Volume 7, Number 5 A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS May, 1978

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The 1977-78 season in Canadian theatre, film and television
P. E. Trudeau and E. P. Taylor: the power élite at work and at play

BOOKS IN CANADA

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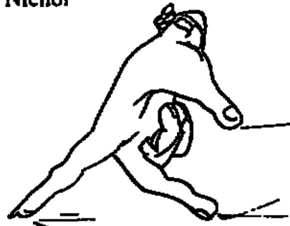

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A REEVES GALLERY

Eleven literary faces from the files of one of Canada's leading magazine photographers

by John Reeves

THOUGH I recently turned 40, I lend to see myself as a lumpy inept adolescent- a slow reader and a slow learner. While other people were doing Honours English degrees and looking forward to a little time at Cambridge I was blundering through art school and looking forward to driving cab. Imagine my delight then at being asked to meander back through 16 years of photographic files to produce a literary document for the editors of Books in Canada. My self-image has been transformed: in a few days I've managed to rampage through my awkward years and straight into the middle' ones.

James Bannerman (available daylight through auto windshield, Leica M2, 35mm. F2 Leitz Summicron, 1/60th at F5.6, Kodak Tri-X rated at 400 ASA and processed normally in Microdol X).

JAMES BANNERMAN: January. 1963. "Good evening. this Is James Bannerman talking to you about CBC Wednesday Right.. . ." I became keenly aware of James gannsrman in the 1930s. My father Is an Englishman; so was Bannerman. My father loves language; so did Bannerman. My father Was convinced that I did not love language enough; so for years we listened to James Bannerman's introductions to the CBC's very cultural *Wednesday Night* series of broadcasts. We didn't always stay tuned to hear the Mahler song-cycles, but we never missed hearing James Bannerman. My father was delighted that my debut on the pages of *Maclean's* was an assignment to photograph his hem, James Bannerman.

Andrée Pelletier (available daylight through a window, Nikkormat FT2, 55m. F1.4 Auto-Nikor, 1/60th at F5.6, Kodak Tri-X rated at 400 ASA and processed normally in Microdol X).

Raymond Souster (available room light, Leica M2, 35mm. F2 Leitz Summicron, 1/60th at F2.8, Kodak Tri-X rated at 400 ASA and processed normally in Microdol X, accidental double-exposure).

Alan Fleming (available light through a window, Nikkormat FT2, 85mm. F1.8 Auto-Nikor, 1/125th at F4, Kodak Tri-X rated at 400 ASA and processed normally in Microdol X).

ANDREE PELLETIER: December, 1972. Andrée Pelletier is an actress and an illustrator of two unpublished children's books written by her sister. (Her sister had a baby instead.) Andrée Pelletier is strong, gentle, wise, and brave. She is also beautiful. Andrée Pelletier is the only person under 30 I've ever really liked. I have photographed her twice for *Maclean's* and once *Chatelaine;* if I knew where she was at this moment I would happily sally forth and photograph her again - for anybody. or even for myself. I presented Andrée with an enlargement of this photo after a superb dinner in the Ritz Café In Montreal. Some weeks later she sent me a delightful drawing of Zelda Fitzgerald. Ours is a very literary friendship.

RAYMOND SOUSTER: June, 1964. I am often asked if I've ever shot an assignment without remembering to remove the camera's lens cap, and I can honestly say that I haven't. However, I have managed to double-expose an embarrassing amount of film owing to careless rewinding procedures. Please know that the complex and intriguing over-lay of images to my Souster portrait was produced completely by accident.

ALAN FLEMING: February, 1974. When Alan Fleming died last December, Canadian books lost their finest architect. Fleming was one of the first Canadian graphic designers to confront seriously the intellectual and aesthetic problems unique to books, particularly pictorial books. He designed the now-classic *Canada: A Year of the Land.* The design department he developed for the U of T Press consistently generates book designs of internationally acclaimed quality. Fleming's interest as teacher, collaborator, and patron has been an important stimulus to a lot of careers in the graphic arts — including my own. In 1968 Fleming, photo-engraver Ernest Herzig, and I joined forces to produce a photographic book about Toronto sculptor John Fillion. Thanks in large measure to Fleming's ingenious and appropriate design and Herzig's superb printing the book won an astonishing number of awards for design and production, including acceptance in the American Institute of Graphic Arts Book Show. Canadian magazines were withering on the vine in the late 1960s and I am primarily a magazine photographer. The inspiration derived from successfully collaborating with Fleming brightened what was for me a dim and depressing time.

MARY GRANNAN: May, 1962. Back in the days before Bill C58, *Time* Magazine was a lively market for parvenu photographers. *Time* served as a sort of photographic bull-pen where you could warm up for the bigger and more numerous pages of magazines such as *Maclean's* or the now defunct *Star Weekly.* This photo is the very first of my literary portraits for *Time.* Mary Grannan developed a considerable reputation during the 1940s and 1950s as the author of the *Maggie Muggins* series of children's books. Maggie's adventures were also the stuff of a long-running series of CBC-Radio broadcasts for children. As a child, my mother approved of my listening to *Maggie Muggins.* She was much less enthusiastic about *Hop Harrigan* and *The Green Hornet.* Back in 1962 the great New York photographer Irving Penn was shooting dramatically side-lit, tightly cropped faces. So was I.

AL PURDY: November, 1965. I remember going to Trenton and renting a car. I remember driving around the Bay of Quinte to Ameliasburg and finding Al Purdy's house. I remember saying yes to four fingers of rye presented to me more or less immediately on crossing Al Purdy's threshold. I remember Al Purdy saying something about home-made wine, at just about the time we ran out of rye. I do *not* remember taking this photograph. It appears that Purdy is sitting on the ground outside his house. Those are obviously grapes heaped on the blanket in the foreground, and I believe that I can confidently assert that the dark fluid in the bottle in front of the grapes is home-made wine. Why am I so confident that that is home-made wine in what is so obviously a container for Seagram's Three Star? You may well ask — and I reply — because an identical bottle filled with a dark red fluid reposes to this day in my wine cellar. It is my view that I am in possession of an extraordinary CanLit memento — the last bottle of Purdy Rouge Soixante-cinq in existence.

Mary Grannan (available light from a window, Leica M2, 90mm, F2.8 Leitz Elmarit, 1/30th at F2.8, Kodak Tri-X rated at 400 ASA and processed normally in Microdol X).

Al Purdy (available daylight, Leica M2, 35mm, F2 Leitz Summicron, 1/250th at F8, Kodak Tri-X rated at 400 ASA and processed normally in Microdol X).

Richard Needham (available light from open door, Leica M2, 35mm, F2 Leitz Summicron, 1/125th at F4, Kodak Tri-X rated at 400 ASA and processed normally in Microdol X).

RICHARD NEEDHAM: July, 1972. It's always nice when your parents think that you are meeting the right sort of people. My mother has read the *Globe & Mail* all her life. My father has read it since 1938 — the year he was married. My parents know all about Richard Needham; they understand him and they admire him extravagantly. *Needham's Inferno* was a highlight of Christmas, 1966. This picture of Needham was taken in his favourite Toronto restaurant, a Greek establishment called the Acropol situated at the corner of Yonge and Dundas Streets. He is awaiting the arrival of an exquisite companion.

HAROLD TOWN: March, 1954. I had never met Harold Town before taking this photograph. We spent several hours together, and he talked to me a lot. He talked about old movies and John Barrymore. He talked about new movies and Marlon Brando. He talked about Fra Angelico, Picasso, and Frederick Varley. He talked about Jack Kerouac, Al Purdy, and Irving Layton. He talked about Mussolini, Churchill, and Harry Truman. He talked about Glenn Gould, Horowitz, and Dinu Lipatti. He tallied about all these things and more, and he talked about them brilliantly. Town was at once the most bewilderingly eclectic scholar and the greatest master of spoken verbal style I had ever met. While he was talking, Town showed me things, including a collection of his "Enigma" drawings that were about to be published in book form by

Harold Town (available room light, Leica M2, 90mm, F2.8 Leitz Elmarit, 1/60th at F2.8, Kodak Tri-X rated at 400 ASA and processed normally in Microdol X).

Doug Fetherling (electronic flash bounced from an umbrella, Hasselblad 500c, 80mm. F2.8 Sonnar, F11, Kodak Tri-X professional rated at 220 ASA and processed for nine minutes in Microdol X at 75 degrees F).

George Ryga (electronic flash bounced from umbrella in combination with available light in background, Hasselblad 500C, 80mm. F2.8 Sonnar, F8, Kodak Tri-X professional rated at 220 ASA and processed for nine minutes in Microdol X at 75 degrees F).

Margaret Laurence (electronic flash bounced from an umbrella, Hasselblad 500C, 80mm. F2.8 Sonnar, F8, Kodak Tri-X professional rated at 220 ASA and processed for nine minutes in Microdol X at 75 degrees F).

McClelland & Stewart. Town has continued to add to the "Enigma" series over the years and I now believe they constitute one of the towering performances in the history of Canadian art. During the 1960s, Town began doing a lot of writing. He produced columns for newspapers and magazines and prefaces for books. He evolved a written style to match his spoken one, a style that reminds me of Ben Jonson's quote: "I speak as I would write: in flowing measure, filled with Game and sprite. . . ." Coached in superb language and dense with intriguing insights, Town's preface to the recently published best seller *Tom Thomson: The Silence and the Storm* should be mandatory reading for anyone pretending to an interest in art history, The Group of Seven, or Tom Thomson.

GEORGE RYGA: September, 1976. When I look at this picture of George Ryga I contemplate the astonishing diversity of the Canadian landscape. The Okanagan Valley in British Columbia where Ryga lives is a desert environment. The Okanagan grows cactus and harbours strange reptiles; it becomes verdant only with irrigation. Visually, the place is reminiscent of Mexico or Southern Spain. It seems to me there is something a little Hispanic-looking about Ryga himself. He reminds me of the guys who gave Marlon Brando such a bad time in *The Appaloosa*.

DOUG FETHERLING: February, 1976. I wanted to photograph Doug Fetherling because I thought he resembled the young G.H. Lawrence. There is something about Fetherling that makes me think of the 1920s and 1930s. I am not at all surprised that he has written a book about Ben Hecht (*The Five Lives of Ben Hecht*). It was my hope that this photo of Fetherling might be just a little reminiscent of Nicholas Murray's great portrait of Lawrence taken in Greenwich Village.

MARGARET LAURENCE: March, 1975. I had to drive from Ottawa to Lakefield, Ont., to photograph Margaret Laurence. It was a snowy day and for some reason the whiteness of everything made me think of Greece. I was driving a two-door Grand Prix and I remember enjoying the steady rhythm of the wipers beating soggy snow from the windshield. I hummed "Me and Bobby Magee" to myself all the way to Lakefield. Margaret Laurence proved to be a tell, gentle, very shy person. Her house, and her life to it seemed to centre on the large, comfortable kitchen, and that is where she chose to be photographed. After we finished working, Margaret made wonderful big ham sandwiches that we washed down with some good Moselle. Though the weather didn't improve for the drive back to Ottawa, I contrived to hum "Bobby Magee" to a higher, key brighter tempo; return trips always seem shorter.

TIP TOP TAYLOR

The perfect model of a modern Major-General presents his admiring portrait of our own Daddy Warbucks

by Wallace Clement

E. P. Taylor: The Biography of Edward Plunkett Taylor, by Richard Rohmer. McClelland & Stewart, 3.55 pages, $15.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 7709 2).

FOR MORE THAN a quarter century, the name E. P. Taylor has been a caricature of Canadian capitalism. Indeed. in many ways his life is synonymous with an important pert of Canada's capitalist class. A look at his memberships in private men's clubs tells us a lot about his class: the Toronto, York, and Rideau Clubs in Canada, the Metropolitan and The Jockey in New York. the Bock's and Turf in England. and the one he created himself. the Lyford Coy in the Bahamas. This is a moo who travels within the upper class circles of the North Atlantic triangle.

Where did Taylor's international connections come from? They date mainly from the Second World War when Taylor was the most powerful Canadian businessmen servicing the Allied governments. His primary "duty" was to boy war supplies from private business. a job that brought him into contact with the leading edge of international capitalism sod obviously made him a lot of friends. In 1940, he was appointed by C. D. Howe to the executive committee of the Department of Munitions and Supply and in the next year to the presidency of War Supplies Limited in Washington and finally. by Winston Churchill. to the presidency of the British Supply Council in North America. The contacts he made during his time as a "dollar-a-year moo" acting es the government's procurer of contracts with private corporations transformed him from a run-of-the-mill upper-class Canadian (who used his family's financial connections and Brading Breweries, of which he became a director et 22, to build Canadian Breweries) into an important international capitalist. His wartime "investment" pid off with dividends.

Taylor's biography (especially *the* biography where hll name appears in the tide twice) should reveal a lot about the capitalist class in Canada. or at least one of its key figures. It should, but it doesn't. Richard Rohmer's biography of Taylor is a "laundered" version of bll life. Not only is the dirty linen removed, but so is the starch. There is little of substance left.

I am not implying that Rohmer did this intentionally, or even consciously. Rather, he was blinded. His class is the some es Taylor's. albeit ot a much more junior level. Rohmer is a sometime lawyer. Major-General, businessman. novelist and now a biographer of the rich. He writes es an infatuated observer with his tongue hanging out in awe of his subject and he appears to share the same assumptions and values as Taylor. The ideological affinity of the two men jumps out of the book. The jacket cover says Rohmer is "no stranger to the world of riches and power" and goes on to say he had "special access to Mr. Taylor's tiles and papers." A sympathetic biographer has some advantages in access to information, but if the writer is not critical (in the true sense of the word), or et least objective. there is a danger of much being left oot, not merely in a factual sense but in the interpretive sense. With an autobiography the reader expects a biased viewpoint. but the reader of a biography also needs to be on goad. For Rohmer. his subject is like a god, the best thing Canada has ever produced, the pinnacle of success and grace.

There would still be some value to this book if it et least contained some insight into the subject. but this biography reads like an Annual Report — facts and figures but no life. What we got is

E. P. Taylor and wife in Washington In 1942.

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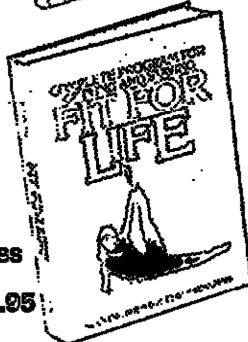

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the public man and very. very little of the private one. His values, attitudes, and perceptions are virtually ignored while Rohmer busies himself, quite literally, listing Taylor's conquests. Even worse, there is simply no analysis in thebook; it is pure journalism and poor journalism at that, simply hanging one quotation on top of another and listing financial accounts of Taylor's exploits. There is no attempt at understanding power or its implications, no distance from the subject, only celebration.

Rohmer tells hi reader notbidg about Taylor's private school days at Ashbury College and only a little more about his days at McGill University. He tells us next to nothing about his club lii, except that it was while he was drinking at the Rideau Club with his father that he was approached by C. D. Howe to join the government during the war. Nor is there much discussion about his family life: bis wife Winifred receives only passing comment, his son Charles only brief reference, and his daughters, Judith Winifred Mappin and Mary Louis Edwards. are ignored. Thii must be as Taylor wanted it a discreet celebration. A lot is said but little that Was not already part of tbe public record.

It would be expected that Rohmer, as a writer with four novels to his credit, would at least produce a book with some style. But this one is very choppy. jumping rapidly from topic to topic, often within a single sentence. Consider this one that begins a paragraph: "In tbe middle of these negotiations with the McLeod,

Taylor's creation of Canadian Breweries was possible only by buying out and closing down many smaller companies. The means were ruthless: he threatened his competitors with price wars and cajoled them with lucrative buy-out schemes.

Young, Weir firm on the one hand, and with his intended partners in P. B. Taylor and Company Limited on the other, Taylor wy considering buying a horse for his personal use, not as part of the pool of the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards' horses." (p. 45). The text jumps four lines later back into the negotiations.

The book opens in 1940. describing the wartime voyage of the *Western Prince* with Taylor, Howe. and William Woodward (of the retail store family) abroad, for no apparent reason except to ask what Canada would have been like had Taylor and Howe been killed on the tip. Besides its questionable style, the approach is an indication of Rohmer's crude "great-man" theory that permeates the book.

Rohmer reduces Taylor to personal qualities and characteristics and does not consider that he was really *acting out the* imperatives of capitalism: accumulate or be absorbed. Taylor was not an entrepreneur (at least in his Canadian operations), although Rohmer attempts to paint him as one. He was a financier. His skill was not in producing anything. It was in buying and selling what others produced and turning it to his advantage. lie learned fmm his wealthy grandfather, Charles Magee, with whom he lived for a time, how to work the British capital market and borrow extensively from wealthy family friends and later. the Royal Bank. (He worked closely with Morris Wilson, the bank's president. during the war.)

The role of banks among Canadian capitalists is critical, particularly for takeovers where Taylor's activities were focused. For example, while putting together Canadian Breweries and taking over Carling Breweries, the Dominion Bank held a crucial black of 60,000 shares. Taylor made an offer which involved his taking control and the bank issuing the company a secured loan, on the condition it could have a director on tbe board. This was Taylor's entry into the world of big business. Taylor's *creation* of Canadian Breweries was possible only by buying out and closing down many smaller companies. The means were ruthless: he threatened his competitors with price wars and cajoled them with lucrative buy-out schemes.

The effect was consolidation and centralization. Tbe advantages of consolidated companies for capitalists are obvious, as Rohmer

points cut: "They would gain better management, a better market for brewery stock. and greater influence over liquor legislation" (p. 60). The disadvantages are "ever discussed. The key resources Taylor used were financial, primarily from British sources during the 1930s. but political resources were also important. Taylor revived the Moderation League and subsidized its propaganda campaign to have beer sold by the bottle or glass in public places. As well he played off the dominant Liberal and Conservative perties in Ontario against one another to hi advantage.

Between 1930 and 1938. Canadian Breweries acquired 15 brewery plants. reducing the number of plants to six and the number of labels from 50 to 27. By 1954. four companies remained with only eight labels. Taylor bed eliminated 430,090 barrels of beer producing capacity between 1930 and 1939, leaving 510.000 barrels capacity under his control (60 per cent of Ontario's total). When Taylor couldn't advertise his beer in Ontario, he bought the periodical *New World*, published in Quebec but distributed in Ontario. which became his vehicle to reach Ontario consumers.

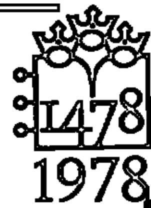
Taylor treated his companies es commodities to be bought "cd sold. His association with Canadian Breweries ended in 1968 when he sold the company to Rothmans of Pall Mall. a South African company. Any sentimental attachment was compensated by the $28.8-million return for his controlling interest. Rchmer says Taylor is "an internationalist, a man who believes in free trade "cd the dawn-playing of nationalism." (p. 129). Nationalism tends to get in the way of profits, Taylor's first passion. Taylor, in fact, would like to eliminate national boundaries: "It would be a major contribution to the peace of the world if the British Commonwealth and the United States were to declare now, I repeat now, during this war, that from now on there shall be between them free movement of goods, a common currency, and free movement of people. The three stand together — none can produce the desired results without the other. and I submit Canada has nothing to fear fmm such an arrangement." (p. 129). E.P. Taylor was indeed an internationalist, both in word end deed. After building a base within Canada, he led his companies into the ranks cf the world's multinationals.

As he had in the brewing industry. Taylor made a series of acquisitions in the forestry industry with the aid of H. R. MacMillan (who controlled MacMillan-Bloedel "cd had befriended Taylor

Taylor and classmate Richard Rohmer.

during the war) and the Royal Bank. This company became known es British Columbia Forest Products and was soon followed by Dominion Stores, Domtar, and Massey-Ferguson, again with the bank's backing. Taylor is quoted es saying: "A lot of people don't understand why I spread myself among eight or ten different businesses. It's because I always felt I could find somebody who could run a business cc a day-to-day basis better than I could run it myself. So I would keep my linger cc him and et the same time guide the policy of the company with the board of directors." (p. 153). Taylor formed Argus Corporation in 1945 to hold the shares of the companies he controlled ("Argus" comes fmm classical

Our Roots Go Back 500 Years



This year the Oxford University Press is celebrating the quincentenary of printing in Oxford. In 1478, only two years after Caxton had set up his press in Westminster, another printer, Theodoric Rood. came from Cologne to start printing in Oxford. The first book he printed there was a commentary on the Apostles' Creed, and over the next ten years he printed some standard academic books end the first printed texts of Grammars written et Oxford.

In the 500 years since then, the Oxford University Press has grown into a large international publishing house. Branches were established in New York in 1896, Canada in 1904, Australia in 1908, India in 1912, South Africa in 1915, New Zealand in 1948, Pakistan in 1952, Nigeria in 1954. East Asia in 1955, East Africa in 1963 (there had been en office in Nairobi since 1954). Japan in 1966. In addition, offices opened in Rhodesia in 1960, Hong Kong in 1961, Zambia in 1963, Ethiopia from 1965 to 1977. Tanzania in 1969, Indonesia in 1973, Mexico in 1974 and Cairo in 1976.

The Press today employs nearly 3000 people in 29 countries and five continents. all dedicated to the tradition of fine Oxford publishing, begun with Theodoric Rood in 1478.

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Peter Sutcliffe: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS An Informal History $19.95

Although the Barker book has been planned to read es en illustrated history of the Press, it also forms a permanent record of en exhibition currently being held et the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. The exhibit will also be shown at the *Rare Book Division of the D.B. Weldon Library, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO fmm 24 May to 3 June to which the public is cordially invited to visit.* From London, Ontario the exhibit will be flown to the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, England then finally shipped to Frankfurt. Germany in the fall for its final showing et the Frankfurt Book Fair.

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mythology and means a giant with a hundred eyes that acts as a guardian). Taylor was the first among "equals". becoming a partnet with Eric Phillips. Wallace McCutcheon, and later John A. McDougald. The Argus partners

> . sought major investments In public companies with special qualities. A basic requirement was that the voting shares of the company be widely held. with no large block of stock in any one individual's hands. Thus. if they could acquire a sufficiently large percentage of the voting shares, they themselves could move in and take over control of the board and therefore the direction of the company, even though they had far less than a majority of the shares (pp. 172-73).

One British executive provides the most apt description of Taylor as a "harvesting machine who will just gather you in . . . *you* will be crushed whether you like it or not." (p. 227).

Rohmer says of the Argus holdings that "in 1972, the company's holdings were still divided among only six companies: Massey-Ferguson Limited, 28.6 per cent; Hollinger Mines Limited. 20.4 per cent; Standard Broadcasting Corp. Ltd., 19.6 per Cent; Domtar Limited, 18.2 per cent: Dominion Stores Limited, 15.0 per cent; British Columbia Forest Products Ltd., 5.3 percent: and the balance in cash · and short-term investment." (p. 172). What Rohmer does not make clear is whether these figures are

He needed a place to run his horses where the stakes would be high. We pressured the provincial government into favourable tax concessions end bought control of the Ontario Jockey Club, practising his approach of consolidation and closing down smaller tracks.

supposed to represent the distribution of Argus's holdings — in which case the figures given add to 107 per cent — or whether they are supposed to represent Argus's share of these companies — in which case they disagree substantially with the Statistics Canada publication *Inter-corporate Ownership. 1972,* which places Argus's holdings at quite different levels for the same year. For example. Argus has 13.4 per cent of British Columbia Forest Products (not 5.3 percent). 24.6 percent of Dominion Stores (not 15.0 per cent). and 47.8 per cent of Standard Broadcasting (not 19.6 per cent). This is not the only error in the book; for example, Rohmer calls Standard Broadcasting Corp. Standard Radio Ltd. in Appendix I. (p. 344). Anyone thinking of using Rohmer's information would be well advised to check it against other sources.

Most of the final third of the book is devoted to Taylor at "play" with the wealth he has accumulated. He needed a place to run his horses where the stakes would be high. He pressured the provincial government into favourable tax concessions and bought control of the Ontario Jockey Club, practising his approach of consolidation and closing down smaller tracks. He then went whole heartedly into the "sport of kin&' and established a dominant position in this game of rich men. becoming an internationally renowed breeder. lie then devoted himself to building Lyford Cay *in* the Bahamas as a playground for the rich. While Rohmer does not have much to say about the policies Taylor used to direct the major companies he controlled, particularly the actual decisions concerning expansion and management, he does pay a good deal of attention to these matters when it comes to horse breeding and racing and the Lyford Cay development — mere trivia in the world of business.

What can the exploits and character of a particular capitalist tell us about the nature of capitalism? What can a biography tell us about the class as a whole? These are important questions since they direct us to "situate" the individual, asking whether the particular individual is exceptional cc typical. They also direct us to the importance of impact this case has on the general condition. Rated in terms of these questions, Rohmer's biography is a failure. ☐

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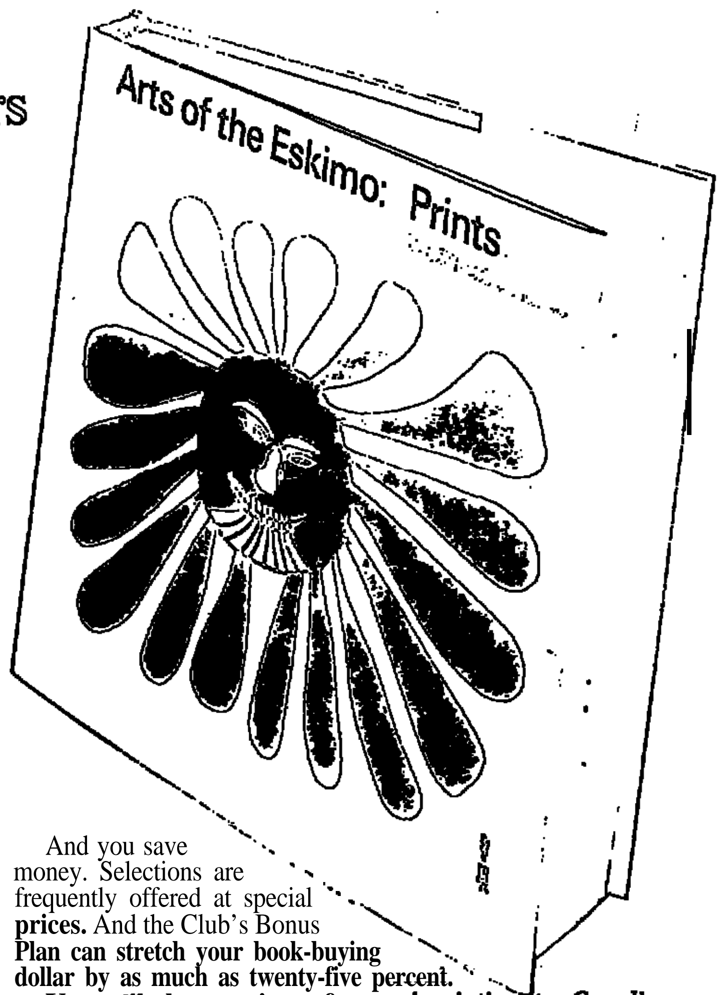

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Shrugs and all

Aadwanski gives us some parts of Trudeau the man but leaves others as elusive as ever

by Donald Swainson

Trudeau, by George Radwanski, Macmillan. 365 Pages, $14.95 cloth (ISBN 7705 1655 6).

GEORGE RADWANSKI has written an unusually interesting book. Its focus is not the Liberal party or Trudeau's years in power; rather its focus is on "the man himself — his formative influences. his personality, his approach to the tasks of leadership. his political theory.. ." Radwanski's research methodology was relatively simple. He read with care Trudeau's written material. published speeches and transcripts of post-1968 interviews. Newspaper and magazine coverage of Trudeau and his public career was analyzed. The most important source consisted of interviews with Trudeau, hi sister, his friends. and his colleagues. The Prime Minister co-operated in the research process. During early 1977 he gave Redwanski eight one-hour interviews, and encouraged his various friends and colleagues to co-operate by submitting to interviews.

A book of this sort should he approached with a certain amount of scepticism. 1978 is almost certain to be an election year, and George Radwanski's book is published et what is probably the outset of a spring campaign. The Prime Minister has hardly been notorious for his warm co-operation with journalists: Radwanski works for the *Financial Times*. The author insists however that Trudeau's co-operation was given without the imposition of any conditions or editorial control whatever: The author comments. "As far es I can determine, his co-operation was motivated simply by a desire to he understood mote clearly -for better or worse — as the sort of individual end leader he really is; as several of his aides remarked to me, he was gambling that en accurate portrait of him would work to his advantage."

Oliver Cromwell asked his portraitist to "use all your skill to pint my picture truly like me. and not flatter me at all; but remark all those roughnesses, pimples, warts, and everything es you see me. . ." Radwanski, in spite of a basic sympathy with Trudeau, attempts to paint that kind of picture. We learn a great deal about Trudeau's family background, education and travels. His unquestioned academic brilliance is expounded: economic. political and personal problems receive extensive treatment. At the same time we are not spared discussions of his jejune eccentricities, his ability to he monumentally insensitive or the periods in his life in which he played the role of dilettante. These narrative passages are often excellent. Through anecdote and detail they do indeed reveal much about the man himself.

Less successful are Radwanski's attempts to use a etude sort of psychological analysis to explain aspects of Trudeau's behaviour. On the basis of somewhat shallow examinetion he concludes that Trudeau strongly adheres to a certain concept of "freedom." Less convincingly, he traces this approach to "freedom" to Trudeau's early experiences and education. Our credulity however is hopelessly strained when we are told that "Trudeau's notion of freedom led him for roost of his adult life to avoid any professional or personal commitments that would tie him down to inescapable responsibilities and restrict his options." Most readers will be a hit dubious about the suggestion that to the lest he was ambivalent about winning the Liberal leadership in 1968, because. "victory would also mean a threat to another vital element of his personality — his solitary nature, his pursuit of freedom unfettered by commitments."

Pierre Trudeau

Two major omissions from the book are difficult to reconcile with the objective of understanding "the man himself." We are given no careful analysis of the nature and extent of his wealth; neither an we given a detailed assessment of his life with Margaret. These gaps leave much of Trudeau es elusive as ever. The narrative can also be grating. Quoted interview material. whether Trudeau's or his colleagues'. is so larded with the words "Gee." "Jees," and "guys" that one wonders what has happened to the editorial blue pencil.

Much of *Trudeau* then is tendentious, and some passages are irritating. Chapter 15, "Trudeau and Quebec," compensates for these deficiencies and should be read by all who plan to vote in 1978. This chapter explains with unusual lucidity Trudeau's role *vis à vis* French Canadian nationalism. The current crisis of unity has come in spite of and not because of Trudeau. Trudeau however has written some key rules for the coming struggle. Because we do have the Official Languages Act. a powerful French-speaking presence in Ottawa and IO years of 'bard-headed federalism at the, centre, we have a good chance of maintaining a viable federal system in Canada. Imagine how desperate we would be mday had the "Two Nations — Special Status" approach of the Pearson Liberals or the Stanfield Conservatives been allowed to shape the current debate. There would have been no debate — onlv chaos and dirintegration.

Even before Trudeau became Liberal leader and Prime Minister. Kenneth McNaught wrote: "Trudeau's political fate will likely he the political fate of Canada." The pimples and the warts make interesting reading. hut the central policy remains the crucial fact. McNaught was right in the mid-1960s; his analysis is just es correct today. ☐

Speaking for the distaff side

I Married a Best Seller. by Sheila Hailey, Doubleday. 287 pages, 59.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 12337 X1.

By HOWARD ENGEL

IF IT IS TRUE that genius is the ability to take endless pains, then it follows that living with a genius is the ability to live with an endless pain. At least that is the way Sheila Haiky sees it in this memoir of 27 years of married life with best-selling novelist Arthur Hailey. In this biography. she cries out, mostly to other women. for all the wives of genius who have never chronicled the living hell of sharing bed and board with a writer. Writers, she says. are "temperamental, ruthless. sensitive, impatient. emotional, unreasonable, demanding. self-centred, and excessively hard-working." One can almost hear a chorus composed of Hadley, Pauline. Martha, and Mary Hemingway, Mrs. Sherwood Anderson, Zelda Fitzgerald, and all the Mrs.. Norman Mailers calling out "Right on!" -while Alice B. Toklas. who was an expert at consoling the wives of genius. applauds with small leathery hands. In this book all writers' wives are revenged, in spirit at least. from Mrs. Chaucer onwards.

I am not suggesting that in concocting this agreeable, good-humoured memoir Sheila Halley had in mind any such high purpose. But the banquet from which the spouses of artists of all kinds sup has always been a spam-and-crackers affair. It is about time someone set right the imbalances, and perhaps at the same time opened the floodgates to a whole series of books about the *torments* of being on the *distaff side* of the creative life, blown about by every whim of the Canada Council. nearly destroyed by the excesses of publishers' patties.

Sheila Hailey has written her book in the manner of a celebrity mast. One can imagine the subject of these exaggerated. funny anecdotes. sitting at the head table, taking it all in good part. In addition to the howlers about how he likes his underwear' rotated in the dresser drawer so that all pieces receive equal wear, and how she has never managed to get him to take out the garbage, she writes about hi occasional extra-marital affairs, as though there were no difference between telling that the world-famous writer once edited Maclean-Hunter's trade magazine *Bus & Transport* and describing a series of events that came close to ending their long marriage. It isabir like seeing *War and Pence* reduced to the television formula of All *in the Family:*

> He began *going out* midmornings for "a breath of air." Never mind that it was five degrees below rem outside. He was never away longer than an hour. Naomi lived in the north end of Toronto. and a halfway meeting point for both of them was a suburban railway station. usually deserted. Arthur bad been deeply moved by the original movie version of *Brief Encounter*, starring Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard. so the station bad real significance. ."

Sheila is the practical member of the Hailey family, Her functional prose shows bow they have distanced themselves from their English working-class roots in certain respects.and failed to do so in others. Their story, like the old Horatio Alger formula, is that success can come to the highly motivated. As in her husband's novels. there is less here than the sum of the parts. Sheila Hailey; as self-revealed, is an interesting mixture of breezy, chatty gossip and opaque brick walls, Her *Arthur* is "precise, pig-headed, fastidious. fan&-ally clean[and] maniacally tidy." Theirs is at times a Svengali/Trilby relationship, one suspects. But it works. ☐

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XXXVIII Biennale di Venezia,
by Pierre Théberge
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Anthony Van Dyck: Suffer Little Children to Come unto Me, by Ellis Waterhouse (No. 11 in Masterpieces in the NGC)
($1.50, 32 pp., 14 ill., 2 in colour)

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($0.50, 8 pp., 15 ill.)

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'Gee, Officer, it was all a Bloor'

Murder Has Your Number. by Hugh Gamer. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 224 pages, $9.95 cloth (ISBN 07 OS2703 6).

By DuBARRY CAMPAU

IF I DIDN'T have at least a superficial idea of how Hugh Gamer spends his time. I would strongly suspect that he moonlights with the homicide squad of the Metro Toronto Police Department. *Murder Has Your Number* is a perfect example of the *roman policier*; it is even written with the scrupulous attention to irrelevant detail that one associates with a cop in court.

The plot is complex, but no mote so than those of many murder cases that occur in any large city and. quite like them, when it is solved not every tiny loose end is neatly knotted. The hody is found by a cab driver who radios his dispatcher to alert the police. From then on the story is told completely from the point of view of Inspector Walter McDumont who, without flashy ESP tricks but with conscientious and sometimes frus-Bating investigation. finds the murderer.

Thevictim is a respectable business man who lives with his family in a fairly expensive neighbourhood in north Toronto, just south of Highway 401. Most of the cast of characters, other than the police, also live there. They see" to know more about each other than most of us hope our own neighbours do. Although this is a help to the police, it also means that occasionally they are given more information than they can use. Yet. it is this extraneous sidetracking that adds greatly to the realistic effect of the novel. How often does a policeman ask a housewife if she heard any shots in the night and end up learning that the reason she didn't was that she was MO busy trying to get her drunken husband to bed? ("And if he keeps on this way. Officer, I swear to God I'll throw him out.")

Although Inspector McDumont is a stickler for routine procedure, he is astonishingly capable of varying his interviewing techniques — from those of Lord Peter Wimsey to Sam Spade -depending on the person. or situation involved. This gives him credibility since none of us is apt to speak the same way to pickpockets as to prelates.

Aside from the fascination of meeting the variety of characters and following the intricacies of the murder investigation, this novel is a natural for anyone who knows. or wishes to know. about the city of Toronto. The inspector covets an incredible number of streets in his search for the murderer and almost every mute he takes is described. At one point he and his aide are driving north on Avenue Road. Between Bloor and Davenport he gives a complete history of Yorkville Village and the Annex. a recital which should have lasted at least until they reached Lawrence. On his way from Yonge and Highway 401 to his fortuitous discovery of the body. the cab driver's path is given. with pauses for stop signs and attention paid to one-way streets and each turn he makes. And, although the driver appears only once more in the book, and briefly at that, we are told that he lives in Chinatown, which, the author notes, was moved from Elizabeth to Dundas West after the new City Hall was built. When Mr. Garner isn't lurking about police headquarters he must be prowling through the latest guide book to the city.

All of these details slow up the narrative. Yet, in fairness, they add to the authenticity of this extremely realistic novel. Let there be no confusion about how a police car gets from Point A to Point B. As a matter of fact, following the routes given in the book would make a very spotting map for a cat rally. It would be most interesting to ark a member of the real Toronto hmnicide squad to give his comments on the author's knowledge of how it works. I would be disappointed and quite cross with him if he found much about which to complain. □

NINTH

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Enlightening thunderer

Taking Sides: Irving Layton's Collected Social and Political Writings, edited and introduced by Howard Aster, Mosaic Press, 222 pages, $10.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88962 058x) and $4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88962056 31.

By GEORGE JONAS

THE COLLECTION is aptly tilled: Irving Layton is taking sides. If he also doubts. researches, investigates and analyses before putting his pen against the blank sheets of paper, by the time the paper is covered with words that process has become invisible. Layton is a seamless thinker. His doubts are resolved, and his only concern is to resolve the reader's.

There is something attractive about such a clean, hard. uncompromising, polemical style. especially in contrast with cautious, qualified. all-ifs-and-buts. conditional, tiny. academic prose. After all, much of the latter proceeds not from thoughtfulness but from fear. Raw courage is more engaging than sophisticated cowardice. A sheet of glass compares well, esthetically speaking, with a bale of cotton.

But the soft. contemptible cotton is flexible; the hard. admirable glass is fragile. Layton advances, somewhat like Patton, conquering Sicily in a day. but then hc burns his bridges behind him. He exposes his flanks, he stretches his supply lines beyond any reasonable limit. The sympathetic reader. one who believes that Layton's cause is just, watches his progress with alarm. Why must he take such needless. foolish risks?

Why must he predict in 1967 (to use a very obvious example) that "It is only a matter of time before the pestiferous Viet Con8 arc cleared out from South Vietnam, and the South Vietnamese are able to determine their future under leaders and institutions of their own choosing?" The desirability of liberal democracy as a political institution is not predicated on its success in Sooth Vietnam. not is the pestiferousness of the Viet Cong predicated on their failure. Fascism is rotten. and it would be no less rotten if it triumphed all over the globe. Potting the two propositions in the same bed can only result in one catching the other one's flu: if Layton was wrong about the Viet Cong losing out — some will be lemptcd to say-he must also be wrong about the Viet Cong being pestiferous.

Yet this is Layton's style and, if the style is the man, this is what Layton is like. Il clearly isn't a matter of not thinking: people who don't think don't change their minds and Layton has changed his mind considerably between 1935 and 1977, the period covered in this book. But whenever he glimpses what, in a given moment, seems to him the truth, he polls out all stops and thunders it like an Old Testament prophet. Though he may thunder the virtual opposite of whet he thundered 10 years earlier, he will thunder it with the same elemental force. He is right. he is right in every detail, and if you don't see *it you* are a spineless, corrupt, unmanly, cretinous shmuck.

It is possible to become so irritated by this as to lose sight df the fact that Layton is right, perhaps not invariably and-not in every detail, but in things that really matter. A careful look also reveals that though he may change his mind entirely about the instruments of deliverance. in essentials he doesn't change his mind et all. He hurls philippies against whatever threatens the freedom and dignity of man: the Right if it's the Bight, and the Left if it's the Left. If Layton's wrath is directed at different targets in 1935 and 1977 it is because the enemy has shifted grounds. It is logical to oppose Hitler and Mao for the same reason, and it is logical to point out that the most acute and imminent threat to the world's liberty in the 1960s and 1970s doesn't come from Bonn. Washington. or even Johannesburg. but from Moscow and Peking. What is illogical is to embrace today's dragon in mortal fear of yesterday's. Layton. *wisely.* fights the beast, not the ghost.

There are many other subjects touched upon in this collection of articles and letters spanning 40 years: Israel. Germany. Quebec. the writer in Canada. There is a particularly fine sketch about a woman in a Tel Aviv bookstore. In his 1946 MA thesis (on Harold Laski) Layton shows a shrewd understanding of the incompatibility of Marxism and liberalism, though his own sympathies seem to be with Marxism at the time. Only his criticism of film critics is disappointing: he appears to regard films as collections of symbols, somewhat like crossword puzzles, which the winning critic solves by coming up with the hidden meanings. This peculiar view enables Layton 10 mention in the same breath Fellini's admirable *Amarcord* with Cavani's ridiculous *The Night Porter. It* might have been a regrettable lapse of taste on the part of critic Martin Knelman to dislike the first if he did, but an equal lapse on Layton's part to admire the second.

What is most likeable about Layton in this collection is that he is a *militant democrat-* one is lemptcd to say a militant moderate. There aren't many of his kind left in this Yeatsian age where the best lack all conviction and the worst seem to have a monopoly on passionate intensity, and Layton will survive his critics for lhis reason alone. Still, what is least likable is his demand for unconditional homage. It would, in fact, be easier to accord it to him if he did not seem to demand it so insistently. Some reticence in this respect is not necessarily a sign of anæmic gentility. ❑

High on obsessions

Night Flights: Stories New and Selected, by Matt Cohen. Doubleday, 240 pages, $7.95 (ISBN 0 385 13333 2).

By MICHAEL THORPR

THIS ACCOMPLISHED collection contains no title story, bet in the first, "The Cure." an airline stewardess provides the clue: "Night flights are better they're more romanlie." Romantic flights from daylit reality. metaphorically or literally nocturnal. form a recurrent theme and texture linking several of the stories, however various insetting and action.

Obsessions are the keynote. variously tuned. "The Cure" is a strong owner. a cool, lethal exposure of obsession and self-delusion, means by which we wilfully fabricate a self. A neurotic son and father are neatly counterpointed, each' distorted by "the living shadow of his own money." In "Brothers" an aspiring novelist vainly attempts to enter the life of a Nova Scotian fishing village, a futureless place where, almost succumbing to nostalgia for the lost unknown. he ironically fails to live in the present. In portraying the twin "freaks" of "Columbus and the Fat Lady," Cohen achieves an intense inward absorption with romantic self-projections. In "Vogel" the protagonist "fell himself running through the middle of his own life, running into darkness." He vainly seeks rebirth through sex and jogging -finally running himself to death, a self never charmed to life by the magic of his obsasions. In "The Hanged Man" a block painter and dipsomanic, sealed" in a self-denying mixed marriage, paints images of his living death, the only works he can finish. These five stories opening the collection are the strongest and are enough to justify it.

As a whole, *Night Flights* exhibits an unusually broad range of subject and insight. Cohen ranges easily fmm portraying the refined nervous states 1 have sketched above to the inarticulate sensibilities of a country child's self-centred universe, fraught with urgent despairs ("Glass Eye end Chickens"), or of the knotted rural relations treated powerfully in "Brain Dust," which centres upon a roughly tender "physical" man who has begun in middle age to be haunted by the vulnerability of the flesh. There are *three* stories of rural life, each as unsentimentally authentic es Cohen's novel. *The Disinherited. A* few stories. however, reflect a colder concern with human obsessions: "The Toy Pilgrim," "Janice." "The Universal Miracle," "The Secret," and "A Literary History of Anton" are brisk and skilfully

Novels and novel ideas ...

PARADE ON AN EMPTY STREET'
by Margaret Drury Gane

Threaded through this poignant story of the friendship between a young boy end girl. are the tensions and daily life of pre-war Toronto. An atmospheric and evocative novel by a supremely gifted writer.

QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE
The Background to a National Crisis
Compiled and written by Achim Krull & Murray Shukyn

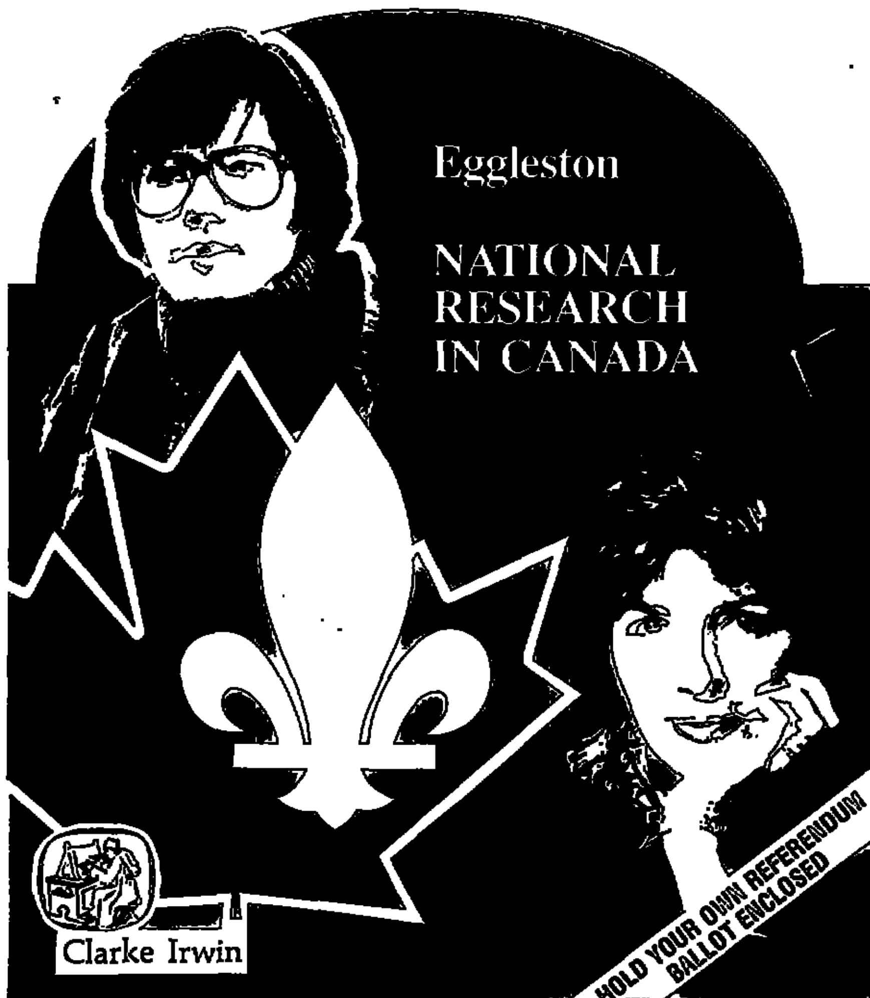
Containing a ballot for the reader's vote. and newspaper articles on the referendum, the economics of Confederation and Rene Levesque's speech in New York, as well as political cartoons and posters, this neat package of material examines an issue of vital importance to Canada's future.

HOLD FAST
by Kevin Major

This fine novel In a gutsy. colloquial style presents an honest and colourful picture of adolescence and life in outport Newfoundland-a teenager's courageous struggle for *survival in* a new environment.

NATIONAL RESEARCH IN CANADA: THE NRC 1916-1966
by Wilfrid Eggleston
Illustrated with numerous black and white photographs

The research of the National Research Council ranges from investigations into concrete building materials to the possible use of ice floes as landing strips. This extraordinary. historic work covers the years 1917 to the late 60's.



pointed, but allow of little engagement beyond the level of ironic recognition.

Cohen's style is highly polished. His openings deftly establish setting, atmosphere or central situation. often through a symbolic gesture or an action that serves as a pointer toward the. core of significance the reader must seek out. His transitions can be abrupt. but they are not arbitrary and sustain a swift, clean movement. Whore his intelligence rather than hi sympathy is uppermost. the effect can be slick; in the more memorable stories-at half the collection, an unusually high count -the control and irony are the servants of a compassionate intelligence. ☐

Links south, east, and home

A **Fist and the Letter: Revolutionary** Poems of Latin America. trans. by Roger Prentice and John M. Kirk. Pulp Press, 119 pages. $3.50 paper (no ISBN).

On the Road Again, by David McFadden. McClelland & Stewart. 112 pages, $5.95 papa (ISBN 0 7710 5510 2).

The Left-Handed One: Poems by Lyubomir Levchev, trans. by John Robert Colombo and Nikola Roussanoff, Hounslow Press, 107 pages. $4.95 papa (ISBN 0 88882 019 4).

By A. F. MORITZ

ONE OF THE MOST exceptional marks of recent Latin American literature — a distinction which is well exemplified in A *Fist and the Letter* — is an ability to engage social realities without descending to rhetoric, invective, andideology. Today. almost alone, Latin American poets are creating a literature which is, in the original sense of the word. political: it involves mankind's social nature and the social Fact. rather than the individual's interior and often isolated experience. The latter, the more usual emphasis of Western poetry, perhaps reaches its extreme point in modern North American writing. Between the two literatures there is often a broad gulf to be bridged, and it can be said with some truth that in the literary sphere as in others the two Americas are necessary to make up a whole.

Well translated by Roger Prentice and John M. Kirk. this anthology of "revolutionary poems" by 21 contemporary poets contains many effective and beautiful poems which show this power to let passion and vision call for social change in a way that avoids didacticism. These poets emphasize human interdependence, the complete immersion of the individual in society, the repercussions that any act — public or private, good or bad — sets up in all directions throughout society. "The human race has really only one check; when one receives a blow. all receive il." as José

Marti says in a quotation used as an epigraph to this anthology. This point, not unfamiliar from religion (and indeed. revolutionary Latin American Catholics have developed their stance largely through their religion), is made real by the poets' fresh discovery of it at the foundation of man's most practical, inescapable activity: social and political life.

This is an excellent book. filled with good things. Personally, I would have enjoyed seeing some younger poets, such as Mexico's Gilberto Meza and Carlos Prospero.

An element of social protest — protest thy manifests itself chiefly es clear social insight and a profound sorrow — is also prominent in David McFadden's outstanding new collection. Its title, On *the Road Again*, is misleading to the extent that it implies "the mixture as before." For hen mow than in earlier books McFadden exposes the basic dilemma of his poetry: "I in full health though never far from endless darkness." And. as with Baudelaire and Robert Lowell, this personal sense of living on the edge of chaos is inseparable in his work from a deep sympathy with the ill. the poor. the downtrodden -all those who are disinherited or in pain. What is the point of contact between the personal and social facts? This is one of the mysteries that animate McFadden's work. as he examines how either joy or misery can join him with, or separate him from, his fellow beings.

These poems include his quasi-surrealist dream poems and narratives, perfect visionary lyrics, Romantic-subjective meditations on nature, and anecdotal analyses of modern psychology and society. Always in evidence is McFadden's easy command of idom and slang. his supple and muscular style, his inventiveness, and his power to bend eccentric and disparate materials into effective shapes. Stylistic artistry combines with vision in On *the Road Again* to produce certain poems (e.g. "Growing Strong." "Simple Masterpiece," "St. Lawrence of the Cross") which are startlingly pore and light. yet at the same time carry a full measure of human misfortune. Perhaps this book constitutes McFadden's *Songs of Experience*. *At* any *rate*. it is superb end contains poems as good as any that have been written in Canada.

It's often a problem to evaluate the social content of poetry from Communist countries, because certain social criticisms and solutions are prescribed. and the state exercises a powerful influence on writers. at times amounting to control. The Bulgarian Lyubomir Levchev ton the evidence of *The Left-Handed One*) is a poet whose toots lie in folk traditions. humanism. and certain modern poetry (including Baudelaire and Eliot) much more than in communism.. A hollow rhetoric enters his work what he exhorts people to arm for the "last fight," or encourages boys to be glad because workers are "scooping out ore For your tanks." This rings False, because the whole tenor of Levchev's work is pity and concern for common people. a love of the earth, a longing for a simple filial relationship with God or Nature. and a bitter awareness of modem man's loneliness. His poems yearn For wholeness and peace, and contain none of the tough-minded analysis which might see destructive violence es a necessary step towards these goals.

Communism beets fruit in Levchev's work when it becomes his point of contact with the suffering and repressed people of Chile, or when he sees Engels es a great saint and liberator who becomes merged with the eternal essence ot the sea and the son. In other words, Levchev (in his poetry at least) is Communist only insofar es Communism is an ideal of harmony end justice to which all can subscribe. Thus, those points in his work (fortunately, they are rather few) where he is making programmatic statements stand out rather clearly as brown spots. In fact, on one covert level, Levchev's poetry represents a successful counter-attack against a dogmatic ideology which might bridle and deform it: "And the most terrible thing of all is/to be reconciled to all things/and to embrace your enemies." Levchev's sorrow at social evil, and his aspirations for a better world, clearly. embrace the people of his own country as well as those of Chile and elsewhere. The basic humanity and piety of his poems, expressing themselves unconstrainedly, are signs of poetry's strength as an instinctive human dissent. end of its power to nurture freedom even where the climate is inhospitable. These translations by John Colombo end Nikola Roussanoff are graceful, effective English poems in their own right. notable For tbe way they alternate elegiac sadness at man's plight with a proud. often joyous determination to create a better future. □

Last of the happy artists

A Border of Beauty: Arthur Lismer's Pen and Pencil, by Marjorie Lismer Bridges, Red Rock, 156 pages. $16.95' cloth (ISBN 0 920178 04 9).

BY CHRISTOPHER HUME

MYTHMAKING is a very curious phenomenon. Nowhere can it be better observed than in connection with the Group of Seven. The last few months alone have seen the release of the Harold Town/David Silcox book, Tom Thomson. *The Silence and the Storm*, and the CBC production, *The Passionate Canadians*. For many people Canadian art *means* the Group of Seven. We Canadians have never quite recovered from their influence. Taste in tbii country. both official and popular, often seems to begin and end with the Group.

Arthur Lismer, the subject of this book written by his daughter, Marjorie Lismer Bridges, is perhaps the most accessible member of the Group. He was, es the book points out, "one of the lest of the happy artists. Not for him was the modem gloom, and introspection, end savagery, end complaints and despair." His concept of art, however, doesn't enjoy much currency these days. Art, he believed, was the property of any man who saw the world with curiosity, wonder and excitement. According to Lismer there is an artist contained within each of us. Hence his' work with children whom he regarded es naturally artistic. In fact, he permitted the demands of teaching to become so great he was nearly obliged to give up his career as a painter. For him this did not involve any real dilemma. All artists, be fell. should be teachers.

The book is in some ways a strange one. For example, the titles of the chapters have little or nothing to do with what follows. Also odd is the abundance of blank pages. The author does not give the reader a critical or even objective evaluation of Lismer and his work; instead she presents us with a highly personal appreciation of the man who was her father. Most important are the sketches. These show a more casual and informal side than do his paintings. The Lismer humour end wit are in evidence throughout. One drawing entitled, "The Group of Seven," for instance, is a caricature of the Lismer Family. As is often the case the picture that emerges is one of a man who best exemplifies his own ideals. □

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WITH REANEY EYES

A portrait of the playwright as part child, part visionary, and part extremist

by Doris Cowan

THE PLAYWRIGHT'S ART is the most private of all the literary arts. A story is told. characters move across the stage., the chorus speaks or sings, but the lyric poet's song of himself is not heard. The narrating voice of tbe prose writer is absent, "refined out of existence," the author's private and personal feelings are nowhere explicitly slated. Yet, the theatre deals ordinarily with the strongest, fiercest, and deeper1 emotions of which we are capable; it is the perfect refuge for a self-effacing extrovert, a poet who is both shy and passionately opinionated-James Reaney.

He is not an easy man to know. I first met him in-1975, when I took part in a three-week pre-rehearsal workshop on *Handcuffs*, the final play of the *Donnellys* trilogy. Reaney the playwright was there in force. but Reaney the man — "Jamie" to friends and colleagues —remained amiable but elusive. He is an academic who has taught since 1960 at the University of Western Ontario. He is married to the poet Colleen Thibaudeau. and has two children. a son and a daughter. His manner ranges from the academically ironic to the theatrically frivolous. When you first meet him he seems rather small and elderly. but as you get to know him he seems, mysteriously. to grow not only bigger and tougher, but also younger, especially when he laughs his uninhibited. snorting and sniggering laugh. He is balding, grey-haired, moustached, the epitome of a professor of English before the 1960s revolution..

But his looks are misleading. In his peaceable way. Reaney is a visionary and an extremist. And he has attracted a loyal following, theatre-goers who admire him for his intricate structure and detail. the incantatory quality of the choral poetry, the heightened colloquial language of his dialogue, and the uniqueness of his vision.

There's a large-dash of the child in Reaney. It comes through. for example. in the depth of feeling in his portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Donnellv, Thev are seen through the eyes of a happy child as the best possible parents, perfectly united, tall, proud, and righteous. yet easy, loving. and unfailingly generous to their wayward sons.

The child in **Reaney shows** up **in other ways too:** in his **constant** interest and **curiosity about the** bits **and scraps and** tag-ends of life **—** the **mysteriousness that,** for most of us, blows **away** es we **grow** up: in his **use** of songs end **games — spinning** tops, cat's cradles, shadow play. musical **chairs; and in** hll **reckless humour,** which **delights** in the incongruous end the **bizarre.** It's there, **for example,** in *Wacousta* when **Pontiac, the Ottawa Indian** Chief, is defeated and **we realize that the** English will **remain** in **possession** of their last **fort,** and **that** the **city** of Detroit will **grow** up **on this** beautiful **wooded** spot. At **this** point, **Reaney's** stage **direction** reads: "Hundreds of tiny **friction cars are released and swarm** ever the **stage."**

One snowy day in **March** I took **the train** to London **and** visited **Reaney** in his office. **a large and cluttered** mom in **the tower** of **University** College. **There are three tall,** narrow, monastic windows **and a whole world** of books, Indian **artifacts, maps,** filing cabinets. model ships **— lots of things that I recognize from past productions.** I asked Reaney **about the friction** cars. **Isn't that sort of device risky?** Why **does** he **do it?**

"I really **can't** explain it. **Probably** it's **just basic immaturity.** But **there's a phrase** of **Eliot's I** always use **to defend** myself **—** 'The intense **levity** of wit' — and **another, a Renaissance** idea. *serio ludere*. **to play in seriousness,. to joke when your meaning is serious.** The **idea is to cut across your audience's expectations, catch them off guard,** and **wake** them up. **The** stuff about freeways **and** Detroit **was** written with Native people **all around** me. **They** thoroughly **approved."**

Reaney started es **a poet;** his **first** book, ***The Red Heart,* was** published in 1949 and **won** him the Governor General's **Award.** (He **has won** it twice since then, in **1958 for *A Suit of Nettles* and** in 1962 fur ***Twelve Letters to a Small Town,* together with *The Killdeer and Other Plays*.) He began early** to **write for voices other than** hi **own. Speakers in his early** poems **include a dwarf, the executioner** of **Mary** Steen. **a** set of dishes, **a** ghost, **a** baby, **Lake Superior, and Death.** Hi poetry **has a detailed, colourful** clarity, **and the radiance** of optimistic energy. **Northrop** Frye, in ***The Bush Garden,*** praises him for his "intellectual exuberance." He is Still **writing poetry,** still "working **away** et **various** projects." but be **isn't** publishing much because the plays **"take** up so much time."

He **wrote** his **first play** in **high school.** "It **was about Stratford,** set in **Perth** County. II **was sort** of a disaster, but it was **fun."** He **wrote** the libretto **for** John **Beckwith's opera *Night-Blooming Cereus,* which. together with** his **short** play One ***Man Masque,* was produced in the spring of 1959 at the U of T's Hart House.** One Men *Masque* is **a** series of poems **for a** single actor. **Reaney was circling closer** to the **theatre,** and in **the** following **years** he **began** to **write** plays in **earnest.** ***The Killdeer, Three Desks,*** and *The Easer Egg* **appeared,** but k **was** Still too **unsure** of **his own** sense of **theatre** to **take** an active **part** in **staging** them. "I **didn't really** know how they should be ***done* until about 10 years** ego, when I **started** working **with amateurs here in London, and doing workshops with children and** young people." In 1966 he **produced** One ***Man Masque* again** with **a cast** of *four* students **— "all** the students **that** showed up." **This** time he **directed** it himself, and "it WY **a** big **turning** point in my life; it **was** riveting, I could **tell,** end other people **said** it **was."** The secret **was** in "getting the **rhythms right.** That **was my first** inkling **that** the pacing **and** so on (as well es **actually** telling the **actors what** it meant, so they were **saying the** lines **meaningfully)** mattered **a very** great deal. **After** that I'd go **to** plays-Chekhov,

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"There's a phrase of Eliot's I always use to defend myself — 'The intense levity Of **wit' — and another, a Renaissance idea, *serio ludere,* to** play **in** seriousness, to joke when **your** meaning is serious."

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people like **that — and** I **realized that often the actors and the** diictor didn't **have a** ghost of **an** idea of **what the** thing **meant, and they're very aggressive** about defending themselves **from** anyone questioning **them. But** oh, I've seen **such terrible productions** of

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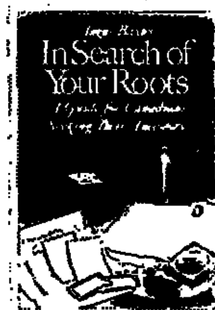

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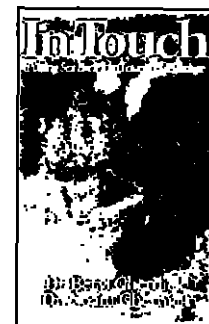

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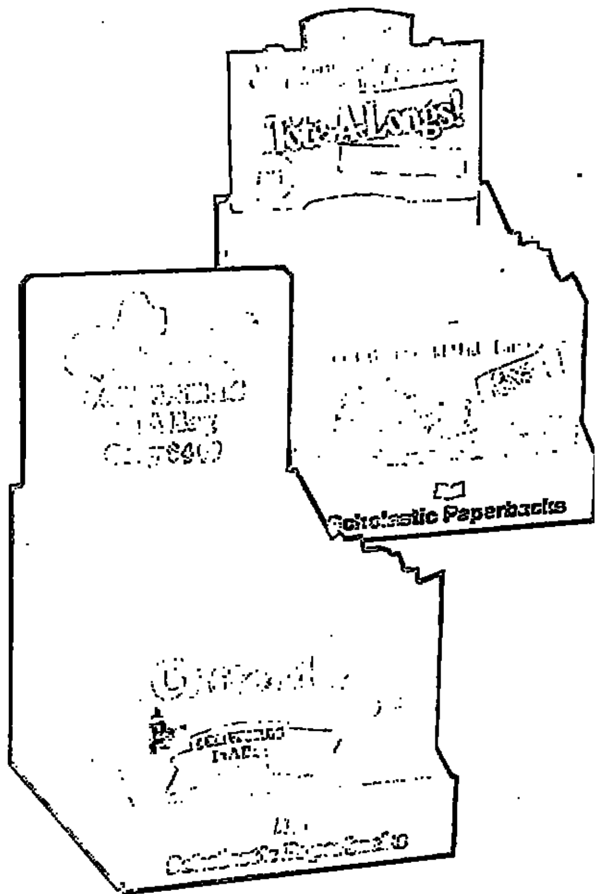

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Brecht, for example. college productions, wherever the classics are produced. Stratford's guilty of it too. That's when I began to get involved in writing the things in workshop with the actors and the director. Then you have a living chance to get the thing done the way it should be done."

The idea of a play about the Donnellys first occurred to Reaney in 1946 (when he was 20). Serious research and writing began in 1967. His fascination with the historical Donnellys was so great, he has written. that "it led me like a Jack-o-Lantern through an enormous eight-year swamp of legal mss., newspaper microfilm, archival vigils, and the like, without one solitary regret."

Was there a point in his research when he realized his sympathies lay more with the Donnellys than with their accusers? Or had he always sympathized with them? "No. I grew up being told they were evil, and yes. there was a point when the scales fell from my eyes." In 1879 Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly were accused of burning down a neighbour's barn. Reaney read through all the testimony for

> **"People don't look at themselves and see Row interesting they are. Even their boredom is utterly fascinating if they would just work at it; it they'd really carry it far enough, they'd get places. That's what the plays are all about."**

and against them, and their own testimony "just rang true. And then my research with people whose parents had known them helped to convince me. too. though of course one's sympathy can never be complete. Some of the Donnelly boys were really villainous."

Since *Handcuffs*, the third part of the trilogy. was finished in 1975, Reaney has written (besides four new plays) a journal account of the *Donnellys* national tour. 14 *Barrels from Sea to Sea*. "I keep a journal anyhow. and I've always wanted to write a travel book. And it seemed important to record something really tremendous. which the tour was. to get all the actors and people down on paper. and not forget what they were like, just in their ordinary lives, travelling and having coffee. and staying in motels."

Reaney was born in 1926 on a farm in South Easthope, Ont. He grew up there and in Stratford. At 18 he left for Toronto and the university. He graduated in 1948. His doctoral thesis on Spenser and Yeats was supervised by Northrop Frye, who has remained an important influence on Reaney. He taught for 10 years at the University of Manitoba, then returned in 1960 to Ontario and a leaching position in London. He is happy teaching. and has never considered giving it up. "At the university you have a library and a whole world to work in theatrically as well as critically," he says, sounding faintly defensive, as if he were used to accusations of evading "real life." He teaches one course in practical theatre, and another in Ontario literature and culture. He describes it as a "regional course, and experimental. You end up finding things you never knew were there." The trading list begins with such items as *The Ontario Leaf Album*, and mile-to-an-inch maps — "precise knowledge shows real love." says Reaney — and continues through Indian legends. John Richardson, and Susanna Moodie, all the way to John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Scotch*. Alice Munro's stories. and John Herbert's *Fortune and Men's Eyes*. By then his students are "Ontario up to the eyebrows."

Reaney has always had strong regionalist sympathies, but it was London artist Greg Curnoe "who really woke me up to doing things about one's region. I'd never really given up on it. but I did fed a bit shy. Not too many people were interested." I suggested to him that people tend to think of their own lives and immediate surroundings as neutral and colourless.

"Yes. it's the whole modem thing. The great difficulty is with people saying they're bored all the time, with their town. their place. and so on. I never found Stratford boring, or anywhere I've lived. People don't look at themselves and see how interesting tbey are. Even their boredom is utterly fascinating if they would just work at it: if they'd really carry it far enough. they'd get places.

That's what the plays are all about, the kids' workshops, even my Theatre problems course.

"For example. two actors who'd worked at Harvey's brought this." He handed me a loose-leaf notebook. "These ate the directions that Harvey's sends out to all its people. 'Always place the wiener lengthwise on the grill.' and so on. Very detailed instructions. That'll be a scene." He handed me a smudged and crumpled piece of paper. "We found this on the floor of the liquor commission. Literally. Someone wrote that." It is headed 'A Letter to a Great Person' and in a brave but shaky handwriting in blue crayon. it begins:

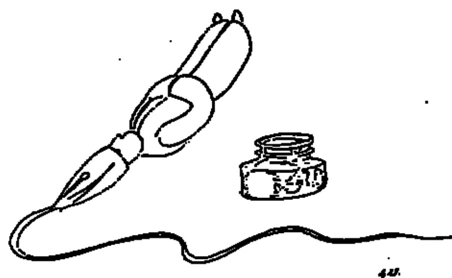
> The other day I heard you talking about never getting any love letters. A love letter this is not. Just a note from an ass-hole who likes you too much. I don't have a pen so hope you find this legible. Sorry about telling you to fuck off tonight. I meant nothing by it.."

This will be performed by a boy in Reaney's class as a monologue.

Reaney saw ideas for plays everywhere during the cross-country tour. "If people wanted to. in the places we've visited. there's no reason why they should be theatrically stewed. They've got lots to do." Even in Toronto? "Not enough people love Toronto enough. There are really nice things there. but they don't love them. not the way Joyce loved Dublin. What about Joyce? Didn't he have to leave Dublin in order to write about it? "That's what Ulysses is all about. of course. But no. Joyce should never have left Dublin. It would have been more interesting if he'd stayed. I felt that in Dublin. when I wy there. The people who should be in Dublin have all left, pertly because it's so awful. terrible, parochial and all the rest of it. But leaving isn't the answer. won't make it any less parochial. They won't read *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake.* they wouldn't be caught deed. Oh. it's a real sow of a country, all right. But the thing to do is to stay home and fight 'em."

Since the *Donnellys* tour ended, three new Reaney plays have been produced: *Baldoon*, *The Dismissal*. and *Wacousta*; and a fourth is in preparation — *The Canadian Brothers*, a sequel to *Wacousta*. *Baldoon*, written with Marty Gervais, is the tale of a malicious poltergeist who terrifies the people of 19th-century Wallaceburg by setting 'fires. turning candle-flames blue, and screaming and howling around their houses at night. "People said it was the first Ontario play that reminded them of Quebec, the folklore aspect, witches." *The Dismissal* is another sort of play altogether, a sharply satiric and comic extravaganza about college and other politics. It is based on a student strike at the University of Toronto in 1894. organized to protest the dismissal of a teacher. William Dale. Dale had dared to write. and sign. a letter to the editor of *The Globe*. denouncing the university's practice of hiring teaching staff fmm abroad. The strike was led by a young Mackenzie King, who was also one of the first to return to classes. *Wacousta*. or *The Prophecy*, the most recently pmduced. is a gothic tale of revenge. It's about "borders .. between all sorts of opposites, the dead and the alive. the savage and the so-called civilized. the Yank and the Canuck, the dream and the day. The plot is taken from Richardson's novel. published in 1832.

All of these plays. as well as the three parts of The *Donnellys*, were directed by Keith Turnbull, whose Friendship and association with Reaney go beck to 1965. The writing and staging have come together. by this time, until they are the two sides of a single process."I don't do much private writing any more," says Reaney. "B's when the thing is rehearsing that you're really finishingthe play. Keith is terrific on detail. and he's certainly able to catch on to the author's meaning. That's very important. It allows me to have my say." □



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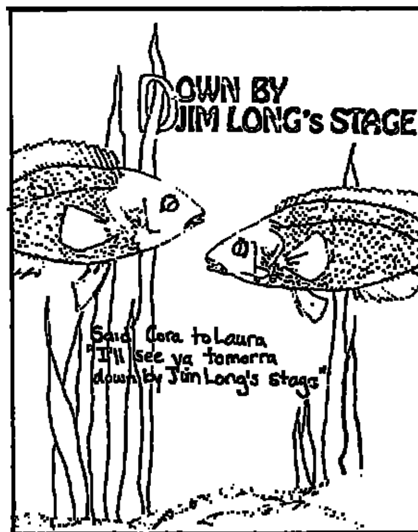

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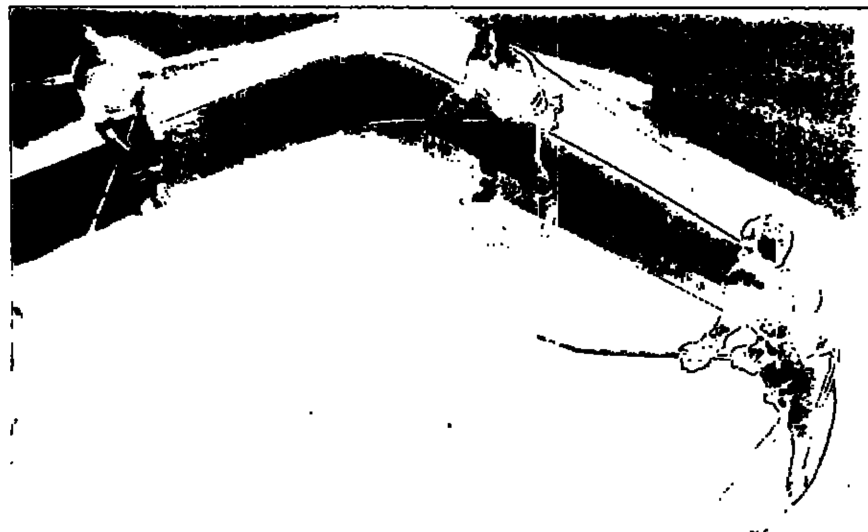
By BRIAN ARNOTT

THREE YEARS AGO, at the Chalmers Award ceremonies, critic Herbert Whittaker mistakenly named Rick Salutin winner for the play *1837* which Salutin had developed with Theatre Passe Muraille. Salutin was named winner again this year for another play called *Les Canadiens*, but this time it was no mistake.

Those who felt Salutin's earlier play should have won over James Reaney's *The Donnellys* have now been vindicated. *1837* was a compact, fast moving, highly theatrical and entertaining account of political oppression in early 19th century Canada. It was forcefully propelled by Salutin's intense concern for social justice and by Theatre Passe Muraille's collective inventiveness which was then at its peak. The experience of developing this play also prompted Salutin to write his own summation of the unsuccessful *coup d'état* of *1837*. It was published (by James Lorimer) as a substantial essay along with the play. The appearance of this essay was further evidence of Salutin's dedication to the proposition that public standards (politics) are the unavoidable content of public art (theatre). Reaney's work, cold and formalist, paled by comparison.

Salutin's new play, *Les Canadiens*, is rather more difficult for me to evaluate than his previous work. For four years in the early 1970s, I wrote regularly about productions of new Canadian plays which were on the whole not available to me in scripted form. Now I find myself commenting on a play that I have not seen produced. At least I am spared the agonies of having to discern the playwright's contribution to the collaborative, evolutionary, and sometimes confusing theatrical product. But I find I am also denied access to the images and inflections of a living performance by seeing only the printed word. This is particularly the case with *Les Canadiens* because Salutin's contribution — its scripted ideas — are not expressed directly in literary terms: no ringing calls to arms; no witty treatises on liberation; no hymns to love on mossy moonlit banks. Instead, Salutin gives the reader single line speeches as well as a few apparent non sequiturs and leaves him to visualize what is going on. Salutin's work reads more like Beckett than Shaw (*grace à Dieu!*) which brings us to the nub of his dramaturgy and the particular achievement of *Les Canadiens*.

In this play, Salutin's role is that of master cartographer. He has carefully surveyed a portion of Canada's virgin cultural topography and has drawn from this experience an epic map. In the book, Salutin briefly describes the process of mapping for the benefit of those readers who might never witness the play. But even those who fail to see every hillock and hummock of Salutin's landscape will not fail to be moved by the magnificence of the view as he has seen it. Despite the sparsity of verbal information, the story is unmistakably clear. It's about a Canadian team that started at the very bottom of the English-French league about 200 years ago and finally made it to the top in 1976. It has always been a great team whose players were both passionate and loyal. Their game was politics but their sport was hockey. While they did poorly in the former they were unbeatable in the latter. An "army on ice," they achieve their final victory on November 15, 1976. Like all great stories, this one is simple, well-known, and glistening with truth. Salutin is an artist unquestionably in touch with his milieu and deservedly honoured as this year's most outstanding playmaker. □



Scene from the TWP production of Les Canadiens.

Proletarian passions

Nothing to Lose, by David Fennario, Talonbooks, 128 pages, $4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88922 121 9).

The Workingman, by Tom Walmsley, Pulp Press, 31 pages, $1.00 paper (ISBN 0 88978 014 5).

Far as the Eye Can See, by Rudy Wiebe and Theatre Passe Muraille, NeWest Press, 125 pages, $4.95 paper (ISBN 0 920316 10 7).

By DAVID McCAUGHNA

IN CANADIAN DRAMA we are continually shown ways in which the system gyps, dehumanizes, and enervates its victims. The rebellious paraplegics in David Freeman's *Creeps*, the downtrodden prisoners in John Herbert's *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, and Michel Tremblay's crushed losers are a prominent sampling from among the countless plays zeroing in upon disaffected, alienated, and pathetic characters ground down by forces beyond their control. These three plays are further variations upon the perennial theme.

David Fennario doesn't hedge. He blames all injustices on the capitalist system which grates workers into spiritual pulp. But it's misleading to make Fennario sound like an out-and-out propagandist. Although his Marxist ideology is never far from the surface, Fennario has an uncommon dramatic grasp which lends his plays an independent life and takes them beyond the limitations of any one dogma. From the start we know exactly who is to blame for the rotten deal the labourers get in Fennario's plays, but like American playwright Clifford Odets, Fennario stocks his plays with vividly drawn characters, grainy dialogue, and an underlying compassion.

When *On the Job* appeared it was hailed as a major first play and Fennario was classified as a potent new voice in Canadian drama. It was sketchy, incomplete, but it struck raw nerve endings. With *Nothing to Lose* Fennario proves that the first play wasn't just a fluke. Set in the same milieu — working-class Montreal — and very similar thematically, this new play is a full and complete work.

The scene is a grubby pub across from a factory in the dreary, industrial Pointe St. Charles area. A motley crew of French and English workers gathers briefly in this watering hole every lunch hour, to swill beer, curse their jobs and their bosses, and then return to work. On this occasion Jackie, a younger worker, rails against the harsh foreman. Jackie surveys his pointless existence with the assistance of Jerry, one-time worker turned successful playwright — Fennario's plays are very auto-

biographical — who is back to share a few with the boys. It's Jackie who carries the play, eventually striking back, but the play's rich texture emanates from the roomful of memorably etched characters.

Fennario is too shrewd and sophisticated a dramatist to fall for haranguing. Rather, he concentrates on embellishing the characters with the quirks and idiosyncrasies that make them fully fleshed, thus displaying their humanity without lecturing an audience about it. And Fennario accomplishes another rare feat by bringing French and English Quebeckers together without seeming to patronize one group; for him language barriers and cultural differences are small bananas when the real villian is the oppressive economic structure.

Tom Walmsley's characters in *The Workingman* have already been flaked out by the world. He is not interested in showing us how this happened; his plays depict the results. So we're slammed into the midst of a relentlessly violent, amoral world. Walmsley's characters exist in a terrain beyond the reach of daily bread-and-butter concerns. They are turned into predators who stalk one another like rabid dogs.

Brief and visceral, *The Workingman* pictures a murderous charade played out in a bare Winnipeg room. Three young people come in from the road, but before they can warm up for three-way kicks, they're diverted by a gun-wielding intruder. Once the nasty game starts it takes more twists than the Snake River. Just who is after who? Finally it doesn't matter as everyone is turned manic.

Walmsley's characters' lives are defined by the gun, knife, needle, and quick, vicious sex. Rootless and desperate, they are like the creatures who populate Michael Hollingsworth's plays: 10 steps ahead of the new morality. *The Workingman* was produced in Toronto on a double bill with Walmsley's other short play, *The Jones Boy*. It's unfortunate that the plays weren't published in the same volume for they both underline the author's considerable strengths and potential. The dialogue is spare and tight — nary a word is wasted — the plays tingle with that old-fashioned element, suspense, and the violence is unnerving. Walmsley's plays lead to one question: will he now be able to channel his abilities into a full-length work?

It's the cruel hand of progress that gets a dunking in Rudy Wiebe's *Far as the Eye Can See*, written in conjunction with Theatre Passe Muraille. This is a panoramic drama about Alberta and the first play in NeWest's upcoming series of Western dramas. Indeed, the play is almost like Alberta's answer to *Gone with the Wind*. Representing Alberta Past are Princess Louise, William Aberhart, and Crowfoot. Today's Alberta is represented in a brief appearance by Peter Lougheed, who brings tidings that a large Calgary Power project which would have gobbled up tracts of farm land has been cancelled. That's the crux of this play: the rape of the land for something we call progress.

The play deals with one threatened farm, owned by old Wadu Kalicz who has a firebrand, cause-consuming granddaughter. She insists he fight the project; meanwhile she falls for an official from Calgary Power. While the contemporary characters debate the project almost endlessly, the historical trio muses like three rambling angels about the province. Crowfoot says, "A hundred years ago this year we gave this earth away and now the white man has at last decided he will chew it up and spit it out like a beast eating itself." The play abounds with such speeches.

Far as the Eye Can See is a sprawling, ambitious work that is spread too thinly over a huge number of characters. The characters begin to sound like mouthpieces and a superficial glaze reduces the arguments to generalities. Had the play narrowed in on a couple of characters it might have been more successful in avoiding the traps, and allowed for detailed, pungent character delineation. I suspect these shortcomings have more to do with Theatre Passe Muraille's process of "making" a play in a collective situation than with Rudy Wiebe. The creations which come out of these collective efforts do tend to be unfocused. Although well-intended and earnestly developed, they skim the

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surface rather than dig in. Alleviating the flatness in this play are some crisp, fetching scenes. And in the Alberta pageant there is a rather poignant shadowing of the province's past. □

The house that Jamie built

Sticks and Stones: The Donnellys, Part One, by James Reaney, Press Porcépic, 179 pages, $3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88878 117 2).

St. Nicholas Hotel: The Donnellys, Part Two, by James Reaney, Press Porcépic, 160 pages, $3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88878 051 6).

Handcuffs: The Donnellys, Part Three, by James Reaney, Press Porcépic, 158 pages, $3.95 (ISBN 0 88878 053 2).

By HERBERT WHITTAKER

A DRIVE to the Classic City of Stratford, Ont., is enhanced by more than anticipation of the most interesting Shakespearean productions to be encountered on this continent. The journey itself suggests a return to Shakespeare's own countryside and it is easy to understand the nostalgia that named the town. It is soothing, prosperous, reassuring terrain through which we pass, seemingly uneventfully. You may not be aware of any flatness, any lack of topographical excitement, unless you venture the same route late on a sunny afternoon. Then the slanting light gives this Southern Ontario landscape its shadowed glens, its deeper patches, its darker passages and its true beauty.

James Reaney, Stratford-born and a poet who has three times received the Governor General's laurels, has known about the shadows of his native landscape from his beginnings. At university his story of *The Box Social* startled with more than the progress of a gifted young writer. In *The Killdeer*, unveiled years later in a warehouse on Toronto's Bedford Avenue, he explored the contrasts of his countryside, and prophetically introduced the image of a pair of paper dolls (worthy of *The Red Shoes*) in Pamela Terry's production.

Acceptance as a playwright took its own time. But come it did handsomely by 1967. His *Colours in the Dark*, a rich stagescape under John Hirsch's handling, afforded the Stratford Festival its true Centennial triumph. Encouraged by a commission, Reaney started to investigate an Irish family named Donnelly, notably poor citizens of nearby Lucan who had given Southern Ontario some lingering shadows. When Hirsch departed, the festival reneged on his commission, but Reaney, undaunted, persisted with his exploration of Donnelly legend and lore, exploring, expanding, and exploding the myth to evolve the tremendous trilogy of plays now published in three volumes, interlaced with photographs from Keith Turnbull's production for Tarragon in the 1973-74 season and accompanied by James Noonan's "scholarly apparatus."

Noonan's preface pays attention to the [illegible] on their return to this earth when conjured by a darkly inspired poet. That poet was, and has long been, able to inspire a production that in every way did justice to [illegible] imaginative work. Reaney and his director worked as one, with visual imagery infinitely close to the aural. On three memorable occasions this wedding of images occurred during that season and established not only Reaney but William Glassco's Tarragon as a notable contributor in the current search for a Canadian past of some richer colour.

Thinking back to those three Tarragon productions, which I found highly successful in "consciously creating an epic of Southwestern Ontario," the reviewer summons a dazzling combination of exhaustive poetic examination and vivid originality of stagecraft, achieved by immensely responsive, and nimble, actors. These latter (in casts of 11, 15 and 14 respectively) doubled so fluently that only Patricia Ludwick remains with a single identification — and that largely because Reaney's sympathy with the Donnellys, already marked in the second of the trilogy, *St. Nicholas Hotel*, focuses on the character of the mother.

Reaney's affection for the macabre emerges through every crevice of this extraordinary theatrical structure. The trilogy is a house, tall and mouldy, with dank and hateful areas to its basement, musty pilings of old clothes, old accounts and faded daguerrotypes in the attic and towering shelves of ancient law-books on the floors between. The poet leads us up and down, back and forth, with a candle, dangerously forcing us to apply ourselves, to spot, to recognize, to share his fascination with every element of his native folklore. Once outside again, the flat and friendly landscape can never look the same.

Those three Tarragon productions (which later dissociated themselves as the NDWT and travelled coast-to-coast to provide a prose saga for Reaney in *14 Barrels from Sea to Sea*) left theatre-folk satisfied that one notable writer's concept has been fully expressed — sometimes even too fully for their lagging spirits. But the plays, like Wagnerian operas, are always worthy of their mastermind.

What remains unsatisfied was any curiosity about the poet's unique creation. Could it be estimated and enjoyed, separate from his work as an inevitably more dependent dramatist? That satisfaction is not given by these Press Porcépic volumes. Reaney has remained faithful to his fellow-travellers. He has paid practical tribute to the contributions of Keith Turnbull and his actors, and

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'Wham, bam, axe me, Mam'

One Night Stand, by Carol Bolt. Playwrights Co-op, 52 pages, $3.50 paper (ISBN 088754 084 8).

Roundhouse, by Bonnie LeMay, Playwrights Co-op, 91 pages, $3.50 paper (ISBN 088754 085 6).

By BRUCE BAILEY

THE SUBTITLE on tbe cover of one *Night* Stand describes this play by Carol Bolt es a "comedy thriller." The play's one thrill end a few scattered wisecracks hardly justify the claim. And if the thinness of the script is not obvious enough from a reading, it is difficult to ignore the paucity in the TV version which dawdles on for the first 75 of its 90 minutes.

The play is set in the Toronto apartment of Daisy, a 30-ish Toronto woman who liar gone out alone to a bar on her birthday end picked up a guitar-toting young man. His name seems to be Rafe, but we cannot be certain of even this detail, since he openly fabricates contradictory stories about his occupation and past history-which may or may net have included serving a term in a penitentiary.

In any case, we do learn that he tells simple-minded jokes (e.g. "You know how Canada Manpower finds a job for en ex-con axe murderer? Very carefully."). Also, his idea of a good time includes donning a Richard Nixon mask end sneaking up behind Daisy. He makes her uneasy enough that sbe telephones her girl-friend Sharon for help. For a while Daisy relaxes enough to make love, but when she returns from taking whet must have been a very long end noisy shower, sbc finds that Sharon has not only arrived but been murdered by Rafe in the living-room.

The ensuing sequence, in which Rafe provokes Daisy into killing him. bears a rather close resemblance to the interaction between Jerry and Peter in Albee's *Zoo Story*. Greet 'writers are entitled to make such literary thefts (es T. S. Eliot points out at some length). Bet eve" a moderately good writer makes clever or original use of the stolen material. Carol Bolt does neither.

Canada might very well benefit fmm the production of exportable commercial bits — se Bolt's obvious intentions in this direction are not to be sneered at. Bet if this play is to compete on tbe thriller and comedy markets abroad, its half-baked attempts et both genres may do us a

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disservice by inviting invidious comparisons end establishing low expectations for the future. Critics with an eye for commercial success in the U.S., et least, might justifiably wonder why the playwright concentrated on Rafe end Daisy when a better play was probably going on in the neighbowing apartment from where we hear loud music and Riva's hysterical screams es she entertains a man who sells exploding cigars and dribble glasses.

While Bolt's play pretends to be something that it is not. Bonnie LeMay's *Roundhouse* is simply a moderated door-slamming farce complete with a tarty mistress hiding in the closet. The play. is unusual only insofar as it applies a classic European form to events in Calgary in the 1920s. The setting may have been dictated by the interests of Alberta Theatre Projects which commissioned this work es part of its Centennial celebrations. but the plot does spring naturally from the environment and history of the area.

The story concerns Rocky and Mac, railroad men assigned to transport a trainload of silkworms et a time when Canadians were apparently bribed to make late deliveries in order to give Americans a commercial edge. Rocky's mistress, who is also a con-artist, puts pressure on him to take the pay-off because she is pregnant and needs the money. The conflict proceeds from there to a reasonably satisfactory resolution.

In the long run, this may be a slighter end more forgettable work than Carol Bolt's latest. However, it generally succeeds within the limits of its highly conventionalized form which plays on stereotypes, slapstick, mist&en identity and sexist family structure. LeMay's greatest strength lies in her occasional ability to set these predictable elements within organically humorous situations. □

He's so happy in the jungle

Bagdad Saloon, Beyond **Mozambique,** Ramona and the White **Slaves,** by George Walker. Coach House. 144 pages, $5.00 paper (ISBN 088910 078 0).

Zastrozzi. by George Walker. Playwrights Co-op. 66 pages, $3.50 pepper (ISBN 088754 081 3).

By BERT COWAN

THESE FOUR PLAYS should really have been printed with a caution to the reader: "Take in smell doses. or es directed by your family psychiatrist. If severe disorientation occurs, discontinue use immediately end switch to Neil Siion or the editorial page of the Toronto *Sun*."

The character in a Stephen Leacock story who jumped onto his horse and galloped off in all directions has a spiritual d&&lent in playwright George Walker, but the directions of his galloping are not to be found on the compass rose. In spite of sketchy designations of lime and locale in his plays — a jungle; or Hong Kong; or "probably Rely. The 1890s" — their real locales are in Walker's mind; and the origins of their existence are in dream and nightmare. This is not to say that they have no substance. The best dreams have their own logic, and so have these plays. but it's not the kind of logic that you can follow by orderly progression from one thought to another. It's bat just to let it wash over you, es it most in the theatre, and not try to pin down any palpable sense. The effort will only leave you more confused. Yet. having see" three of these plays performed, I can testify that their impact on the printed page is different end sometimes more satisfying — a comment that may relate more to the quality of production and acting than to the quality of Walker's writing. The first time I sew *Beyond Mozambique,* it struck me as arrant nonsense. The second time, under Walker's own direction, it seemed much improved. Yet, fmm neither production did I get the idea — made so clear in the text -that we in the audience are the menacing, unseen natives in the jungle whose written demand to the characters to "entertain us" leads to the play's grotesque ending.

Similarly. *Ramona and the White Slaves* seemed absurdly far-fetched on the stage — a ridiculous parody of Tennessee Williams and his obsessions with kinky sex and cannibalism. Even worse. I had the impression that it might have been written by Williams under the influence of opium. My traction after reading the play is not that different, but it's clear that it has intellectual content es well. Walker's thought, about such conundrums as the nature of truth and time and morality, is muddled but it's still thought, and the muddle results more from the author's exuberance end profusion of ideas (combined with a certain lack of discipline) than from an inability to organize his material.

This same kind of exuberance bubbles up throughout the plays. 'sometimes es a strengthening influence, often es a weakening one. In *Beyond Mozambique.* for instance, one could be so fascinated by the author's hyperbole in making his character Liduc a Chinese-Jewish-junkie-priest as to lose sight of the fact that Liduc serves a serious purpose. if-es always — a vague one. Similarly, in *Bagdad Saloon,* the first end perhaps the strangest of the four plays, Walker cannot resist the impulse to throw in a totaljv extraneous gag about the character Ivanhoe Jones just as the play is about to end by tuning beck on itself. Jones is the ugly, shapeless, ageless, inarticulate son of Dolly, one of two immortals in the play. Walker has Dolly remark, out of the blue, "Eventually I want my son to become a rock star. I think he has what it takes."

The latest of the plays. *Zastrozzi, the Master of Discipline.* is a Gothic melodrama about love, crime. religion, jealousy and revenge. Although, like the others, it is full of excesses, its subject matter makes them justifiable. Also, Walker has exercised more restraint in getting it all together, so that it displays an inner consistency that is missing in the others.

My overall impression, on reading these plays, is that Walker is a vital end inventive dramatist with a technique and highly coloured imagination all his own. His best work is probably yet to come. So far he has suffered greatly from gaps in the comprehension of more earthbound actors and directors. □

Small towns and purgatory

Seven Hours to Sundown, by George Ryga, Talonbooks, 128 pages, 54.95 paper (ISBN 0 889221 124 3).

Ploughmen of the Glacier, by George Ryga, Talonbooks, 80 pages, 84.93 paper (ISBN 0 889221 118 9).

The Seagull, by Anton Chekhov, translated from the Russian by David French with Donna Orwin, General Publishing. $5.95 paper (ISBN 0 77361038 3).

By SEAN VJRGO

THERE'S ALWAYS an element of parable in George Ryga's work and on the page it's more obtrusive than in production. Mote than with most contemporary plays, the reader has to remind himself constantly that these are only blueprints and that good performers, well directed, may be capable of clothing the bare bones of Ryga's dialogue and situations with the flesh of human immediacy. For the man does know the theatre. His grasp of the stage's potential is masterful. He has a sure feeling for the number of different areas and realities within one bare set that an audience can cope with. His audiences cannot sit back and merely absorb; his theatre is a "hot" medium and the spectator's imagination has to be engaged, nudged only by minimal hints of lighting and tone.

But, having saidthat. I find these two new plays unsatisfying, cerebral, and two-dimensional. *Seven Hours to Sundown.* a three-acter, deals with smell-town reelpolitik. Sid Kiosk has just been elected mayor. He takes the job seriously: he has "arrived," has overcome his dirt-farm origins. and a failed shotgun marriage. He is a self-made men. He is rednecked, bigoted, honest, innocent, and no match for Alderman Rossini, who understands power and has no interest in the trappings of office.

Rossini opposes an attempt to convert an empty church into a craft centre. His opposition is pragmatic: es the present landlord of the craftsman involved he doesn't want to lose his rent. But for Kiosk it's personal. Ex-schoolteacher Jerry Goyda represents all that he hates: "he hangs on to the system with one hand an' thumbs his nose at the stars with the other." Worse. Goyda seems ready to steal Kiosk's daughter, Irma. The irony is that Goyda and Kiosk (despite their backgrounds) are similar characters. Both are haunted by failed marriages: both have created one-man businesses; both are helplessly manipulated by others. For Goyda the Machiavellian role is played by Janice Webber, a newspaper woman heeding for greater things who is brutal in her campaign for "truth." She forces Goyda into the role of progressive crusader, and she and Rossini stand back when the showdown comes. Neither Goyda "or Kiosk wins, but Irma is the real victim. Tom by conflicting loyalties. she crashes a car in a playback of her grandfather's death.

The shade of Ibsen is always present, but what Ryga lacks by comparison is a sense of flesh-and-blood reality. Even in translation, Ibsen's characters have individual voices, styles end quirks. You can believe in their lives outside the plays' frameworks. Ryga's all speak essentially with the same voice. It's not unfair. either, to criticise the play by naturalistic standards. It reeks of naturalism. Every character is totally explained by his or her background and history. And Ryga lacks the Brechtian or Marxist de tachment that might relieve the unremitting seriousness that distinguishes him from Ibsen.

At two moments the play does reach a heightened dimension. The first is when the blind cripple Dolan has the stage. howled&able. sinister end. in his detachment, powerful. The second is when Goyda encounters in flashback the Mansonesque fanatic who abducted his wife and child. Yes, these are melodramatic figures, but somehow they breathe more naturally than the others.

The characters in the two-act *Ploughmen of the Glacier,* inhabiting a set that might be hell, purgatory or limbo. are less solemn. Lowry. alcoholic journalist, and Volcanic, vegetarian, murderer and miner, bitch, accuse and taunt but whatever happens they belong to one another. Their names say it all really. It's *Molloy* plus symbolism, minus language.

David French's new version of *The Seagull* reads well. Its language and rhythms have the actor in mind and I'd recommend it to any company doing the play. All the same, it hasn't been that badly sewed by previous translators and you'd think there were other European works in more urgent need of reworking. □

Rock, crock, and resolution

John and the Missus, by Gordon Pinsent. Playwrights Co-op. 62 pages, $3.50 paper (ISBN 0 88754 059 7).

The Magnificent Slowpoke, by Martin Lager, Playwrights Co-op, 106 pages, $3.50 paper (ISBN 0 88754 069 4)

Uphill Revival, Shinbone General Store, and Underground Lake.. by Rex Deverell, Playwrights Co-op, 102 pages, $3.50 paper (ISBN 0 88754 053 8).

Boiler Room Suite, by Rex Deverell, Playwrights Co-op. 64 pages, $3.50 paper (ISBN 0 88754 065 1).

By DUNCAN **McEWAN**

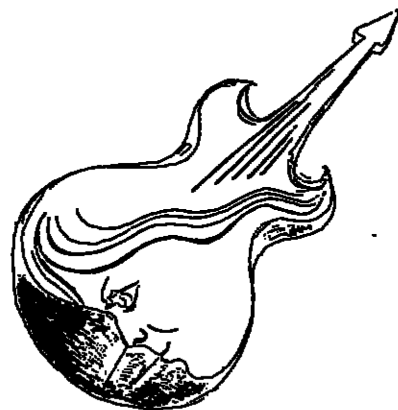
IT WOULD BE a shame if Gordon Pinsent's new play *John and the Missus were to* be taken as another example of "Newfcult"; it is neither es ingenuous nor es parochial as the label would suggest. It is an exceptional play, both a parable end a lament for the old and the new in Newfoundland. and so strong as lo be genuinely disturbing. It has been adapted from the novel of the same title. but while the book suffered from a prosy style, the play is taut and succinct.

The setting is a mining village in Newfoundland. insulated from the outside world. Change has always been resisted. But. the mine is no longer pmspering. and es the play opens there has been another accident: John Munn is brought out of the mine, injured. Heir a stalwart of the village and of the mine, and it seems important that he survive. But how well has he survived? He suffered a head injury and he seems a changed man -violent and irascible. The only other oldtimer left is Fudge who, less mutable than John, stands firm to the end, ""touched by the tide of change that eventually overtakes John and destroys him. But Fudge is at one with the mck on which the mine is built, graphically rising out of it at the start of the play. standing as rock at the end. For although he never articulates it, Fudge, like John, seems to understand that to survive in the town, in the mine, one must be made of rock. John has lost his old strength and all around him people are leaving. His own son Matt has married, and his new wife wants to seek a life elsewhere as does the Missus. She can see that it's no good. She realizes that the chaos in her husband's mind stems not from the incoherence of injury, but from an agonized. torn spirit. John comprehends that for him there may no longer be any future here, though he has bee" devoted to the village all his life. If he leaves, will the community survive? Can it get by without him? He's a strong man, broken; magnificent in the full violence of his emotions es is the Missus. He can lean on her and together they are strong. But whatshould he do? And on goes the passionate inquiry.

Throughout this symbolic turmoil there is a rawness to the characters and to the plot that strikes deep. It is not the rawness of a naif, "or are the characters simple roughhewn rustic folk; they are complex and rooted in their past. The characters are created on an epic scale; the camouflage they have erected around their fears end instabilities is made of tradition and habit; it is not the urban camouflage of neurosis. In these characters stasis is their strength. "But times a' changin', b'ys," and much is lost. In the dedication to the novel Gordon Pinsent honoured his mother "whose silence gave me my voice." It is only those young enough to be ready for change who can freely voice the heresy: "let's go on somewhere else, there's nothing for us here.:'

Moving from the epic to the banal, I have to introduce Martin Lager's *Magnificent Slowpoke* by saying it was the first play I have read that kept me glancing at my watch while I was reading it. It is. in fact, an attempt at zany, possibly black humor. It is set in the apartment of a man who moves so slowly that people on the telephone hang up before he answers it. That is essentially the plot, although his long-dead mother appears inexplicably part way through. I can only surmise that the author was exorcising ghosts of his own.

Moving back to a more satisfactory vein. the plays of Rex Deverell are well-structured pieces of whimsy that beguile through a rich sense of invention. *Uphill Revival. Shinbone General Store* and *Underground Lake are* plays for children ranging fmm kindergarten through high school. Each takes an essentially plausible premise. transforms it into a mystery, transports it into the less plausible through theatrical device, then returns to a resolution that is always intriguing. Sufficient to hold even the duller! student (for a while, et any rate), Boiler *Room Suite* continues in this style, It's basically a children's play for adults. though there's a touch of Anouilh. You've probably seen it all before, but this home-grown version is still well worth reading. □



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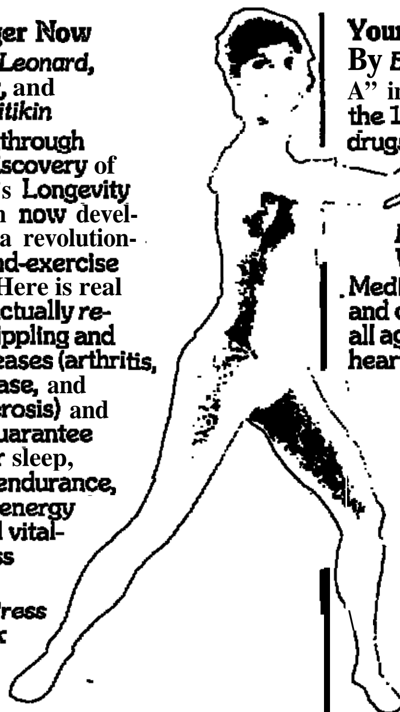

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Sex and the single martyr

Tanned. by Bryan Wade. Playwrights' Co-op, 89 pages. $3.50 paper (ISBN 0 88754 071 6).

This Side of the Rockier. by Bryan Wade. Playwrights Co-op, 108 pages. $3.50 paper (ISBN 0 88754 047 3).

Sainte-Marie Among **the Hurons**, by James W. Nichol. Playwrights Co-op, 48 pages (ISBN 0 88754 057 0).

By JON REDFERN

Like an Indian. That's how tanned I want to bc. That's how tanned we all should be. We should lie without our clothes and tan our breasts. cocks, tits, snatcher. assholes, and open our mouths and let the sun inside, let it run down our throats and tan our stomachs and wombs and lungs and hearts.

THAT PASSAGE from *Tanned* is perhaps the best in this bitchy, sometimes perceptive portrait of three women. Through three acts they share their confidences. fears, survival tactics, and a lot of man-hate. Bryan Wade's play begins promisingly with the three women sunning themselves on a dock while talking about how they find and lose new men. But. their fantasies and phobia probings. at first so charming. soon level out into a static soap-comedy. without one redeeming flight of true madness.

Wade's best play, *Underground*, never suffered from such a palsied domesticity. It, too, had three people sitting around musing, but their phobias were part of a half-dream and Wade gave an eerie tension to his shifting time patterns and an entrancing menace to his charades and banal chat. In *Tamed, all that* urbane surrealism has been jettisoned.

Similarly, in This *Side of the Rockies*, Wade has made his three men too ordinary. Ronny, Dave, and Tom are nice guys on a camping trip. In fact. all they do is set up camp and argue. Dianne. a wandering hippie with a star on her check and a galling penchant 'for playing tricks, and two red-neck hunters appear, adding a little colour to the mire, but Wade never gives us any reason to listen to them or to wonder whether it's the forest or the audience they are thinking of mowing down.

We emerge from *Tanned* and *This Side of the Rockies* with a flat taste in our mouths. Both plays require us to find resonances, even meaningful sounds in the hollowest of clichés and the most verbose and tiresome characters. By throwing out the dark con-founding comedy of his earlier works, and by choosing. instead, a bland realism with an emphasis on insipid chatter, plot, and character. Wade only succeeds in dem-onstrating his uncertainty with traditional dramatic forms; after all. he isn't really what one could call a traditional playwright. His plays show a love of the bizarre, a love for the *Sturm und Dreck* of TV and the B movie. Harold Pinter's arid ellipses breeze through a lot of Wade dialogue and Sam Shepard taught him how to make mono-logues fill up with a fearsome quirkiness. As a writer of nuances, Wade has perfected the red herring that turns, very slyly, into the bloody butcher knife. As well Wade loves the absurdist's notion that talk and idle actions -best shown in Beckett -stave off a glimpse of the Abyss. In *Tanned* Connie and Noreen talk a lot about sex and daiquiri-making. but Wade hasn't made them anxious enough to l us see their trembling and fear of a confusing world. In *This Side of the Rockies* Ronny and Dave have long. equally unrevealing mono-logues. On one hand his characters mouth bromides that are too obvious to really pull at our consciences and yet they don't possess the pathos of Gogo or Didi.

So, Wade fails. That might seem a harsh judgement, but in view of Wade's apparent carelessness I think it is justified. He has talent and. notwithstanding touches of su-preme cleverness. he is a good writer. Connie is Wade's best creation; she is delightfully manipulative. She teases Noreen. taunting her with lesbian overtures and then lies about a sexual liaison with a teenage stud who visits the play only to show how obnoxious macho youth can be. Noreen wails a lot even though she is happily married and in love. In these moments Wade's thin dialogue swells with wit and feeling. His humour is a unique mix of complaint and chummy insult.

James W. Nichol's play. *Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons*, doesn't suffer from the same extremes. This story of the martyrdom of Catholic priests at the hands of the Huron and Iroquois is often brutal, often elevating in its discovery of physical pain and psychic guilt. Nichol isn't all that successful at getting his ideas across. His characters indulge in too much monologue and there are a lot of hokey, stagey devices -ghost narrators, Indians speaking broken English poetically — that grate. In fact, Nichol's play never really takes off. It is grounded in a bathos and a sentimental view of history that. annoyingly, turns the sufferings of Canada's early heroes into shallow ranting. A pity, too, because Nichol has a fine ear for the inner voice and is able to write, on occasion, a striking and unforgettable wail of true despair. ☐

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As ye sow, so shall ye weep

Paper Wheat. by 25th House Theatre, Canadian Theatre Review. Winter 1978 issue, $3.

Who's Looking after the Atlantic? and **The** Proper Perspective, by Warren Graves, Playwrights Co-op, 40 pages, $3.50 paper (ISBN 0 88754 079 1).

The Suicide Meet, by Mary Humphrey Baldridge, Playwrights Co-op, 34 pages, 53.00 paper (ISBN 0 88754 067 8).

By SYVALYA ELCHEN

PAPER WHEAT. a collaborative work by 25th Street House Theatre fmm Saskatoon could probably be best described as the twin of The *Farm* Show. that famous Canadian collective creation first presented by Theatre Passe Muraille in 1972; If only for a comparison of East/West sensibilities, it might be valuable to look at the relative merits of the two. The subject matter of both is that great unsung Canadian collective hero: the farmer. The unique Canadianism of *The Farm Show* resided in its honest portraiture and in the titillating affirmation that Canadians of the grass-roots variety could be entertaining on stage.

Although *The Farm Show* was dramatur-gically awkward at lima. it had an underly-ing bite of "rural chic" wherein its "hick-ness" was a sly way of gelling back at the rich urban pseudo-sophisticates who in-dulged in weekend farming as a kind of pioneer parlor game. Six years later. in *Paper Wheat*, the attack is against the amorphous government machine. And even though the consolidated efforts of the Wheat Pool and Co-Op may appear to be in vain, *Paper Wheat* would make a sure-tit-e hit if

only in its attempt to articulate these problems on stage. Unlike *The Farm Show*. which restricted itself to present-day rural Ontario. *Paper Wheat* captures the sweep. ing breadth of the Prairies in its relaxed perambulatory account of the early sod-busting immigrants and the historical rise of the Farmers' Co-Op movement.

Yet. if *The Farm Show* was guilty of a kind of cozy protectivism of the Farmer as an endangered species. *Paper Wheat* suffers from a *coy* avoidance of the terror, intensity. and even heroism of the Canadian rural pioneer. Ultimately, it will be the depth of this experience that will determine whether *Paper Wheat* survives as a play or is reduced to a paperweight on the Canadian drama shelf.

In another vein altogether, two plays by Warren Graves, *The Proper Perspective* and *Who's Looking After the Atlantic?* are a case study of the battle of "wrought" over "Fear or rot." This playwright is so self-consciously concerned with writing a "serious" work. he stalks his themes with such grim determination. that he works against all his finer playwrighting skills which. even in these one-acters, are not unaccomplished.

In *The Proper Perspective*, a confrontation between two army officers in Southeast Asia over the morality of a war massacre, Graves exhibits a deft much with dialogue. the beginnings of chilling characterization. and the admirable ability to create a disquieting atmosphere. All too soon his theme thumps on in Full-blown caps and "WHAT IS TRUTH?" becomes a pseudo-Pirandellean pirouette of a murder that is/isn't/ii again/but really isn't as the author finally succumbs to *the* limpy fiction of "stage lies" for his solution.

In *Who's Looking After the Atlantic?* the theme again bursts Forth with neon-sign sublety. This time, to illustrate the plight of the "SOCIAL CONSCIENCE IN A CAPITALISTIC SOCIETY" Graves has chosen that clichéd and classically deluded duo: the psychiatrist and his patient. Although hampered by clumsy motivation. trying narrative sequences. and amateur intellectualism. the play surprisingly still gives the impression of stylistic unity and a bonus of curious believability.

Mary Humphrey Baldridge. author of *The Suicide Meet*, describes her play as "a series of daily downers." A sad. sad series this certainly is: each scene ends with a "cute kicker" that doesn't have enough originality to warrant even a groan. Examples: a 30-ish ex-Engineering Queen natters on and on about the therapeutic benefits of a night on the town and, gratified by the smiles and attention she is receiving from her fellow diners. she gets up and displays a sucker stuck to *her* dress; an ex-divorcée explains her fear of finding the tail shed by her son's pet iguana. and screamingly confronts a suspicious-looking object only to find it is a piece of wilted lettuce; Betsy Frump (guess who) enters with ha CBC microphone to interview a convicted killer holding off the police only to inform him that he really doesn't stand a chance without a hostage. At this point (guess what) the scene ends with Betsy being nabbed into hostageland.

If you think this study of despondency sounds a bit pre-pubescent, the author implies as much with a key unseen figure. an omniscient intercom principal who intones such inanities as. "We really appreciate how hard the boys' soccer team has worked. We know how much effort they put in — and even though they lost...." Although this play represents only 1/300th of the total Canadian repertoire published by Playwrights Co-op, it clearly indicates some of our playwrights should be encouraged to opt out. □

A stage of her own

Women Write for the Theatre: Volume II, One Crowded Hour. by Charlotte Fielden, 71 pages, $3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88754 048 II: Volume IV, Victims, by Lezley Hazard. Playwrights Co-op, 81 pages, 53.95 paper (ISBN 0 88754 052 X).

By M. J. MILLER

THESE TWO volumes *contain* plays selected as winners from 293 entries in a "Women Write For the Theatre" competition intended to "stimulate interest in women writers and. conversely, to galvanize them into presenting their work to the public."

In fact. *One* Crowded *Hour:* A *One-Woman Play* reflects the author's experience writing television scripts and then reshaping them in rehearsal, an essential process that every play requires before it is ready for the public eye. The result is certainly worth publishing and performing "-contest or no contest. The other volume, *Victims*, was also written by a woman from the professional theatre. Yet these short. cliché-ridden pieces with their far-too-literal stage metaphors and their dull characters are not (at least in this draft) ready for print or For the stage.

Briefly. the first play in *Victims* pairs the stereotypes of a domineering and restless wife and a Milquetoast husband. Wife kills his cat. Husband is slowly transformed into cat and terrorizes wife. The play is called "Claws." Throughout the piece, passages of clumsy exposition, which explain rather than show us the motives of the characters, clog the dialogue. The concluding stage directions are typical of most of the action: "The lights fade. *Paula remains,* slowly rocking, softly whimpering. Soon *nothing* is left but the shadow of a cat on the window. Then quick black-out."

In "Forfeits." an equally predictable "twist" results when best friend Cassandra invites George and Emma for dinner, forces them to relive Emma's cruelty to her as a little girl and exacts George's life '(by poison) as forfeit for her pet rat, which was drowned long ago at Emma's insistence. "Despair" asks us to care about the suffering of a nameless woman with little personality, who graphically describes ha abortion, using an improbable mixture of clinical detail and such metaphors as "the Forceps changed.. . and became a bird (she mimes the *shape*) *eyes.* head-beak ... a long probing beak." Eventually "*(as if to fly into the audience)*" she iumps out of the window.

Despite the gothic clichés, the telegraphing of plot turns, the blatant symbols and the pop psychology, Ms. Hazard does have a sharp eye for physical detail in her settings. On occasion. she also surprises us with a wisp exchange of dialogue. Fresher ideas and trust in the intelligence of her audience may make her next plays more interesting.

Both volumes tackle Feminist and anti-feminist stereotypes. *Victims*, probably inadvertently. reinforces such anti-Feminist clichés as castrater, two catty women locked in devious combat, or outcast-cum-victim. *One Crowded Hour* *also* takes a look at one of the favourite "Victims" of Feminist concern: a housewife in her mid-60s. Mabel, suddenly widowed and bereft of all meaning in the tag-end of ha life. When Ms. Fielden places her character on a bare stage with one object. a "frankly phallic" giant Saguaro cactus representing the desert outskirts of an Arizona resort, one might justifiably expect yet another editorial from *Chatelaine* disguised as a play. Not so.

Mabel, a nice ordinary woman. speaking with the idiom and accent of the working-class Protestant Irish from Lachine, chats with us for more than an hour about her impressions of resort life for the sunset set, her grief for her husband Willie, her kids.

FIONA MEE

AS we WERE going to press, we learned with shock and deep sorrow of the death from cancer at the age of 31 of Fiona Mee, publisher of *Quill & Quire*. Since she joined the trade magazine as editor in September, 1971, Ms. Mee had been a strong and progressive force in the development of the Canadian publishing and bookselling industries. Her creative energy will be sorely missed, as will ha friendship to this magazine. A Fiona Mee Memorial Award has been established by her friends and colleagues. It will offer an annual prize for the best article or series of articles on a literary or publishing subject. Donations to the award fund can be sent to: *Quill & Quire*, 59 Front Street East, Toronto M5E 1B3.

her 200-year-old house with the "gov-mint" brass plaque which Willie fixed up with red brick shingles, and her memories of life's surprises: the realization one day that she is a Wasp; the accidental glimpse of her husband at work in the rail yards — "so proud and so free . . . a king in yer world, Willie . . feelin' somethin' I can never share with ya." The play also shows her in the process of discovering things-a red nightgown. a painting, wine with sup per. It explores her first reflex-to centre her life on yet another man.

However, Mabel, happily tipsy. is stood-up by her new beau, Len. In a sensitive. funny, sequence she imagines her date fast asleep in the air-conditioned mom. "his white summer pants off and hung on a chair." This leads ha to compare the Saguaro with Willie's "bing-bang, thank-you M'am." Eating a large ripe peach (saved fmm her lunch) she imagines "not so cheap thrills" with Len, then surprises herself ad us with a gleeful on-stage orgasm — her first.

In *One Crowded Hour*, Ms. Fielden creates a woman with a specific back-ground. credible emotions, limited horizons and endearing but acute observations on herself and others. Her definition of "libera-tion," freedom to paint. play the radio loudly, drive a car, and clean with sprays like the TV ads. is beautifully prepared for and very satisfying. She is a character who frees herself fmm everyone's expectations — feminist as well as sexist — to be herself.

As for the good intentions of the Co-op and the arts councils: if they really did unearth some good plays that might other-wise not have been submitted to the theatres and publishers. then perhaps such a contest is worthwhile — or at least a necessary phase in developing playwrights in Canada. One would hope, however, that the time will soon come when such cate-gories as "Women Writing for the Theatre" are abandoned as unnecessary. ☐

The magic formula of K-to-3

Chinook and Too Many Kings, by' Paddy Campbell, Playwrights Co-op, 2.5. pages, $3.00 paper (ISBN 0 88754 051 1).

The Beast in the Bag and Wild West Circus, by Isabelle Foord, Playwrights Cc-op. 32 pages, $3.00 paper (ISBN 0 88754 079 9).

Maximilian Beetle.. by Larry Zacharko, Playwright's Co-op, 62 pages, $2.50 paper (ISBN 0 88754 076 7).

By SHELAGH HEWITT

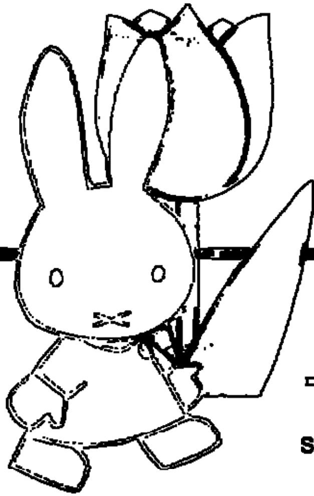
IN THE LATE 1940s and 1950s when I was growing up in Toronto. the Toronto Children's Players entertained us monthly with plays written for children. Those of us in the four-to-11 age group swarmed with out parents into Baton Auditorium and watched older children perform a repertoire gleaned largely from the classic fairy tales. We sat on auditorium seats onto which we were not allowed to put our feet; we sang songs for 15 minutes before the perform-ance began; and if there were a lady with a large hat in front of us, we were given the chance. before the performance began, to ask her to remove it. Once the play started, we were expected to behave.

We were a privileged lot. For most children living outside Toronto --and, as a matter of fact, for most of those in Tor-onto whose parents were not themselves theatre-goers — there was no theatre at all. The 1960s changed all that. The arts became respectable and theatre companies began to travel to the children. All over the country small bands of actors performed plays specifically geared to certain age groups; the mysterious phrase "K-to-3" took on the significance of a magic formula for playwrights writing for children. And the plays themselves developed characteris-tics which had been imposed on them by the conditions under which they were per-formed. Rarely was a play written for more than five characters, a number which could fit handily into a station-wagon or van for easy and cheap travel. Sets were completely eliminated, as were lighting requirements. Costumes. kept to a minimum, were often makeshift. The public school "gymna-torium" became an instant theatre. Audi-ences sat on the floor. Scripts became shorter: one had to make sure that from start to finish -including the entrance and exit of the audience -the play took no longer than two 35-minute periods.

Another controlling factor that emerged was participation. It was a key word in education and a key word in arts-in-educa-tion. It became more important, for in-stance, for a child to write a poem than to read a line one. As a member of a theatre audience, then, the child was encouraged, through the play's dialogue. to perform alongside the actor. Al its best, as in Len Peterson's *Almighty Voice,* this mode of theatre for children worked superbly. It was not always so. Often the context of perform-ing the plays — the limited situations in which they could reasonably be presented to audiences in schools — overwhelmed the potential for creativity within the plays themselves. The context. established the rules by which playwrights mse or fell and whether their plays were performed at all.

Of the three playwrights under review, Isabelle Foord seems the most influenced by the context for which she writes. *The Beast in the Bag* and *Wild West Circus* jump off the page as "towing school productions." Both open with a gathering together of the students. In *The Beast in the Bag,* the circle is formed because a story-teller has sent two characters to tell a story. *Wild West Circus* opens under the guise of a small-town meeting with the children as the towns-people. Foord has carefully worked in her "audience control devices." In *The Beast in the Bag.* a bell is rung to produce "the magic of silence" and in *Wild West Circus.* tie children are encouraged to help the sheriff by firing make-believe guns which they must shoot "soft." After several meandering plots. both plays seem to end simply when the time period is up. In *Beast,* a magic formula is pronounced and the characters turn themselves into bii and fly way. *Wild West Circus* succumbs with the lazy device of having one of the characters say "Well. that's it folks!"

The use of these devices is not bad, and in school situations. it is often necessary. However in Isabelle Foord's case they are dreadfully *obvious* because ha two plays have no real merit. Her characters (four in one play, live in the other) are shallow and silly. In *Wild West Circus*, she dares to. introduce a Dr. Lao, whose main charac-



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teristic, tastelessly enough. is an embarrassing use of broken English. Dialogue is stilted and condescending:

> AURORA: He won't anymore. He just needed some attention. Well, if I got slung by a whole swarm of bees and then I got stuffed into a little bag. I'd be mad. tee. wouldn't you? (*Audience response*) There, that proves it. He's just like all the rest of us really. a basically decent Beast. Please. can I keep him?

Paddy Campbell is also writing for limited conditions, bet she has not let these override her instincts for good theatre. Both *Chinook* and Too *Many* Kings were written for five actors; both were designed for productions in schools; both plays carry instructions that they will have a" optimum effect if they are done in the round. But, *Chinook* develops a truly exciting story: a small boy. Chinook. and his friends Starchild. a young girl, and Rattle, a young man who cannot talk. save the Old Man of their community from the clutches of the Ice Woman. The audience is used skilfully. At times, it must thaw out the characters who have been frozen by the Ice Woman, or build imaginary bridges, or hew trees; in each case. the participation of the audience is necessary to the plot.

In *Too Many Kings* a story-maker named Mendel and his friendly but bumbling essistant, Fudge, conjure up three Fairy-tale kings who war and wrangle for control of the play's plot. The audience again is pet lo good dramatic use cresting sound effects, pretending to weave the story back together, and working up some big laughs so that there can be a happy ending. The characters all have distinct personalities. unlike the tedious stock characters created by Isabelle Foord.

Larry Zacharko is somewhat different in his approach to children's theatre from either Campbell or Foord. His play *Maximilian Beetle* was developed in a Playwrights Workshop at the Tarragon Theatre in 1974 and was later produced by Young People's Theatre For the arts and culture program of the 1976 Olympics. Limitation of cast was note consideration: there are 13 characters in the play. Nor was the play designed for touring in the schools. Consequently, Fairly extensive costuming and, props are necessary to give tbis play its required theatricality.

Its story of a beetle named Maximilian, kept es a pet by a small boy, and Maximilian's love For a butterfly who has lost her beautiful scarf is intriguing if somewhat complicated. The characters are cleverly conceived. Bumbleovichka, the bee who is allergic to flowers, the Friendly Emma Wasp, Uncle Ant. the incompetent leader of a scout troop, and Barney and Cedric, the housefly villains of the piece, are all carefully and amusingly drawn. Unfortunately. the plot drifts from point to point, and the jokes -though they are often good ones — seem to depend largely on adult knowledge end sensibilities. Yet. Zacharko's script is an imaginative one which never condescends to children. Its Faults lie in the opposite diction: like A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh.* its best audience will be adults keen to revel in sophisticated flights of fancy.

There is nothing wrong with limitations in the theatre. Every playwright has to contend with restrictions and impossibilities. The mark of talent, it seems, is the ability to transcend those limitations. or to shape them to one's own imagination and talent. Of these three writers, Isabelle Foord scarcely tries to work beyond the limitations imposed upon ha, Larry Zacharko attempts to pretend that they do not exist and that his audience is elsewhere, and only Paddy Campbell makes the genuine artist's leap over any possible restrictions into a creative world which she makes ha own. □

Frame and fortune

In film, 1977-78 was the season that married flair with CanLit to produce popular footage

by W.H. Rockett

HOW CAN ONE fault a film season in which production was up over last year. a handful of features ran longer than a nominal two weeks in major theatres, and Margaret Trudeau found herself — on a Montreal soundstage no less.

This was the season in which Craig Russell not only won a best-actor award at Berlin for his role in *Outrageous,* but a special best-actor-actress prize at the Virgin Islands film festival. *Why Shoot The Teacher* grossed $1 million in its first two months. and took a Grand Prix at the Paris festival. The NFB, which periodically an-"ounces its intention to cease Features production. virtually swept the Canadian Film Awards with *J. A. Martin, Photographe* and *One Man.* And someone finally had the good sense to cast choreographer A"" Ditchburn in a dance-centred film — albeit in New York.

We were also well served with new books concerned specifically with Canadian film. The anthology *Canadian Film Reader* (Peter Martin Associates) is an excellent selection of bits and pieces culled from magazines and journals of the last 54 years. Martin Knelman's *This Is Where We Came In* (M & S) is basically a pleasant collection of that critic's earlier work. bet its new first chapters will likely Form the core of any number of high-school and college introductory film history courses. Finally. peter Harcourt's *Movies and Mythologies* (CBC Publications) is a" *entertaining* approach through the Scylla and Cbarybdis of his nationalism and Marxism.

It was in fact such a good year that Knelman was moved to praise "the new self-confidence in Canadian film expression" *in* the November issue of *Toronto Life:*

> There have been isolated successes in this country before, but for the first lime Canadians have produced a whole cluster of pictures that audiences really enjoy. We go to these films "et as a patriotic duly but because we want to see them.

It is interesting to see someone like Knelman in effect confess to a past sense of patriotic duty. and express his relief at having other motivations to see Canadian films. Knelman attributes to these new films not only self-confidence. but also something he calls "popular flair." It's defining that quality that has puzzled me most over the last year.

One common point strikes me in looking at the three popular successes among English-language productions: *Who Has Seen The Wind*, *Why Shoot The Teacher*, and *Outrageous* are derived from prose originals. This has long been the case in Hollywood productions: a film based on a popular novel is in effect a pre-sold product. Hollywood has been known to have a" Eric Segal first publish a *Low Story* as a novel when it had been written originally es a screenplay. Certainly *Who Has Seen The Wind* is on the reading list of many CanLit courses, while Max Braithwaite is a popular and funny author and *Why Shoot The Teacher* is one of his best books. But they are steady sellers, rather than adornments of the current best-seller lists. *Outrageous* is based on a story in Margaret Gibson's *Butterfly Ward*, a fine but less popular book.

Since simple avarice isn't the obvious motive in turning to prose, one feels justified in attributing nobler motives to the film-makers. They have seen something in these stories, something that deserves to be brought to a non-reading public, something that lends itself to the language of film, or both. "Popular flair"?

Anthony Burgess, author of the novel A *Clockwork Orange*, decried a few years ago the popular tendency to see a film version es the final fulfillment of the prose original. "the assumption being that the *bock* itself whets an appetite for the true fulfillment — the verbal shadow turned into light, the word made flesh." Burgess, who actually believes in a hierarchy of the arts with literature on top and ballet et the bottom, simply feels words tell stories better than pictures. What viewing the three films mentioned hem demonstrates is that pictures tell a story quite as nicely es words, but *it isn't necessarily the same story the* original author had in mind.

W. 0. Mitchell has made it quite clear he loathed the screenplay Allen King and Petricia Watson wrote for *Who Has seen The Wind*. *Certainly* he is justified in being a curmudgeon in this instance. The film borders on the incoherent and dwells solidly in the indifferent.. The script writers have abandoned the novel's structure, a series of waves through which young Brian passes from the ages of four to 11. This is no doubt owing to the difficulty of taking a child actor through the changes end growth *stimulated* by a *series* of deaths and his responses to those deaths. It would also make for a" extraordinarily long shooting schedule. But King end Watson have also opted for moving the death of Brian's father (Gordon Pinsent) to the end of the film, a death that comes earlier in Mitchell's novel. Instead of being part of a pattern of maturing, the single death becomes something larger: the only solid question we are given is whether Brian will weep over this loss (of course, he does so). Lines of character and plot are dropped for no apparent reason, while others are retained with little justification. People move about in a competently filmed landscape without bumping into the furniture. Considering that the director of cinematography is Richard Leiterman, the director of the film is Allen King, and the landscape is spacious prairies, that is simply not good enough. This isn't a matter of a film inspired by a pleasant novel but heading off in its own directions: this is a film that *never* at *any* point seems to be aware of when it's going and doesn't particularly care. Perhaps King end Watson were overwhelmed by the cut-rate mysticism of parts of the novel, and fell back into the relative safety of being obscure. With safety, they found boredom. What popular appeal this film has enjoyed can probably be credited to its nostalgic 1930s setting, and some vague notion that W. 0. Mitchell must be good for "I.

Outrageous, on the other hand, knows precisely where *it's* headed. Unlike Gibson's original story, the film plunges toward success for female impersonator Craig Russell and as happy an ending as loony Hollis McLaren is likely ever to find. It is a fine, silly film, plotted sketchily so that Russell's various impersonations stand out like jewels in a minimal white-gold setting. The story's original title was "Making It," the aim of both Russell's Robin and McLaren's Liza. He wants to escape heirdressing and the smell tacky gay clubs where he's been doing his numbers, while she simply wants to keep all concerned convinced she can function outside the asylum. Gibson tells her story in a series of

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letters between the two. The last from Liza informs Robin that her baby (the result of one of a number of liaisons with men identified by the names of the cab companies for which they drivel was born &ad. The last reply from Robin is simply "Dear Liza,".

Writer-director Dick Benner parlays that open ending into a blitz finish. Robin and his cab driver/personal manager drive from New York to Toronto. bundle Liw into the car, and return south. Everybody ends up crackers and happy. Liza popping her pills and Robin his zingy one-liners. Why not? This film is really a Craig Russell vehicle. Hollis McLaren came along for the ride; she just happens to be good enough lo leave one with the sense that something's going on between Russell's numbers.

It's *Why Shoot The Teacher* that has managed to be both witty end substantial. Braithwaite's book is a memoir of the year (aged 20) he spent teaching in a rural school at Bleke, Sask. Scriptwriter James DeFelice has skilfully raided the original to produce en exceptionally entertaining screenplay. The real coup. however, lies in the casting of Bud Cort as the young teacher. His face, round es a ping-pong bell end es unmarked by experience. is my newest visual image for ingenuous. Desperate for any sort of work in the Depression-grim West, young Max has steadily dropped his asking price until he finds himself in Bkke working for IOUs and room and board. The room is the school basement and board is food he hasn't the slightest notion how to cook. The action is episodic, but the individual vignettes are fascinating and the handy device of the academic year serves to frame the film well. Samantha Eggar es Mrs. Field, the British war bride who drifts into a 24-hour incompleted tryst with Max in a snowstorm, and Gary Reineke es Harris Montgomery. Prairie Populist, are a superb supporting cast. Director Silvio Narrizano usually knows when to stop his threshing machine so we suffer little emotional drain, while cinematographer Marc Champion does with the prairie everything I had expected from Richard Leiterman. My only quibble is with tone: Braithwaite is surprisingly subdued in his book, end then are moments of bitterness es well. DeFelice has added an indication et the film's end that Max will return to Bleke— a gesture of fond memory Braithwaite couldn't make at the time or in his later memoir, but the sort of sentiment with which film-makers like to end a picture. Still, it's a small point when dealing with a film that sets out to be itself and succeeds so well.

Three successes and three very different films, despite *Wind's* and *Teacher's* shared time and place (although it should be noted that *Wind* is chiefly a summer film, Teacher an endless winter). Whatever "popular flair" may be, its definition can't be found in en obvious common denominator in these three films. But there is no doubt that both *Outrageous* and *Why Shoot The Teacher* require neither patriotism nor a sense of their being medicinally good for us to draw an audience. They indeed bode well for the future, and earn respect and praise for thii past season. □

Tube and tunnel-vision

In TV, the 1977-78 season (apart from 'Bethune') proved that the medium still hasn't got the message

by M. J. Miller

IN THE PAST 15 years, poets. playwrights and novelists have exploded, once and for all, the myth that we have no myths. We are moving on from Algonquin Landscapes, *The Titanic* and *Ten Lost Years* to more dangerous images of fact and fiction — Will Donnelly, The Boy Bishop. Hosanna — more fitted to our times.

The artists and the audiences may be ready, but the mass media are not. A few years ego. the CBC opened its new em of public myth making with *The National Dream*, an epic celebrating landscapes. technology and teem work. with only a few tantalizing glimpses of the men and women who shared the dream.

This season the trend seems to be towards rehabilitating a rebel or two, among them a communist, Norman Bethune, who died 40 years ago in China, end a feminist, Nellie McClung, who left her imprint on our history more then 60 years ago. A new look et Riel is pmmixd for next year. Can Radisson or Mackenzie be far behind?

In the event. it proved easier to bring to life the already familiar modem hero of the doctor -helped by the fact that this one was also an artist, lover, visionary, inventor and loner — than it was to animate a heroine whose early reputation was won es a "Lady Novelist." Certainly there was more Ethel M. Dell than Margaret E. Atwood about this image. No matter that, like Bethune, McClung was also strong. With a cutting wit. a love of battle, a wicked gift for mimicry, end en eloquent hatred of the sweatshops that financed the bagmen of Manitoba. On television new hats and shrill girlishness were all that defined her character.

Nellie McClung and *Bethune* were presented only weeks apart. Both were rerun. Considered together, they make one wonder how it is that the CBC Drama Section could produce a superb documentary drama like *Bethune* and a lightweight. rather dull. sexist bit of fluff like *Nellie McClung* — with no apparent sense of disparity.

What made one succeed and the other fail? Which is more typical? Well, one cannot fault the casting in either play. Donald Sutherland and Kate Reid are two of our most gifted actors. In each play. the designs, costumes. props, and sets were carefully researched end well executed. Nor could one blame money: or the choice of medium -tape or film; or the episodic narrative structure of each. No. the success of *Bethune* end the failure of *Nellie McClung* could be attributed to the script, to the attitude of writer and director, to subject matter, and to the focus — or lack of it.

Both scripts were based on material easily available. Roderick Stewart's biography *Bethune* (1973) supplies most of the dramatic incidents in the program. McClung's biography *Still Stands the Stream* shows quite clearly how she came to bee feminist — a process barely hinted at in the television version. Her novel *Purple* Springs. despite its dated sentimentality, gives a far clearer view of the women's fight for the vote in that en than the play. (McClung may still be found in libraries and on the bookshelves of an older generation). Even more to the point, the recent University of Toronto reissue of her collection of essays In *Times Like These* (1915)

shows the lady at her best — forthright, funny. logical. A glance et these sources shows bow a good script can bring life toe rather dry work like Stewart's and a bad one can trivialize. oven falsify the record.

Be that as it may. *Bethune* worked es a television play. The dialogue was crisp, the situations crackled with humour, anger, and above all, energy. Among many memorable incidents were those showing Bethune's ruthlessness (when he forced his new bride to jump across a deep ravine) his impatience and arrogance (a little poetic license. here) as he collapses his own lung: his sense of mischief (when he shocks student nurses with his casual display of his own anatomy); the eloquence. charisma and naiveté of the man's actual words defending Stalin's Russia to hostile colleagues. Silence and subtext were also allowed to do their work — in the look between Bethune and a Spanish mother, her child dead in her arms; in the complex shifts of emotion between Bethune and his wife Frances; in the unspoken rapport between Bethune end Chinese general Nieh.

The play also worked because it gave this enormously complex man his duo: because Sutherland (who had an interest in Bethune over several years) gave a dewiled. intense performance; because the script moved cleanly. swiftly through events now remote. giving them urgency once more; and because the whole work had one focus-the protagonist. the misfit who refused to become a victim.

Nellie McClung was not *so* blessed. Wooden dialogue replaced her own vivid phrases. Cozy domestic scenes reassured us that she really was all woman; but we were given no glimpse of the grinding burdens of life on the Manitoba farms and in the fetid factories. One feisty encounter with the Premier could not *compensate for* the predictable pastiches of speeches on the hustings. the shallow. wilful, improbably girlish characterization of Nellie herself. the stereotyped suffragists and the *cliché* of the long-suffering husband. The play also managed to ignore the most effective and entertaining piece of Suffragist propaganda. "The Women's Parliament" which skewered the pompous flatulence of the government. lo the most famous sketch of the piece. Nellie played the Premier to packed houses.

It was an invigorating time, the stuff of legends. a turning point in our political life, and the CBC managed to make it boring. Worse still. this hit of revisionism stressed the suffragist defeat et the polls (even though Roblin fell 10 months later) and invented a climax wherein Wes McClung forced Nellie to choose between himself and his career, and her cause. Needless to say this version made sure that she chose him. The scene slanders both parties, undercuts the context and the thrust of the issues which should have vitalized 'the drama and rewires this part of our heritage into a Harlequin Romance. We got neitha good history nor good entertainment.

As Nellie said of herself, she had a "queer streak of cheerful imbecility" in her up to a certain period in her life. But she had resilience. She did "get the thing done and let the" howl." She had guts, brains and good sense and she deserves better than this play. So do we.

However the tone of irony. deprecation, "who us?" characteristic of *Nellie McClung* is more typical of the image of ourselves currently found on our television. A quick backward look confirms the impression. *The Newcomers* (Irish, Indian, end French, so far) talk like textbooks end suffer a lot. Formula ethnic clichés, slapstick. and sexism blur potential folk heroes like "King of Kensington." Even Claude Jutra's direction cannot rescue Nick Adonidas fmm had scripts. *In* more *serious* plays. a runaway kid is dumped beck into a sterile environment *(Dreamspeaker)*, Ada is lobotomized, *(Ada)*, and an eccentric con-men sails in circles to suicide *(Horse Latitudes)*. Among all of the loser/survivors, the only large-scale, truly tragic figure has been Hedda Gabler and she isn't "ours." CTV's sole effort in the last two or three years, *Separation*, managed to reduce our 'national *Angst* to *All* My *Children Search for Tomorrow.* CBC drama is certainly not all bed. *Sidestreet* is *competent, For the Record* is usually a lively and intelligent series of topical docu-dramas, and A *Gift to Last was good* family entertainment.

Nevertheless, the vision is sharply coostricted. Our poets, playwrights, and novelists are not locked into the romantic and' ironic modes. They can and do create high comedy and full scale tragedy. Television also has the power to terrify and &light — and the *power* to make myths. Witness *Bethune*. We we waiting for "ore. □

The ether/ore philosophy

Reading Writing and Radio. by Winston G. Schell and Marstan Woolings, Longman, 208 pages, $3.95 paper (ISBN 0 77471112 4).

By TOM FULTON

COMMERCIAL RADIO attacks on "any fronts. Portable radios assault us on buses. sidewalks, and even from bicycles. "Contemporary" programming *pursues us in* stores, blatts at us from parked cars, and oozes thmugh our neighbour's wells. It's hypnotic. persuasive, and inescapable. Private radio in Canada — or anywhere in North America for that matter — is a huckster's paradise. It's also the cowardly giant of modem media, more concerned than any other branch of the communications industry with kissing corporate or small-business asses for profit than providing a public service. It's easy to forget that radio frequencies are owned end allocated by the government, presumably for the benefit of the public and not the enrichment of a couple of hundred media carpetbaggers. Commercial *stations,* large and small. do discharge their minimal moral. and legal obligations, but as quickly and painlessly as possible. I wonder how "any public service announcements, or how "any Canadian artists would be heard on the airwaves without government legislation? Thank God commercials are restricted. Otherwise we would be flooded withes many as individual markets could bear.

Radio. in its infancy (which. alas, "any also believe was its prime). filled the publicly owned airwaves with original, entertaining programming. Then television burst on the scene offering audio *and* video. Radio's creative talent — the top writers and performers — rushed to the future like rats from a torpedoed ship. The body of creative radio in North America was drawn and quartered. burned by progress, with the ashes flung into the ether. In Canada the CBC survived. thanks to massive government funding. lo provide services lo communities and listeners ignored by the numbers-hungry private outlets. Let's face it, commercial radio selves Canada's cultural and information needs about as effectively as junk mail. Part of the problem is that the fresh blood the industry so desperately needs (not that it *wants* it) is unaware that radio *could* be a vital social force, that it wasn't always a wasteland, that local murder. national mayhem, and international disasters may not he essential *to* audience size and satisfaction. Following a policy of "minimal tune-out factors" may not be the only path to heaven.

Reading, Writing and Radio is a surprising text. in that it calmly and objectively charts the state of both private and public radio in Canada today. The authors, educators Winston Schell and Marstan Woolings, have taken extensive quotes and articles from diverse sources. The result not only makes for a lively learning experience, hut also colours the subject with richer hues than could be *expected* from opinionated broadcasters. All *aspects* of modem radio programming are examined. from record promo *men,* trade magazines. logs and librarians. to CRTC "Canadian content" regulations. (The institution of the latter caused private radio moguls to scream es if the till had slammed shut on their corporate jewels.)

For those who know nothing about radio -other than what they hear -the hook is an invaluable primer. Although the authors claim that their baby "concentrates on the daily realities of radio -reading, writing. speaking and listening — rather than on philosophical and sociological mess-media questions," don't you believe it. Top 40 deejays are described as being "either on the brink of some unnamed cataclysm or they have to go to the bathroom." CKLW-Windsor. the most powerful Top

40 station in Canada (primarily because it's the number one station in Detroit) is described by various media commentators in a particularly revealing and damning manner. Formula radio has been caught with its pants down. The editors have tried not to editorialize, but in stating that Top 40 radio "caters to the largest possible audience" they are admitting that it is structured to appeal to the lowest common denominator.

Reading, Writing and Radio features a particularly absorbing chapter on the preparation and delivery of newscasts. The authors note that "there are many ways in which a news announcer can make a newscast 'colorful'-but it is often at the expense of objectivity. Sometimes, fairness in reporting is abandoned for the sake of interest." They ask: "is sensationalism an acceptable motive in newscasting?" The implication is that it is not. On commercial mdio the function of news. as well es music, is to attract the greatest number of listeners and thereby justify the highest possible "rate card."

The authors have tried to include all relevant areas of the industry, with chapters on music end recording, add sales and advertising. Helpful to the neophyte is the inclusion of sample newscasts, program logs, Top 40 charts and program "wheels," and even a sampk of that holiest of holies, the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement diary. In the hands of intelligent instructors *Reading, Writing and Radio* could be the handbook of a revolution. □

interview by M. T. Kelly

Ken Mitchell's progress as a writer, from Cruel Tears to thoughts on Booze

KEN MITCHELL is a novelist. short-story writer, and co-author with the group Humphrey and the Dumptrucks of the country-and-western opera *Cruel Tears*. He was born in Moose Jaw in 1940 and now lives and leaches in Regina. Oxford University Press recently published his anthology of Prairie wiling. *Horizon*, and Macmillan released his collection of short stories, *Everybody Gets Something Here*, last spring. M. T. Kelly interviewed Mitchell after a matinée performance of Crud *Tears* at Toronto's NDWT theatre.

Books in Canada: ***What gave you the idea for the Prairie anthology?***

Mitchell: Oxford was looking for ideas end they got in touch with me. There has been a lot of writing about the Prairies, but it has never been collected. There is a real regional identity in the West. as important as Quebec's, but it has never been defined. I tried to do that.

BiC: ***Cruel Tears is based on Othello, set in Saskatchewan, and features country music. Where did you get the idea to combine all these elements?***

Mitchell: I was in Greece and I became very interested in the relationship between music end theatre. Plays develop out of literature and poetry, and I think opera is an attempt to return to the original conception of theatre. I also had many other ideas in mind when I started to work on Cruel *Tears*. Some of it is constructed cinematically. I was thinking about Brecht's *Three Penny Opera*, end I wanted to write a political play. It's political in the sense that I wanted to break down some of the barriers between art and politics: I wanted to reach a different kind of audience. We haven't broken through yet to this audience. a different audience than the university-educated, regular, theatre-going audience — the 'elite." if you want to call it that. We haven't broken through in spite of extensive promotion on country-music stations. I hnd great hopes for Toronto but it didn't work out. But you see I think that folk music — and country music is the folk music of a part of our culture — is important. The level of artistry we brought to the music in *Cruel Tears* justifies calling it an opera. Also, the themes that are central in country music are central in our culture. They are the same themes that are dealt with in the play: passion, jealousy, betrayal, revenge. These may not be in artistic forms yet, but they're there. and it concerns a deep problem in our culture that isn't discussed'. I'm trying to jab at some of the sore spots of sexual politics in *Cruel Tears*, and I intentionally used a mythic plot.

BiC: ***Are you going to concentrate on writing for the theatre from now on?***

Mitchell: No. I've always got foot or five projects going at the same time. Right now I'm working one theatre piece titled Booze. which again I'm *writing* with the Dumptrucks. (Humphrey has left the group.) I'm also working on a novel. I've been working

Ken Mitchell

on it for five years. and I'm not sure if I'll finish it or not. Novels are a lot of work.

BiC: ***Did your novel Wandering Rafferty take that long?***

Mitchell: Well I'd originally written it as a film, an NFB project, but it didn't come to anything, so I turned it into a novel. I sent it in over the transom. to Macmillan. They asked fore major rewrite. I think it was cot by about one third, and then it was published. I'm also working et a film script at the moment.

BiC: ***You seem to be quite a prolific writer. Do you have a schedule for your writing? Do you set aside so many hours a day for work?***

Mitchell: I do four pages a day. no matter what. I rewrite a lot and sometimes, if I'm going over something, I might do 10. But four pages a day is what I aim for. I had to learn to do this. My workload is a big one, and working thii way I know the end sill arrive. Four pages a day. Sometimes it may read as if I've made myself sit down and write, but I work anyway. If I've come home from a play at I 1:30 et night I'll still sit down and write: four pages. I often pot things aside for a while. As I said, I have half a dozen projects going at the same time, end if something isn't up to scratch I'll store it.

BiC: ***When do you work?***

Mitchell: I work in the mornings now. or try to. though funnily enough I often work better et night. It's slower then, and I don't have the adrenalin high I often do in the mornings. But waking in the mornings fits in better with my schedule of teaching.

BiC: ***How do you relax? I know you used to play rugger.***

Mitchell: I don't play rugger any more. You have to be very lit. and I don't have the time. I meditate instead end it seems to help. I work, I teach, which isn't difficult for me, though I teach creative writing. Teaching's a social release end I look forward to the group I have now, which is a very exciting class. Then I go home to my family. I know I'm productive now because I have a home. a stability. which is very important to me and useful. I need it. You need a pattern, a rhythm. Drinking used to be quite a release for me. but I've given it up. It's useful not to drink while one is working on *Booze*. I used to drink a lot, but I've tapered off since my 20s. I think the way we drink in this culture is a massive poison-taking and I want to say something about it. I quit drinking because I was losing too much time. It's as simple as that: I enjoy writing more than drinking. I have to look after myself. Hell, I've worked with hangover, with klds crawling across my lap, but you don't work as well.

BiC: ***Why do you push yourself so hard?***

Mitchell: Well, I think I have an ability, a gift you could call it, to communicate ideas. I think it important that I keep developing my ability, because if it keeps developing I might have important things to soy. □

of some import

Celebrity Sam, the dictionary man, and some ghoulish port by Greene

Samuel Johnson, by **W. Jackson Bate**. Longman, 646 pages, $25.95 cloth (ISBN 15 179260 7). Although the word "celebrity" as we understand it had been in use for 150 years by 1755 when Samuel Johnson published his *Dictionary*, the great savant omitted to list that particular meaning. Oddly enough, he used the word in that very sense in reference to himself in a *Rambler* article of 1751. Ah well, if he was not the first, he was certainly the Homer of celebrities. In our own em he might well have been 3 regular on the *Tonight* show (in the presence of articulate learning Carsons tolls over and prostrates himself like a happy beagle); be would surely have punctured Merv; and his tough charm might even have captivated Dinah. As a performer, we know him best however through his appearances on *The Jimmy Boswell Show,* alongside such regular guests as Oliver Goldsmith. Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr Elphinstone:

> Mr Elphinstone talked of a new book that was much admired and asked Dr Johnson if he had read it. JOHNSON: "I have looked into it." "What (said Elphinstone), have you not read it through?" — Johnson, offended . . . answered tardy, "No, Sir; do *you* read books *through*?"

All good knockabout stuff, especially when someone else's favourite ox got gored. but Boswell, gifted interlocutor and talent coordinator that he was, only stepped on to the Johnson scene when the lion was already 53 years of age, and we have journeyed through 365 pages of the new biography *Samuel Johnson* by W. Jackson Bate, Lowell Professor of Humanities at Harvard University. Pace Johnson. this is a book that I have read through and through and through. I doubt that I shall ever keep it far from my hand.

Professor Bate explains his biographical strategy briefly and clearly:

> *Johnson loved biography before every other kind of writing. . He believed that hardly a single life had passed from which we could not learn something, if only it were told with complete honesty. . He was especially concerned to find out how those whom we consider to be great experiencing natures ever managed to become what they were — what they had to struggle against, and, above all what they had to struggle against in themselves. . . . But if we want to know frankly and completely the difficulties they faced, we also want to know how they surmounted them.*

And so. in this scholarly. compassionate. harrowing, desperate. exhilarating work, Bate successfully carries out Johnson's own program: "The sacred writers related the vicious as well as the virtuous actions of men: which had this moral effect, that it kept mankind from *despair*." And who but Johnson would not have succumbed to *despair?* Ungainly born, half blind. half deaf, he was as driven by the compulsion to achieve as he was scourged by the guilt of idleness and procrastination, and ever fearful of letting his God-given talents slip to waste across the dreaded 'frontier of insanity.

If Professor Bate seems sometimes trying to play the Freudian analyst he imagines Johnson needed, he can be forgiven a thousandfold. He reports that Johnson, sought out by a friend who confessed to being obsessed with "shocking, impious thoughts," granted psychiatric absolution both to *himself and friend:* " 'If I was to divide my life into three parts.' said Johnson. 'two of them would have been filled with such thoughts.' "

Bate presents Johnson entire: sadism, morality, buffoonery, heroism and slovenliness. Here is the King-Emperor delivering one of hi devastating one-line judgements on a victim: "His only power of giving pleasure is not to interrupt il." And here is *the man who, hours from death, when* kindly surgeon Cruikshank too-gently wielded his lancet in a hopeless effort to drain away floods of dropsical fluid, could rebuke the doctor with a resolute demand to cut "Deeper, deeper; I want length of life, and you are afraid of giving me pin,, which I do not value."

Bate's work deliberately and firmly guides the reader to the edge of unbearable pity and terror for its wretched, heroic subject. Concerning Johnson's last repotted words, in Latin. "Iam moriturus. ." ("I, who am about to die . .") Bate notes. "Spoken in delirium the words echo the ancient Roman salutation of the dying gladiators to Cæsar."

We have been granted a triumphant Life.

— RICHARD LUBBOCK

* * *

The Human Factor, by **Graham Greene**, Clarke Irwin, 399 pages, $12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 370 30043 2). What makes a spy? Greed, ideology, patriotism, evens love of theatre—*so goes the conventional* wisdom. In *The Human Factor* the answer is love sod a sense of obligation. Maurice Castle is number two in so obscure department of Section 6 (Philby's old section), which deals with Portuguese-African affairs. When a leak is discovered in the department, Dr. Percival — the spies' physician and a friend of Sit John Hargreaves, 'C' — suspects Arthur Davis. Castle's junior, but Colonel Daintry, *the security chief,* isn't so sum.

Percival posses on supposedly secret

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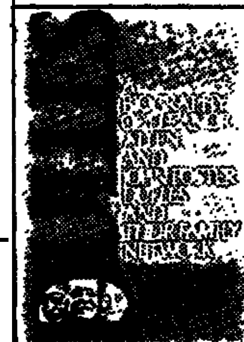

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biological warfare information to Davis, who, unknown to security, also tells Castle. When the information turns up in Moscow. Percival eliminates Davis with a toxin that destroys the liver — the victim is a known port addict. (The ghoulish humour is vintage Greene.) While Davis is dying, Castle has to entertain Cornelius Muller, an agent of BOSS, the South African Bureau of State Security. (Castle's wife, Sarah, is a black south African.) Muller, who is noting if not a chameleon, has the plans for "Operation Uncle Remus." Apartheid's "final solution." Castle steals them accidentally. and with the only other suspect dead has no choice but to get on tbe conveyor belt to Moscow.

Lacking allegiance to the city of God or the city of Marx. Castle acts as he does for Sarah's "people" end because a Communist agent helped smuggle her out of South Africa. The intelligence he has given Moscow, before Uncle Remus. has no intrinsic value: like all double agents. the betrayer is himself betrayed — he is used to build up the bona fides of a KGB defecmr-in-place who will feed doctored information to the British.

The Human Factor ends bleakly: Castle. calling Sarah fmm Moscow. is disconnected. Despite this. it is a compassionate and witty novel — unusual qualities in a spy story.

— CHRIS SCOTT

on/off/set

by Hens Jewinski

Poetic contracts bid, made, and lost and a magazine heading for slam

"SKIP BID; please wait" is a bridge term designed to warn the other players that something unusual or out of sequence is about to be bid. Thm should be a similar announcement for extraordinary books such as The Circular Dark by Pier Giorgio Di Cicco (Borealis Press, 65 pages. $4.95). The book is an unconventionally powerful one in which poems overwhelm the reader, and not the other way around. Di Cicco is careful in his choice of language — "After you died/your books came in moving vans./I finished your reading for you/Bill, you old man/your life.came crated to us/it wallpapers the den." He writes of love, irony, hate, frustration, indeed all human failings nnd achievements with discerning metaphor. He is strongest when he looks at past (and present) as if be were looking through a camera. The device is hauntingly effective: "My mother has a phomgnph in which/she sits on a balcony, sewing. my/dead brother plays in shorts, my sister/is in tresses with dolls. They an together./It is before thebombing." Skip bid; please wait: *The Circular Dark* is out of keeping with many of the books of poetry published recently because it involves the reader from beginning to end in tightly controlled evocative language, an unusual accomplishment in any game.

Paul Cameron Brown should read Di Cicco's book before rereading his own. Whispers (Three Trees Press, 63 pages, $3.95); he might gain some sort of insight into the craft of poetry, insight that inadvertently occurs only in the poem "Seagulls":

> *I see many thoughts from a window.*
> *Seagulls in the fashion of summer*
> *and leaves as they quit the year.*
> *Sense impressions, if they are this,*
> *are only images*
> *of what we refuse to follow.*

Brown should examine this poem closely before he does any more writing. He might also consider examining A True History of Lambton County (Oberon; 138 pages. $4.95) by Don Gutteridge m learn bow to develop and maintain a thematic concern throughout a piece of work. History, of course, is Gutteridge's major concern, but be paces this neatly in his book by using poetry, excerpts from journals and newspapers, and all the irony, tragedy and happiness that a poet can muster from his family background. One of the most delightful pieces in the book is headed "Our Story," titled "Moonlight Conception (My Own)." and turns out to be an excerpt from *The Observer* (Winter. 1936.37) in which the poet weaves together a hockey game in which his father starred and his revelation of moonlight hanky-panky on a bicycle trip. The effect is a tidy bit of imny. Gutteridge is in full control of his craft in this book. In "Making the Map." he weaves together family. personal. and public history:

> *I am a maker of maps,*
> *a primitive, in league with*
> *Champlain, Thompson, Mackenzie —*
> *our first philosophers*

And Gutteridge, in this tradition, draws a map of his own village from memory. When he realizes that his map is subject to the faults of that memory. he understands:

> *Champlain, Thompson, Mackenzie:*
> *old cartographers, you*
> *knew this all along.*
> *You were the first poets.*

Another poetical treatment of history does not succeed as well. "Poems looking back to our crofter roots" is how Cleaning the Bones by Joseph McLeod (Press Porcepic; 62 pages. $4.95) is described on the front cover. And the promise is fulfilled in

most of the book. But the mood of the poems is so dreary and so repetitive that it wouldn't matter if the book were all one poem. or part of one poem, or a poem et all. There is little technique shown here. The poems may well be about the past, bathatis no reason for the absence of life and humour. The titles of the poems are so obvious and most of the poems so straightforward that the material becomes predictable, page after page. The book "ever rises above giving a "Modern History Lesson": "My father/worked in a mine/and fathered seven/He is a smell man/in a photograph/with cherry hair/and crossed legs/ on a beautiful lawn/of a place called San/ where he died". The rest of the poem you can fill in for yourself — almost anything is an improvement.

Into the Open (Golden Dog Press, 59 pages, $4), by Christopher Levenson is another odd book. a book better described as uneven. Most poems hem do not reach (or aspire to! more than a workmanlike competence and therefore the book is quite readable but not lively. Many poems do not even attain the height of "Making Love": "We've made so much/we don't know what to do with it all./Thank God you can't be arrested just for possession/only for trafficking." The poems slip into ondeveloped states such as the one in *"An Interesting* Condition" in which the speaker finds himself "at the edge of town at a point where the mad divides:/though I cannot yet see the signposts/l know which road to take." Levenson's poems do not have answers and, worse still. they set up no interesting problems.

The journal Room of One's Own does present interesting problems. In the first issue the editors expressed the hope that theirs would be a publication in which "women can share and express their unique perspectives on themselves, each other and the world." Now, after 10 issues, the magazine is finally beginning to hit its stride and measure up to the potential of contemporary feminist writing. *Room started out* well with "Poem fmm the Fourth World Manifesto" by Gwen Hauser and a review by Dorothy Liiesay of her own anthology. *Forty Women Ports of Canada.* and has become mom and more interesting with every number. Criticism has become its forte: "Between Dinner. Dishes & Diapers: A Woman Writer's Plight." "Feminist Sightings on the Bionic Woman:' and "Women in Latin American Literature" all provide powerful comments on the role of modem women writers. The essays are thought-provoking and provide the backbone of the journal. *Room* seldom has editorials. and confines itself to calls for subscription renewals and mom manuscripts. but its criticism has become its hallmark, as the editors first hoped. Read it ad subscribe to it. It is another publication which, if I may return to the bridge books, seems likely to reach "slam." □

the browser

by Morris Wolfe

On being stymied and immobilized by the destabilizing impact of prosaic retrofitting

I SOMETIMES get the feeling that M & S books haven't been edited so much as processed. They seem to have passed through the various stages of production without being read. let alone checked, by anyone other than the author. Doris Shackleton's biography of Tommy Douglas *of a* couple of years ego was a prime example of this. The book was so badly written, so riddled with errors as to be embarrassing. Now (alas) we have Shackleton's new book, Power Town: Democracy Discarded. (221 pages. S4.95 paper). It deals with the way in which Ottawa's bureaucracy has changed in the decade since Trudeau became Prime Minister.

If anything. Shackleton's prose in this book is worse than it was in the Douglas book. If she were a student of mine, I'd give her no more than a D. The book begins this way: "Today in Canada there is a distinct sense of being stymied, reduced to immobility, by the federal government's aclions and attitudes toward people of all regions. The cleft has widened between us and them." *Then* the bad writing begins. M & S most assume there aren't enough of us out here who EM. Why else would they allow drivel like this into the bookstores?

* * *

BUT DORIS SHACKLETON doesn't have a comer on the crummy prose market. That's made clear by Canadian Cultural Nationalism, selected proceedings of the Fourth Lester B. Pearson Conference on the Canada-U.S. Relationship (edited by Janice L. Murray, New York University Press, 139 pages, $6.20). For example, this sentence: "Beyond platitudes, it is not clear what remedial actions can be proposed regarding the destabilizing impact of Canadian cultural retrofitting on the U.S.-Canadian relationship." That comes from a paper by a Professor Swanson of the Centre of Canadian Studies, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. (If that's what the prose at the *Advanced* school is like, one shudders to think. . .). Early in his paper, Swanson argues that "cultural nationalism" is too imprecise a term; the engineering concept of "retrofitting" is better. In fairness. I should say that the book also contains some excellent material — Ramsay Cook's essay "Cultural Nationalism in Canada: *An* Historical Perspective,"

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for instance. Cook's position on Cultural nationalism, as Dcnis Smith points out in *his* paper, has clearly become more moderate in the past decade.

NORTHROP FRYE says a citizen's primary duty is to "try to know what should be changed in his society and what conserved." But no citizen can discharge that responsibility unless he *knows* his country. *To Know Ourselves*, a massive report examining the extent to which such self-knowledge is possible in Canada. was released in 1976 by the Commission on Canadian Studies. a body established by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Its not-tot-surprising conclusion was that in the 50 or so areas of university teaching and research examined by T. H. B. Symons' commission there was not one in which "reasonable balance and attention [was] being given to Canadian matters." The Book and Periodical Development Council has published an abridged version of *To Know Ourselves* (The Symons Report, 205 pages, distributed by M & S, $1.95 paper). Every teacher in the country — at whatever level — should be required to read it.

THE QUESTION of Canadian citizens' right to know extends beyond the schools. Exactly what wc have a tight to know is the issue involved in the Toronto Sun case now before tbe courts. But the notion that we really don't have a right to know very much extends to the nervous Functioning of the most lowly of civil servants. Some months ago, a friend who was doing research on the Foreign Investment Review Agency went into the FIRA office in Ottawa to pick up a copy of their annual report. Sk was asked what she wanted it For! I suspect that if too many of us asked For such a document at the same time. the government might find it necessary to invoke the War Measures Act.

I'M NOT A Family-tree man myself. but if I were. I'd want to own a copy of Angus Baxter's In Search of Your Roots: A Guide For Canadians Seeking Their Ancestors (293 pages. Macmillan. 514.95). Baxter offers a detailed description of how to go about getting the information one needs to trace one's roots almost anywhere in the world. Often, however. the process is so difficult — in the case of Poland. For example. nothing less than "a knowledge of polish and a visit to Poland" will da-that Mackenzie King's method of making contact with ancestors seems preferable. Or no less likely of bearing fruit.

KENNETH STRONG'S biography of Japan's conservationist pioneer. Tanaka Shozo, arrived on my desk the day the new Tokyo airport was put out of commission by his spiritual descendants. Ox Against the Storm (231 pages, UBC Press, $15) tells the story of this remarkable. pig-headed man who realized at the turn of the century that unless something was done the inordinately rapid industrialization of Japan would eventually make Japan a country unfit to live in. The book takes its title Fmm a poem by Shozo: "Beaten, buffeted/By the rain and the wind,/An ox drags his load/Past, and is gone/Leaving only/Wheeltracks in mud/And the sadness of things."

ONE OF THE essays included in Religion and Culture in Canada (edited by Peter Slater, 566 pages, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, $7.50) is titled "A Puckish Reflection on Religion in Canada." Its authors. Tom Sinclair-Faulkner. deals with the extent to which hockey fulfills a religious Function in the lives of many Canadians ("One k a little less lonely in Toronto if one may cheer the Leafs"). John Badertscher, one of Sinclair-Faulkner's colleagues, replies saying that "technological society is not only a new Form of religion, but an idolatrous one as well; and as in the case of all idolatries, it demands human sacrifice." *That*, hc says. is where hockey fits in. Fascinating reading.

TO WHAT EXTENT can national institutions such as banks or the CBC function effectively in a country as regionally diverse as Canada? Is it possible For them to do so without at least seeming to discriminate among the regions? Provincial Government Banks: A Case Study of Regional Response to National Institutions by John N. Benson (112 pages. The Fraser Institute, 626 Bute Street, Vancouver, 53.95) attempts to answer these questions as they apply to banking. (The book focuses on British Columbia when a government-owned "super bank" was on the drawing boards of the Barrett government.) Benson's surprising conclusion is that if such discrimination exists. it's "unlikely to be significant or persistent." □

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Letters to the Editor

ROBIN VS. GEORGE, CONT.

Sir:

With what I conceived to be characteristic Canadian urbanity. restraint, and cheerful Fellowship, I recently appeared in your pages (March) to comment on George Woodcock's achievement as editor of *Canadian Literature* for the last 19 years. I held back; I equivocated; I tried to point out in a Friendly way that George Woodcock edited a colourless, a clubhouse publication: self-congratulatory, anti-nationalist, spuming class analysis, avoiding forms of criticism that would involve Canada's dependent/*colonial economic* condition and *the real state of* patronage in the arts of the country.

I tried to suggest that, as a philosophical anarchist, (and a stuffed shirt) George Wccdccck was constantly suggesting we solve Canada's political problems by aping the Swiss Cantons, and that we pretend we have dealt with all of literature when we have produced a tunnel-visioned, politically castrated, self-congratulatory publication like *Canadian Literature.*

To my surprise and (I must admit it) disappointment, Woodcock dll not warm to my constructive criticism of his editing years. Instead hc attacked me in what I can only call a strident, ungentlemanly, and over-heated way. (His nearly 40 years in England obviously dld little to teach him good manners, it seems.) He didn't lii me saying he was self-congratulatory, nor that he had announced himself both an immigrant and a native (when it suited the public climate of opinion).

Let me give evidence. In his anthology Of articles, *A Choice of Critics* taken from *Canadian Literature*, Woodcock says in the introduction that the pieces "have permanent critical value" and are "substantial essays" with "literary merit." Two of them are his own, chosen by himself for inclusion.

He goes on to list a number of essayists in the bock who are also "adept in poetry and other fields of writing." Among that specially talented group Wccdccck lists Woodcock.

Finally. he goes on to deal, in two. large paragraphs, with "the fact that Canada is still a country of immigration." The "immigrant writers" have. Woodcock writes. "helped to introduce more rigorous ad objective critical standards." In that group he lists Woodcock.

The note of self-congratulation might be evident to a perceptive eye — which is not to say it would be evident to Woodcock's eye. Moreover, anyone who can find him saying anything else than that he's an immigrant in that introduction has to be something of-a magician.

He says in hi reply to me that he is an internationalist. Who isn't? He says — altogether too simplistically — that the nation-state is outmoded. And he plump for a "real working federation." What cf? Of Canada? Of the continent? Of the world? He doesn't say.

Perhaps the most embarrassing part of Woodcock's bellicose reply is the statistical section and his attacks, head on, upon me. *Canadian Literature used* mo writers, rays Wccdccck. He lists Bll Names. He only used three anarchists, or is it four? Then be asks for evidence, for explanation of my allegations.

Okay. Here's some. He never. he says. wrote editorials attacking people working on the "national question." But he says himself that he did "write editorials protesting against xenophobic attacks by certain self-styled nationalists on immigrant writers of integrity and worth."

Who were these people? Who defined what a xenophobic attack is? Who were the "immigrant writers cf integrity and worth"? I suspect Woodcock doesn't name them because MC of the people he defended, for instance, is Warren Tallman, a U.S. immigrant who dlln't want Canadian citizenship. Nonetheless, after IS years here he agreed to represent the Governor General, choosing the annual literary awards. Tallman was a self-declared anarchist, a U.S. citizen. and one (as anarchist) who wanted no truck with hierarchy or the likes of Governors General. But he took the job!

He doesn't strike me as a particularly convincing example of an immigrant writer of integrity ad worth. Many people in the literary world raised hell. for all the obvious reasons. Doubtless. in Woodcock's view, they were making "xenophobic attacks."

Many of us believe Warren Tallman and people like him and his many Black Mountain literary and political minions are cultural imperialists. George Woodcock *did align* himself witb them. They may not all describe themselves as anarchists. But that is, in a proper definition, what they are. And they are quite numerous in *Canadian Literature*.

My most important point is right there: Woodcock took sides and didn't even know he was doing it. He did nothing to provide balance.

He asks for names of seriously neglected writers "on the national question," and I admit that is a harder question to answer. Wbm are the people we don't see in *Canadian Literature* he asks, on the "national question." class, and so c d

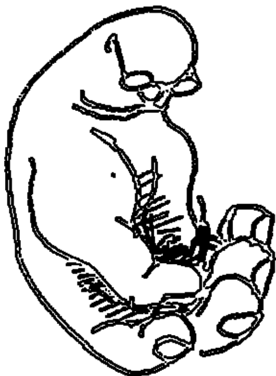
My answer Is that Woodcock did nothing to develop writers on the questions. He did not solicit material on those questions though he did on others. He did not develop writers present and available. Reg Watters, for instance. wrote a few excellent articles on national character and national literature, and then was permitted to disappear on the subject. Was he invited to develop his ideas? R. L. McDougall wrote an article on class. Was he asked to submit more, or to suggest other names? Was Dyson Carter ever invited on class and working people? Joe Wallace was alive and in Vancouver, I understand. Was he ever solicited. interviewed, even noticed?

Then of course there's Hugh MacLennan who Woodcock published. MacLennan's speech on culture and Canadianization of the universities is published in a four-volume anthology of *Canadian Literature*. Did Woodcock ever solicit MacLennan, who was open, public. and lucid on that question, to do an article relating it to literature and criticism in the country? I know he didn't ask Marya Fiamengo Hardman to dc such an article. one of his first friends in Canada. And I know she would have done it. I believe he hasn't solicited Milton Acorn on any of the subjects. I could go on and on.

Fmm the evidence of *Canadian Literature*, Woodcock never solicited anybody on those questions. A part of the "national question" is. of course, the question of Canadianization. That struggle and its meaning for literature, curriculum, and literary criticism might never have existed if *Canadian Literature* is *the* source of evidence.

As for an article I wrote and submitted 15 years ago tc George Woodcock, I really haven't got much to say. I doubt that the rejection of that little piece has formed my philosophical, political, and aesthetic relation to literature in Canada. My position is pretty consistent and George Woodcock's intellectually castrated editing of *Canadian Literature* fits in to a small part of my general commentary.

But if he wants to prove me brute and madman, let him publish hi letter and my letter, and even — for all I care — my "polemical piece on cultural politics." He didn't like it and rejected it. so I'm giving him the cd&.



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But hi article is full of insinuation and innuendo. I've cleared up what I could. Let him do the rest.

I'm afraid that tbe truth of tbe matter is George Woodcock took a *very* political, a *very* ideological position in the editing of *Canadian Literature* making it, as I said before, "a distinct obstruction to the development of criticism in Canada."

Robin Mathews
Ottawa

Sii:

Spring is coming and the voice of the pipsqueak is heard in the land. Another letter from Robin Mathews. He should give up. George Woodcock's reputation can survive such puerile attacks. I wonder if Mathews' reputation will survive making them. At one time I had Mathews pegged as a sort of low humorist, a writer of not very subtle satire, attempting to mine veins which Swift worked out centuries ago. Gradually it dawned on me that he was in earnest, that what animates him is the billet jealousy that only the *sterile-minded* can feel *toward* those *who achieve* and are admired. I happen to admire George Woodcock. I admire his integrity, his clarity. hi intelligence and his critical distinction. Any good critic is bound to say or write things with which others may disagree. I do not agree with Woodcock's anarchism, but I believe that he is a civilized man with whom I could carry on a civilized debate. Mathews, judged fmm any of his public statements or postures, can not be called civilized. To engage in any kind of discussion with him would be futile. Come on Canada, put him on the back burner and let him stew in bib own bile.

John H. Wilde
Due West, s. c.

P.S. I lived in Winnipeg for 11 years. I lii Canada and I like most Canadians. But I don't like petty-minded bigots no matter where they reside.

Sii:

I was reading *Books in Canada.* Volume 7, Number 3, (why don't you number them consecutively, like comic books?) and becoming outraged at George Woodcock's laughable attempts to discredit Robin Mathews and his accusations. I was. as usual pmmising myself that I'd write a letter to the editor, knowing full well that I wouldn't. I never write letters to the editor. I can't type — not even by the increasingly chic, two-finger, hunt-and-peck method.

But this lime, as you may have deduced. it's different. Woodcock claims that "the 'success' of my magazine rests ultimately . on . the editor." Sorry Jack! The success of any magazine depends on the reader. I doubt. of course, if Woodcock's comments were addressed to the reader. Like much of the writing in *Books in Canada,* Woodcock's rebuttal appears to be only for the consumption of the CanLit clique. of which I am not a member and. as such. have no business writing this letter.

Simon Snow
North Bay. Ont.

Sir:

Much as I admire Woodcock's works as a writer, I have to agree with Robin Mathews that his editing of *Canadian Literature* is no fit subject of public praise. Woodcock is a great Canadian. If he has bad to support his massive achievement by mechanical labour id some interstice of the Canadian academic bureaucracy, then let us respect the necessity that drove him to it. and celebrate the fact that he has reached the age where he will not have to do it any mote.

In his preface to *CL #1,* Woodcock said: "*Canadian Literature* is published by a university, but many of its present and future contributom live and work outside of academic circles, and long may they continue to do so. for, the independent men and women Of letters are the solid core of any mature literature." Quite right as usual, but of course it was not long before tbe university began exacting its price for publishing C L . *Despite some brilliant flashes, the periodical* gradually became the p-of grad students and professors climbing the academic ladder, and of writers needing a number of easy publishing credits to support their positions on the Canada Council.

What's wrong with the kind of criticism that *CL* publishes? T. S. Eliot said it well in "The Frontiers of Criticism." Tbe "teacher-critics." he says. make the prevalent error Of "mistaking explanation for understanding." Their three basic approaches (via literary origins, author's experience, textual analysis) may help a reader to avoid misunderstanding, but do not facilitate — indeed they decimate — any conviction of personal relevancy. "It was as if someone had taken a machine to pieces and left me with the task of reassembling the pats." The "specialism" of academic criticism is the key to its weakness. "Every critic may have his eye on a definite goal. may be engaged on a task which needs no justification, and yet criticism itself may be lost as to its alms."

An analysis of Woodcock's last issue, *#73,* shows just how incapable he was of keeping back the tide. Three of the five feature articles, by Staines, Tauskey, and Burwell, 45 pages of a 127-page issue, are manifestly illogical. They are sophisticated grad student exercises at most, of some interest perhaps to teachers engaged in the business of refining the art of expository writing as a classroom exercise. They are certainly not worth publication in "Canada's foremost literary magazine." How much greater the contribution to Canadian literature if UBC hsd bundled up all that expensive paps and given it to Bill Bissett, Alan Safarik, Barry McKinnon, or Brian Fawcett!

I must take issue with Mathews, however, over his feeling that Woodcock has never understood Canadian literature. I think he understands it too well. When it coma to "survival." in Canada, George Woodcock could write the book. He returned as an anarchist to a country where the institutions preceded the people, where the heroes are mainly engineers, clergymen. policemen, civil servants, and other varieties of bureaucrat. He was first associated with John Sutherland and *Northern Review* — the greatest critic and the best magazine of Canadian letters in our history. (Read what Sutherland said about Canadian criticism in his submission to tbe Royal Commission to the Arts in the December-January, 1950, issue of *NR!*) But as Woodcock has told us himself. no one could live by writing for John Sutherland and gardening. Woodcock gravitated to the university and, as I understand it, took on *CL* as a kind of "choice of nightmares." At UBC, if he could not hold off the aspirants to the departmental publishing list, at least he made enough space for himself to write a series Of brilliant books. Now he is haunted by the praise of colleagues for the meaningless work he and they bad to do for a living. If he could put all that on paper! It would be one of tbe great anarchist texts, for the real enemy of anarchism is not government but bureaucracy.

Maybe he will do it. He is. after all, a "*remarkable man.*" Beneath all his recent babbling about *Canadian Literature, I* seem to hear the cry of his real voice. "The horror, the horror!"

John Harris
Prince George, B.C.

FOREVER IRVING

Sir:

How difficult it is to find words which adequately express my indebtedness to Irving Layton's short but gut-grippingly significant article in your March issue, "Leading with a five-thousand-year-old chin." In recent years it has been made painfully clear to me that 1. as a second-generation Wasp Canadian, had absolutely no right to exist, but until Mr. Layton's penetrating article I had no idea just how much my "parvenu" and "moribund" existence was stifling the in: terminable fertility of the Jewish-Canadian imagination.

I thought it particularly kind of Mr. Layton to remind us that he belongs to a group of "talented and resourceful" Jewish-Canadian writers who are united in their fight against the sterile gentility and "talentless mediocrity" of the Wasp literary establishment. In fact. only Mr. Layton's characteristic reserve prevented him from going into the sordid details of this flagrant opposition to all that is dynamic in Canadian ethnic-minority writings. Has not this establishment repeatedly exhibited its reactionary defiance of Jewish-Canadian writers by printing much of their poetry and fiction in several journals and magazines? Has it not further thwarted such creative effort by publishing the works of each of these "talented and resourceful" writers, including-l blush to mention it- more than 20 books by Mr. Layton himself? Have not many of these authors felt the humiliating sting of winning the Governor General's Award for poetry or fiction? Mr. Layton has, but he is obviously too cracked up with suffering and indignation to bring this fact to our attention. And, of course, we should remember that this suffering and indignation has increased tenfold ever since he was forced to accept a teaching position by the "pathetic stumblebum academics" at York University.

Yet. if it were not for Mr. Layton's recent poetry and related pronouncements I would never have come to understand that I was indeed not a Christian but a rather stolid and stupid "Xian." So solidly entrenched in the ways of Xianity was I that I scarcely, if ever, thought of Christ burping, farting, and having an erection. Ii-, I now know that someday these images will come to me as readily as they do to Mr. Layton. who has evidently spent many sleepless nights contemplating such matters.

But perhaps in the end Mr. Layton is not asking the Wasp literary establishment to land another blow on his 5,000-year-old chin but rather to get down on their knees and bestow a kiss upon his 66-year-old cheeks.

John F. Vardon
Former President of YPXA
(Young People's Xian Association)
Kitchener, Ont.

Sir:

It was ingenious. but a little unkind of you, to include in your symposium on "The Verbal Mosaic" (March) a piece from the pen of a Master Humorist. Irving Layton is admittedly our finest parodist, but the rollicking absurdity of his prose and verse made the rest of us look very dull indeed. 1 have long admired Layton. I am not at all sure that he isn't our greatest comedian. His portrayal of the bilious egoist, quick with personal abuse. and filled witb self-congratulatory euphoria. is side-splitting. and chastening. After reading one of his letters to the press, or hi6 masterly prefaces we are all forced to reconsider the tone and temper cd our work. His use of hyperbolic burlesque in imitating the grosser absurdities of our literary critics; his extraordinary capacity to out-do the racists among us in his fantasia on the theme of the wicked Wasps and the wonderful Jews; his splendid attacks upon the anti-intellectuals in the form of frenetic and illogical parodies of their diatribes against the universities: these are a source of endless pleasure tome.

I particularly admire his statement that the Jewish Canadian writer is a "5,000-year-old Canadian." I have never seen a funnier parody of the claims made by those concerned to celebrate their ancestries. We are obliged to ask what happened in 3022 B.C. According to Ussher, Adam died in 3074 B.C.. and tradition has it that the Flood took place in 2469 B.C.. and Abraham was not born until 1966 B.C. Can he have intended 500 and not 5,000? In which case (the dates are approximate), he may be claiming Cabot as a Jew — as splendid a piece of reclamation as Yeats attempting to show that Blake was Irish.

HI poem to Douglas Barbour is, of course, a masterpiece. Nobody but Layton would have the nerve to portray the aggrieved poet as such a small-minded. vulgar, and hysterical person. I particularly appreciated the subtlety of the syntactical error in the second stanza; it Is not a new device in Layton's work, but it is handled here with great aplomb.

It is. in my view, hllh time that Layton's genius as a parodist was recognized. His is no common ability. I do not know of another poet who deliberately mingles his serious poems and his parodic excursions in his books. Sometimes this cm confuse the unsophisticated reader as in the last two books where the jokes exceeded the serious works in number and the humour of the introductions was possibly a little broad, a little excessive. These are however minor flaws, and we must recall the successes. Who can forget that

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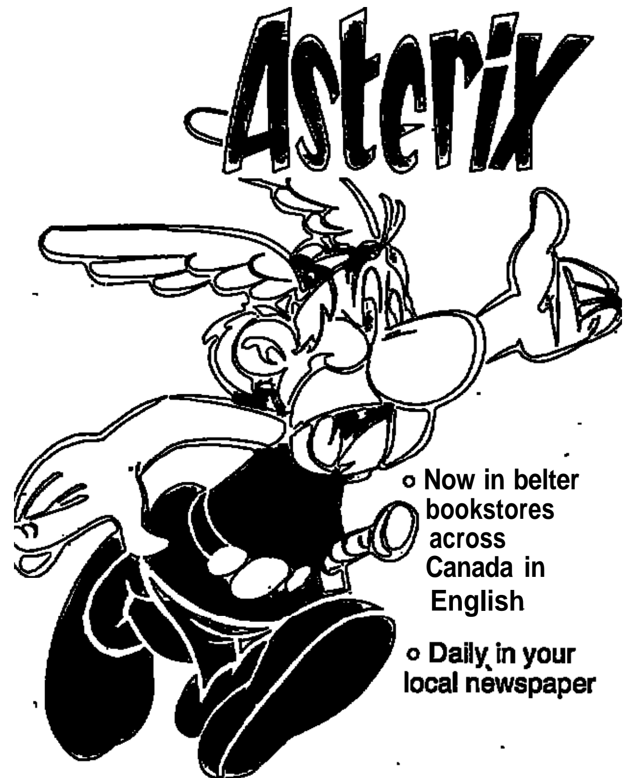

hilarious pos" "Lilith" in *Balls* for *a* One *Armed Juggler*, and that deftly clumsy "Roman Jew to Ovid"? Without Irving Layton we might be in danger of "king ourselves and our literary pretensions seriously. As it is. we know that as long as be is among us, however, clumsily we write our verse, and however egotistical. bilious. illogical, anti-intellectual and vulgar we become, he will outdistance us in his superb mockeries. Ho is "as constant as the northern star, Of whose true-fix'd and resting qualities There is no fellow in the firmament." Why, oh why, has be never yet received the Stephen Leacock Award for humour?

Robin Skelton
Victoria, B.C.

Sir:

To My Brother Irving:

Hath not a Wasp eyes? hath not a Wasp hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons.'.. If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us. do we not die?...

Phyllis Webb
Ganges, B.C.

ELEMENT OF FIRE

Sir:

I assume what Bon Waldie is most concerned with is how people acquire the habit of reading. (Mr. Waldie reviewed our books *Earth* and *Air* for the March issue.) And I wonder how he acquired his. Was it by answering the questions at the end of each chapter7 Was it by drawing up lists of the words he didn't know on each page and diligently looking them up afterwards? Was it by searching out the theme and purpose of every poem, ploy. short story, essay and novel he read? I doubt it.

People become readers when they come to realize that the world of print has something to do with their own lives; they read to enlarge their lives, to inform and entertain themselves. Looked at this way. reading can be a perfectly natural process, if only the busy-work could be kept to a minimum.

Do" Mr. Waldie know just who non-readers are? (The non-readers are the audiences for whom our series hat been designed.) They are not "medial readers, those who require highly specialized instruction to help them overcome perceptual and physical handicaps. Non-readers make up anywhere from 20% to 50% of the population. depending on whose educated guess you go by. For a variety of reasons they see no value in the painted word, and in schools they are the students who have come to distrust textbooks, perhaps because classroom materials see" to have little connection with what happens outside institutional wails. Mt. Waldie would deal with non-readers, he suggests, by telling them that reading is "damn hard work." I wonder how many would be converted by such an approach.

In producing the Elements series for junior high school (*Earth, Air, Fire* and *Water*) our motive has been to treat reading as an enjoyable experience, not a chore. The magazine-style design, the many illustrations reflect an attempt to render the books es "dike textbooks as possible. There are no questions, no exercises, no lists of things to do; there is simply the material itself, all of it Canadian. (For teachers who want back-up, however, a very thorough teachers' guide will provide information on the selections and detailed suggestions for use of the series as a catalyst to student writing.) Much of the writing is new to the classroom. Much of it can be "ad aloud: that's one way of enjoying what you mad. And some of the pieces do "flat various attitudes towards matters which should concern Canadians —I can't agree that these attitudes are reflecting a "dated, urban, liberal value system." The truth is too many books now being used in schools reflect no attitude at all towards this country; perhaps that's because so many school books are American. Non-made" in particular need to know that print can be as committed and immediate as any other medium: most of them are intelligent enough to deal with issues.

It would be useful to know from what platform Mt. Waldie addresses us. He calls himself an "increasingly traditional reviewer" — and the bias certainly shows! Listen to hi":

"Learning is *not* easy. It's hard work for most students and damn hard work for a few. That's a fundamental precondition for learning any new skill, be it making clay pots. tiding a bicycle. or reading and writing."

Ironically all the examples are of activities which should. above all. be enjoyable. Sorely the *desire* to learn is the first precondition of learning. And. *to the non-reader, that desire* doesn't arise From a reading program, or skill-building exercises, or flow-charts, or the threat of difficulties ahead.

The most pleasing "action to our series has been from vocational students — often the forgotten souls in the educational system. They have expressed their delight at being presented with adult ideas which challenge their understanding and imagination. Teenagers aren't adults yet of course. But they don't need to be patronized by their teachers and by their textbooks. Reading is part of the overall thinking process; it isn't an isolated skill. Ron Waldie should inform himself more fully of the complexity of the reading problems in schools, so that he can bring a better understanding to the materials he is assessing.

Peter Carver
Educational Editor
Peter Martin Associates Ltd.
Toronto

Sir:

It was "damn hard work" but I got a,, the way through your man Waldie's review of Peter Carver's Elements series (March).

Why is Waldie so grumpy?

Carver's series is simply a very readable collection of mom than 200 pieces of Canadian writing most of which haven't been seen before. I can't think of anything more useful to give to a reluctant reader.

But Waldie thinks that reluctant made" will stop being reluctant once they feel the lash of his long faced warning about reading being "damn hard work."

Then he sees a dark connection between reading and learning to ride a bicycle and making a clay pot.

I have a Dickensian scene in mind: old Waldie standing over young Waldie: a clay pot is being made and it's damn hard work; later, the bicycle ordeal.

Sad.

I see where you define Waldie as someone who "writes frequently on classroom materials."

That's too bad.

Brian Doyle
Glebe Collegiate Institute
Ottawa

men and their libraries: 2

by Foo

ON HOGTOWN AND HILL

Sir:

O Canada! Oh, criticism!

I refer, of course, to your April "Notes and Comments," in which you present the 1978 Books in Canada Award for First Novels to Oonah McFee for *Sandbars*. It is a fine first novel to be so", a "al solid achievement, but one wonders bow it was possible for your five judges to pass over Jack Hodgins' imaginative *tour de force, The Invention of the World.* Could it have something to do with the fact that all five of your judges live in 8" Toronto area? Do we have yet another example of the kind of Toronto parochialism that sees the boundaries of Canada as being Bloor east and west, Yonge north and south? Since your magazine is called *Books* in *Canada*,

it might have been more appropriate to have selected a national panel.

The award for the worst piece of pseudo-criticism from your judges clearly goes to Douglas Hill. who, we are told, teacher English at U of I-s Erindale College. A,,, can say is heaven help his students if this is what passes for literary criticism in bis classes. "It's hard to dismiss any of these novels," he tells us, as if this were the critic's main function. "Each [of these novels] has some virtues," this oracle says, though "there's a flaw common to them all." What academic arrogance, what gall. He goes on to speak of "dead air," "easy writing," and "cheating." What kind of critical language *is* this? Surely the seven short-listed novels (presumably the best first novels published in the country last year). deserve a mote sophisticated, critical response than thii. particularly from a university professor of English? Such dismissive criticism would never be tolerated in any reputable graduate class. Can you imagine a student getting away with saying. as Hill does of Hodgins' novel. that "there's a lot of bullshit in the book." And how can lyricism be "forced" and insights "hackneyed"? Surely there are contradictions in terms?

Only David Helwig offers a human, if uncritical response. Come on *Books in Canada*, the award is an excellent idea. but you have got to do better than this. We simply cannot allow ourselves to go on settling for so little good criticism in this country.

Doug Beardsley
Toronto

Editor's note: 0 Canada! Oh. hoary old Hogtown conspiracies! Mr. Beardsley's shallow. reflex-action jibe about Toronto parochialism is disappointing. His cheap shot at Pmf. Hill is more so. First, three of the live judges ate relatively recent arrivals in the Toronto area and four of the seven novels on the short list are set a long way west of Yonge Street. A national panel would of course be ideal but the organizational costs ate beyond our present resources. Second, the judges were asked for and gave necessarily brief comments to explain their verdicts. Ib treat such comments as full-fledged literary criticism is a disingenuous confusion of categories. Third, the comments were printed to make the selection process as open as possible. Perhaps Mt. Beardsley would prefer we adopt the secretive procedures of the Governor General's Awards and simply print the name of the winner — without revealing the short list or the judges' comments.

KEEL-HAULING HELWIG

St:

What does David Helwig mean by daring to question (March) whether anyone under60 reads the Hornblower books now? Of course we do. Not only that, but Forester has spawned a whole genre of writing, of whom the but examples are Alexander Kent and Dudley Pope (there ate also several others). Even C. Northcote Parkinson got into the act by wiling a "biography" of Hornblower.

Now, *with The Black Cockade* by Victor Suthren, we have the genre with Canadian content. Hornblower fans who ate also Canadian literary nationalists can now indulge their fancy without guilt. Bravo Victor Suthren! I look forward to the sequels.

In the meantime, Mr. Helwig can stop making assumptions about the reading habits of those who presumably are younger than he is.

C. W. K. Heard
Ottawa

TYPOS CORRECTED

Sir:

I wish to comment on Duncan Meiie's March review of CommCept Publishing's *Look Again: The Process @Prejudice and Discrimination.*

In *his* article, "Prejudice and *Those* Love-hear Relationships," *the* reviewer is particularly critical of the typographical errors found *in* the book. This seems somewhat unjustified, considering that Mr. Meikle received a review copy of the book in which a note acknowledged the errors and announced the imminent appearance of a revised edition.

A revised edition of *Look* Again has been available for more than six months and the edition Mr. Meiie criticizes is not in circulation.

Patricia M. Ellis
Managing Editor
CommCept Publishing Ltd.
Vancouver

CREDIT TO KALMAN

Sir:

In Graham Jackson's review of *Dance Today in Canada* (Match). credit was given to myself as general editor. Credit for the high quality of this excellent book should have gone to Rolf Kalman, who is listed as editor on the verso.

It it hoped this error was not indicative of the consideration given tbis unique book.

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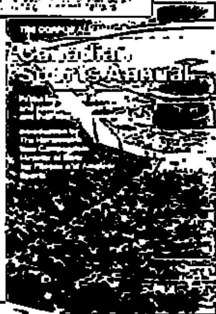

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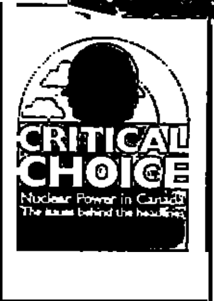

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SINCE THE ABSURD and undemocratic 30-year rule on official papers is still in force, historians and the general public have only just become aware of how batty Mackenzie King really was. Will we have to wait until 1998 to read the first of the Trudeau diaries? Probably, but meanwhile let's try to cut the red "pe. We'll pay $25 for the best hypothetical entry in Trudeau's diary for any day during the past 10 years. Maximum length: 100 words. Address: CanWit No. 33, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street fist, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is July 31.

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 31

WE WERE SEEKING "official" American jokes for next year's edition of *The Official Ethnic Calendar*, published in New York. Unfortunately, many of the rollicking knee-slappers we received seemed to date from the War of 1812; when it comes to anti-American humour, Canadians apparently have long memories. An exception was the entry from petty Schnorr, an American (and clearly a republican) now living in Toronto. She receives $25 for this topical ringer:

Q: Why do the people of Plains, Georgia, eat peanuts on Thanksgiving?
A: Because they sent their turkey to Washington.

Honourable mentions:

'An American is Rome asked directions to the Sistine Chapel. By inadvertance he was directed to the public urinals. There he saw a crowd of people with their heads craned. looking up. Back home, be asked what he thought of the Sistine Chapel. "The ceiling is fine," he said. "bet the smell in then is something awful."

— A. St.-J. Swift, Montreal

* * *

Q: What's the name of the American neurosis that Gerald Ford now suffers from?
A: Peanut envy.

— Josephy Dunlop-Addley, Appin, Ont.

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WRITERS' WORKSHOP
July 31 - August 11 at New College, U. of T. Fiction: Austin Clarke. Alice Denham, Reshard Gool, Gerald Lampert, Elizabeth Salter. Dramatists: Ken Gass, Marlin Klnch. Poets: Steve McCaffery, Joe Rosenblatt, P. K. Page. Non-fiction: Eleanor Wright Pelrine, Rachel Wyatt. For brochure: G. Lampert. Workshop, 165 Spadina Avenue, Suite 8. Toronto M5T 2C4. (416) 364-3818.

Books received

THE FOLLOWING Canadian books have been received by *Books in Canada* in recent weeks. Inclusion in this list does not preclude a review or notice in a future issue:

Reduce Your Personal Taxes, by Gordon Riehl, PaperJacks.
Valéry, pour une poétique du dialogue, by Alexandre Lazaridès, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
La Bruyère, Ou le style cruel, by Doris Kirsch, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
Wilfrid Laurier, by Martin Spigelman, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
Gabriel Dumont, by George Woodcock, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
Protective Footwear, by George Bowring, M & S.
Family Kinship and Community, by K. Ishwaran, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Oscar Remembered, by Maxim Mazumdar, Personal Library.
Working for Wildlife, the Beginning of Preservation in Canada, by Janet Foster, U of T Press.
Jody Said, by Beth Jankola, Press Gang.
Small Rural Schools on Prince Edward Island, by Edmonds & Bessal, Square Deal.
The Democratization of Canadian Architecture, by Anthony Jackson, Library of Canadian Architecture.
The Stone Angel, by Margaret Laurence, Bantam-Seal Books.
The Ion Effect, by Fred Soyka with Alan Edmonds, Bantam-Seal Books.
This Man Was Innocent, by James C. McRuer, Clarke Irwin.
Pierre M. Irving and Washington Irving: A Collaboration in Life and Letters, by Wayne R. Kime, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
Religion and Culture in Canada/Religion et culture au Canada, edited by Peter Slater, CCSR.
From Rural Parkland to Urban Centre: One Hundred Years of Growth at The University of Manitoba 1877 to 1977, Hyperion Press.
The West Coast Trail Poems, by John Marshall, Oolichan Books.
The Woman I Am, by Dorothy Livesay, Press Porcépic.
The Italians, by F. G. Paci, Oberon.
Skevington's Daughter, by John Mills, Oberon.
Running With the Wind, by Olive O'Brien, Elaine Harrison & Assoc.
The Insider's Guide to Toronto, by Glenn McInnes, The Picadilly Press.
Oh Can (you see) ada!, by Simon Lizee, Myrtle Ebert, and Violet Lefebvre, CANLIT.
antitoenailimagery: Research Projects in Canadian Literature, by Peter Birdsall, Delores Broten & Gail Donald, CANLIT.
Mx 'n' Match II, by Gail Donald, Delores Broten, and Peter Birdsall, CANLIT.
Valley Verses: 49 Illustrated Fairy Tales for Children, by Josephine Grawbarger, Spiritual Press.
The Hogg Poems and Drawings, by Barry Callaghan, General.
Werthelmer: Form and Growth, by Esther Wertheimer, Musson.
Vancouver Defended: A History of the Men and Guns of the Lower Mainland Defences, 1859-1949, by Peter N. Moogk, Antonson Publishing.
Canadian Military Independence in the Age of the Superpowers, by Brian Cuthbertson, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
The Problem Exists in the Classroom Because It Exists in the World, edited by Susan Wayne, Co-operative Schools Group on Development Education.
Quebec: The People Speak, by Rick Butler, Doubleday.
The Shanty-Horses: James Bay Poems, by Bob McGee, New Delta.
Grace, by Michael Harris, New Delta.
The Other Side of Games, by Richard Sommer, New Delta.
The Assumption of Private Lives, by Robert Allen, New Delta.
"Lil", by Anne McLean, New Delta.
Between the Lines, by Stephen Scriver, Thistledown Press.
The Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada, compiled by Mary Alice Downie and Barbara Robertson, Oxford.
Fallout, by Peter Such, NC Press.
I've Tasted My Blood, by Milton Acorn, Steel Rail.
The Future of the Offshore, Legal Developments and Canadian Business, edited by Donald J. Patton, Clare Beckton, and Douglas M. Johnston, Centre for International Business Studies.
Howard Lowrie, M.D.: Physician Humanitarian, by William Repka, Progress Books.
Vanished Peoples, by Peter Such, NC Press.
A Wilderness of Days, by Maxwell Bates, Sono Nis Press.
Hanging Threads, by W. Gunther Plaut, Lester & Orpen.
Carl Schaefer, by Margaret Gray, Margaret Rand, and Lois Steen, Gage.
Moving in Alone, by John Newlove, Oolichan Books.
The Moon Pool, by John Ballem, M & S.
Don Quixote in Nighttown, by Victor-Lévy Beaulieu, Press Porcépic.
Residential Property Tax Relief in Ontario, by R. M. Bird and N. E. Slack, U of T Press.
Duchess, by Josephine Edgar, PaperJacks.
The Bomb Makers, by Vic Mayhew, PaperJacks.
The Tartar, by Franklin Proud, PaperJacks.
Of Pure Blood, by Marc Hillel and Clarissa Henry, PaperJacks.
Three Cheers for Me, by Donald Jack, PaperJacks.
That's Me in the Middle, by Donald Jack, PaperJacks.
The Periwinkle Assault, by Charles Dennis, PaperJacks.
Dark Must Yield, by Dave Godfrey, Press Porcépic.
Noble Madness, by Maye Preston Hill, PaperJacks.
Liberty and the Holy City, by Michael Macklem, Oberon Press.
Journey to the Sun, by Yves Troendle, Oolichan Books.
Up in the Tree, by Margaret Atwood, M & S.
Jeannette, a Memoir, by Tom Brown, Lester & Orpen.
Four Canadian Poets, by Avron Hoffman, Cathy Ford, Rikki, and Opal Nations, Intermedia.
This Book, by Opal Nations, The Eternal Network.
Gilles Hénault: Lectures de sémaphore, by Hugues Corriveau, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
Ancient Music, by Itzy Borenstein, Aya Press.
You Asked Us, edited by Anne Collins and Prue Hemelryk, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
From First Moon to End of Year, by Rosalia Scott, Guinness Publishing.
Ahml, by Manon Rippon, Sono Nis Press.
Northern Vagabond, by Alex Inglis, M & S.
Dominance and Dependency, by John Hutcheson, M & S.
Song and Silence, by Darlene Madott, Borealis Press.

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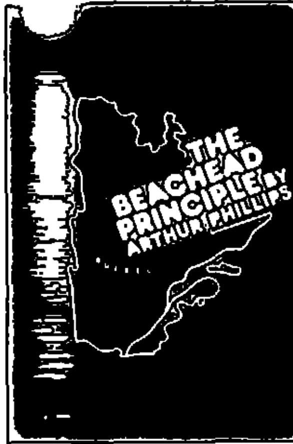

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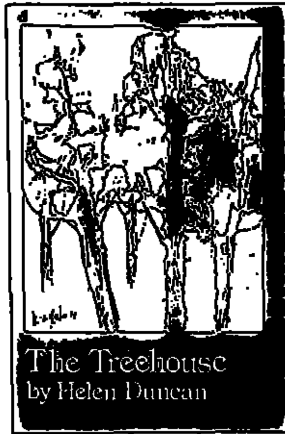

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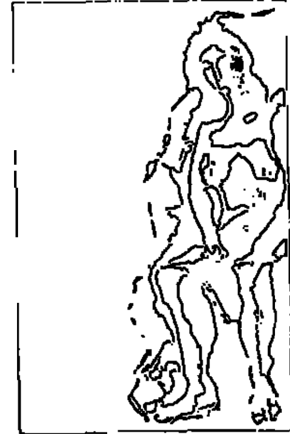

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