment tirades were mere echoes of other fashionable radicals with more serious purposes. It didn't matter that he sometimes contradicted himself, or was silly or tedious. What mattered was the *Profit attitude*, his stance — one football player thumbing his nose at the sports system wherein he earned his living.

Now about this book, *For Love, Money, and Future Considerations*, which Profit describes as "a personal reflection of my life as a CFL player." It's a disappointing book in several ways, even though it is graced with some 150 Terry Hancey photographs. To put things as gently as possible, Mel Profit is not nearly as good a writer as he is a talker. He seems constrained in print, haunted by awkward, clumsy turns of phrase. The whole point of one story is lost because he puts the wrong city in the punchline. His judgments and comments on CFL players, coaches and cities are shallow and hardly more than could be expected from the average fan. Most disappointing of all, Profit pulls most of his punches. His inside stories are mainly second-hand or watered down. At one point he writes, "There are . . . occasions when candidness is overruled by tact" — is this the Mel Profit we know, the fearless disturber? Well, hardly. This book is a chore to read through, curiously lacking both energy and emotion. Even the photographs, fine as they are, are for the most part static "character studies" or tableaux.

Mel Profit attained a couple of summits in 1971, as a player and as ar

iconoclast. He was team captain, All-Canadian, and the Argos' most popular player as they reached the Grey Cup game for the first time in 19 years. Soon after the season, Profit vigorously opposed the decision to install artificial turf in CNE Stadium, indignantly wondering aloud why \$250,000 of the taxpayers' money should be used, as he put it, to benefit only a few pro football players. Perhaps that was the final straw for J. Bassett. Or maybe it was just coincidence that the Argos decided they would lose in 1972 without Mel Profit's services. In any case, Profit is now retired from football and doing his establishment-smashing from the premises of Toronto's newest TV station. After this book, I'm afraid people will take him less seriously than they did before. It's much easier to talk about writing a good book than to write one. Ask the man who's tried. □

JACK HUTCHINSON, originally from Moose Jaw, has played football for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and has worked variously as supervisor, producer, sports-writer and broadcaster for CBC; he recently added TV acting to his trades.

VOICE PRINTS

RIEL: A Poem For Voices

DON GUTTERIDGE
Van Nostrand Reinhold
paper \$2.95; 70 pages

CREEPS

DAVID FREEMAN
University of Toronto Press
paper \$1.95; 40 pages

reviewed by Katharine Govier

IT IS JUST one hundred years since Sir John A. gave Louis Riel \$1000 to go into exile, and 87 years since Riel was hanged. After his burial, in the dead of night, the body was dug up by friends and moved from St. Boniface to an unknown home (or so I have been told by Rudy Weibe). Similarly, Riel's place in history has been adjusted over the years.

Don Gutteridge's *Poem for Voices* is a chant-collage offering the "poetic meaning" of Riel's story. The young Riel has "two rivers" for heritage, one reaching east and the other in the west. He tries to unite them and fails: he tries to preserve one and fails.

The most successful poetry evokes the landscape of Manitoba, the buffalo hunt and the railroad, "a steel tongue intoning/ Its single word into the empty western-sky." Parts of letters, editorials and posters give historical interest, but are not altogether welcome divergences from the intensifying interior drama.

This is a new edition of the short volume first published by Fiddlehead Poetry Books in 1968. Photo-montages by Mary Cserepy, an afterword and a chronology have been added. The work is impressive in that Gutteridge has recreated Riel's life in images of the land he was born to and where he has been homeless.

Creeps is the first play published by the University of Toronto Press in their new Canadian Play Series. It is a good beginning — not all plays make

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good reading although they may make fine theatre. This is both.

"We" in Freeman's angry mini-world are spastics, receivers of paralyzing charities and "pityshit." "They" are everyone else. People keep coming in and not going out of the dirty urinal in a sheltered workshop where the play is set. No one really wants to go out, back to making boxes or sanding blocks. In two hours of fierce talk, interrupted by an insistent social worker who thinks something filthy is going on, the men recreate dreams. One, perhaps, responds to his hopes. Yet as he takes a step "outside," the others, defeated again, are "inside" more deeply than before.

Even in reading, the play seems like a long and agonized dance. Pictures of the actors and descriptions of their movements help to create the visual sense. Movement must in this play be as expressive as words. Ordinary tasks are awkward, slow and humiliating. Fights and falls become supra-real battles of human will. A handful of people emerge very large from these pages. □

KATHARINE GOVIER, a writer from Edmonton, who has studied at University of Alberta and at York University, now works in Toronto.

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STORIES FROM WESTERN CANADA

Selected & introduced by Rudy Wiebe

Macmillan

cloth \$10.00, paper \$2.95; 274 pages

reviewed by Penny Johnston

SHORT STORIES either hit you dead on, or you have to bribe yourself to read them. So on picking up *Stories from Western Canada* I said to myself, I'll chance the back of the book first, before I start at the front. In the sections there, entitled *Strange Love*, *Dream and Live*, and *Families*, I found the stories on the whole, highly entertaining. But in the book's first section, *Such People*, I found the tales, "Indian Woman", and "The Tepee", beautiful but dull; and I could never have the patience to struggle through the terrible spelling of Peter Pond's "His True Confession".

Overall, I found that the stories had tremendous charm, and that some were quite funny. A lot had gentle endings, a nice change from the usual death or insanity. Mind you, there were several shockers. In Margaret Laurence's, "Horses of the Night", a young girl observes as her older cousin, Chris, a visitor to their farm, who so desperately is trying to escape from his family environment and the Depression, that all his "life's choices had become narrower and narrower, his mind finally retreating into insanity". I was very interested in the stream of consciousness technique used by Rudy Wiebe in his "Did Jesus ever Laugh", and the skill in his transition from the reality of the killer's mind to the external reality of the apartment room and his intended victim's reactions.

In "A week in the Country", Dorothy Livesay describes the suppressed fantasies of a young Winnipeg girl's visit to a farm, and her ensuing infatuation for her servant's boyfriend, a young farmhand. Or in the tale, "Old Mrs. Dirks", an elderly woman, living alone and ignored on the

edge of town with her chickens, suddenly in her 70th year begins to imagine that she is sexually desirable to the husband of a woman in the town. A vagrant that she is kind to eventually opens up her world. The climax is gentle. A relationship between a "vertical" young man who has grown up in Vancouver, near the mountains and the sea, and a young prairie artist, a "horizontal" person is symbolized by one of her paintings, "Streak Mosaic". This she explains is a crop disease, the grain will never ripen.

In the section *Dream and Live*, a widow, Mrs. Kubichek, in "Earth Moving", poignantly realizes that her coal mine, mined for the last 20 years with picks and shovels, can no longer compete with the neighbouring strip mine's efficient draglines. If you can't fight 'em, exploit 'em — and she does with the help of a vagrant prospector who builds her a still. She chuckles:

"You figure, Jake, we could soak them three-fifty for the stuff?"

A granddad, out of work in the 30s, and crazy about his radio, uses his wits to obtain free power for himself and his whole block, in Ken Mitchell's humorous, "The Great Electrical Revolution". The justice done to capitalist leeches ends when a linesman from the Moose Jaw Light and Power Company climbs outside the parlour-window and notices the connecting wire.

So for someone who has never been west of Ontario, I found the stories, simple and direct. My reaction on reading them, on the whole, was not how clever, but how warm. □

PENNY JOHNSTON teaches English at high-school and is a regular contributor to the community newspaper, *Toronto Citizen*.

WAR JAW

THE PREVENTION OF WORLD WAR III

HAROLD E. BRONSON

Prairie Fire Books
paper \$2.75; 217 pages

WAR AND SOCIETY IN NORTH AMERICA

J. L. GRANATSTEIN &
R. D. CUFF (Editors)

Thomas Nelson & Sons
paper \$3.95; 199 pages

LEE KUAN YEW, who took Singapore out of the Malaysian Federation, thus thwarting what remained of British foreign policy in the area, once observed that the Americans and the British are both perfidious — the only difference being that the latter are intelligently so.

If half of the revelations in Harold Bronson's book (ingenuously subtitled, *A Survey of Twentieth Century Events and Theories which Help to Explain the Causes of War and How It Can Be Abolished*) have any substance, then it is impossible to explain how American foreign policy, especially in the Far East, lies in such obvious ruin. According to Bronson, America has pursued its quest for world domination with a Machiavellian cunning equalled only by the other great villain of this book, the Soviet Union. The hero of the piece is, of course, Chairman Mao, assisted by altruistic revolutionaries selflessly dedicated to the downfall of the imperialist paper tiger, its running dogs and lackeys.

Should word-mongering be equated with war-mongering, then the best I can say of this book is that it stands an even chance of causing the crisis it seeks to prevent.

The second book under review is based on a false premise, to wit: "There has always been something stirring, more often something tragic, in the clash of great armies by night. Society, too, has been dissected by academics and writers who search for the motive forces that drive men to greatness and folly. Curiously, however, few North Americans have looked at the effects of war on society." (Editors' Introduction,

their italics.) No paper tiger this; merely a castle in the clouds. To put it plainly, we are meant to believe that historians in the past have viewed war as an isolated phenomenon, whereas Professor Granatstein *et al.* have discovered something new.

In fact, *War and Society in North America* lacks justification. It is not a book but a collection of papers, read at the fall, 1970, meeting of the Canadian Association for American Studies. Hence the reader who is looking for a miscellany will find just that — ranging from accounts of the American and

Canadian business experience in World War I to a pseudo-psychological account of Ernest Hemingway's attitude to war — subjects tenuously connected, though yoked together by appeals to the inter-disciplinary approach greatly in fashion at York University.

If you like learned puffing and supposed scholarship, with (as in the first book) copious annotation, you will find this collection of academic solitudes mildly interesting. Personally, I am glad that "scholars" and academics now hold their tea-parties at places other than the State Department. □ cs

BETTER DEAD..

MAGADAN

MICHAEL SOLOMON

Chateau Books
cloth \$7.95; 243 pages

reviewed by Peter Hay

I KNOW OF no better antidote to Farley Mowat's rosy and insipid travelogue *Sibir* than Michael Solomon's book of festering memories. It is a geographical irony that the whole should be more sinister than its parts: the fact is that the name Siberia evokes much more for us than Magadan, which is a small area of Siberia in the Sea of Okhotsk, roughly analogous to the position of Vancouver on the other side of the same ocean, and similarly sheltered by the Kamchatka peninsula in one case, and by Vancouver Island in the other.

Here the analogy ends; for Magadan was the port which supplied with slave labour the vast mining camps in the Kolyma range. Millions were sent there during almost twenty years of terror under Stalin to work, to waste away, to die in conditions which make the Nazi work camps look almost purgatorial in comparison.

Michael Solomon is a Canadian of more recent origin than Farley Mowat. He was kidnapped in his native Roumania after the war and spent seventeen years in prisons and concentration camps in the Soviet Union and again in Roumania. His book covers "only"

the nine years spent in Siberia. The thaw following Stalin's death meant release for hundreds of thousands of survivors, but for Mr. Solomon it was only another beginning. The Soviet secret police "freed" him so he could be handed over to their Roumanian colleagues.

Magadan is a documentary and should be read as part of the larger mosaic of misery that is being pieced together about what went on in Stalin's death camps. Unlike the novels of Solzhenytsin (Irving Layton's foreword to *Magadan* notwithstanding) or even Eugenia Ginzburg's *Into the Whirlwind*, Mr. Solomon's book is not a literary masterpiece. It is the testament of a man who has died many deaths; though he was dead for seventeen years, he was murdered again and again, committed suicide many times and was humiliated and degraded beyond human understanding. Mr. Solomon's book should be read carefully for what it is: the truth. It lacks adornment; and although the author's journalistic skill comes across in the capturing of details, his use of English is at times awkward and obviously unaided by a slick editorial

hand. Above all, his sensibility displayed in his attitudes towards his tormentors or fellow victims is as genuine as it is ingenuous. His situation, as an outsider, lacks the inherent complex of ironies that we find in the testimonies of the ardent believers: the Communists swallowed by their own party. As a result, Mr. Solomon's style conveys less of that macabre horror we get from Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and even more from Bela Szasz's *Volunteers for the Gallows* published in London this year.

I wish Farley Mowat and all other Canadians touring the Russian Arctic might read Mr. Solomon's book. When they wonder at feats of Soviet engineering in the North, they should also find out how they were put there and at what human cost. *Magadan* contains some useful insights into the permanent features of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. Some Canadians wondered during Mr. Kosygin's visit here what the fuss about Jews was all about. Here is a book by a fellow-Canadian who gained his knowledge on the subject through incomprehensible, immense and undeserved suffering. □

PETER HAY lives in Vancouver. He publishes plays in co-operation with Talonbooks.

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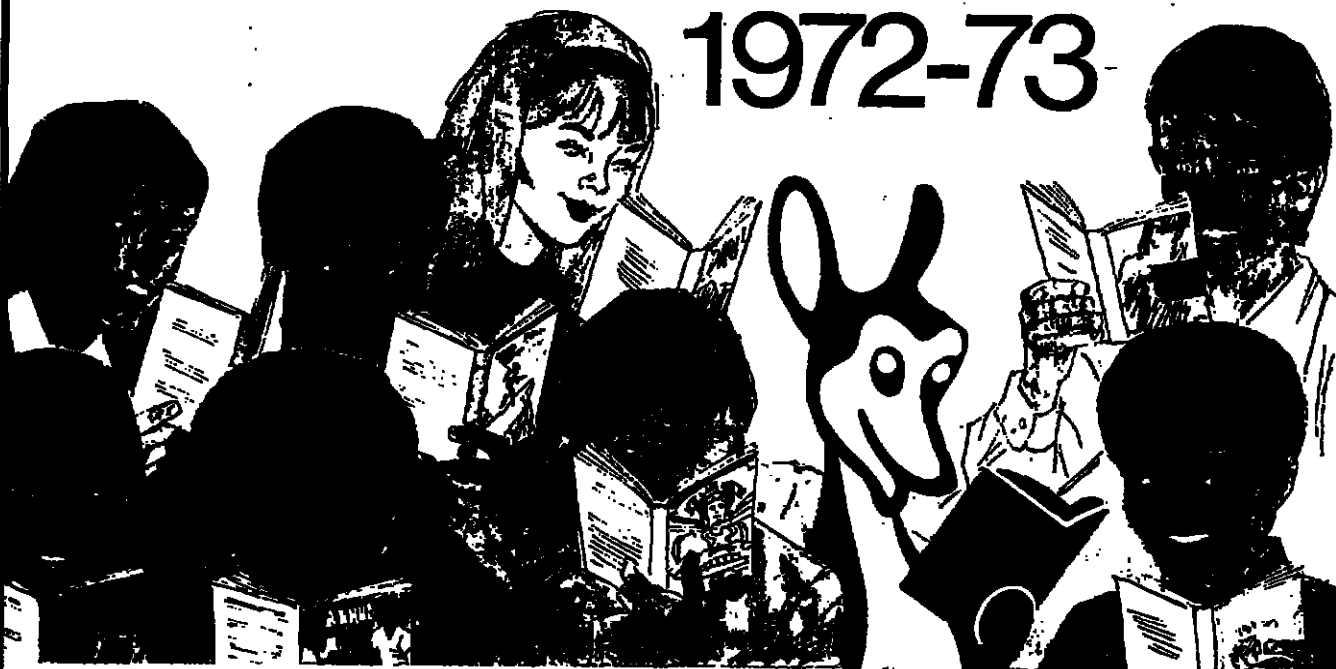
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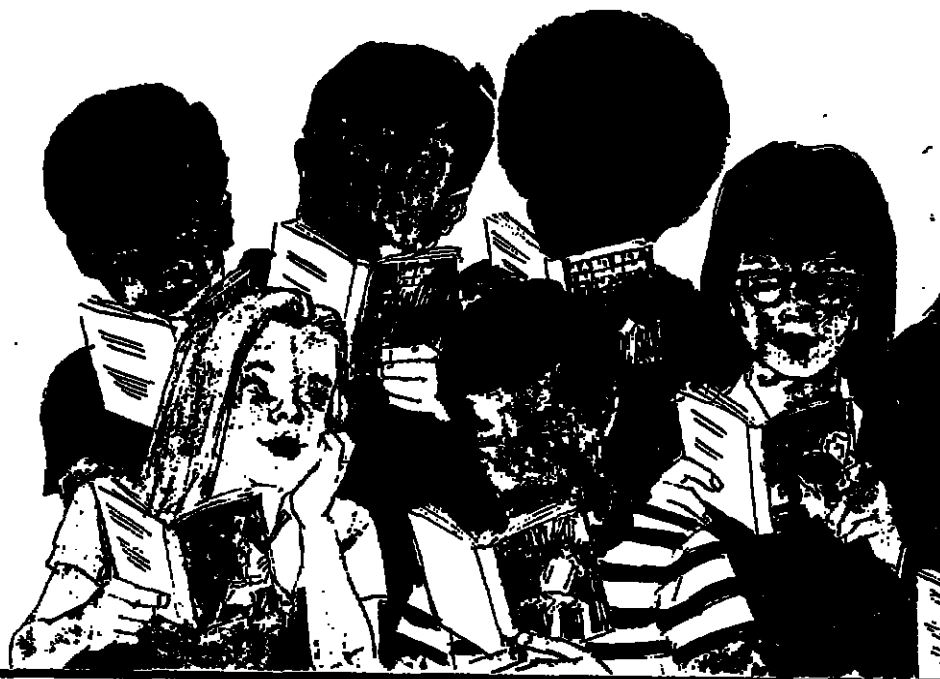
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