

BOOKS *in* CANADA

a national review of books

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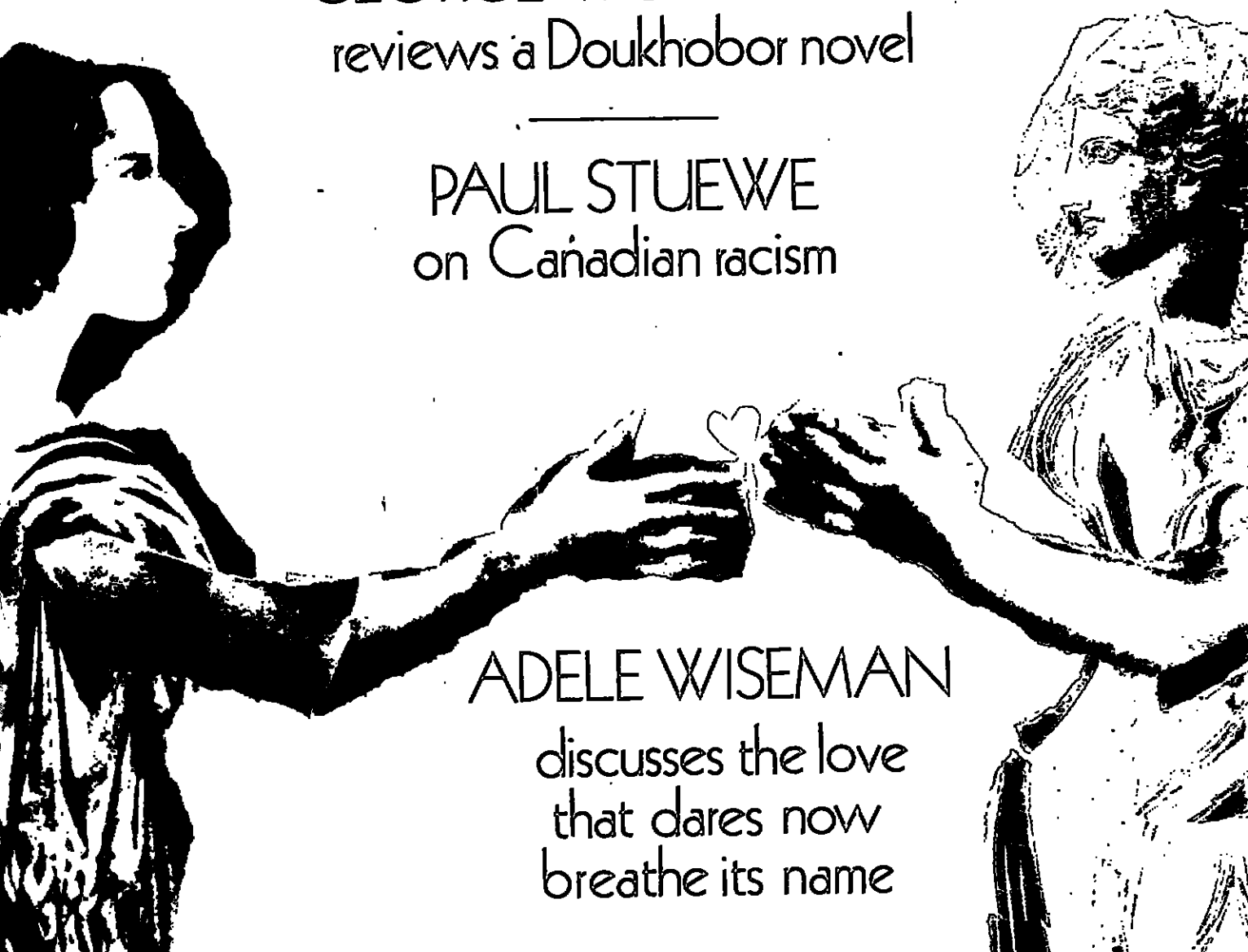
SEPTEMBER, 1975

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reviews a Doukhobor novel

PAUL STUEWE
on Canadian racism



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discusses the love
that dares now
breathe its name

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BOOKS in CANADA

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SISTERS UNDER THE SKIN

As Radclyffe Hall asserted, and Jane Rule confirms, the new Sappho's not for burning

Theme for Diverse Instruments, by Jane Rule, Talonbooks, 185 pages, \$4.95 paper.

Lesbian Images, by Jane Rule, Doubleday, 312 pages, \$9.95 cloth.

Radclyffe Hall at the Well of Loneliness: A Sapphic Chronicle, by Lovat Dickson, William Collins Sons, 236 pages, \$11.95 cloth.

By ADELE WISEMAN

NOT HAVING READ any of the previous work of Jane Rule, I came with pleasure on *Theme for Diverse Instruments*. In her fiction, Ms. Rule is a virtuoso who sets herself difficult tasks and brings formidable powers of craft and intellect to bear in their execution. There is a fine quirkiness of mind and a suppleness of style that make even what for me were the less successful of these 13 stories worth reading. At her best, Ms. Rule has the ability to select and organize details in such a way as to set off sympathetic vibrations among apparently unrelated subjects. The result is a fruitful and meaningful ambiguity, similar to that found in metaphor, having the same suggestive sense of hidden relationship, of depth and complexity, of the validity of the personal vision that she presents. A story I would single out for required re-reading is "Invention for Shelagh." At first sight a series of journal jottings loosely describing the relationships among a group of people named but scarcely visualized, this story responds to attention. It is a delicate evocation of the essential patterns and rhythms and movements of these people as they impinge on each other in physical, intellec-



Adelle Wiseman

tual, and emotional space, and as they are impinged on by what to them are significant details from the outside world. One is led to sense them in continuous creation, to perceive their interweaving lives, the "dance" of their existence that has both personal immediacy and the feeling of a more abstract composition, of the flux of life itself. No mean accomplishment, this.

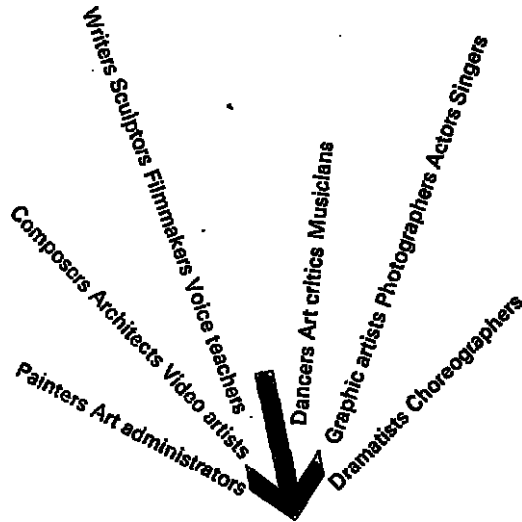
The title story of the book presents the narrator's family myth as rooted in an Amazonian mother, her totem the redwood tree. It is a gigantic projection, of Bunyanesque vitality. This mother, creator of fruitful, masterful daughters and massive, exemplary, but ultimately ineffectual sons is, it is also suggested, the creator of the U.S., her offspring its power elite. Thematically and symbolically complex, this is, among other things, a bold attempt to set up against the prevalent myths of our society in which the positive powers are predominantly male, a positive myth of the dominant female. As such it is bound to create some discomfort, as the males in the story are correspondingly diminished, even to the point where of the two key biologically non-reproductive members of the family, the male is a neutered literary critic (and what could be more neutered?), while the female is a lesbian artist, whose totem is the spider. It is clear that male ascendancy is not even a question here, though considering the habits of lady spiders, male survival as a significant force may well be. Arachne, the spider lady, has even seduced the chosen mate of the one male in the family who managed to produce a son, and thereby cut him off from legally spreading his name any further.

"Brother and Sister" is a moving piece on a theme that recurs in various guises in this book. Here the disintegration of the gigantic brother must inevitably be chillingly contrasted with the quiet, helpless strength of the almost invisible but clearly dominant sister. In lighter vein is "House," a delightful little tale, a comic survival story of a family that manages to cope creatively with the results of the father's brief flirtation with middle-class conformity. "Middle Children" was less successful for me largely because of the author's insistence on her thesis about middle children,

It is clear that male ascendancy is not even a question here, though considering the habits of lady spiders, male survival as a significant force may well be.

which, being arguable, tended to weaken the effect of, rather than support, her central idyll. In some of the other stories I found myself questioning her story-telling strategy, either because of what for me were uncertainties of intention, as in "The Basement of the House," where I felt that Ms. Rule was playing with loaded red herrings, or blurring of focus, as in "Housekeeping," where the stated theme and resolution did not quite coalesce with the underlying

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emotional currents. In the **otherwise** perceptive "A Walk by Himself," I didn't know whether to take the ending as a postscript to epiphany or the prelude to disaster. One thing is certain, in accordance with the discovery of the little girl in "My Father's House," Ms. Rule is very definitely painting herself into the picture.

In the **non-fiction** *Lesbian Images*, Ms. Rule examines the lives and work of a number of **literary women** and comments on the image of the lesbian that **each** of them projects. She judges not according to the quality of **the writing** they produced, but according to her own standards of what constitute desirable lesbian responses. This is not a dispassionate study, as she **readily** admits. **She** is a champion of a cause **and** measures her own well-being by the **attitude** of society **toward** her cause. Informative and often **analytically** acute, Ms. Rule makes some interesting and insightful comments about a formidable **array** of gifted women. She does a brilliant job, **for** instance, of pinpointing the reasons for **the** continued popularity of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*:

Its survival as the single authoritative novel on lesbian love depends on its misconception. It supports the view that men are naturally superior, that, given a choice, any woman would prefer a real man unless she herself is a congenital freak... Stephen does not defy the social structure she was born into. Male domination is intolerable to her only when she can't assert it for herself. Women are inferior...

She also **says** some illuminating things **about** the tendency to increasing **obscurity** in Gertrude Stein, **and** the critical **unfairness** in the treatment **of** such writers as **Willa Cather** by critics whose judgments have been **biased** by **their** own assumptions about lesbians. **But** Ms. Rule is no more fair or accurate than they were when dealing with artists who somehow **run** counter to the bias of her own obsession. What could less aptly **describe** the tone and quality of that writer's work, than the unfortunately twice-repeated simile with which she opens and closes her chapter on Colette? "Reading too much Colette at a time is like having an orgy of rancid maple sugar."

What is actually the **response** to lesbians that Ms. Rule hopes to foster? In her opening chapters, she traces the history of **religious, legal,** and moral persecution of the **lesbian,** and a grim history it is. She examines the translation from religious and moral persecution to psychiatric **persecution** — correctly, I think, **interpreting** the punitive and judgmental **attitude** that is still at **the** base of most psychiatric practice toward any mental disturbance. Rejecting vehemently in particular **the** Freudian masculinity-femininity dualism, she goes on to reject **all** psychiatry **that** **assumes** lesbianism is a sickness **or** is symptomatic of sickness, even when **the** lesbian feels sick and herself desires treatment.

Nowadays, the people who make life most difficult for her, Ms. Rule claims, are the "hidden lesbians," who live their lives in fear of discovery and feel threatened by her candid and unashamed lifestyle. **Her** call is to all lesbians and potential lesbians to stand up and be counted, proud, normal and unashamed. If they don't or won't, it is because of the destructive effects of lifelong social pressure on the self-image.

As far as Ms. Rule is concerned, all women should identify themselves with lesbians, "for **the** radical woman, free of **the** **dominance** of man, whether or not she was emotionally and sexually involved with another woman, **could** and should proudly call herself a lesbian." Surely this is an **abuse** of semantics, if nothing else. But once language is **blurred**, it is easier to accept the **further** blurring of reality.

For this is essentially a polemical book, its writing in tone and method always slipping toward propaganda for a cause. Facts are selected and trimmed for highlighting, statistics are incompletely analyzed, their implications oversimplified; statements are emotionally loaded. **Psychiatrists**, for instance, are excoriated as unscientific and irrational, but a statement by **Simone de Beauvoir** ("And if nature is to be invoked, one can say that all women are naturally homosexual. . .") is presented as though it has particular authority. Similarly, the author quotes Robin **Morgan's** "assertion that most lesbians in the country are married and are raising children," to which she adds: "She's probably right. . ." And there is a great deal of play given to some **imperfectly** interpreted statistics from **Kinsey**, from which she evolves the claim that women are really better satisfied **sexually** by women. Further, according to her reading of **Kinsey**, a majority of women prefer techniques associated with lesbian lovemaking, even in heterosexual relationships. But since she has totally rejected the Freudian femininity-masculinity axis, how can she,

Interesting to speculate that a Won Juan among lesbians may yet tam out to be a latent heterosexual. And fascinating that an ideal for the liberated women should be loveless fucking, the one-night stand, the fraternity-boy mentality.

claim any kind of lovemaking as specifically feminine? Since men have tongues too, she would have to limit her statistics to how many women actually prefer to perform **cunnilingus**, for instance. And she would have to consider a statistic on how many women prefer to perform **fellatio**. And what of all the women in the statistical picture who were never interested enough to try lesbianism? Lack of space prevents me from pointing out all the other absurdities of this kind of approach to the complexities of human sexual and emotional interaction. Suffice to say that what Ms. Rule is driving at here is basically as insulting to women, the very people she claims to want to liberate and represent, as the **thuggish** male assertions we all know so well: "All you girls really need is a good screw. You may kick and scream but you're really dying for it." I really think she doesn't realize that the underlying thrust of her argument is equally assaultive, reductive, self-justifying and wish-fulfilling. Women apparently are to be told, if not by the male then by the lesbian, who they are and what they really want, and what choices it is most natural for them to make.

And after all her talk of the high grades of love bet&en lesbians, after her complaints because the church won't legally sanction **lesbian** marriages, after all her strenuous **objections** throughout the book to male identification. Ms. Rule, in her final pages, makes a plea for unity in the lesbian movement (though why lesbians should agree any more than the let-handed people whom she claims their essential situation duplicates. it's hard to see), and she salutes Jill Johnston, the leader of a faction advocating a separate lesbian nation, in the following curious terms:

The joyous energy which comes from this kind of lesbian identity has given Jill Johnston the reputation of a Don Juan, for she has given up any concept of love which includes possessiveness, celebrates her liberation from the necessity of being in love in order to enjoy her sexuality, boasts of pick-ups and one-night stands more like a fraternity boy than a middle-aged woman she has somehow survived to become.

Interesting to speculate that a Don Juan among lesbians may yet turn out to be a latent heterosexual. And fascinating that an ideal for the liberated woman should be loveless fucking, the one-night stand, the fraternity-boy mentality.

The fact is that under the high gloss of argument, there is a considerable confusion in Ms. Rule's camp. She is trying to argue on too many fronts simultaneously, and some of the stances she feels compelled to take up in order to come out "right" are mutually contradictory. Now, the place where mutually contradictory stances can be successfully reconciled, is fiction at its best. In Ms. Rule as a writer of fiction I can see that as an exciting possibility. As a propagandist, she too often insults my intelligence, and what I conceive to be her own.

One half-turn from these current intensities and who is that long, reedy gentleman, his manner self-possessed yet hesitant, modesty underlining distinction, a man still slightly bewildered to have been chosen to bear witness to such mysteries? Lady Una Tmubridge, devoted consort though she was to Radclyffe Hall for a great part of her life and possibly beyond ("And if God choose I shall but Love thee better after death"), certainly knew how to pick her man. No knight of old could have conceived himself less worthy, nor completed more honourably an unwanted task, at the behest of fair lady. In *Radclyffe Hall at the Well of Loneliness*, a biography of Radclyffe Hall, and in fact, of Una Tmubridge too, Lovat Dickson has discharged what he came to feel was a moral obligation, and has perhaps finally silenced a certain amount of urgent alto bleeping in his direction, from that territory beyond the grave that both ladies (as well as W. B. Yeats and others, before and since) had spent many of their living hours in trying to explore.

Radclyffe Hall and Una Tmubridge were colourful figures (rich, beautiful lady in diamond studded semi-drag, accompanied by willowy, delicate beauty in a monocle) of the London social scene of the 1920s. *The Well of Loneliness*, if viewed as literature, was quite adequately described by Virginia Woolf, who nevertheless defended its right to be printed, as "a meritorious, dull book." Still, its writing was motivated by a genuine messianic impulse, and seen simply as a semi-biographical document, in intense sincerity of purpose and glimpses of raw human anguish, it has some genuinely moving moments. Radclyffe Hall saw herself as a pioneer, and hoped by her efforts to win sympathy and acceptance and emotional living space for all lesbians. Though the book was banned for a while, to the delight of its cunning publisher, who arranged to have it published in France, from whence few travellers returned without it, it established lesbianism as a cause, and brought comfort to probably thousands of lonely and distressed women — the not unmixed comfort, as lane Rule would point out, of learning that they were not alone, for there were a lot of other freaks just like them.

Radclyffe Hall conceived of her homosexual nature as an unwanted role that had been thrust on her from birth, a congenital deformity. She was fated but innocent, and as such deserved compassion and understanding, and the tight to live and love in her own way. Since it had been thrust upon her, she determined to perform this role openly on the stage of life, acting out its implications as natural to the role. Intensely self-conscious, intensely egocentric, she and Una performed their lives, convinced not only of their validity, but of their high purpose.

Lovat Dickson is careful to impose few of the insights, interpretations or judgments from a later age on the biog-

raphical material with which he deals. He describes these lives in the terms in which they were lived, allowing his heroines their own **interpretations** of themselves and of their needs and **behaviour**. His style, **spare** and of an old-world elegance, admirably captures their time. But **though** he seldom intrudes on their **performance**, he is not uncritical, as for instance of their treatment of **Una's** little daughter, who "lived the loneliest life imaginable .. and a certain **sadistic** element seemed to enter into **the** judgments and **subsequent** punishments meted out by them when she had **erred** in any way." But when **they** had dumped her and **gone** off

Luckily, some child was spared the acting out of this sentimental fantasy, which was related to the old bugaboo about the "barrenness" of homosexual union, rather than any interest in other than themselves.

together for a joyous holiday in Italy, "they even started **negotiating** for the purchase of a baby which they could adopt and bring up as their **own**." Luckily, **some** child was spared the acting out of **this** sentimental fantasy, which was related to the old bugaboo about the "barrenness" of homosexual union, rather than any interest in other than themselves. What **frantic** mental, emotional, and **physical** gymnastics must be performed **when** one's **concept** of "love" **remains** limited to that "romantic love" so dear to the **adolescent and other egocentric states**. What an amount of **emotional** pumping up is required to sustain **these** ecstasies, and how much continued physical reassurance. What a limited **range this** is for that most splendidly **generous** of human capacities, the capacity to love.

And yet, under what **enormous** stress these women **functioned**. How **much** psychic **energy** it must have taken simply to brazen out their lies. **Loyat** Dickson is **obviously** sometimes shocked, and clearly handle-s some of the **details**



Radcliffe Hall

at fingertips' end. What, for instance, that is unique to **lesbian** activity, could possibly be involved in **the following**?

It is clear that the sexual practices of lesbianism induced some gynaecological woes of an unhappy kind for which the medical treatment can be protracted and painful.

But it is to his credit that he records as a **process** of **enlightenment**, an **enlargement** of understanding and sympathy, the history of his contact with **Una Troubridge**, an enlargement of understanding and **sympathy** he hopes, in turn, to bequeath to his **readers**. □

LAND OF MILK AND HONKIES

Sure Canada's d multiculturd society — up to d point. Now let's find out what it really means

By **PAUL STUEWE**

HERE IN THE wonderful world of the vertical mosaic we don't believe in **coddling** our immigrants, no sir. We just sift the little **blighters** through one of our more Byzantine bureaucracies and encourage them to move into a compatible ghetto where "their own kind" will look after them. Sun, we fund **an** information **centre** hem and them and hire the odd multilingual social worker, but that's just a little frosting on the old Canadian comuwopia. We all **know** that a little hard work and clean living will **carry** one tight to the ... well, not the top, but close enough so **that** one **can** at least become a member of one of the less influential service clubs and a spokesman for the **Canadian community** and an **all-round** good fellow **valiantly** transcending

the handicap of **an unpronounceable** name. Dare anyone **ask** for mom?

Until **recently**, no. But since John 'Porter's **1965 discovery** that some pieces of **the** mosaic were **more equal than** others, we have **realized** how closely ethnicity and status are linked in Canadian society. Although this is a relatively tolerant **country** -and at a time of "White Power" slogans defacing Toronto **hoardings** and East Indian homes being vandalized in Vancouver, let us **emphasize** the **relatively** — the flip side of our easy-going acceptance is a pervasive **absence** of curiosity about what really makes our ethnics **tick**. As long as immigrants choose to **remain** within the established **confines** of their **particular** enclave, ignorance may indeed **be** conducive to bliss; **but** let them move towards achieving power **or wealth** in the greater society and we will raise up on our hind legs and come **forth** with a resounding "what do you people **want**?"

One way of finding out would be to consult a few of the proliferating number of books dealing with the experience of ethnic groups in Canada. For a succinct and yet wide-ranging overview of historical developments, one could do little better than to turn to *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism*, edited by Howard Palmer (Copp Clark, 216 pages, \$7.95 cloth and \$4.75 paper). Here is an excellent selection of the speeches, memoirs, and sociological

Canadian immigration policy has always reflected the short-run interest of the ruling political party, and its lack of consistency has been as notable as its failure to take humanitarian considerations into meaningful account.

studies that constitute the hard reality behind the conventional platitude that Canada has always welcomed the disadvantaged of the world, and one reads them with an avid fascination compounded by a growing sense of shame.

Sir Clifford Sifton's preference for the "stalwart peasant in a sheep-skin coat," for example, has been preserved both in Canadian history books and Columbo's *Canadian Quotations*; but the full text of his remarks indicates just how primitive were the terms in which the early 20th-century debate on immigration was conducted:

... there are hundreds of thousands of hardy peasants ... who are anxious to leave Europe and start life under better conditions in a new country. These men are workers. They have been bred for generations to work from daylight to dark. They have never done anything else and they never expect to do anything else.

With adversaries of the quality of Sir Clifford, it is not surprising that those opposed to immigration had little difficulty in lowering the level of discourse even further. The prize for Most Inflammatory Yellow Journalism should probably go to the Calgary *Herald*; which specialized in such vicious rhetoric as "dirty, frowsy, Galicians" and "the importing of a mass of human ignorance, filth and immorality;" but even "liberals" of the calibre of Watson Kirkconnell, who stressed the potential benefits of multiculturalism, tended to rely upon the most wildly impressionistic stereotypes of "national character."

This sort of historical dirty laundry aside, however, there is one very important point that emerges from Palmer's book. Canadian immigration policy has always reflected the short-run interests of the ruling political party, and its lack of consistency has been as notable as its failure to take humanitarian considerations into meaningful account. When strong bodies have been needed for hard labour or professional skills inadequately supplied by the Canadian educational system, the welcome mat has been unrolled and immigration regulations judiciously eased; but when projects are completed and professional positions filled, we suddenly discover that immigrants put severe strains on our capacity for tolerance, and move near those who will have "difficulty in adjusting" to our once-more self-sufficient society. Thus that current travelling farce known as the "Green Paper" hearings is merely a sophisticated method of preparing public opinion for a new tightening of immigration requirements, and when and if business conditions improve we shall doubtless be treated to a "Purple Paper" touting the contribution of immigrants to an expanding economy.

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A concrete example of our off-again, on-again attitudes to "New Canadians" is provided by David Flint's **The Hutterites: A Study in Prejudice** (Oxford, 193 pages, \$5.95 paper). Enticed here by promises of freedom from military service and the rights to private schools and communal land ownership, the Hutterites soon learned that the Canadian government could be swayed by the fears of a minority of ultra-patriots. The promise of military exemption was revoked, and ensuing decades of harassment over private schools and communal land ownership, harassment encouraged by the government's initial failure to stand up to racist sentiment.

After reading *The Hutterites*, one concludes that they are more to be pitied for their isolation than persecuted for their unwillingness to compromise centuries of religious practice. Flint's is a highly sympathetic presentation, stressing the positive qualities of a life characterized by gentleness, industriousness, and fundamental stability; but the Hutterites' careful programming of desirable social responses brings to mind the enforced sterility of *Walden Two*, as they tenaciously build a solitude and call it peace. This informative and penetrating book will in any case provide

readers with the means of making their own estimation of the validity of the Hutterite alternative.

Headley Tulloch's Black Canadians: A Long Line of Fighters (NC Press, 188 pages, \$8.95 cloth and \$3.95 paper) is one of the first Canadian examples of what might be called the "ethnic pride" book, where the intent is to instill a positive group self-image by filling in some of the blanks in Anglo-centric history texts. Tulloch recounts the story of blacks in Canada in clear, forceful prose that never lapses into empty rhetoric, and strikes a nice balance between self-interest and consideration for others. A typical comment: "Lately we have had M emphasize that black is beautiful. But so are red, yellow, and white."

Four years ago I was a tutorial leader in a course on race relations at a Canadian university, and found that the students' lack of interest in Canadian material was matched only by my inability to find inexpensive and readily available specimens of it. There is no longer any excuse for either avoiding the subject or characterizing it as dull and tedious. We now have the opportunity to learn what multiculturalism really means, and that is an exciting and challenging project that we may just be mature enough to accept. □

NON-LITERATE LITERATURE

The Doukhobors distrust print, but a novel
hds been written from matriarchal memories

By **GEORGE WOODCOCK**

THERE ARE FEW Doukhobors living today who took part in the great migration of the sect from Russia to Canada under the aegis of Tolstoy and Kropotkin nearly 80 years ago, and even fewer who remember the settlements in the Caucasus from which these religious pacifists began their long odyssey of exile in Georgia and Cyprus before they eventually reached a disenchanting haven in Canada. But a quarter of a century ago, when I first encountered the Doukhobors in the narrow valleys between the Rockies and the Okanagan, many veterans of the Russian past survived — and especially those amiable matriarchs, faces wrinkled like winter apples under their traditional head-scarfs, who firmly "laddied" it over their children and grandchildren, gently tyrannized their daughters-in-law, and made marvellous perogis and kasha.

Such old Doukhobor women were veritable walking treasuries of traditional lore and sharply visual recollections. The Doukhobors who came to Canada were mainly non-literate, but like most people who distrust the printed word they brought with them a strong oral tradition. Their history was embraced in a great collection of hymns and psalms which recorded not only their doctrines but also their history, and which were handed down from one generation of singers to the next. The Doukhobors called this corpus of sung literature "The Living Book," and many of the more conservative members of the sect felt — some still feel — that it should never be set down in writing. When it was, the man who did it was a non-Doukhobor, a friend of Lenin named Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich. But Bonch-Bruevich only caught the Doukhobor tradition at a particular moment, about the turn of the century, and new psalms were being

composed to celebrate the continuing battle between the Doukhobors and earthly powers right down to the burnings and marches and imprisonments of the Sons of Freedom (radical wing of the Doukhobors) in British Columbia in the early 1960s.

More than the men, who often claimed attention by their militant action, the Doukhobor women kept the oral tradition alive and preserved the memories of the sect, so that if one wanted to get a feeling of what it meant to live in the villages of the Caucasus in the early 1890s before the great persecutions and exoduses began, one went to the matriarchs in the great square brick community houses of Brilliant or Grand Forks.

One of these matriarchs is the central figure of **Tanya** (267 pages, \$9.43, a kind of historical novel written by Eli Popoff, former editor of the Doukhobor weekly journal *Iskra*. It is published by the Mir Publication Society in Grand Forks, B.C. The society is a group of young Doukhobors, reacting against the anti-literary tradition of their forebears, who also publish an English language Doukhobor magazine called *Mir* (meaning, roughly, Community). **Tanya** is the first book they have issued, and one of the first books written in English by a Doukhobor, though two learned members of the sect, Peter Maloff and V. A. Sukhorev, have already published histories of their people in Russian. Certainly **Tanya** is the first Doukhobor novel that I have encountered.

But how far is it really a novel? The central figure, **Tanya Moojelski** who became **Tanya Arishenkov** by marriage, was a woman who actually lived, reaching adulthood in the Caucasus and dying little more than a decade ago in British Columbia, and the narrative (based largely on her own oral accounts) tells her life and attempts to reconstruct her reactions to the drama of being a Doukhobor during the age of

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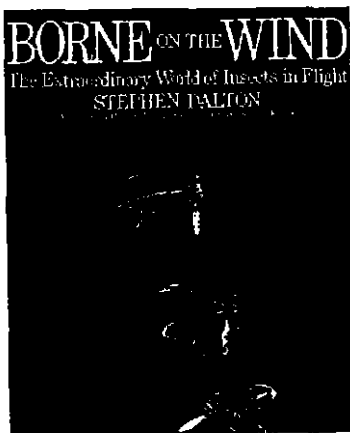


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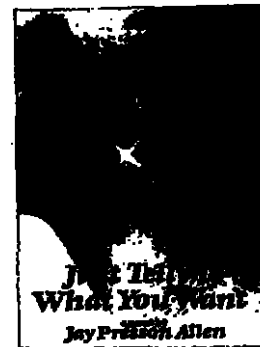
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Russian and later of Canadian persecutions. It is, in its own way, an historical novel, but it would be excessive to claim that Popoff has solved the difficult problems that such a genre creates — particularly in our own day, when we demand a subjective as well as an objective authenticity even if a novelist deals with events that actually happened. Such problems nowadays daunt even experienced novelists, and Popoff, who writes with a fresh kind of simplicity that often redeems his gaucheries of diction, makes no claims to sophisticated craftsmanship.

If Tanya does hold our interest — and it did mine almost all the way through — it is because, for the first time, we have an extended representation of what Doukhobor history meant to an early Doukhobor, an account of dramatic experiences as they were lived, an evocation of the faith whose aura enveloped the Doukhobor leaders and which sustained the more simple members of the sect through hardships and disappointments and deceptions.

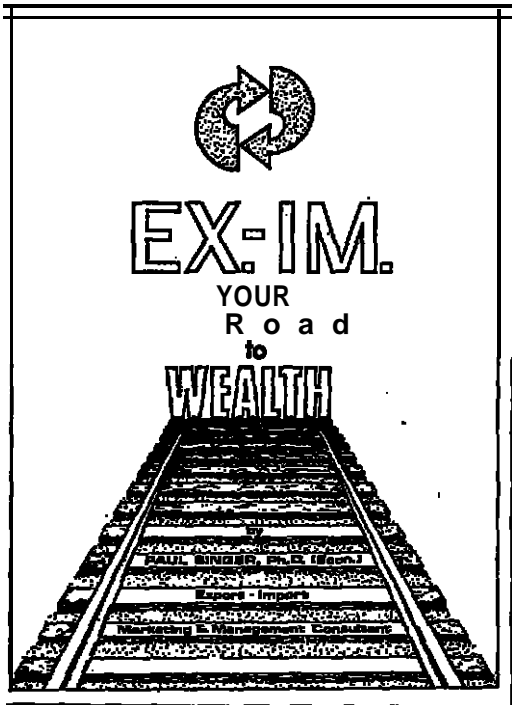
Of course, even among Doukhobors there were viewpoints different from Tanya's simplistic faith. The Independents became disillusioned with the leaders; the chiliastic, Sons of Freedom went off on their own militant lines of action in which the leaders appeared only as figures whose word was interpreted in reverse to sanction violence outside the normal course of pacifist beliefs. But thousands of ordinary Doukhobors, in the Prairies and in British Columbia, carried on doggedly according to their slogan of "Toil and Peaceful Life," enduring the alienation of their lands and other bureaucratic persecutions by the Canadian authorities who had once promised them a free haven from discrimination, enduring even the impositions of their own leaders, and carrying on in the belief that their sacrifices

would bring the earthly paradise of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, which alas was never achieved. Of these thousands, the Orthodox Doukhobors who maintained their devotion to the succession of Verigin messiahs (Peter the Lordly, Peter the Purger, etc.), Tanya is typical, and in her we see the bewilderment of many other East and Central European peasants who came to Canada, imagining it would allow them to follow their traditional ways of life in peace, and were disappointed.

Perhaps the main flaw of Tanya is the failure to sustain a consistent point of view. We are expected to see all that happens through Tanya's eyes, as experience changes her; but too often in the early part of the book we find her involved in a course of sophisticated introspection quite out of her character as a simple peasant woman in a village of the Caucasus; and equally often in the latter part of the book the author resorts to a thinly disguised historical narration of 'events in Doukhobor history, filtered unconvincingly through Tanya's consciousness. Unfortunately, while the narration is sometimes too obtrusive for convincing fiction, it is often insufficient as history, and the reader who does not know the Doukhobor record will sometimes find himself benighted in a thicket of unexplained allusions.

But if Tanya cannot rate high marks as an example of the difficult craft of historical fiction, its documentary interest remains; it shows Doukhobor experience as probably nine out of 10 Doukhobors perceived it, and that has rarely been done. There are fascinating details of daily life in past generations, and one hopes that some day Popoff will devote his great knowledge to a much-needed social history of his people, who are one of the most interesting of Canada's minorities. □

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WHY 'ACADEMIC' IS PEJORATIVE

Some questions—and answers—about the effect of the university on the creative process,

By EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG

No CONSCIENTIOUS REVIEWER would wish to add significantly to the difficulties of *Creativity and the University* (York University Publications Office, 61 pages, \$6.50 cloth), an unfortunate little collection of essays by Mordecai Richler, André Fortier, and Rollo May. They are the 1972 Gerstein lectures, with the exception of a fourth lecture given by Dean John T. Saywell of York University, a historian and a television personality of considerable repute. Saywell's lecture, three years Inter, "is regrettably not available for publication," though its author must, by virtue of his position, have dealt with the issues that gives the series its title more continuously than any of the three contributors. None of these is an academic; and Mr. Richler, at least, is pmud of it. André Fortier is a mathematician who became a career civil servant; his lecture was prepared toward the beginning of his service as Director of the Canada Council. Rollo May is one of the most distinguished living existential psychiatrists, and the author of *Love and Will*, among other works. Mordecai Richler is Mordecai Richler; certainly, if he isn't, no one else is.

The contributions of each of these men to the maintenance of culture have been so substantial that the belated appearance of this book cannot detract much from their record, yet it is sad to see them willing to speak when they have so little to say. Richler, at least, is consistently entertaining and has some valid points to make about the futility of trying to teach creative writing and the dangers of trying to judge literary quality by norms derived from nationalism rather than from the literary task the author has imposed on himself. Fortier is chiefly concerned with the propriety of offering public support to artistic endeavours that by their nature cannot command a mass audience, and with ways in which that audience can be expanded so as to justify more support. He accepts the necessity, ultimately, of deferring to the popular will and does not, if I understand him, conceive that one major function of the Canada Council might precisely be to support work that was unpopular (and always would be) just because it had something disagreeable but important to say. About the university, as such, he says nothing, but makes his obeisances to it by noting in his opening paragraph: "For the purpose of this essay I have used the word 'university' in its broadest sense — that is, any means of acquiring knowledge and training." Fortier's use of the word "knowledge" in his definition may be

intended to exclude the **public-school system** from it; but surely **cannot** be taken to exclude such formidable and esteemed Canadian institutions of **learning** as **Millhaven, Collins Bay, and Dorchester**. But he does not refer to them either. The only attention he gives to the function of the university as such in fostering creativity is as the agency by which statistical data on the penetrating power of the arts are collected.

Rollo May's lecture, however, is the most disappointing of the three because, but not only because, one expects more. Dr. May, also, **decided to ignore the university al-**

Fortier's use of the word "knowledge" . . . may be intended to exclude the public school system . . . but surely it cannot be taken to exclude such formidable and esteemed Canadian institutions of learning as Millhaven, Collins Bay, and Dorchester.

together in his discourse; he does not even apologize for the omission as **Fortier** does. But he did this, apparently, in order to use the time instead to deal with some issues of genuine **importance** that were, indeed, probably unfamiliar to his 1972 audience. As always in his published work, as in his professional life generally, he is concerned about the relationship between autonomy, creativity, and **death**; for he sees creativity as dependent on the ability to stand as a separate human being with a unique experience—the willingness to **accept** death through the confidence that what one creates as a human being will possess its own immortality. This is an immense topic of the most fundamental significance, and of course impossible to undertake in a single hour. But if you **are** going to try, it doesn't help to



Edgar Z. Friedenberg

approach one's audience as if one were telling a nursery tale:

But Zeus punishes Prometheus for his theft by condemning him to hang on the Caucasus mountains where vultures come during the day and eat his liver. At night it grows back again, and so they come the next morning and repeat the torture. This is the symbol of creative effort. Anybody who has put in day tier day, year after year, in search of some truth, some discovery, will know exactly what it is like to be Prometheus.

This seems overstated: Sisyphus, perhaps; Prometheus, no. Yet the Soviet authorities **are** surely to be commended for refusing, regardless of tradition, to tolerate this sort of thing now that the Caucasus **form** part of a modern welfare state. **Here** in Canada we may also be confident that our devotion to hygiene will continue to prevent such a **problem** from arising in the future, as it has done in the past. **Prometheus**, hung up on the Rockies **somewhere** near **Banff**, **would** be enough to restore Social Credit to **power**.

Creativity and the University has no editor; nor is it possible — or desirable — to force the invited participants in an academic occasion to confine themselves to the topic at hand. But if a book is to be published under the title given to a set of lectures, **it** ought at least to address **itself** to that topic. This **61-page** book never bothers to, and it never becomes clear why the York **University** Publications Office wanted to bring it forth after three years. If **'twere** done, **'twere** best done quickly; yet who would have thought these old lectures to have so little 'meat' in them?

The topic is, admittedly, a very **difficult one**. When people try to explore the idea of "Creativity and Something," some social 'institution' they usually **write** as if **creativity** were **one** variable and the institution another, separate **variable**. In the framework of such lectures as these the **university** is intended to be **treated** as the independent variable and creativity the dependent one. The question implicit in the title **is**: How does the nature of **the** university **influence** *ik* effect on the creative **process**? Does it nurture creativity, stifle it, fund it, censor it, 'none of the above, all of the **above**, or some of the above under certain circumstances. and if so, what circumstances?

Such questions are not **addressed** in *Creativity and the University* (though Mr. **Richler** occasionally makes sport with them as if he were toying with a Frisbee) and that seems a bit negligent. There is something to be said, in a capitalist society, for actually doing or trying to do what you contract to do. Indeed, even Hamilton **Harbour** was ultimately dredged. But even if **these** three wise men had **attempted** to answer the questions, they would surely have'

Prometheus, hung up in the Rockies somewhere near Banff, would be enough to restore Social Credit to power.

found it impossible to deal with them in so simplified a format as a series of four separate **lectures** by different people. The relationship between creativity and the university is much too **complicated** for that. It must be attacked by **thought** processes more like those of integral calculus than of algebra, **which** take account of the way the variables **themselves** — not just their magnitudes — change as **they** interact, and generate new quantities whose magnitudes, and whose influence, cannot really be inferred from the original relationships.

The fundamental difficulty **arises** from the fact that the university, as an elite institution, has planned and continues



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to play (though decreasingly) a major role in determining how creativity is to be defined and what kinds of expression shall be deemed creative. This makes concomitant observation difficult, and validation **probably** impossible. As long as the university is in a position of defining what it **recognizes** and rewards es creative while withholding serious assessment, let alone recognition, from modes that do not suit its **canon**, there is really no **way** to tell what its net effect on creativity may be—though the pejorative tone of the adjective “academic” when applied to a work of art certainly shows where our suspicions lie. It is this very stubborn

*It is **this very stubborn problem that drove F. R. Leavis to such excessive lengths of ill temper through much of his career, culminating in his attacks on Lord Snow.***

problem that **drove** F. R. Leavis to **such** excessive lengths of ill-temper **through** much of his career, culminating in his attacks on **Lord Snow**. an academic novelist in every **sense** of the **word-and**, to **Leavis's** confusion, a good one. It isn't so much that the judges were biased in **Snow's favour**, but that the very definition of what counts had been biased in his **favour**. The reverse had, as **Leavis** earlier saw it, been **true** in the case of **D. H. Lawrence**, whose writing did not suit the academic standards of his day (even though **there** is much **in** it that is today recognizable as a schoolmaster's excessive **enthusiasm** at observing that **there** exists a sensual world full of conflicts). By **the** time **Snow** enjoyed his **popular success**, **broad** artistic standards had changed. Both novelists had become old-fashioned, and critical (if not popular) acclaim was going to novelists whose interests and **styles** had not **been** developed in the academy — though **they** were increasingly recognized there as the academy grew less self-confident. **Richler**, in his lecture., presents himself **casually** as a textbook example of this **process**, and informatively so.

As the universities abandon their elitist position, their relation to the arts becomes simply **more** tenuous and less relevant; and I think **this** could be said about their **relation** ship to creativity as a whole — though, here, presumably, **Lord Snow** would probably disagree with me, since the universities have certainly been the site if not the source of creativity in **the** sciences. **Moreover**, their **democratization** has contributed to **their** scientific clout, as **The Double Helix** clearly reveals; for that book, **now** 13 years old, is even more impressive as an account of the triumph of crass competitiveness in the world's genetics laboratories than as a story of scientific achievement. In order to win credit for unlocking the final secrets of heredity, it is apparently necessary to behave as if one had no ancestors at all, or none to speak of.

Even if the **role** of the universities in fostering creativity in the sciences has compensated for their decreasingly effective participation in this **process** in the arts, as the establishment of artistic standards has increasingly devolved on critics directly based in the media and none the worse for **that**, there seems to be no reason for research in the sciences to continue to be **centred** in institutions whose traditional missions have been teaching and the transmission of what used to be regarded as an authoritative culture. The graduate science schools with the highest prestige already function as essentially separate institutions funded by the state; and

their cadres **are** not **artists** but **janizaries**. This fact is not attributable to any essential difference between **creativity** in the arts and in the sciences — there is no such difference — but **to** the special relationship of the **scientist** to the means of production and especially of military enterprise. That **special relationship** makes him a member of a **different** social class from that of less functional members of the academic community, if **there** still is one. What such people **contribute** to a community is not a disciplined **interpretation** of their unique experience, but an alert and technically **competent** performance of a **role** in a productive process. What **the** community contributes to **them** is **less** a forum of **peers** to understand and judge **their** creation, though this still occurs, than it is a network of **legal** and administrative **services** that **govern** **their** work and co-ordinate **it** with that of other **scientists** employed by other governmental or **industrial** entities. None of this has anything to do **with** the transmission of knowledge or culture to younger members of the community; and though it does still have a great deal to do with the kansmission of style, the style **that** is **recognized** and **rewarded** is not expressive but instrumental. You don't need a **university** for that; **it's** easier without one.

The university cannot really do much to foster — or oppress — creativity in the arts, either. as if becomes more open and less certain of its position as the organ of an elite. It is true, of **course**, that this opens its gates to a wider source of talent. But it deprives it of any basis for knowing what to do with the talent when it arrives. It is hot a matter of the elite possessing superior values **or** aesthetic **stan-**

A university that has standards, even bad ones that people must rebel against, does help its members to structure their experience and hence put more meaning into their creative acts.

dards; both may be, and often are, dreadful. But a university that **has** standards, even **bad ones** that people must rebel against, does help its members to **structure** their experience and **hence** to put more meaning into their creative acts. **Thirty-five** years ago, in a book that is still **the** best I ever read, *Black Lamb and Gray Falcon*. Rebecca West **observed**: “**Art** is not a plaything but a necessity; and in essence, form, is not a decorative adjustment, but a cup into which life can be poured, and lifted to the lips, **and** be tasted.” You **can** do that with a disposable plastic cup; but it **makes** life taste funny, and rather **flat**. And if you use a Dixie cup, you better not sing about it. **They'll** call you a racist. □



School days, school daze

About School: What Every Canadian Parent Should Know, by Robert M. Stamp, New Press, 192 pages, \$8.95 cloth.

Living and Learning in the Free School, by Mark W. Novak, McClelland & Stewart, 137 pages, \$3.95 paper.

By MORRIS WOLFE

AT THE HEART of the community-school movement that Calgary education professor Robert Stamp describes in *About School: What Every Canadian Parent Should Know* is nostalgia for the good old days when "organized" education worked, or at least seems to have worked, and when we had a much clearer idea of what schools were for (job training). "Our earliest school houses," Stamp reminds us, "were often built by the villagers and farm people themselves. Parents boarded the teachers. School trustees and parents worked closely with the teachers and examined the pupils. The limited funds for schools were voted at well-attended local meetings. . . . The school building . . . was . . . the centre of activities for the small community it served."

The central beliefs of this country's community-school movement, now almost 10 years old: can be simply stated: if parents were genuinely involved along with teachers and principals in making decisions about the education of their children, and if schools once again became the kinds of community centres they once were, the quality of our children's education (and of community life) would be much higher than it is. In addition, the movement believes, there's no reason why groups of like-minded parents shouldn't be able to set up schools of their own outside the established system. "Isn't it ironic," writes Stamp, "that in a nation supposedly suspicious of the evils of monopoly . . . we have an education system that offers no choice to its customers?"

About *School* is the first attempt we've had at an overview of the community-school movement in this country, and one has to be grateful to Stamp for the work he's done in assembling material on the subject. One

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learns, for example, that Vancouver has more publicly supported alternative schools at the secondary level than any other city in Canada, and that at Beaconsfield High School near Montreal "mothers who are graphic artists help teachers prepare transparencies for overhead projection." The trouble is, much of the time it seems as if all Stamp has done is assemble the material; almost nowhere does he probe it or explore its implications. Why is it that Vancouver is so far ahead of (behind?) the rest of the country in the number of choices available at the secondary-school level? Are the mothers at Beaconsfield High genuinely involved in making decisions about their child's education, or have they merely been co-opted PTA fashion? Even when Stamp deals with situations that he's observed at first-hand, he holds back. In 1972 he was one of a group of parents who organized a private alternative school in Calgary. He tells us nothing of what motivated him to become involved in the group, or of the problems they must have faced. We're simply informed that after "a period of unforgettable pace and energy, enthusiasm and exhaustion" the school opened. Anyone who's had anything to do with organizing an alternative school can only smile at that wonderful bit of understatement.

In his preface to *Living and Learning in the Free School*, University of Winnipeg sociologist Mark W. Novak thanks some friends for their assistance, and says, "only the agony of reading this manuscript in two rough draft versions could compare with the agony of writing them." I would like to add to that the agony of reviewing Novak.

The idea behind the book is a good one. No one has yet told the story of any one of Canada's "free" schools; Novak could do so based on his experiences in an unidentified "free" school in an eastern Canadian city. The result, unfortunately, is that we still need the kind of book Novak set out to write. (I would love, for instance, to read a well-written account of that fascinating experiment, Everdale Place, this country's first free school and the birthplace of the excellent journal *This Magazine Is About Schools*.)

Living and Learning in the Free School is so full of pretentious twaddle that one wonders if it isn't all some kind of joke. "At the dawn of sociological history," Novak tells us on page 5, "Emile Durkheim recognized the inti-

mate relationship between the 'moral order' of society and the educational system organized to reproduce that society." We get lots of Durkheim, Weber, and the other big guns of sociology on each of the confused pages that follow. Almost at the very end of the book, Novak informs us: "We do not need Durkheim to tell us that: contemporary [sic] schooling . . . serves as a training ground for the battlefield of social life." Hell, I could have told him that on page 6, and it would have saved both of us a lot of trouble: □

Clio with her girdle on

Alexander Graham Bell; Laura Secord; Casimir Gzowski; Elizabeth Simcoe; Egerton Ryerson; Emily Carr; all in The Canadians Series, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 60 pages, \$2.25 each.

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By L. R. HILL

Emily (Carr) frequently said that she had no use for history.
Can you see any point in studying history?
Can we learn anything useful from it?
Emily Carr, page 37

IN 1973 THE Ontario Ministry of Education extended the teaching of social studies through grades nine and 10, thus postponing the student's initiation into the discipline of history until grade 11. To disguise this easing of standards the title *History* was used for the intermediate division curriculum guideline for grades seven to 10. Ontario students from 12 to 16 will be offered four years of Canadian studies. Most Ontario teachers, burdened with the responsi-

bility for building courses, have yet to find a path through this jungle. The only approach the guideline makes it virtually impossible to use is historical. In the absence of any informative, integrating idea, teachers can only expect materials directly keyed to the guideline's individual topics. These series seem designed to fit that faulty framework.

"The Canadians" is a continuing series of attractive 60-page biographies of more than 60 "interesting personalities" (guideline) designed to help students understand "what it means to be Canadian" and to learn about "leadership in Canadian politics" (guideline). Each book consists of nine or more short one-to-four-page chapters liberally sprinkled with illustrations, quotations from sources, and questions for homework and discussion. Each has a motivating introduction and bibliography. The reading level may be a little too high for many 12-year-olds and while some of the questions are weak ("What famous battle occurred at Waterloo?"), others require a highly motivated student ("Write a report on the modern educational system, stating your ideas about the purpose of education" or "Write a nose-to-nose dialogue between Colonel Joseph Ryerson and William Lyon Mackenzie" or "In your opinion, are the new theories [about Stonehenge] convincing?"). *Laura Secord* is a cute story for girls, with its moral of courage, but is poorly edited. (The questions on page 23 stumped this reviewer.) *Casimir Gzowski* is a solid work that even a senior could read with profit.

"Growth of a Nation Series" deals with settlement, trade, railways, prospecting, and policing in the early days of British North America. Each volume tells its story chronologically in an easy style over 64 pages shouting, "History isn't dull — we make it fun!" Even the covers look sugar-coated. Full-page pictures, maps, charts, sketches, and old ads break up (support?) (distract from?) the copy. Each book concludes with a word list, a game, and a quiz or puzzle. There are even little plays to be dramatized.

But creative history presents problems. From *Settlement of the West*: "What do you know about the lives of western Canadian Indians?" (Nothing.) "Choose one of the groups mentioned in this chapter, and write two paragraphs about the way in which they used to live." (Okay — The Blackfeet. Now, with no data and no suggestions

for reading, am I to imagine how they lived? If I don't know any **history**, should I invent it?) "Can you think of any ways in which the Canadian government could have prevented the [Riel] 'rebellion'?" (No. Were there any ways? Why didn't the government employ them?) Fmm Fur Trade: "What effect do you **think** the fur trade



had on the history of Canada?" (Excellent!) "Write a story that tells the history of Canada as you think it might have been if there had been no fur trade." (Laughter!) Without the discipline of history as a guide, these mistakes multiply.

Two other problems mat the series. First, there is poor editing, suspect scholarship, and plain silliness. Read the opening three paragraphs of *Settlement of the West*. Or try *Fur Trade*: "Draw a picture of a goose hunt." The second problem is a serious underestimation of the student's ability. If students can read these books, answer the questions, and even rewrite stories into short plays, they are ready for more substantial fare.

"The Foundations of Contemporary Canada Series" centres on "the impact of technology on Canadian society" (education, environment, rural life and foreign ownership), thus "moving into unexplored directions" with "a series devoted to the innovation of original Canadian Studies materials... using the documentary approach and inquiry method. ..." Translation: School teachers spent five years excerpting fmm secondary sources (Illich, McLuhan, Toffler, Frye, Dennis, Asimov, Information Canada, Cook, Grant, Levitt, Galbraith, Fuller, Rohmer, Coy., Gagan, Adams; Gray. etc.) and including some questions here and there. Other than the technological slant and the convenience of access, why was this series published? At what

cost? "It became the objective of the [Canadian Studies Foundation] to foster the development of new curriculum [sic], materials, and teaching methods in an attempt to encourage a better understanding of the diversity of Canadian society.?"

It is not clear why technology and change were chosen to represent the crisis in Canadian education and the questions here encourage those deplorable circuitous discussions that result from vacuous opinion-swapping. On foreign ownership, why was there not equal space for the position that Canada exists because of, not in spite of, imperialism?. With their short readings and abundant noisy questions, the books in the series reflect the impact of technology. They read as if a crowd of experts were standing around the reader's desk shouting opinions and demanding that the unlettered student state and defend his, as if one were lost in a maze of neon billboards or watching a confusion of television commercials. In their own way they illustrate the need for suspended judgment and quiet informed reflection, qualities of mind difficult to teach under the Ontario Ministry of Education's new curriculum guideline. □

Things as they theme

The **Urban Experience**, edited by John Stevens; **The Frontier Experience**, edited by Jack Hodgins; **The Prairie Experience**, edited by Terry Angus; **The Immigrant Experience**, edited by Leuba Bailey; **The Maritime Experience**, edited by Michael O. Nowlan; **Isolation in Canadian Literature**, edited by David Arnason; all in **Themes in Canadian Literature Series**, general editor David Arnason, Macmillan, 122 pages, \$3.25 each.

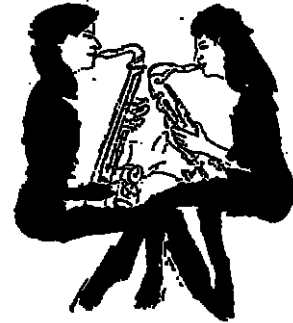
By RICHARD LONDON

THESE SELECTIONS of prose, poetry and drama, and the other volumes in the series presently "in preparation," are presumably aimed at the senior high-school student, although there is no general introduction that discusses the function of the series. Each volume consists of a short introduction by the editor that discusses the theme, approx-

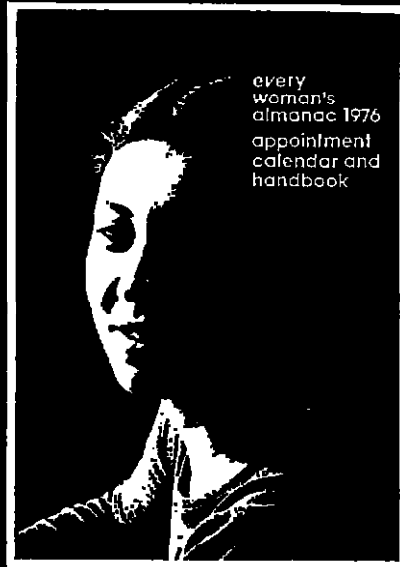
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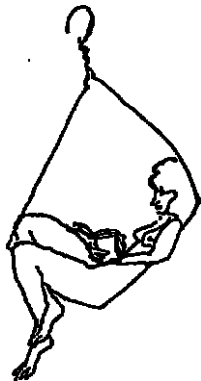
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imately 25 pieces by Canadian writers of the past and present that purport to illustrate or comment on the theme. a series of "Questions on the Theme" designed to force the student to relate the sections to the theme, and a bibliography. (I do wish editors would stop referring to lists of books for further reading as bibliographies; they are not.)

The concept of themes in Canadian literature is not new, although one might have expected a volume called *Survival in Canadian Literature*, edited according to the precepts put forth in Margaret Atwood's well-



known book on the subject. Atwood's work, however, apparently lends itself to thematic treatment. She is included in *Urban, Immigrant, Isolation*, and *Frontier*, for the best authors' box score so far. Morley Callaghan, who one might have expected to see in *Urban only gets into Immigrant*; Margaret Laurence makes it in *Prairie* and *Immigrant* and so on. Part of the "anthology game" is quarreling with other people's selections and while the inclusions are mainly what one would expect there is certainly a wide range of Canadian literature represented.

There are a few pleasant and unusual surprises. Gwen Pharis Ringwood's haunting short play "Still Stands the House" is included in *Prairie* as is "Sarah Binks: The Early Years" by Paul Hiebert. Marc Lescarbot's "A Letter From Port Royal" (1606) is in *Immigrant* and Ernest Buckler's fine short story "The First Born Son" appears in *Maritime*. "Bud the Spud," by Stompin' Tom Connors, is also in *Maritime*. Rudy Wiebe's "The Naming of Albert Johnson" and several other seldom-anthologized pieces are in *Frontier*.

One of the problems associated with thematic anthologies is how literally one interprets the theme. There are, for instance, many kinds of "isolation" — physical, spiritual, and psychological

— and thus rather disparate literary expressions end up side by side. Sinclair Ross's "The Lamp at Noon" does not, on the surface at least, go together very well with Leonard Cohen's "For Anne." Perhaps this kind of juxtaposition will be stimulating for students. It could also be confusing.

The volumes are attractively designed, compared with high-school anthologies I remember, with colourful covers and some photographic illustrations. The type, however, is set with ragged right-hand margins; fine for poetry, very sloppy indeed for prose.

Inevitably the success of the series in the classroom will depend on the ability and imagination of the teachers. The "Questions on the Theme" section in each volume may be useful to both teacher and student, although the questions strike me as generally puerile. For example: "Even in a crowded city loneliness can take many forms. How would you describe the various states of loneliness in 'The Saga of the Fine-toothed Comb,' 'Fog,' and 'On Saint-Urbain Street'?" What other selections in this book convey a sense of loneliness?"

At the very least, students will be provided with a generous selection of their country's literature. It is hard to imagine the literature of many other countries being divided up in this way, but perhaps thematic interpretation is yet another Canadian peculiarity. □

Commonwealth of notions

Among Worlds, by W.H. New, Press Porcépic, Illustrated, 287 pages, \$13.95 cloth and \$6.95 paper.

By KEITH GAREBIAN

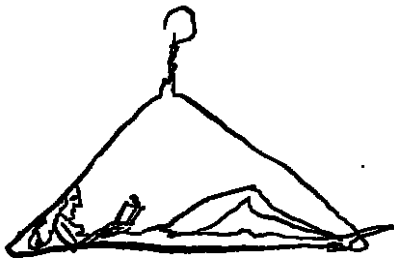
ANY SPECIALIST IN Commonwealth literature who attempts a multilateral interpretation of his field should be equipped with temerity, stamina, and encyclopaedic vision. The field is remarkably vast, virginial in sections, and confusing. Because Commonwealth writing in English is relatively new in comparison to literature from Europe, Britain, or the United States, critical interpretation runs the risk of dating itself shortly after its perfor-

mance. Professor New runs this risk with courage, energy, and insight, and as he crosses the field he erects signposts for fellow explorers. That his adventure is erratic in parts does not strangle its pioneer spirit or stop its impressive effluences.

New draws attention to patterns of dislocation in the West Indies, the dominant themes of barrier and race in South Africa, the Canadian spirit of opposites, the New Zealand escape into distance, the arid heartland at the core of Australian literature, and the tragically harmonized antitheses in South Asia. He observes the dichotomy between an old, dead world and one apparently struggling to be born, and the resulting ambiguities of colonial identity survive.

Far more ambitious than anything else its author has attempted before, this book manages to dress its broad survey (with glances at history) in a lively style. Generally, there is myth charting on a high level and it covers prominent figures such as V. S. Naipaul, R. K. Narayan, Chinua Achebe, Janet Frame, Patrick White, and Mordecai Richler. But New's focus is too broad at times and consequently deals dimly with some important writers while encompassing several others who hardly deserve more than a footnote. New has an indiscreet tendency to apply the term "wit" to even second-rate works, and this gilding of faded lilies is unfortunate — especially since there are other brilliant pieces that richly deserve (but don't always get) greater attention. Moreover, New's somewhat hasty tentativeness does not do justice to certain complexities in his subject.

Why, for instance, does New rush to accept Lamming's concept of the Caribbean without providing equal consideration to Naipaul's? Why does he discuss Balachandra Rajan's satiric *Too Long In The West* and ignore the more profound and brilliant *The Dark Dancer*? On the more general side, New's sections are not weighted proportionally. The African chapters are objective in their examination of discontinuous myth and moral or political disquisition, but the Asian sector sometimes strains when it links Indo-Anglian fiction to Western patterns rather than to Oriental ones. Moreover, the Canadian section is disappointing and, in pushing its point (of opposites running together), it ignores the fundamental rift between the artist who intuitively life's commotion or absurdity



and the Canadian public, which strives for compromise at almost any cost.

But in New's case provocativeness is a concomitant of significance — whether or not we agree with his thesis. And his multilateral study becomes a third species after John P. Matthews' *Tradition in Exile* (a brilliant bilateral study of 19th-century Australian and Canadian poetry) and William Walsh's *A Manifold Voice* (an engaging gallery of individual literary identities in the Commonwealth). And, importantly, it does convey a sense of excitement about the future of Commonwealth literature. □

That clever little clique in W.C.C.

The **Bloomsbury Group**: A Collection of Memoirs, Commentary, and Criticism, edited by S.P. Rosenbaum, U of T Press, 444 pages, \$25 cloth and \$10 paper.

By LAWRENCE GARBER

STEPHEN SPENDER has called the **Bloomsbury Group** "the most constructive and creative influence on English taste between the two wars ... the last kick of an enlightened aristocratic tradition." Others have not been so generous in their estimate of this collective of Cambridge-London friends, which included the **Woolfs** (Virginia and Leonard), the **Bells** (Vanessa and Clive), the **MacCarthys** (Mary and Desmond), Roger Fry, Lytton **Strachey**, John Maynard Keynes, **Duncan Grant**, and E. M. **Forster**. Branded by some as "an intellectual mafia" whose influences on the literature, art, and politics of its time were supposedly directed by a series of self-serving motives and whose attitudes were forged

by an elitist Cambridge ideology, **Bloomsbury** has suffered through the years from distorted versions of the role it has played in the cultural life of 20th-century England. Wyndham Lewis called them "a family party of Dissenting aesthetes;" D. H. Lawrence referred to them as "beetles ... this horror of little swarming selves;" and F.R. Leavis described them as "so many petty egos, each primed with conscious cleverness." Roy Campbell, the South African poet, even wrote a mocking celebration of the Bloomsbury style:

*Of all the clever people round me here
I most delight in Me —
Mine is the only voice I hear,
And mine the only face I see.*

But to speak of **Bloomsbury** as a uniform, monolithic structure with a clear program of ideas (as its enemies invariably do) is at once misleading. "Bloomsbury is composed of people who 'hold similar opinions and like being with each other,'" Forster wrote in 1929. 'A reading of the memoirs, essays, and commentary of this Collection makes it quite clear that **Bloomsbury** consisted of a number of extremely gifted individuals whose main attachments were emotional, whose basis was friendship, and whose convictions were only roughly in concert. There are certainly examples of other groups whose founding elements were more cohesive and doctrinal: the **Pre-Raphaelite** movement with its deliberate pacts and oaths, or the **Clapham Sect** with its staunch evangelical missions. Even **Podhoretz's** Commentary crowd is more organized at its polemical centre than was **Bloomsbury**.

Hostility towards the Group (notions of shady conspiracies) may spring from the fact that there is a frame in **Bloomsbury** and it is of two kinds: the first ideological, the second genealogical. First, there was the Cambridge tradition, with the intellectual life of its societies and the distinctive influences of J. M. E. **McTaggart**, G. L. **Dickinson**, and G.E. **Moore**: Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903) - a book that argued that the ends most worth pursuing for the selves were good states of mind in communion with objects of love, beauty, and truth - had tremendous impact on such figures as Keynes, **Strachey** and Leonard **Woolf**. They saw **Moore's** ethics as a release from the 19th-century narrowness of **Benthamite** utilitarianism. Second, they was

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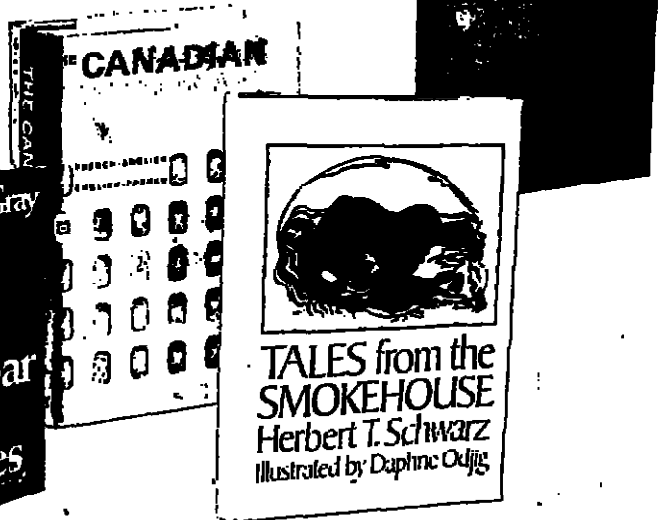
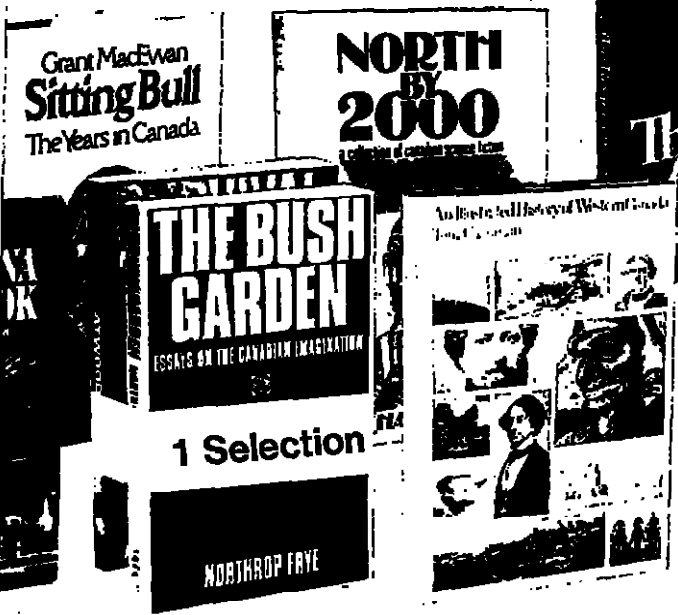
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Yesterday's men

the reality of an actual family structure in **Bloomsbury** built up through friendship, blood relations, and marriage: **Clive Bell** married **Vanessa** Stephen, **Leonard Woolf** married **Virginia** Stephen, **David Garnett** married **Angelica** Bell, **Duncan Grant** was **Strachey's** first cousin. And so on.

Of course the bias is there; it is a bias in favour of the view that individually and in sum Bloomsbury accomplishments were important, widespread, and of significance to our own lives.

But too much can be made of these connections; because what emerges from **S. P. Rosenbaum's** selections are the evidences of terrific disparities and disagreements throughout the Group — a term, by the way, few of its "members" have accepted as an accurate name for its informally joined district meetings. What **Bloomsbury** shared was a suspicion of mere tradition for tradition's sake and a sort of intellectual and emotional honesty that pushed them into positions considered quite scandalous in their day;

Rosenbaum has put together a generous selection of **Bloomsbury**

documents and I can't think of anything of real importance that has been omitted. **Bloomsbury**, both in its private and public aspects, is nicely represented and letters, memoirs, and recollections smack intimately of **Sussex cottages** and the parlours of **W. C. 1**. And wit and playfulness is there too, of course: in the withering *bon-mots* of **Lytton Strachey** Or in the mischievous *Dreadnought* incident in which **Virginia Woolf** and company, disguised as **Abyssinian royalty**, hoaxed the British navy. Critics of **Bloomsbury** are represented as well — in all their fury — including a marvellous exchange between **Clive Bell** and **G. B. Shaw**. **Professor Rosenbaum** has included useful introductions to each document, placing them in time and circumstance with a minimum of editorial bias. But of course the bias is there; it is a bias in favour of the view that individually and in sum **Bloomsbury** accomplishments were important, widespread, and of significance to our own lives. And in terms of the novel (**Forster**, **Virginia Woolf**), biography (**Strachey**), economics (**Keynes**), politics (**Leonard Woolf**), aesthetics (**Fry**, **Bell**) and painting (**Grant**, **Vanessa Bell**), who can doubt that they have influenced our civilization considerably and have done so without the narrow permeations of doctrine, or the confines of an elitist reserve? □

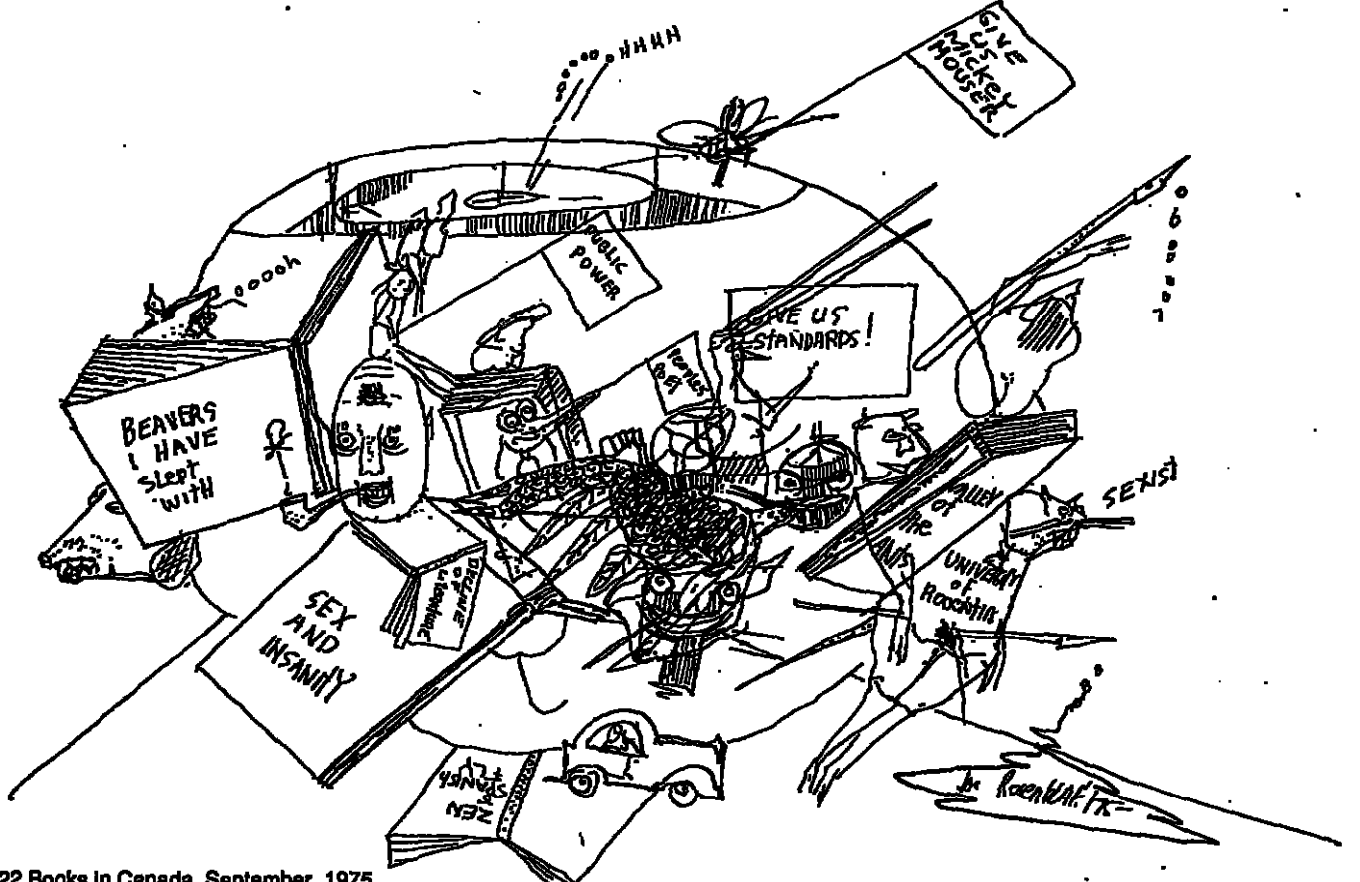
René Lévesque: Portrait of a Québécois, by **Jean Provencher**, translated by **David Ellis**, Gags, 272 pages, \$9.95 cloth and \$5.95 paper.

The Vigil of Quebec, by **Fernand Dumont**, translated by **Sheila Fischman** and **Richard Howard**, U of T Press, 131 pages; \$3.50 paper.

By **NIGEL SPENCER**

READING THE STORIES Of recent or current political personalities almost always seems to make them recede uncomfortably into the far-distant past. Consequently, present archaisms are shown up with more than usual clarity. This is true of **Jean Provencher's** recently translated biography of **René Lévesque**, and even more so of the somewhat outdated confessions of **Fernand Dumont**.

David Ellis has given us a smooth and highly accurate translation of **Red Lévesque: Portrait of a Québécois**, a book that has been out for barely a year in the original. Despite its almost chatty tone, **Provencher's** book does not lapse into the picayune "I smoke them because I like them"



type of biography. Nor does it elevate **Lévesque** to the status of an abstract "phenomenon that typifies the dilemma of Quebec." As its title implies, the book follows **Lévesque** through a series of episodes crucial to him and to Quebec society, and balances the spare and lucid narration with a range of opinion culled both at the time and in retrospect. The result is not a ponderous, academic tome but an unpretentious and successful gathering of essential resources. Both **Pmvencher** and his translator have been careful to provide all the necessary apparatus and information without encumbering the personal narrative.

From each major episode, **Provencher** conveys the essential, formative influences that worked both on **Lévesque** and his social environment: all of this without ever really forcing anything on the reader.

From his middle-class, highly cultured home in the **Gaspé**, **Lévesque** acquired both a reverence for the written word (later translated into broadcasting) and a resentment of the anglophone monopolies that imprisoned the people of the region. All of this was tempered with a basic optimism and good humour that have since remained his particular trademarks. Similarly, his classical, academic background provided him with a sense of moderation, a taste for debate and a long-range trust in the "rules of the game" that have caused him increasing difficulty.

Lévesque's school friends and colleagues make up a virtual Who's Who of the Quiet Revolution: **Yves Pratte**, **Jean Marchand**, **Pierre Trudeau**, **Gerard Pelletier**, **Francois Cloutier**, **Robert Cliche**, **Doris Lussier**, and the Lesage Liberals. In fact, this small, self-contained world of newly emerging professionals and technocrats circumscribes effectively the self-congratulating group who still see the Quiet (middle-class) Revolution as a blueprint for **Quebec's** future. In these terms, the apparently contradictory behaviour of men like **Trudeau** becomes much more understandable: the PM is fighting a kind of nationalism that he still associates with **Duplessis**, because he cannot conceive it in other terms. Likewise, he sees efficient "planning" (the magic word of the 1960s) as the key to progress across the world, regardless of frontiers. The content and orientation of that planning is of little or no importance, because it is not a valid technological problem.

Similarly, **Lévesque** now finds himself at the head of a reformist party that

is a direct descendant of **Lesage's** Liberals (**Bourassa** almost joined) and which is likewise becoming more and more of a brake on progressive elements in public life.

Pmvencher takes us up to the inauguration of the **Parti Québécois** in 1969, before ending his narrative, but all of these ambiguities have been well-prepared for, and the unalloyed admiration of earlier pages make way for something darker. Alluding to **Lévesque's** denunciation of the **La Presse** strikers in 1971, **Provencher** leads us to believe that any subsequent volume on the post-1970 period could centre on **Lévesque's** increasingly conservative tendencies and his stranglehold on the PQ. Seen in the light of the short-lived "liberation" that followed the death of **Duplessis** and the subsequent, timid back-peddalling carried out by **Lesage**, **Johnson**, **Bourassa**, et al., this becomes an ironic repetition of recent history.

Perhaps this is the most striking thing of all to emerge from **Provencher's** work: the speed at which things have changed in Quebec, so that the supposed leaders find themselves, like **Lesage**, almost instantly left behind.

As far as **Lévesque** himself is concerned, one has the feeling that his potential lifetime has encompassed as much change as he can cope with, and that far from being a leader his greatest

Far from being a leader, [Lévesque's] greatest contribution has been as a pragmatic collector of existing ideas and social currents.

contribution has been as a pragmatic collector of existing ideas and social currents.

This reminds me of his first, and probably greatest, vocation — as a journalist. He became a public figure as a war correspondent in **Europe** and **Korea**, then rose to "stardom" by capturing the popular imagination as the "man who introduced the art of reporting" to **Radio-Canada**. His lively, comprehensive critical style quickly set the pace for the infant **TV news service**, and subsequently became a valuable tradition in the French network. Although unappreciated outside **Quebec**, this will remain, one suspects, his greatest gift to the times.

If **Lévesque**, the wiry, no-nonsense distruster of abstractions, and ideologies, no longer finds himself in

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tie vanguard of popular opinion, the urbane intellectual, Fernand Dumont, represents the other side of the same coin. A sociologist, by profession, he gives one the feeling of groping — sometimes with success, frequently in confusion — for some kind of sturdy, popular roots.

The Vigil of Quebec is a much different book than Provencher's. This loosely grouped collection of speeches, essays, and musings spans several years up to, and including, the War Measures Act. That the translation by Sheila Fischman and Richard Howard trails the original by four years adds to its somewhat archaic flavour. However, like the Lévesque biography, this book seems primarily an attempt to sum up an era that is dead and gone.

Looking back over his "vigil," Dumont has an alarming tendency to allow brilliant insights to slip by, often unexplored, while he concentrates on a, vague perpetuation of the intellectual games and short-sightedness of the naively optimistic Quiet Revolution. He is at his best in the earlier chapters, when sketching, concisely and clearly, a brief psycho-analytic history of Quebec culture; or near the end, when explaining the "symbolism of fear" surrounding the War Measures Act. It is in these passages that he can really be of use to readers outside Quebec.

Elsewhere, his tendency to discuss political and social life in terms of poorly defined "myths" and "symbols" is annoying, confusing, and frequently repetitive and sterile. The main fault here, one suspects, is in Dumont's editing. Many of these pieces are speeches carefully geared to different interest groups, and Dumont as the celebrity, soul-searching Catholic and timid socialist, tends to adopt one virginal pose after another, only to drop it in a calculated way before his enthralled audience. Had he re-thought and reworked these pieces into a more coherent whole before publication, the results could have been sparkling and immensely provocative. Still, one must accept the frank, pensive, and personal nature of these writings, for they can be engaging and frequently revealing. But one suspects that this level of the book has far more appeal for Quebec readers than for Canadians.

Now confident, now alarmed, Dumont pleads for a vigorous but discriminating re-examination of past and current myths and symbols, ideas and tendencies. He proceeds cautiously to catalogue what he feels are Quebec's

reliable cultural and political resources, but his suggestions beyond this point are frequently pitiful.

He repeatedly expresses a vague faith in the "educational revolution" without ever being specific or coming down to concrete realities. It is ironic that in 1975, the Liberals are as dedicated to arresting that one as they were the Quiet Revolution 10 years ago. Similarly, the government-run development corporation, in which the Dumont of 1969 had so much hope, is being dismantled because of fears that it will work too well. Endless examples can be quoted to show Dumont's technocratic belief that just a tightening of a screw or a drop of oil in the right place will permit the political machine to run perfectly. That it is built wrong does not occur to him. If people want socialism, they will vote in a new "elite" (an essential bit of Dumont's political jargon) to manufacture it for them.

Elsewhere, Dumont confuses short-term and long-term points of view, values and institutions, subjective reactions, and the precious objectivity of a sociologist. To be fair, Fischman and Howard have given us a pretty reliable translation. But without the peculiar charm and eloquence of the original to beguile us, Dumont's weaknesses show up more than his strengths.

That both Lévesque and Dumont have now reached the point where they are so obviously trying to put new wine



into old bottles suggests that something has changed profoundly in Quebec since 1970. Let us hope that English-language publishers will start to give us anthologies from the Parti Pris or Maintenant groups with the same punctuality that they deliver the latest novel from Carrier or play by Tremblay. □

Two old testaments

Social Planning for Canada, by the Research Committee of the League for Social Reconstruction, with an introduction by F. R. Scott and others, U of T Press (Social History of Canada Series), 528 pages, \$20 cloth and \$6.50 paper.

Report on Social Security for Canada, 1943, by Leonard Marsh with an introduction by him, U of T Press (Social History of Canada Series), 330 pages, \$15 cloth and \$5.50 paper.

By J. L. GRANATSTRIN

DURING THE 1930s and 1940s, socialists had "planning" as **their god.** Capitalism could **produce** the goods, yes, but usually in alternating gluts or scarcities that came **nowhere** near meeting the needs of the people. The **Great Depression** was the classic example of the breakdown of the system, a time when **all** the flaws and fallacies were fully exposed. And, then the war had come and the **government had** stepped in to impose planning, co-ordination, and controls, to create in fact a socialist state under the press of necessity. The results again were clear: Canada **produced** more goods **more efficiently** than ever before and the **gross** national product doubled in the space of five years. So **great** was the **wealth** of the state that **there** was at last money to pay for the social services, the **social-welfare** schemes, that had seemed almost impossible a **few years** earlier.

These two books are in a **real** sense the bibles that guided the change. *Social Planning for Canada* was a **collective** effort unduced by the **Toronto**-and **Montreal**-based **academics** who formed the heart of the League for Social Reconstruction. *The Report on Social Security for Canada* was **produced** for a House of **Commons** Special Committee on Social Security in **1943** by **Leonard Marsh**, the Research Director of the **Advisory Committee** on Postwar **Reconstruction.**

Leonard Marsh's *Report* was **probably** **more directly influential.** His report was prepared in 1943 in large part because the Minister of Pensions, Ian Mackenzie, was hungry for publicity and wanted a Canadian document that would rival the **Beveridge Report** in Britain, **that** great document that laid

the groundwork for "**cradle-to-grave**" security: In the space of weeks, Marsh **produced** his study, and an impressive document it was. Mobilizing statistics **gathered** during 10 years of research, Marsh demonstrated that **Canadians** lived in **squalor** and **that** generations had been- raised in poor **health** and on inadequate food. The answers, in his view, were **to create a comprehensive social-security** scheme, including national **health** insurance, universal **contributory** old age pensions, family allowances, and planning for public **employment** projects.

In 1943, **this** kind of report was **still** seen as **visionary.** Marsh estimated the costs at \$900 million, or **150** percent of the total **prewar budget.** But **as** he **stressed,** "social security payments are not money lost... [Rather, they] are **investments** in morale and health, in **greater family** stability ... in human productive efficiency." So **they were;** equally important, social security had **other attractions.** First, it seemed a political winning hand, as Mackenzie King's Liberals were quick to note. The baby bonus, for example, served to undercut **the** appeal of **socialism** in the election of 1945 and keep Liberalism in charge for the postwar period. And social security also made **the civil servants** happy. **Everyone** feared another depression after the war ended, add in the best Keynesian fashion, purchasing power was held to be the key. How better to get people to spend money **than to** give it out in small dollops that were intended to be spent on milk and **shoes** for the kiddies? Everyone was happy except the CCF, which **had seen** its ideas pirated away.

The League for Social **Reconstruction** had been formed **expressly** for the **purpose** of developing a body of ideas

Marsh demonstrated. That Canadians lived in squalor and that generations had been raised in poor health and on inadequate food.

the **Liberals** could not **steal.** This, as the surviving leaders of the **LSR** tell us in their new introduction to **their** master work, was **very** much **the intent** of Frank Underhill, the **Toronto** history professor, who created **the** league. Underhill gathered **around him** an **extraordinary** group of men and **women, such** people as Frank Scott, Leonard Marsh, Graham Spry, Eugene

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Forsey, and Joe Parkinson. Out of their brainstorming sessions came the intellectual props that made the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation the spawning ground for a generation of ideas that are today legislation.

The LSR were critics of society during the Depression. Who except a fool could not be? Their analyses, their *Social Planning for Canada*, put heavy stress on the need for rationalization, for organization, for greater state control, for planning. "We... look to the establishment in Canada of a new social order," their manifesto proclaimed, "which will substitute a planned and socialized economy for the existing chaotic individualism. ..."

In the 1930s planning was a dirty word; today it is taken for granted. But unfortunately planning did not bring the utopia foreseen by the LSR. Instead, it brings expressways or airports that no one wants and no one can prevent; it brings giant bureaucracies that exist to serve themselves, not the people; it leads to demands for decentralization as an escape from mashing control from the centre. We still have capitalism, free enterprise, "chaotic individualism," but now we also have much of the trappings of government control. Where did it all go wrong? □

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Nickel and damning, it

Falconbridge: Portrait of a Canadian Mining Multinational, by John Deverell and the Latin American Working Group, James Lorimer & Company, 192 pages, \$11 cloth and \$4.95 paper.

by PETER BRIMELOW

ONE OF THE things that saved me from dying of boredom on the gruelling trek through a U.S. business school a couple of years ago was the periodic arrival in the library of a group of radicals. They were using the standard reference books to trace local ramifications of the military-industrial complex for publication in the various underground newspaper!

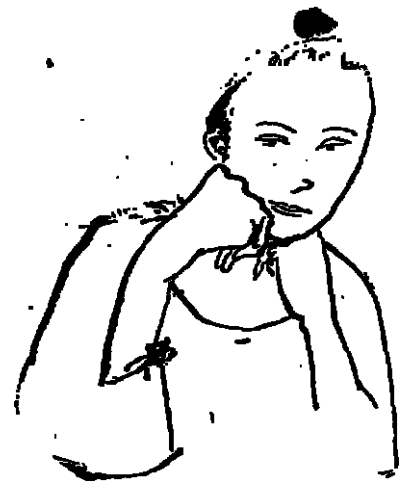
This book is a similar sort of exposé, only on a grander scale. It traces the history of Falconbridge Nickel Mines Ltd., from its incorporation in 1928 to its current operations in three separate countries. The book's technical virtuosity commands admiration. There's an efficient if humourless piling up of narrative, an energetic carving of obscure factual gargoyles embellished with learned references to remote back issues of the *Financial Post*, and overarching structures of statistical data about living conditions in South West Africa (which is, of course, devoutly referred to as Namibia throughout).

But it's a cathedral that can only be fully appreciated by those who share the puritanical faith that inspires its creators. One must be outraged by the news that world nickel markets have been effectively dominated by a cartel, a fact that so exercises the authors that they're hard pressed to explain how Falconbridge, led by Thayer Lindsley, managed to break into the cartel in the 1930s. One must be shocked to discover that Canadian corporations don't operate in a vacuum, that their various alliances can be traced—as the authors rightly point out — by riding the elevator up one of Toronto's bank palaces and seeing who the banks have strong-armed into tepancies. One must reject as heresy the argument that mining companies support the economy in more ways than simply by paying wages — notably in the multiplier effect of wages and other expenditures — since this makes it impossible to present them as parasites.

It's a reflection on the limited interests of intellectuals and academics that the story of a company such as Falconbridge always seems to be told by partisans, either in-house PR writers or roving bands of Marxists. Canadian businessmen don't help. Falconbridge is refusing to comment, like an elephant sticking its head in the sand and hoping the hunters will take it for an ostrich.

One result of this is that we're asked to believe that multinational managements function in some concerted way with U.S. imperialism. But in fact, like most businessmen, they seem incapable of looking beyond the next quarter's earnings, which is why they are among the most mindless backers of détente with Russia and China. Indeed, the multinationals are attacked by the right as well as the left for their very neglect of U.S. national interests. The John Biih Society, for example, points angrily to the paradox of helping the Russians to build the trucks that were supplying the North Vietnamese victory in South Vietnam.

There's nothing in this book of the subtlety Anthony Sampson showed when he said, at the end of his attack on ITT in *The Sovereign State*, that it was impossible to reject completely the point that 'multinationals get the job



done. They do organize production effectively, notwithstanding the authors' apparent belief that nickel just comes out of the ground and gives itself up.

Ultimately, the authors seem to object to Falconbridge because the company does not go around overthrowing friendly but oppressive national governments. The reason it doesn't is 'because it's a mining company, not a communist party. But judging from the author's reverent references to North Vietnam and Cuba, that might be better than what they have in mind. □

How B.C. happened

British Columbia Chronicle 1778-1846: Adventures by Sea and Land, by G. P. V. and Helen B. Akrigg, Discovery Press (Box 45295, Postal Station G, Vancouver), illustrated, 429 pages, \$14.95 cloth.

By RICHARD LONDON

THE EARLY HISTORY of the discovery and exploration of the Pacific Northwest extends, in essence, from 1778 when Captain Cook sailed into Nootka Sound, to 1846 when the international boundary was established at the 49th parallel of latitude. During this period the prospect of riches derived from the fur trade drew men by sea and land to the vast uncharted area that would eventually become British Columbia. In one sense its history is the history of the two companies under whose aegis the explorers and traders pushed back the frontier — the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. The actions of these men and the Indians they encountered produced a rich mosaic of historical episodes redolent of the drama of the confrontation of man and wilderness. The major explorers (Cook, Vancouver, Mackenzie, Fraser, Thompson) have been the object of detailed historical study for many years and most of their journals and diaries have been published. There remain, however, vast quantities of unpublished letters, minutes, reports, and journals that have not all been used by the authors of the large survey histories of B.C., from Bancroft in 1887 to Ormsby in 1958.

The Akriggs (whose last team effort was the successful *1001 British Columbia Place Names*) have attempted in this book to provide a chronological overview of B.C. history from 1778 to 1846, year by year, in a popular style. And they have succeeded admirably. They emphasize the first-hand accounts of individual (and often minor) characters and rely heavily on primary sources. The explorers and fur-company factors were indefatigable compilers of reports, diaries, and journals and some of them had well developed literary pretensions. Consider this passage from the journal of Samuel Black, the first explorer to penetrate the forests of central northern B.C.:

This morning involuntary indulged an hour longer than usual in morpheus chains, waking out of which the white resplendent orb of day was gloriously illuminating the blue azure sky & variegated Mountains reflecting his dancing beams in the silvery mirror of the Lake exhibited before our Torpid senses....

Despite a style politely termed "prolix" by Sir George Simpson, to whom he addressed his reports, Black was an important explorer. One of the attractive features of the *Akriggs' Chronicle* is the inclusion of information about and quotations from such unjustly neglected characters. (Black's journal was edited by E. E. Rich and published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society in 1955.)

The Akriggs do not usually attempt detailed critical evaluations of the careers of the major explorers, although they do provide the references to books and articles where such considerations may be found. They do, however, come out rather strongly against David Thompson, concluding that his failure to secure the rights to the mouth of the Columbia River for Great Britain and the North West Company was the result of serious flaws in his character. This is an arguable point and smacks of psycho-history.

The chronicle form of historical narrative imposes certain difficulties. As events often do not slot themselves neatly into specific years, the authors are frequently forced to resort to the "we will meet up with X or Y again" technique, which breaks down the continuous delineation of an individual career. That, however, is a minor cavil. British Columbians, whether reposing on the bosom of their native heath or suffering in self-imposed exile — indeed, anyone who is interested in the exploration and development of the Canadian West — will delight in this attractive, well-illustrated, and readable book. □



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Shake 'n' Blake

Edward Blake: The Man of the Other Way (1833-1881), by Joseph Schull, Macmillan, 257 pages, \$13.95 cloth.

By J. D. LIVRRMORR

EDWARD BLAKE has always been an elusive figure. Shy and sickly, often cold and aloof, he was comprehensible to few of his colleagues and a close friend of even fewer—a lonely, glacial sphinx who hated politics yet needed its ego satisfaction, who outwardly shunned positions of political leadership but inwardly demanded them. Blake chose to obey his own logic and impulses, often disregarding the political consequences. He devoted 40 years to public life in Canada and Great Britain, leaving behind a reputation for rashness and disloyalty and the unique distinction of being the only leader of Canada's Liberal party who never became prime minister.

Edward Blake: The Man of the Other Way is the first of a projected two-volume biography by Joseph Schull, one of Canada's most versatile and prolific writers. He is the author of several popular books in Canadian history, including a widely acclaimed study of Blake's successor to the Liberal leadership, Sir Wilfred Laurier, and has employed his talents to good advantage in infusing drama and vitality into a subject hitherto considered stolid and confusing. The result is an interesting, sympathetic biography that explains many of the mysteries of Blake's career to 1881, one year after he assumed the leadership of the national Liberal party.

Although based upon sound research and a thorough grasp of the secondary literature, the book rarely departs from traditional interpretations. Historians will find the chronicle of events familiar and the personality characterizations orthodox. In assessing Blake's controversial political role, Schull has tended to tread the trails broken by J. M. S. Careless, Dale Thomson, and Donald Creighton. He has thereby missed a potentially important opportunity to view the period through the eyes of a participant who differed with George Brown and Alexander Mackenzie almost as much as he did with Mac-

donald. Blake's imperial thought and constitutional views are described in the context of politics in the 1860s and 1870s, but are never synthesized and treated systematically, employing the methodological tools of the intellectual historian. Too often the book is vague on political details that might have clarified the issues for the general reader and led to a more meaningful evaluation of Blake the politician.

Instead of re-appraising Blake's role in 19th-century politics, Schull has chosen to create a portrait of a complicated personality. And he is at his best when gauging Blake's many moods or plumbing his motivations. Complex, impetuous, and generally misunderstood, Blake possessed behind his frosty exterior a warmth and sensitivity that few of his colleagues appreciated. Schull describes with flair the private Blake — the successes of his legal career, the burden of his family heritage, and the impact of his changing fortunes. Although it adds little to traditional interpretations of the late-19th-century, *Edward Blake: The Man of the Other Way* makes for interesting, enjoyable reading. □

What all the fuzz is about

Police Command, by Brian A. Grosman, Macmillan, 148 pages, \$12.95 cloth and \$5.95 paper

By MICHAEL RYVAL

IN AN INCREASINGLY complex society that is growing perplexed at the rapid growth of crime, most people ironically take the police for granted. That is, they point at crime statistics yet have no real idea of the powers and constraints of the police. As for the discretionary nature of law enforcement, where in the simplest case one driver is fined for speeding and another merely admonished, most people ignore it. Protection is their concern, not quality of performance.

In *Police Command*, Brian Grosman has examined the organization and practices of various Canadian and American urban police forces. Much of the focus is on police leadership. There are few surprises, however, as Grosman attempts to answer rather elementary questions and avoids the temptation of exposing police corruption and violence. This dry, textbook-like inves-

tigation leaves that task to other less sympathetic observers — and to films and TV.

Gmsman, a professor of law in Saskatchewan, is concerned with the inner workings of the police: police bureaucracy; selection of the chief; the problems of instituting change; the selective nature of law enforcement; and the limitations on police. It's generally from the insider's (i.e., police) point of view, though Gmsman keeps it all in the context of the police-community relationship.

As might be expected, the police are hierarchical and para-military in nature. Authority, discipline, and regimentation are bywords, though in these times eroding ones. The chief usually arrives at his rank after years of service, so it's not likely that he'll be as flexible and innovative as when he en- &d the force. (Outside appointees must master the interpersonal relationships within the force in order to centralize control.)

In theory the chief is politically impartial; yet he must deal with politicians, the media, business, and other interest groups and usually identifies with those who are at his own level or slightly above it. It's no wonder the community may be divided over the chief's worth.

Though taking the police perspective, Gmsman also illustrates his case for reform with stories of inconsistent law enforcement, narrow and limited training that emphasizes experience and results in stereotyping and labelling of people, and the lack of executive support for police unions.

But these and other problems can be remedied — with the acknowledgement and participation of the chief. Gmsman suggests there would be improvement in performance if a more open, creative relationship between the police and the community were established. Tensions would dissolve if relations were more informal, less rigid. This would apply at all levels, not just to a special unit of the force. Interestingly, many of Gmsman's proposals originate in the U.S. — specifically from the California cities of San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland — though some experiments are being conducted in North Vancouver.

Grosman advocates a shedding of the defensive, para-military role of the police. When that will happen is debatable. As he says, "The quality of police service in any, urban environment depends upon the availability of municipal and other governmental initia-

tives.... The police alone cannot erase the causes of violence and disorder."

Police Command is a well-argued case for progressive policing. Its weakness is that it doesn't give us the sense of real people in real places; there's too much anonymity for my taste. But no doubt it will find its spot on the bookshelves of students majoring in police technology. □

Our patron, right or wrong

Pictures from the Douglas M. Duncan Collection, selected and introduced by Frances Duncan Barwick, U of T Press, 156 pages, \$15 cloth.

By GARY MICHAEL DADLT

IF DOUGLAS DUNCAN hadn't existed, Robertson Davies would have had to invent him. Witty, wealthy, and learned, Duncan became, in the tiny rarified world of Canadian art and letters in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, what Pearl McCarthy once called "unofficial adviser to everybody."

Duncan was lanky, shambling, absent-minded, out-at-the-elbows; he is reported to have lived largely on Laura Secord chocolates, fudge sundaes, and milkshakes; he drove, according to Barbara Moon, a "rusted old Buick convertible with tom rear wind-screen held together with diaper pins;" the late Alan Jarvis has written that he "once saw him slip a Craven A box across a restaurant table to a young Canadian artist: the packet contained 10 one-hundred dollar bills." Quite simply, Douglas Duncan was a peripatetic drawing-room comedy.

Canada does not much nourish and venerate its eccentrics. The "good things" one says or does are unlikely to get further than a small circle of friends. In Douglas Duncan's case, happily, the tone and texture of his life as aesthete, patron, and raconteur has been caught and made accessible (with at least some success) by the publication last year by the University of Toronto Press of *Douglas Duncan, a Memorial Portrait*, edited by Alan Jarvis. Though a little thin and fulsome in places, the volume contained a good deal of valuable stuff about Duncan's establishing of the Picture Loan Society, about his friendship with David Milne (and his tireless championing of

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FROM OBERON

that remarkable painter) and L. L. Fitzgerald, and a thoughtful account of his efforts in support of the younger artists he believed in.

The U of T Press has now released *Pictures from the Douglas M. Duncan Collection*, edited by Duncan's sister, Frances Duncan Barwick. The book is a selection by Mrs. Barwick of 146 works from Duncan's enormous collection (at the time of his death in 1968 it contained more than 1,200 pieces). It is a peculiar anthology, peculiar in the wild fluctuating unevenness of the quality of the works. One longs to know to what extent Mrs. Barwick was able to reduce but maintain an accurate profile of her brother's taste. Or did she strike out entirely on her own? Whatever the answer, the book reproduces, in addition to the undeniably fine Milnes, Fitzgeralds, Varleys, and Emily Carrs, some execrable pictures; not just forgettable but downright bad works by Henry Almedia, Ralph Allen, Ann Macintosh Duff, André Fauteux, Julius Griffith, Tom Hodgson, Gerald Human, P. K. Irwin. And the list goes on and on. I wish there were some way to sound less cantankerous about the taste and the aesthetic commitment of a kind and generous man. No doubt many of these works

were purchased to help out an artist Duncan wished to keep afloat until he gave evidence of what Duncan thought of as his promise (though, ironically, everyone who knew Duncan denies this possibility). But this collection is a shaky structure upon which to hope to maintain a legendary connoisseurship.

House that Jacques' built

The Beautiful Old Houses' of Quebec, by P. Roy Wilson; with a foreword by Jean Palardy, U of T Press, 126 pages, \$12.50 cloth.

By BRIAN VINTCENT

THE ONLY TRULY Canadian style of architecture is that of the old stone houses built by the French settlers in Quebec. Over the years, many have been torn down through public apathy and commercial greed, others have been renovated out of all recognition, and still others - especially on the Ile d'Orléans - have been abandoned and are falling in ruins. Fortunately, a few have been saved and are maintained in their original state by the Canadian Heritage of Quebec.

For many years, Quebec architect P. Roy Wilson has been sketching these houses, all over the province and 50 of his drawings are now collected in *The Beautiful Old Houses of Quebec*. The book is intended as a record of the houses not as they are today but as they were in their most attractive state.

And beautiful they certainly were, with their dormer windows and finials set in steep roofs that were crowned by the solid mass of the chimneys. In his brief introduction to the sketches, Wilson points out the genius of the builders who could combine function with elegance of design to such happy effect. The characteristic bell-cast of the eaves, for instance, that project so far over the exterior house wall are not only aesthetically pleasing but also serve to protect the wall from rain and snow, and shade the window from the high sun of summer while allowing into the house as much of the lower winter light as possible.

Wilson has a good understanding of the whys and wherefores of such practical details. Stone parapet-gables raised above the roof at each end of the

house were adopted from France to prevent the spreading of fire from roof to roof. For the same purpose, wooden shingles were soon replaced by metal sheets. Known as *fer blanc*, these were originally made from the flattened tins in which tea and other foods were imported and are still to be seen throughout Quebec today, often painted a bright red.

Informative and beautifully designed, Wilson's book is a labour of love from start to finish. It has no need of Jean Palardy's fulsome foreword to advertise its merits. It is a welcome memorial to an appealing domestic architecture that has been shamefully neglected. □

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Ski whiz and Charlie Brown

Jackrabbit: His First Hundred Years, compiled by Brian Powell, Collier-Macmillan, 206 pages, \$10 cloth.

Every Kid Can Win, by Terry Orlick and Cal Botterill, Nelson-Hall (325 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill., 60606). 187 pages, \$6.95 cloth.

BY BRUCE KIDD

I FIRST HEARD of Herman "Jackrabbit" Smith-Johannsen when he was interviewed on CBC-Radio several years ago, and since then he has been a hero of mine. He should be everybody's hero.

A Norwegian engineer who came to Canada in 1902 as a salesman for a Cleveland manufacturing firm, Jackrabbit was the first to introduce skiing—or "Norwegian snowshoeing" as it was first called—to many pans of Ontario, Quebec, and the northeastern United States and his leadership in the sport continues until the Present day. Before the First World War, he taught trappers, prospectors, and Indians how to ski and saved them hours of walking in the snow. His firm went bankrupt in the 1929 crash, so he took his family to a small bush cabin in Shawbridge, Que., and learned to support them by living off the land. "I always had a deer or moose hanging in the woodshed," he likes to recount.

During the Depression Jackrabbit taught countless kids and adults how to have fun in the bush inexpensively, making their own skis and snowshoes, preparing and applying their own waxes. During his lifetime he has laid out countless trails through the Laurentians, including the 50-kilometer championship course used at the 1932 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid and the famous Lachute-Hull 100-mile marathon course. He's an avid competitor too and he's personally encouraged thousands by his example, including all three Canadian Olympic Medalists: Lucite Wheeler, Anne Heggveit, and Nancy Greene.

He still skis every day. He celebrated his 100th birthday on June 15.

Usually I find a collection of personal tributes too formal or too narrow to convey the excitement of an honored person and the significance of his or her contribution. but *Jackrabbit:*

His First Hundred Years, a compilation of tributes from 50 men and women who knew him well, provides just the right combination of personal anecdote and historical perspective. What I admire most about Jackrabbit is his zest for life and his fiercely stated belief that skiing shouldn't be expensive—be abhors expensive equipment, tows, chalets.

Far too many Canadians have never discovered the joys of physical activity that has kept Jackrabbit bursting with energy for so long. One reason is that they were turned off as youngsters by a repressive experience in organized sports or school physical-education classes. Orlick and Botterill's *Every Kid Can Win* represents a major attempt to turn the tables. Both men are physical education graduates whose research in sports psychology led them to understand the attitudes and practices that have caused so many boys and girls to drop out. Instead of filing their theses in the library and resting on the laurels of academic publication, Orlick and Botterill have boiled down this research into an easily readable, highly Practical manual on how kids' sports can become more fun and meaningful. I give it an A-plus. Here's what the authors say:

It is absurd that on the one hand we feel that sports are good for kids and on the other hand we set up a system which eliminates poorer performers, girls, late-maturing boys, kids who are not aggressive, and so on. . . . Just as the least lovable child is the one who needs loving the most, the least athletic child may need athletics the most. The process of cutting is a vicious circle for the one who doesn't make it.

They back this up by quoting from their own research interviews, which show that eliminated kids would still like to play if given a chance. They then turn it around and outline countless simple Steps that could be taken by fathers, mothers, coaches, teachers, and sports league co-ordinators to make the sporting experience fully supportive.

Then's no reason why sport can't be enjoyable for all ages. as Jackrabbit's experience would seem to prove. If *Every Kid Can Win* is carefully taken to heart by the adults who control kids sports, many more children will take their sports participation with them into adulthood.

Just one sour note: distribution of this book in Canada has been held up for almost a year because it was published in the United States. A Canadian publisher had the first shot at the manuscript nearly two years ago and rejected it out of hand. □



The Ottawa Waterway

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The author of *The Rideau Waterway* once again recounts the exciting history of a Canadian waterway. He not only describes how for more than 250 years the Ottawa has been used by explorers, missionaries, fur traders, lumbermen, settlers, travellers, and industry, but also tours the liver today, pointing out the scenic highlights. \$15.00



The Beautiful Old Houses of Quebec

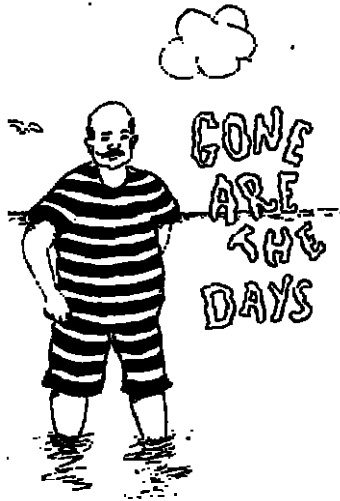
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Gone are the Days

Edited by Adrian Macdonald

A collection of essays by a group who call themselves the Senior Scribes. The authors have all had distinguished careers in writing, teaching, architecture, business and library work.

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Adrian Macdonald, the editor, described the years before the First World War as marvellous years to be alive. An era of perpetual progress.
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Net Worth

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There aren't many books about Canadian businessmen. Chester Everett Pickering shams with his readers his eighty-nine years of experience in business, politics and public life.

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Ernest G. Slack

a stuff gown and a silk one

*A Stuff Gown and a Silk One
Ernest G. Slack*

"We still have flowers, but they seemed to be more of them then. The air was full of their perfume and the odour of clover or new mown hay in the adjacent fields: Seventy years ago life in Central Ontario was quite different than it is today. Children walking to school felt a warm, silky day dust caressing their toes. An extensive knowledge of home remedies was gained by children before they entered school. Ernest Slack captures his memories with a humour and sensitivity that will captivate the reader.

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IN BRIEF

ONE OF THE great successes of Canadian publishing is Anne Hardy's guide to the country's restaurants from coast to coast. The fifth edition of *Where To Eat In Canada 1975-76* (Oberon Press, \$3.95), duly revised and brought up to date, is as useful and authoritative as its predecessors. Its pronouncements may not have the clout of France's *Guide Michelin* as yet, but the book is certainly moving quickly in that diction and one can foresee the day when restaurants will succeed or fail on its commendation. Like all good guide books, Hardy's is scrupulously honest (indeed, she could teach a few others a thing or two on that score) and she's fair but firm. She maintains, quite correctly, that there is no reason why any restaurant, however remote, need serve whipped cream from an aerosol can, wrap its baked potatoes in foil, or make salads with iceberg lettuce. The guide is designed for the growing number of Canadians who care about such things and who insist on good value for their money.

BRIAN VINTCENT

WHEN THE Apollo-Soyuz crews rendezvoused 140 miles over Germany to symbolize U.S.-Soviet détente, observers in many quarters may have been puzzled by the attention devoted to choosing suitable menus for the occasion. But to readers of Kenneth P. Kirkwood's *The Diplomat at Table* (The Scarecrow Press, P.O. Box 656, Metuchen, N.J., \$10 cloth) it would have appeared entirely natural. Moreover, the news that the fare enjoyed by both crews was Russian (that is, that the peanut butter sandwich gave way to the cabbage roll) might have indicated who is getting the better of the relationship. A surreptitious sherry (it was during Prohibition) shared with the First Secretary at Canada's newly opened embassy in Washington in 1928 launched Kirkwood on a distinguished career as a diplomat. It also began his life-long interest (he died in 1969) in the connection between gastronomy and diplomacy. After 31 years in the game, he agreed with Wilde's Prince Paul that brilliant diplomacy is like great salad-making: the problem is to know how much oil to mix with one's vinegar. The blend is exactly right in this book. As delightful as Harold Nicolson and as entertaining as Lawrence Durrell,

Kirkwood serves up a collation of anecdotes, comments, and quotations about diplomacy from the ancient Greeks to the Kennedys in support of a thesis he calls "dietetic materialism." Yet a question may strike the happy readers of this diverting volume by one of Canada's few scholar-diplomats: Why didn't it find a Canadian publisher?

GUY STANLEY

GEORGE STEINER was the CBC's Massey Lecturer last fall, and the text of his five brilliant lectures is now available as the CBC publication, *Nostalgia for the Absolute*. (\$2 paper). Steiner's theme, which recurs throughout his writings (not to mention those of Nietzsche and Camus, from whom Steiner's title is an unacknowledged loan) is simple: *le Dieu est mort, vive les Dieux*—specifically, Marx, Freud, and Levi-Strauss, whose work Steiner sees as surrogates for traditional religion or "metatheologies," notwithstanding their claims for empirical validity. For, as with the "thought" of our various butterball mystics from India and the cults of UFO watchers, all the trappings of organized religion are there: organized mythologies, claims for totality, original disciples and apostates, idioms, emblems, metaphors, and so on. Unfortunately, the book does not print the broadcast verbal rejoinders to Steiner, which included a fascinating interview with Levi-Strauss long-distance from Paris; still, Steiner's wide-ranging views are important and wittily presented in these short chapters, which for all their brevity are models of true interdisciplinary scholarship.

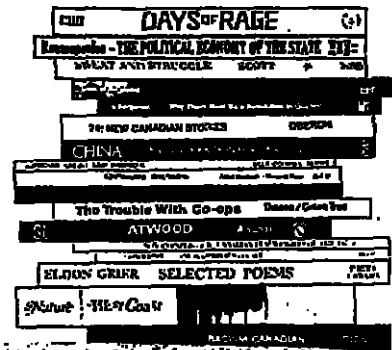
GRAHAM FORST

IT'S HAPPENED. A *Catcher in the Rye* for the 1970s. The *Jesus Boy* by R. L. Gordon (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, \$8.95 cloth) is a funny, macabre, and tragic account of an adolescent boy's search for independence; love, and meaning. Like Holden Caulfield, he's an outcast. He's also a believable kid. Trapped by an invalid, demanding mother ("Do you mind spending the evening with your mother?"), he stays, but not without wanting to shout: "Of course I minded you stupid old bat ... Do you imagine anyone in his right mind would want to spend an evening with you?" He smokes, swears, drinks, has sexual fantasies—experiments with all the adult "vices." He leaves home after he has—or thinks he has—killed his mother. He remains a real character,

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but at that point he also becomes a Mankind (Kidkind?) figure, surrounded by symbolic types: **Darren Bartlett**, proprietor of a hotel/brothel ("My contribution to the world is a sin offering"); Anna, representative of earthly love; Miss **Truscott**, director of the Far Horizons Home for the Aged, a sort of spirit guide; and Bobby **Garrison**, a profiteering evangelist who offers him, as the Jesus Boy, life, meaning, and finally death. All of these symbolic figures have idiosyncrasies; touches of humanity that lift them and the book as a whole out of the realm of the purely schematic. And many of the cameo characters are delightful. Gordon's structure is sound without being obtrusive. His descriptive phrasing is excellent, as is his ear for dialogue.

JEAN E. MELUSKY



Open Letter, Second and Third Series (1971-75), edited by Frank Davey, Coach House Press, quarterly, annual subscription \$7.25.

By LINDA SANDLBR

THE MOST remarkable thing about *Open Letter* is that it has catapulted from its mimeographed phase of guerilla warfare into the establishment without losing any of its original militancy. Frank Davey founded *Open Letter*, an exiled son of Vancouver's *Tish*, in Victoria in the mid-1960s. When he

accepted a teaching post at York University in 1970, *Open Letter* came with him. Although it's now published in an impeccably elegant format by Coach House Press, and has been subsidized by the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council since the fall of 1974, *Open Letter* remains an impressive and vigilant champion of West Coast post-modernism. George Bowering, Steve McCaffery, bp Nichol, Fred Wah (and until recently; Victor Coleman and Stan Persky) form the body of contributing editors. Like a revolutionary sect in exile, *Open Letter* is closed to dissenters, but for all proponents of radical aesthetics it provides an open Forum for debate, rebuttal, and counter-assault.

Even for a critical quarterly, *Open Letter* is extraordinarily independent of an audience. One thousand copies are printed for libraries and initiates, but it remains something of an open secret — partly because it favours American-influenced writers in the nationalist, tradition-oriented East, and partly because it has the reputation of being the magazine that nobody reads. It doesn't sit on the periodical shelves of the University of Toronto's Robarts Library, and no one seems to have asked for it. Many of its articles are written in tormented, jargon-ridden prose; other contributions take the form of minute, minimal scrawls across the void of a page. And yet, and yet — *Open Letter* is, perhaps the most fascinating critical quarterly we have. It's the only one that consistently reviews and assimilates new ideas about art and communication: Richard Kostelanetz cuts through the trappings and briars of modernism to the poets who are reshaping our perceptions (2/7); Leslie Mundwiler explores recent theories about art as a way of knowing the world (2/5), as the enactment of existential truths (2/3), or in the novels of Miguel Asturias, as the voice of the people (2/8). And it's a rare quarterly that pays as much attention to the forms and techniques of writing as *Open Letter* does. Each issue coalesces roughly around a central theme: "Politics and Poetry," "Olson and Others," "Narrative," "Refinding the Language," "Down With History," "Reductive Aesthetics," and so on. The titles are a fair index of its range and characteristic; concerns, but let's see how they work in action. The spring, 1974, issue (2/4) is titled "Kinetic Mythology." The old "mythy" poets like Jay MacPherson, Davey says elsewhere, write according to prescribed formulas; they retreat

from the modern world into the austere disciplines of tradition. The new ones like Gwen MacEwen, Frank Davey, and Eli Mandel find mythology in their own environment. Davey's opening essay on Gwen MacEwen applies this idea, showing how in her best work, myth is expressed in the action of the story, not superimposed on it. Like most of Davey's criticism, this is not only partisan but also perceptive and accurate. Margaret Atwood contributes a superb essay on John Newlove, whom she portrays as a poet cornered in a hostile world. His despair, she notes, is vintage Canadian despair. George Bowering follows close on her tail with his response to Atwood's response to Newlove, offering a counter-mythology written in the non-style that apparently records the movement of his mind. He also gives a brief impression of Robert Duncan—the American father and mentor of the West Coast school (see Bowering's *Curious*, Coach House Press, 1973). David McFadden ties things up with a poem about Bowering. So far, *Open Letter* might seem to be what its critics say: incestuous, self-reflecting, and of limited interest — a dead letter, as John Robert Colombo would have it.

If that was true, you wouldn't find Michele Lalonde, the Quebec poet, dismpting the circuit with his proclamation that writing is a social act; that the writer must break out of the small magazine circuit and get into circulation by addressing the people in their own language. In Lalonde's terms, the *Open Letter* crew would be elitist proponents of a "secondary culture," sustained by the state and parasitic on popular culture. His manifesto is the text of an address to the Quebec Writers Conference of 1971, one of several that Davey has published. Who else in English Canada would be as willing?

Open Letter, in fact, is as close to the Roman forum as the print&book can get; even the graphics and reviews are part of an internal dynamic. The concept of the open letter was probably borrowed from Charles Olson, who popularized the view of poetry as a collaboration between writer and reader. The reader then, even the critic; is not the privileged observer of a self-contained artwork, she is the poet's correspondent.

This takes us back to where it all began, in Vancouver in 1961, when a group of unknown and wildly unorthodox poets (Davey, Bowering, Lionel Kearns, Fred Wah) founded a mimeographed newsletter called *Tish*

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— a meeting place for their lives, as one *Tish* historian diagnosed. And during the 18 months that **the first** founders remained. *Tish* testified to the influence of the American Black **Mountaineers** — Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, and Charles Olson — and documented the **emergence** of the West Coasters. *Open Letter* is the son of *Tish*, the son who **took** a Canadian turning without renouncing his origins.

In 1973, Press **Porcépic** published *From There to Here*, Davey's sharply defined analysis of English Canadian writing since the 1960s. The book is **Davey's** answer to **Margaret Atwood's** *Survival*, and the best **account** of post-modernism available, by someone who **was** there at the mot. **Atwood** defines Canadianism in thematic terms; her **territory** is the **literal** and psychic wilderness. Davey defines **Canadianism** by its distinctive literary forms; his field is technology's global village. He argues that the **1960s** represent a **break** with the past and a shift in man's **relationship** to the cosmos; he gives preference to writers who **have** responded to the challenge of the **electronic** environment by experimenting with language and **forms** to find ways of expressing the **altered** realities of their world. *From There to Here* is a book worth having, for **its** insights, angles, and data (sometimes inaccurate). And the notion of the **artist** as a front-line researcher says something essential about *Open Letter* and its editor. **Here** is the conviction that drives Davey:

Before the Fir World War hit the West, **Ezra Pound** declared war on bad art. The serious artist, he said, was engaged in the science of communication. In the **spring**, 1973, *Open Letter*, Steve **McCaffery** and bp Nichol published the second manifesto (they'd lost the **first**) of the **Toronto Research Group** (2/4), a variable group of **practising** artists engaged in exploring and formulating alternatives to traditional techniques of translation and narrative' (verbal, linear, cinematic). In the **first** of a continuing series of TRG Reports we see the minimalist sensibilities of **McCaffery** and **Nichol** at work— what we see is the concrete poet's horror at the stark void of the white page, and the **narrator's** childlike grappling with the first principles of **communication**. Later reports by other hands explore the **physical laws** of the book and expose the static **relationship** traditional **narrative** imposes on writer and reader. One of the **most** articulate (by **Davey?**) poses the idea that given the **ratio** of

readers to writers, the reader's role is the **significant** one; if you write a novel you need a **discontinuous non-narrative** prose that involves the reader (2/9). **The recent** issue dissects the **iconic, non-narrative** art of the comic strip (3/2).

Nothing here is new, but God and **McLuhan** know that **these ideas aren't** current. If the Davey group **proceeds** as though **McLuhan** hadn't been and gone on Madison Avenue, that's because he hasn't—for most **critics** and writers of Canadian **literature**. And if most *Open Letter* **aesthetics** are more interesting than the writing that **illustrates the theories**, as Barry **Alpert** says (3/2) — well, "Picasso said **we** do something first & then someone **comes** along & does it pretty," (2/8) as **Bowering** says Gertrude Stein says Picasso said. □

SCRIPT & FILM

By **DOUG FETHERLING**

THE CURIOUS THING about *Russian Roulette*, the American film **starring** George **Segal**, is that it's much more realistically Canadian than Tom **Archie's** *Kosygin Is Coming*, the **Canadian** novel on which it's based. In this **respect** it may very well be unique. On those infrequent **occasions** in the past when Americans made films from **Canadian books**, they tended to **de-Canadianize** them drastically if not entirely. For example, *Rachel, Rachel*, which was based on Margaret **Laurence's** *A Jest of God*, shifted the **story from Manitoba to Maine** rather **unaccountably**. Similarly, when Americans shoot films in Canada for financial reasons they **often** than not **deCanadianize** the **location** to resemble the U.S. as much as possible; and of course American movies' of the past (*Rose Marie*, *Saskatchewan*, and so on) **were** notorious for making Canada and Canadians seem all **rather British**.

Russian Roulette is interesting for **lossing these precedents aside**. Here we have a U.S. film made in Vancouver and **dearly labelling itself as such**. Here we have **Segal** as an RCMP officer who **behaves and speaks** more like a Canadian than an American or a Briton. This is in contrast with the original

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book, in which the characters major and minor speak and think like Englishmen, calling one another "bloke" and, in one instance, even resorting to "blimey." In the film version much of this nonsense is toned down. If anything, the Canadianness is exaggerated.

While the credits attribute the screenplay to Ardies himself, Stanley Mann, and Arnold Margolin, it is difficult to determine how accurate an indication this is of who did the writing, since credit is frequently called for by contract when there is little or no basis for such credit in fact. Whatever the true proportions of the collaboration in this case, one thing is certain: the script is just what an adapted screenplay should be—a much-improved version of the book. Indeed, *Russian Roulette* is less a mere adaptation of Ardie's

1974 thriller than it is a valuable rewrite of it in a different medium. Few writers (let alone Canadian ones) ever have such an opportunity for correcting their mistakes; Ardies, with however much help from Mann and Margolin, has made the best of it.

The plot has its factual basis in the Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin's troubled tour of Canada in 1970. The story, in brief, is that of Corporal Timothy Shaver. After 15 years with the RCMP he's been suspended for sulking his commanding officer. Shortly before Kosygin is due in Vancouver, he's contacted by a man named Petapiece, an officer of the Special Branch (which even then was actually called the Security Service). Petapiece wants Shaver to kidnap a man named Henke, an East European troublemaker the Russians want safely out of the way until the visit,

is over. Petapiece makes clear that if the mission is completed successfully he will put in the fix with the force so that Shaver will be reinstated.

Two days before the visit Shaver discovers that a party or parties unknown have already kidnapped Henke or possibly murdered him and disposed of the body. Rather than report this and render his dismissal a foregone conclusion, he decides to try to rekidnap Henke himself in the 48 hours remaining. In the course of this attempt, he kills a syndicate torpedo from Detroit hired to get the Mountie out of the way. Later he learns that Henke is in fact an employee of the CIA.

The conspiracy unfolds something like this: some members of the KGB, fearful of détente between the Soviets and the Americans of which this Canadian tour is an early step, are planning



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**SAMUEL STEVENS
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to assassinate Kosygin themselves; it's they who are holding Henke, whom they intend to make into a human bomb and drop from a helicopter onto, the official motorcade; the reasoning is that the two superpowers will plunge back into Cold War once a CIA man — one the Canadians have been asked to immobilize — kills the Russian leader on Canadian soil with Canadian aid or at least through Canadian incompetence.

Shaver, acting alone, learns all this. At the very last moment, he shoots down the helicopter and kills its passenger before anyone can detonate the explosives. This follows a gun battle on the oxidized copper roof of the Hotel Vancouver. These are the story elements common to both the book and the film. The discrepancies in the two entertainments provide an unusual opportunity for examining the differences between Hollywood's idea of Canada and Canada's idea of Hollywood.

Ardies, who is a practised thriller writer, makes a number of concessions to the genre's traditions. One of the laws of the thriller is that the author must have enough inside information about various specialized occupations and situations to make them believable to his reader but, not enough to contradict the reader's preconceived ideas. For instance, Shaver at one point when he's on Henke's trail (the scene is dropped in the film) poses as a newspaperman and carries on about the profession with a bus driver. The view he

gives is all wrong. The driver doesn't know this of course and neither does the reader. But Ardies himself must know, since he's a former Vancouver Sun reporter.

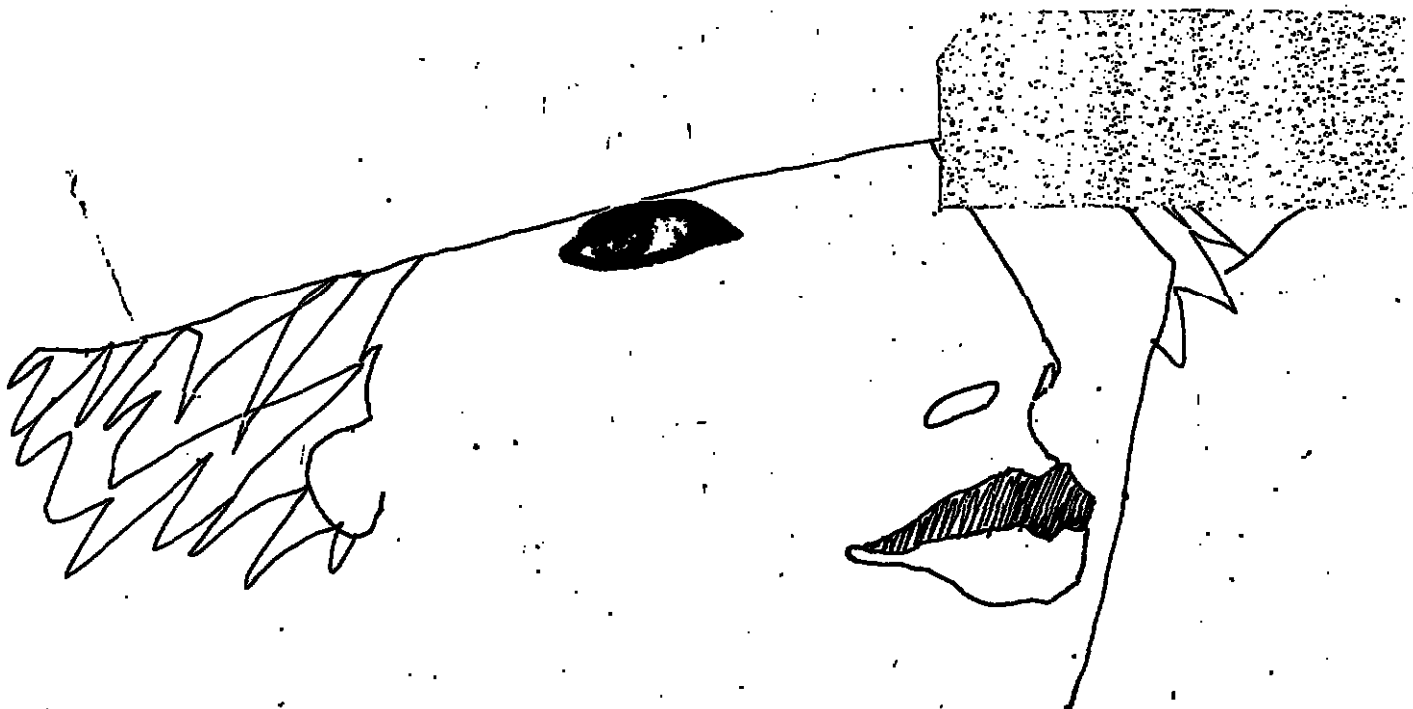
Similarly, the novel, as already mentioned, contains some of the most British prose since P. G. Wodehouse. Yet Shaver himself sometimes breaks from talking like a music-hall performer in order to speak like a flippant, slangy American private detective. When he's forcing information out of the hit man on a bridge above the Fraser River (a scene recorded in the film as well as in the novel) he tells the man to "fink or swim." It's like something Lew Archer or Philip Marlowe would say. Coming from a Mountie, who should talk more like a bureaucrat than a baseball player, it sounds wrong. The thriller is an American invention and remains an American-dominated form, and Ardies gas along with these facts.

It's as though Ardies had his eye on a U.S. movie sale all along. If so, this explains why his characters are so British, because in the past Hollywood has usually liked its English-speaking Canadians to be that way. In this case, however, Hollywood has come nearer the truth than before by discarding all the come-ons, or most of them, while concentrating, perhaps too much, on true-to-life Canadiana. There are sev-

eral close shots of beer bottles that emphasize the funny labels on the B.C. brands. Another shot shows Shaver jimmying a lock with a Chargex card rather than with one of the American credit cards.

The film is directed by Lou Lombardo, who was formerly Robert Altman's editor. As a claim to fame, this is akin to having been Premier Bill Davis' charisma teacher. Lombardo, however, together with his screenwriters, has made great improvements on the original material. They have tightened up the action, which in the book moves slowly till the final chapters. They have discarded many superfluous characters and situations. They have changed the corny ending of the book wherein Shaver and his RCMP girlfriend decide to get married. What he, or they, have made in fact is not only a better movie than the book is a book but also a hybrid film that is half Canadian and half American.

The film lacks the glossiness that would have attached itself to an American thriller shot in the States. But because it apparently used Canadians behind the scenes, it displays one of the great strengths of Canadian film: the ability to capture the essence of a geo-



graphical place in an almost-impressionistic manner. The city of Vancouver in Lombardo's film (like the city of Montreal in *The Pyx*) looks absolutely true to itself. Taking in the cinematography one says to oneself, yes, that's exactly the way Vancouver feels and smells; that's precisely the amount of space things have moulded them out them in the winter. This holds true mainly 'for the scenes of the city itself but it also applies to scenes shot at Grouse Mountain (which do not occur in the book).

More importantly, the film is pleasing to the sensibilities of both nations because of the way it depicts cops. The RCMP shown here are sufficiently corrupt to ring true to the American audience's view of cops everywhere, yet wholesome and clean-cut enough to allow Canadians to retain their naive pride in their own federal police. If the film shows times to have changed at all in police circles, it's American time and not Canadian. In the film, the fellow who has come from Detroit to bump off Shaver is a hit man, nothing more, nothing less. In the book, however, this character too has CIA connections. Perhaps when the film was being planned, it was thought this angle would have been too much for the Americans to swallow, but it's not too much now. Canadians of course still believe such things don't happen on Canadian soil no matter who is behind them. The Canadianness of this film has won out. □

WHAT'S THIS we hear? The Government of Canada is blowing a cool million bucks on one book? As a present for the Americans, yet. Wags are saying it will be a single-copy edition, printed on platinum, for the White House library. Down through the ages successive U.S. Presidents will be able to peruse its metallic contents whenever their thoughts turn fitfully to the ever-so-friendly neighbour to the north. And this federal largesse in a foreign field at a time when the Canadian publishing industry is trying to nickel-and-dime its way toward solvency.

Well, we — and possibly you — heard wrong. It is true that Canada is spending \$1 million on a book as a gift to the United States on the occasion of that country's bicentennial. However,

owing to a dim-witted public-relations policy, the project has been cloaked in semi-secrecy and the little information that has seeped out has been gleefully misinterpreted. (When-will bureaucrats learn that their enduring contempt for the public's right to know invariably backfires?) Anyway, here are the actual details:

The book, tentatively titled *Between Ourselves*, is being prepared by the National Film Board's still-photography division under the direction of Lorraine Monk. The theme is the common border between Canada and the U.S. — not just the border running from the Atlantic to the Pacific but also the one between British Columbia and Alaska. The book will consist of some 240 full-colour photographs by 32 Canadian photographers. A special edition of 20,000 copies will be presented to congressmen, parliamentarians, and libraries on both countries. A standard edition will be available to the public through a commercial publisher.

Of course, you can't judge a book by its advance coverage — good or bad. *Between Ourselves* may turn out to be the biggest bomb since the one that burst in air, illuminating that star-spangled banner in the dawn's early light. On the other hand, this is the same NFB group that gave us the excellent centennial volume, *A Year of the Land*. And independent critics who have seen early proofs of the new book report that it is superb. Indeed, the NFB is reasonably certain the book will become a commercial best seller and hence the full costs, one half of which are to be spent on printing, will be recovered in a few years.

If that is the case; this particular gift book will be both a worthwhile investment and a first-class advertisement for Canada's quality-book industry. It's just a pity that somebody didn't write a better foreword for the taxpayers.

* * *

A BELATED note Of thanks to the Ontario Arts Council, which not only renewed our regular grant but contributed \$1,000 toward the costs of our special issue on women four months ago. The OAC is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. It has been a model agency of its kind, ignoring narrow territorial limitations and cheerfully fostering enterprises (such as ours) with cultural implications that extend far beyond the provincial boundaries. Other "have" provinces please note.

CanWit No.3

HERE'S THE opening paragraph of a first novel soon to be published by McClarkan & Newspider.

It was raining in Samia but they were in Toronto at the time. Roger stood on the balcony, gazing out across the harbour at the turbid-brown swell of the lake. It reminded him of bad harvests and the murmur of Gregorian chants. Beside him, Sylvia shivered. "I have something to tell you," she said.

Unfortunately, the novel still lacks a concluding paragraph. A book prize will be awarded for the best entry. The maximum length is 75 words. Address: CanWit No. 3, Books in Canada, 501 Yonge Street, Spite 23, Toronto M4Y 1Y4.

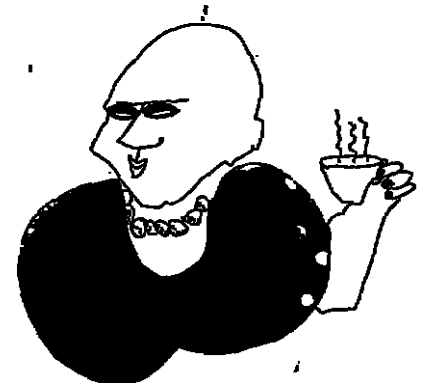
RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 1

Readers were asked to provide recipes for any well-known figure or character in Canadian literature. Most of the entries had a distinctly sour taste. Some, indeed, were too unpalatable to print. The winner is Ron Robinson of Winnipeg. He receives a copy of the award-winning art book *John Fillion* by Dorothy Cameron and John Reeves (Martlet Press, \$19.50) for the three following concoctions:

Robertson Davies: Take one stinging snow ball. Toss through an arc, while disturbing one Jung man/fancy. Wave your hands magically over the earth's bowl until he can't bear it. Add a Magnus of champagne. Serve as a trilogy.

Jack McClelland: Take one raddish-red, white-topped book publisher. Bungle with a large fork, adding alternate layers of government money and covers resembling boiled cabbage. Simmer until well stewed.

Anne of Green Gables: Marinate one Maritime girl in a situation of Polly-unsaturated corn oil with island spices. Add a pinch of courage and serve with a laugh. Garnish with pig tales.



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