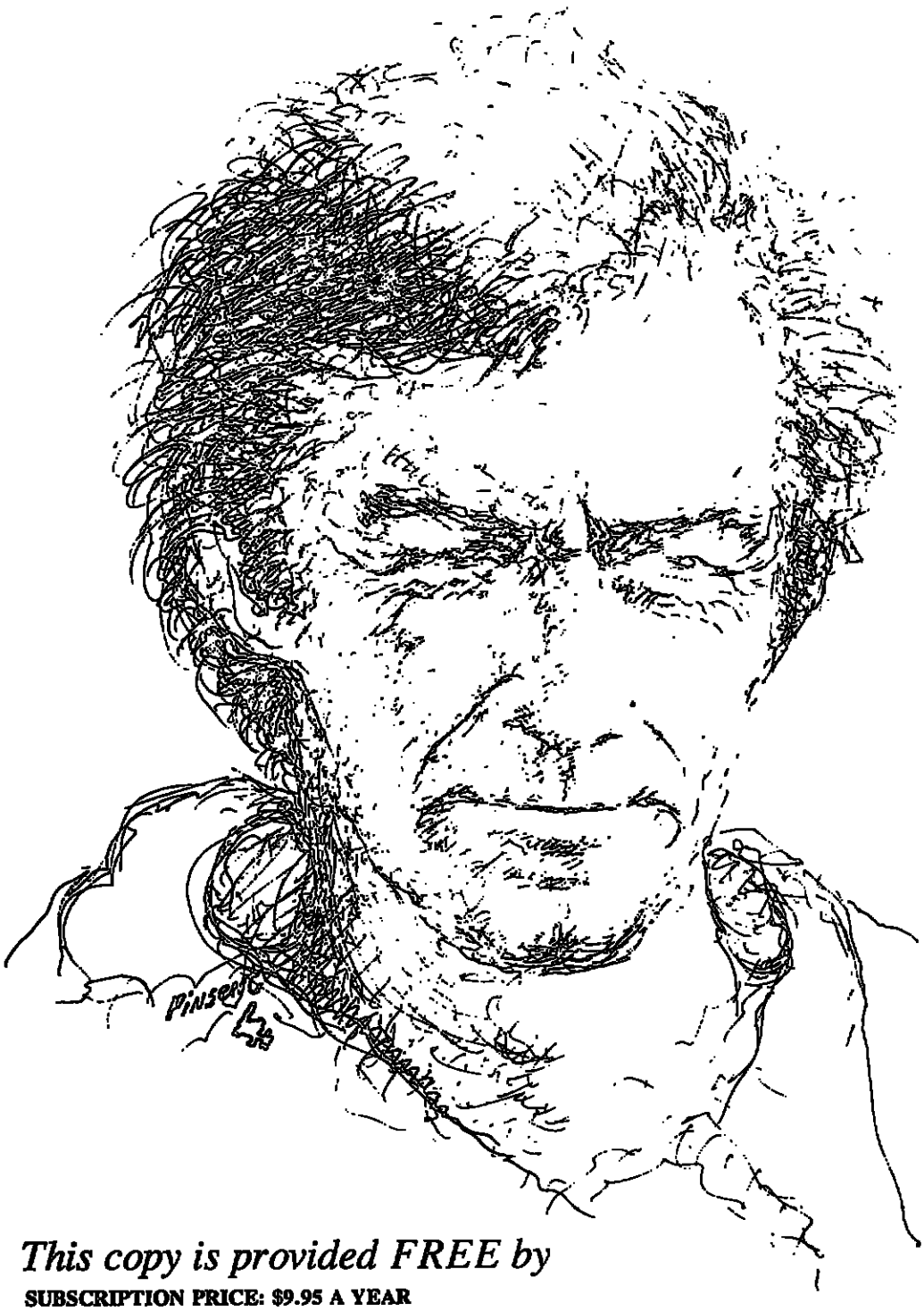
Volume 8, Number 4 A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS April, 1979

Who wrote the best first novel of 1978? See page three
Drama issue: domestic alarums and Talonbooks' excursions
A Gothic end to the prolific apprenticeship of Matt Cohen

BOOKSINCANADA



GORDON PINSENT

A man of many parts

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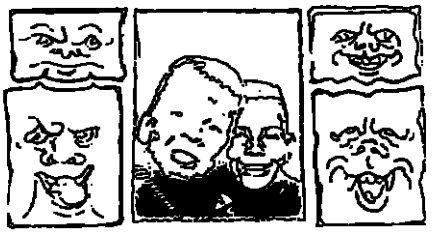
Volume 8, Number 4 April. 1979

BOOKS IN CANADA

FEATURES

REVIEWS

DEPARTMENTS



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FAIREST OF THE FAIR

Presenting this year's winner of dur award for first novels, gleaned from an early harvest that proved less than vintage

AS IN WINE so in first novels if this year's crop of contenders for the third annual Books in Canada Award for First Novels is any indication. Some 25 first novels were published in Canada in 1978 as compared with 20 last year and nearly 40 in 1976. But this was not a vintage year.

Our panel had trouble selecting a short list — any first novel published in English during the calendar year is eligible for the award which carries a cash prize of $1,000 -and finally settled on *Abra* by Joan Barfoot (McGraw-Hill Ryerson), *Disneyland. Please* by Clive Doucet (Fitzhenry & Whiteside), *The Double-Cross Circuit* by Michael Dorland (Lester & Orpen), *Hold Fast by* Kevin Major (Clarke Irwin), *The Italians* by Frank Paci (Oberon), and *Parade on an Empty Street* by Margaret Drury Gane (Clarke Irwin). Indeed. one of the judges suggested that we not award the prize this year because the field was so poor. The books could be ranked, he felt, but none deserved to be a winner.

Unlike previous years, when the panel had been deadlocked or severely divided. the judges found it easy to select a winner. Two of the four judges felt one book was by far tbe most accomplished, provocative, and intelligent novel, and that it shone not only in terms of this contest. but as a piece of fiction. It is with great pleasure that we announce. that Joan Barfoot, author of *Abm.* has won the 1978 Books in Canada Award for First Novels.

The judges for this year's competition were Montreal writer and translator Sheila Fischman; novelist and teacher Dave Godfrey of the Creative Writing Department. University of Victoria: critic and lecturer Douglas Hill of Erindale College, University of Toronto; and bookseller David Stimpson of the University of Toronto Bookstores. First-novel columnist Sandra Martin chaired the panel. Here are the judges' comments:

Sheila Fischman: I was pleased by the range of themes, subjects, and settings in the novels on this short list. It was interesting to note that there was only one truly "regional" novel (Hold *Fast*) — though Gane's *Parade on an Empty Street* should likely be included too. now that more people arc acknowledging tbat Toronto is a region.

I picked up *The Double-Cross Circuit with some* irritation — because it arrived late, and I had to read it on the last day. But just as the blurb writer promised, I couldn't put it down. One quibble: the characters should have been made to sound as though they were speaking French. not North-American English. Doucet's *Disneyland, Please* took me from a world that's completely foreign — that of big-time football -to tbe borderline counter-culture that's been made all too familiar by novels, and maintained my interest throughout. *Parade on an Empty Street* is a nice nostalgic evocation of once-WASP Toronto, but the tidy ending made me uncomfortable. Paci's *The Italians* showed effectively the kinds of tensions, cultural and personal, that can exist in any immigrant family. but he tried to crowd too many important themes and questions into one shortish novel. Major's Newfoundland novel is' a little gem that depicts adolescent sorrow, stubbornness, and joy. and it can be read with profit by adults as well as younger readers.

My favourite novel of the six. though, the one I vote for as best first novel of the year, is *Abra*. *To my* astonishment, for tbis was the novel I approached with the greatest apprehension. I'm tired. weary, sick to death of stories about middle-class people who throw it all away for the tranquillity or adventure of life in the wilds. often with an adolescent lover or one of the same sex, and the lint few pages of *Abm made* me *feat* the worst. But then the woman's story began to unfold, her character to develop, her philosophy to sound appealing — and I was captivated, completely captivated. I shared Abra's anguish as she rediscovered her daughter, now a young woman, and the torment she must have experienced as she made ha final decision. Barfoot is a writer with intelligence, sensitivity, inventiveness, and the great gift of being able to take what has b&me a hackneyed theme and make it new. I look forward eagerly to whatever else she might bc writing.

Dave Godfrey: The past decade has spoiled reviewers of first novels; each year there has been at least one quite extraordinary novel. often from a figure already established in another genre. Now we are faced with quite an ordinary crop. Ranking such work is not really the proper exercise for tbe critics; helping rebuild the audience would be more to the point. My four choices show an inverse relationship between the probable success and flaws.

The Double-Cross Circuit is likely to be the most successful. One of those dashing talcs of intrigue with the requisite amount of blood and gore per chapter. it is saved from tbc ordinary by the crafty use as background of published material on ITT and tbe Algerian war. The plot turns, however, on a communications system that would. miraculously. leak the information on *some* of

Joan Barfoot

its channels to the Russians. The impossibility of that. fmm a technical sense. somehow founders the whole novel, making one think not about the plot but about what fear of corporational technology must have done to a readership to keep this kind of witchcraft moral tale so much in demand.

Abm suffers from a similar flaw, although this time psychological unbelievability rather than technological. Barfoot's heroine is a woman who leaves husband and family to go live on her own in a bush farm. On tbe first page, Abra can hardly remember her own name. By chapter three, witb the arrival of Katie, her daughter. she is remembering detail after detail of her own departure and arrival. As current as the subject matter is, I never really could let myself match tbe novel to the real world after that initial dismption of belief. The novel is almost totallv linear. with careful attention to the journalistic surface, while, supposedly, Abra is hooking up with the deeper powers of nature, contentment and wisdom. This process of change is not matched by any elements of the form whatsoever. so that although the novel is cast in the first person, it still reads as though Abra is being discussed and described, remembered and measured, rather than experienced.

Parade on an Empty Street is flawed slightly by Gane's need to attach form and meaning to the lives she describes so carefully and perceptively. Ordinarily, stories of young children discovering the evil world are difficult to make work. but Gane manages that sufficiently well that perhaps the epilogue is necessary, pulling the action into the present and letting us know that Shirley has overcome the horrors imposed on her by family and situation. Personally I wish that even if it had to he them for the ordinary reader, it might have been purged of its "this is the end of the story" messages.

Which leaves me then. I suppose, with Paci's The *Italians* as my first choice. The popular novel is not really an art form, hut a mirror of the fears and fantasies of its intended readership. *Abra* is *a* fantasy: *The Double-Cross Circuit* lets fears surface and then cauterizes them in tbe formulistic moments of violence. *The Italians* Is a sociological novel, a debt-to-one's-past novel, in whiih Paci tells the story of a single family of immigrants. Nothing innovative, nothing startling, but nothing false, either. The sense of place. force of cultural pressures, and endurance of social ideals and realities come through all the more strongly by contrast with some of the unrealities of *Double-Cross* and *Abm.*

Still, pod luck to them all. May Dorland sell his movie rights for $100,000, may Barfoot's next be serialized in *Chatelaine*, may Gane write an adult novel next time. and may Paci become a professor at Laurentian.

Douglas Hill: Virginia Woolf called *Middlemarch* "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people." I've never been quite sure what she meant, but her remark suggests a handy yardstick *for this year's* entries. *Only one of them. Abra*, measures up to the requirements that mature readers should make of fiction. The rest are entertaining, and each does certain things well, but they simply will not satisfy the tastes or needs of adults.

Hold Fast is an engaging juvenile; it's just in the wrong contest. *Parade on an Empty Street* has a broader range, more resonance, and strikes some precise truths about puberty witb delicacy and feeling. But basically it's an ice-cream scoop of nostalgia for adolescence in '40s Toronto. Neither book extends its meanings much past tbe problems of Grade 9 or IO.

Disneyland, Please has a strong if occasionally predictable and melodramatic story going for it, but it settles in to what it might do best too late. Doucet knows how to pace a narrative and hold a pleasantly disarming tone, but the book's overloaded with events and uneven in its attitudes. He wastes time on unrewarding material and too often fails to grab his chances to dig down for insights -which he can do when he tries.

The Double-Cross Circuit is carefully plotted and has the sort of gimmick that *could* work, but it's only the skeleton of a spy thriller. It's talky, for one thing, with information and documentation delivered through direct statement rather than character or action. The writing is flaccid when not simply inept. And the characters are flat. unmemorable. Exposition, clichés, and melodrama are fatal to this genre.

If then were a prize for "firstness," I'd want to give it to The *Italians*. There's energy, ambition. intelligence. sensitivity in abundance; the subject -cultural schizophrenia — touches us all in Canada. But Paci doesn't organize subtly enough or write well enough (dialogue especially) to give hi intentions breathing space.

I'm excited by how good *Abm is.* Thinking it to be yet another version of the woman-flees-to-the-woods-in-s~h-of-ide business, I wasn't prepared to be impressed. But *Abra* is tough. complex, and convincing in the emotional truth it delivers.

It's a slow-moving book. dangerously so: it tells an unspectacular story deliberately, with pauses for reflection. analysis. and revision. The narrator is in the process of coming alive. not so much fmm neurotic depression as from numbness. Releasing her memories is slow work; the book tingles with perceptions as the blood flows in. *Abra's* voice is remarkable — muted. inward. perfectly natural, responding slowly to tbe rhythms of the seasons and the surroundings. It's the voice of a woman who has never talked to herself.

Abra is about the relation of guilt. faith, and joy, about doing and being. It has none of the self-conscious stylistic or structural excesses of last year's best first novels, *Sandbars* and *The Invention of the World*. *Abra* merely tries to prepare some hard questions carefully, and suggest necessarily partial answers truthfully, without flinching. It's a book I want to read again. soon.

David Stimpson: An ordinary year for the first novel in Canada. My initial reaction to the six shortlisted titles was that the award not be given for 1978, but a second reading of *Abm* changed my mind. It showed a style and imagination that pm *it* above the others. so it received my nomination. I liked both *Hold Fast* and *Parade on an Empty Street*, though the latter is marred by a silly prologue that should have been edited out. *Disneyland, Please* has some good writing: *The Double-Cross Circuit* is a competent thriller, and *The Italians* is handsome and well-designed. □

A hick's progress

Matt Cohen ends his prolific apprenticeship with a fine mortality tale about an Ontario Gothic romance

by Michael Smith

The Sweet Second Summer of Kitty Malone, by Matt Cohen. McClelland & Stewart. 233 pages, 512.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 2221 2).

AT 36, MATT COHEN has already written so many books (11, by my count) that his publishers never seem able to account for all of them in their flyleaf blurbs. Unlike the creations of a production *line.* his work is far from uniform — including verse, children's books. some experimental stuff, and a few good stories — which may explain why reviewers haven't tended to appraise him too kindly. Of his later novels, one of the best was *The Disinherited* (1974), about the disintegrating family of a dying farmer, Richard Thomas. It was followed by *Wooden* Hunters (1975) and the futuristic *The Colours of War* (1977).

In Thr Surer *Second Summer of Kitty Malone* Cohen has returned to tbe same locale, geographical and emotional, that he examined in *The Disinherited.* This time it's the Malone family. neighbours of the Thomas bunch near Salem, Ont., a marginally agricultural community north of Kingston. As in the earlier novel, part of the action occurs in the hospital where Kitty and her brother. Charlie, are briefly patients and their 82-year-old mother comes to die. For, like much of Cohen's writing, the story is' suffused with mortality, whose shorthand forms he repeatedly harks to in images of fishing, booting. sickness. and dying.

Above all. however. this is a love story between Kitty Malone and Patrick Frank who, &spite the novel's title, emerges as its real hem. Pot has appeared in several of Cohen's books in the supporting role of town drunk. In *The Colours of War* he's a "wretched parody of a man." a lanky, shambling. foot-stomping hick who used to teach the narrator fiddle lessons. In Cohen's 1972 short story. "Country Music." he's overshadowed by his twin brother, Mark; "known to be the crazier of the two," a welder whose specialty is reassembling derelict vehicles into almost-roadworthy mutants. (In *Kitty Malone* Mark has become introspective — he literally turns his glass eye inward while thinking.) Until now, Pot has always been defined by his props. Here, he's more than a caricature, and in the process has acquired a kind of dignity. No fiddle, and though the bottle of Barclay Five Star Brandy is always near at hand. now Pet spends sleepless nights worrying about how it's rotting his brain.

Pet, 49,' a sometime gas jockey at the Salem Garage and General Repair, has been Kitty's reluctant suitor for more than 20 years, leaving her on binges of neglect, sometimes for months, until he finds himself once again trudging through the bush from his house to hers. Kitty, 40, so named because her birth gave her mother an attack of catalepsy. lives in the house her grandfather built when he retired from the family farm. She. moved there not long after her return from Toronto, where she fled as a young woman — and in her lonely terror soon found a loutish husband — after Pat bad rejected heron the pretext that their ages were too far apart. Like Pm, Kitty is brooding over her fate; she has an ovarian cyst, and the operation for it will render her sterile. Through their need for each other she now is celebrating the "second summer" of ha womanhood.

Everything in *Kitty Malone* happens in a few days in early summer, but a lot does happen. Kitty goes into hospital. Her mother, Ellen, like the Indians her crazy old mind conjures up, decides it's time to will herself to die. Kitty's first husband. Randy Blair, shows up from the city. After a drinking bout at the No-Tell Motel, their son, Randy Jr., deliberately NM over his Uncle Charlie with a pickup truck· and breaks hi leg. Pat, overwhelmed by his love for Kitty, his shrinking brain, age, and the responsibility to avenge Charlie's injury, finally marries Kitty in time to enjoy a combined wake and wedding party at which the rye is generously supplied with Ellen's life insurance.

Matt Cohen

As fictional territory Salem serves Cohen the way the rock farms of the Wingham area serve Alice Munro. As lo Munro's stories. Cohen leans toward a sort of Ontario Gothic — in which the physical deformities and impoverished lives of the inhabitants almost become too grotesque to be real. Yet he also shows increasing sympathy toward his characters. Some of the minor parts — such as Lynn. the illegitimate offspring of one of Pat and Kitty's reconciliations — are less than fully drawn; but in major characters, like Kitty, he portrays a convincing ebb and flow of usually inarticulate emotion. Compared to their aptly truncated dialogue ("You okay?"/ "Sure."), at times some characters seem *too* articulate -such as Mark, with his surprisingly literate scribblers full of notes.

As an examination of relationships *Kitty Malone* is written from the points of view of several different characters, often intercut with flashbacks. Cohen has quit the obvious experimental bent of his earlier work. 'Sometimes he still mixes fragmentary thoughts and uncertain chronology — especially when dealing with Ellen's senile mind — but now it works particularly well. Cohen's early work suggests that he was lucky enough to serve at least part of his writing apprenticeship by actually being in print, though much of his uneven production is likely the affliction of any prolific writer, of whom there are very few in Canada. There also aren't many novels as sweet as *Kitty Malone*. □

The examined life

William Dubin, biographer, mixes lives and living in a cerebral novel by Bernard Malamud, 'moralist

by Douglas Hill

Dubin's Lives, by **Bernard Malamud, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 361** pages. $12.95 cloth **(ISBN 0 374 14414 1).**

NOVELS ABOUT WRITERS thicken the air amend **us:** John **Updike last** month, **John** Irving and Alan **Lelchuk** last year, William **Styron** soon, **Bernard Malamud now** with his **first** book in five years. It's **arguably his** richest. **concerned less** with unwieldy **cultural** polarities of the **kind** *The Fixer* and The *Tenants* attempted to force together. more with the complex but **unsensational** private anguish **that man, with a** shove **from** history, devises for himself. **It's also conceivably** his best, though one hopes not his **last** (he's 64). **From** its **magical** beginning, unique yet **familiar** — "They sometimes met on country roads when there **were** flowers or snow" — to its typically embiiuous. provocative ending, ***Dubin's Lives*** **seems closest in mood and intention** to *Tbe* ***Assistant***, closest **in** its **expansiveness** and its embrace of subjective phenomena to A ***New Life***, bet without the latter's **elements** of **farce.**

The action of **the** plot, **which spans** about three **years,** is not **hard** to describe. (I think -it's my only important objection-that the story goes on too long; after the midpoint it occasionally **mires** itself, loses steam.) **William Dubin,** author of **four** books of biography — *Short Lives. Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, H. D. Thoreau* — *is at* **work** on The ***Passion of*** *D. H. Lawrence: A Life*. **He lives with his wife** — they **are** both in their **50s; she has** been **married** before and widowed -in **a small upstate** New York town **near** the **Vermont** border; her son is **a** U.S. **Army** deserter living in **Europe,** end their **daughter** a student et Berkeley. A calm, **rhythmic,** carefully tended existence, with some **recognizable** anxieties crowding the edges. Bet **life closes in — experience as prison has** been **Malamud's** generative **metaphor from** the **start** — when **Dubin** involves himself **passionately,** awkwardly. painfully, with **a** young woman, Fanny **Bick,** who begins to slip erratically in and **out** through the **barred windows** of **his** life.

Allusive, literary, cerebral. the novel **manages** its intelligence **like** breathing. **Malamud** weaves the patterns of **Dubin's life from images the biographer has spun out** in his lives. **There's** Lincoln for will **and discipline, Mark Twain** for grizzled despair, Thoreau for the seasons. Lawrence for flower, **flesh,** and blood. **Each** life **draws** strands of **success** and failure, energy and gloom, rage and impotence, through the **texture** of **Dubin's** daily routines. through **the stuff of his dreams, fears, and fantasies.**

The prose is cleanly **crafted,** simple **and** deep, like the **tracing** of **frost** upon **a** dark **winter window. Nature — the world, everything that** in Emerson's **terms** might be called the **"not-Dubin" —** is etched with **precise,** supple lyricism. **The** settings are chiefly **rural,** pastoral. with excursions to New York City, Stockholm, and Venice. **Malamud carries** off this **part** of the **writer's** task — to **"turn** stone into sunlight, language **into** fire," es ***The Tenants*** pets it — memorably.

The **conflict** between the demands of life and **art** is, es **a** reader might expect, the **central** subject of ***Dubin's Lives***; **the** novel focuses relentlessly upon tbe **writer** wiring.

Bernard Malamud

the **writer** doubting. bet without **strain** or **tedium lifts this struggle** above **solipsism.** Of **Harry Lesser,** in *The Tenants*, Malamud said, **"he lives** to **write, writes** to live." For **Dubin** the **formula's** not so easy: "I write to know the next mom of my fate." In theory (his own) he's got the **stresses** of **working** end living safely **ballasted;** he's **rationalized** a snug **harbour** and a smooth **voyage** home. Fanny **is the** blue-sky stone that **dismasts** him **and** sets him adrift. **Dubin** has founded **his hopes** for integrity, **as artist and *mensch*, upon a** continual **diligent adjustment** of the **pressures** of world **and** ego — of family. children, **friends,** of his books, his body, his modest *fame.* Life — **random, imperious, baleful — turns** the rituals of form into **a** soul's prison, middle-aged comfort into **a** sort of **Jamesian existential** terror.

The book's questions cluster around the shifting. **often paradoxical** conjunction of "lives" with **"life."** All **'of Malamud's** novels have sought to uncover the **treasures** of human **truth buried** in the **relation** between two people; he's never blinked at the **traditional —** one could say **old**-fashioned -assumption that fiction ought to **speak** definitively to such topics es the **nature** of love and responsibility. **Malamud's a** Romantic end **a** moralist. **Dubin,** too; **his** crisis is to have **apparently** secure knowledge. hard-won through **matured** reading and writing of biography, thrown into question. "It's one thing for **a man** not to know," he says. "not to have **learned;** it's **another** not to be able to live by what one **does** know. **That's sure** danger."

And for **Dubin, sure** suffering. The **Malamud** hem **suffers,** deeply, stoically. bet he doesn't **dramatize** his **condition. Philip Rahv** caught it neatly: suffering in **Malamud** "is not whet **you are** looking for but what you **are** likely to get." **Morris Bober,** the beaten-up and -down **grocer** of The ***Assistant***, *says* simply. "if **you** live. you **suffer."** If **suffering** can possibly transform, if faith is allowed to exist --and **Malamud** clearly believes **so — waiting** the process **out** is usually the most hi **characters** can do. **Frank** Alpine. the **assistant, waits; Yakov** Bok, the **fixer,** wits; **William**

Dubin, son of Charlie-the-wailer, merely accepts his — man's — fete. Grace — deliverance — will be a long time coming for Dcbin. is only dimly visible. if at all, at the end of the bock, but he insists on hi right not to surrender.

This is a humane and moving work, cf great loveliness. In its affirmations, pined, partial, muted though they seemingly must be. there is jcy. "Dcbin loved what he observed: nature rather than scene. For nature he *felt* — had earned in winter this beauty of late spring." *Dubin's Lives:* Dcbin lives. Malamud's alive. □

There goes the neighbourhood

Lucien's Tombs. by Marion Rippon, Doubleday. 232 pages. 59.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 14429 6).

By PHIL SURGUY

ESSENTIAL TO the success of a mystery novel is the authenticity of its setting; the author must establish a community with such authority that any crime that happens there is a true one. True in the sense that the crime is a fundamental violation of the natural order of things. The detective's primary task, which goes beyond merely pinning the blame on- someone, is to help restore the community's equilibrium. As W. H. Auden pointed out, the first detective in our literature was Oedipus.

Lucien's Tombs is set in an old neighbourhood near the cathedral in St. Denis, a city cc the northern outskirts of Paris. Among the members of the community are: a drunken failure of a real estate agent, his ravenous wife end his pathetic sister; an easygoing baker, his haughty wife and their dangerous son; an epicene mortician; two decrepit sisters who are the last survivors of their old noble family; and Lucien Anjou, a retired soldii who, during the Second World War, was a formidable leader of the Maquis. Also living in the neighbourhood are a Paris police inspector and his wife, end, staying with them on holiday, is their old friend Maurice Ygrec, a retired gendance. Lucien's granddaughter Pippais the household's femme *de ménage*.

This is Marion Rippon's fourth novel featuring the adventures of Gendarme Ygrec. (The other books are *The Hand of Solange*, *Behold. The Druid Weeps.* and *The Ninth Tentacle.) Mrs.* Rippon was raised and educated in Alberta and travelled widely in Europe when her husband was with the Canadian Armed Forces. She now lives in Victoria, B.C.

Lucien's Tombs opens with two people disposing of a corpse, a fairly conventional beginning. But it's soon clear that no one else in the community knows about. let alone misses. the corpse and that the real story is creeping up on us li-cm other directions. The main plot elements are a contemporary struggle for possession of the aristocratic sisters' lend and the slowly emerging revelation of Lucien's wartime relationship with the two women. Mrs. Rippon's sense of how the passions, frustrations, and times of the previous generation can infect the present one is as sharp as Ross Macdonald's.

Her expert telling cf the stay from several alternating points of view vividly lets the reader know that these people cannot go cc much longer before their little society cracks apart. And yet. es far as the characters themselves (including the killers-to-be) are concerned, their festering preoccupations and obsessions are simply the stuff of everyday life, not the gradually intensifying elements of an impending disaster. Even Ygrec, the detective, is complacent, happy to enjoy hi friends' fire while idly learning about the neighbourhood from Pippa's gossip.

It would be unfair to say who gets murdered first and even more of a disservice to give the name of the next victim. The murders start to happen — the formal mystery begins — about halfway through the book; but even after Ygrec has set out cc his investigation the author maintains her

concern for the truth of her characters, rather than giving way to simple plot mechanics. *Lucien's Tombs* is a very good. satisfying mystery novel. It is the first of Mrs. Rippon's books that I have read, and I don't at all regret not having yet read the others: for a mystery addict it is always a fine, but increasingly infrequent, treat to discover an author who has a body of work that one can look forward to enjoying. □

Toothless dragon, aimless flight

Dragon Island, by Jacques Godbout, translated by David Ellis, Musson/General Publishing. 118 pages. 98.95 paper (ISBN 0 7137 1027 2).

Wing In the Wind, by Diane Giguère, translated by Alan Brown, McClelland & Stewart. 108 pages, 010.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 3310 9).

By WAYNE GRADY

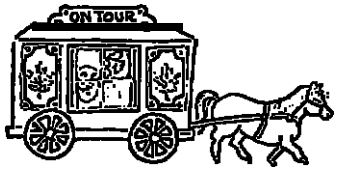
JACQUES GODBOUT's literary output has more or less paralleled the political history of Quebec. In fact. as dramatist, novelist, painter. filmmaker. and founder of the literary magazine *Liberté*, be may be said to have helped bring some of that history about, or at least managed to keep pace with it. His first novel. *L'Aquarium*, described a Camus-like anti-hero turning hem: life in the Casa Occidental, a tropical fishbowl of spineless. uncommitted flotsam fmm the deluge of the real world. His second novel, *Knife on the Table* (the only other of Godbout's books available in English), came in 1965, and contained a central character who became more and more alienated from his *pays natale* until the first FLQ bombing-death moved him to rejoin his compatriots in Montreal. (In fact the first FLQ bomb victim, Thérèse Morin, was killed on May 5, 1966, when a bomb exploded in a Montreal shoe factory.) Then followed *Salut Galarneau!* and a period of reflection, introspection. and the discovery of self-determination and independence. *D'Amour, P.Q.*. which reflected the 1970 October crisis. may be seen as the application of the lessons learned through self-realization.

Dragon Island, however. is rather a retreat into fantasy and allegory — a common venue in French Canadian literature — than a bold, prophetic manifesto. Isle Verte, an island at the mouth of the legendary Saguenay River. has been chosen by William T. Shaheen, president of Pennsylvania & Texas International. as a site for one of its Controlled Atomic Dumps — a storage lot for America's nuclear waste. P & T International has the blessings of everyone. including the federal and provincial governments and the deracinated inhabitants of Isle Verte themselves, except for Michel Bonparlant, a professional dragon stalker who nurses a vendetta against Shaheen for seducing Bonparlant's idol, Marilyn Monroe. The symbolism, though tortuous, is presented with enough panache to make it enjoyable. but one cannot help recalling Roch Carrier's statement in a recent essay (Books in *Canada.* February) that since the victory of the Parti Québécois the most strident voices in Quebec have been reduced to preaching to the converted. "In the past," writes Carrier. no doubt with *Knife on the Table* and Hubert Aquin's *Prochaine* Episode in mind, "Quebec literature was written in opposition: it demanded and..., it denounced." Recent books. however, "have made fewer and fewer demands."

Diane Giguère's third novel, *Wings in the Wind.* is really a collage of character sketches, except that "collage" implies too much interrelatedness for Gig&e's characters. Her women languish in the alienation and ennui popular in French novels of the 1960s. Amédée, a librarian, who probably *was* popular in the 1960s, now tries to fend off advancing middle age by spending her holiday at a health spa in the south of France. she meets no one, writes letters to her dead friend, gains a lot of weight, and returns to her library feeling "a sharp but indefinite pin": the dull ache, no doubt, of meaninglessness unredeemed by our or her own close scrutiny.

Part two gives us Elizabeth. a young woman who. like Amédée, passes through life in "a strange kind of anxiety" and asks half-hewed questions about the meaning of it all. After a few pages of aimless wandering she finds herself in a remote hotel in rural Quebec with two equally vaporish women: Clotilde, the hotel's owner, and Melanie, Clotilde's maid and aura. Elizabeth establishes herself like dust in a spare room, comes perilously close to sainthood (which is a Catholic euphemism for futile life balanced by ineffective death). settles for madness instead, and runs off with Clotilde. Melanie promptly kills herself, a flash of velvet under a passing train, "then nothing . . . exactly as if she had never lived." She hadn't. Presumably Elizabeth has escaped into "life." but more likely she will become another Amédée.

Giguère's writing at times matches the hard stream of brittle consciousness that, Hubert Aquin achieved in his later novels. More often, however, her style retreats with her characters into diffused. airy nothingness. Again one returns to Carrier: "At the table where the intellectual meal is served, what the writer has prepared is not the main course; it's scarcely more important than the chocolate served at coffee time." □



Father knows best

Panama, by Thomas McGuane, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 175 pages, $10.50 cloth (ISBN 0 374 22942 2).

By DAVID McKIM

THE CONSTANT IN the novels of Thomas McGuane is that the fathers all have money. And it is a time-honoured right of American heroes to break away from the fathers and all their loot. As an early McGuane character declares, there are to be no strings attached; the identity, at any cost. must be self-created. So, in early McGuane, it war.

It is an age of diminished possibility, and McGuane has had second thoughts about the validity of this formula. At the end of his last novel. *Ninety-two in the Shade,* McGuane's anti-hem was lying murdered in a skiff off Key West. He hadn't followed his father's advice. He had taken a single essential self-determining action, and he was killed for it. The message- did not inspire. but it was plain: free yourself and you die. Why tbii should be was not made clear.

Written six years after *Ninety-two in the Shade. Panama* takes up where it left off. R opens as the post-mortem of the McGuane anti-hem. Chester Hunnicutt Pomeroy, the narrator. is self-created: "I stand for those who have made themselves up." He is also dead -he tells us so in the first lines. Now the equation is explained. The independent life cannot be self-sustaining; you live off your own energy for a time, float, as Chester says, in your own invention. and finally you're through. "Home from the field of agony" where he lived the separate life — a nightmare even while it lasted — Chester is the proof. He is. he says. a "fresh" corpse needing a fresh slut.

Panama mainly is about reviving Chester, or hying to. The process is a reversal of the old formula. Living free. no strings attached, hasn't worked for him, so obviously he needs to *get* attached.

This tidy idea,' the re-socialization of a corpse. even though it is developed with care and reasonable consistency, finally doesn't succeed. There is a major technical problem involving Chester's detachment. He is supposed to have a failed memory. yet as narrator he is our only source of information. McGuane wastes time dealing with this oddity, but finally we learn what we need to know. By no means is this a puzzle played for laughs. That's the real Problem. McGuane wants us to rake his idea seriously, to cheer the socializers on.

Ii would be like cheering for Huck Finn in a necktie: not right. At the start Chester awaits "recharging, bombardment,

implanting. *something*, shall we say, close to the bone." What he gets are constant tiring — and tiresome — lectures to straighten himself out — from his crazy stepmother, a mean cop. a bad Southern lawyer. all the creeps he had cut himself free of. He comes to believe that he is rotten, diseased.

> I wanted to get well. I just didn't know what that was. If there was a fear, it was that I had *never* known; that I had been strikingly not well from the start.

He feels sorry for himself, he doubts himself, and he is ready to do what others want him to do.

Now Chester has had a lot of experience at being perverse. No matter bow be tries to discipline bimsclf to other people's wishes he doesn't connect well with them. "You can die trying." his wife says, and she leaves. It's arguable that he never does take on any attachment. McGuane respects Chester's separateness. But he and Chester both have a fatal attraction for one figure. He's dressed just right; hc has a pile of money and a boat about a city block long. He is Chester's father. and all he wants is to talk to his son. This is a clever book. but it's subversive. ❑

A family affair

The Cutting Edge, by Penelope Gilliatt, Longman, 150 pages. $12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 698 10948 Il.

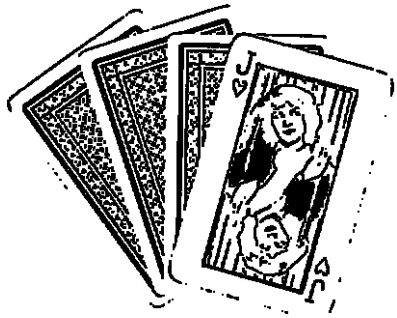
By *JAY* BOCHNER

WE ALL ENVY Penelope Gilliatt; she leads the exciting. influential. chic life. writing film reviews for *The New Yorker* six months of the year and her own fiction in London the other six. Like the rest of us, she assuredly does many other things as well. not all of them as exciting, but none of her book jackets will tell us much more than those few facts, the worldly outer garment of her life. Occasionally tbcy tell us she has a son. which is a clue to something else again.

It is precisely tbat outer garment, the shiny appearance of living well seen from the outside, tbat seems at first to bcthc main preoccupation of this novel. Gilliatt's characters, always British, are brilliant. worldly while improvident. ironic without snobbishness. These and other qualities are discernable not so much in the characters as separate entities as in Gilliatt's prose, a succinct but expressive sort of British that is often foreign to our ears, yet gains in precision for its very strangeness. Few on either side of the Atlantic write sentences like: "His slow-burning distaste for the mediocre gave them no purchase" or "Our enemies arc endless and immoderate."

Most of this short novel is made of dialogue in which characters discuss their quotidian affairs in cool, intelligent style. But we come to see that much more personal matters flow beneath these clear words. In fact, this is a novel of family, but in a world, certainly our own, where tbc family is presumed dead. It survives anyway. between two brothers for example.: each goes his own way, bumping his head or breaking the odd toe, while the heart-rending connections work quietly all in undertow. This is a novel, a long short story really, of the relationship between these two brothers, one in Paris tbc other in Istambul, both yearning for each other and for England. They are not far different from many other characters of Gilliatt.. British in exile whom you find in ha stories, always published in *The New Yorker (The New Yorker,* with Cheever, Barthelme, Gilliatt, and others. is running its own war with the slack or overly emotional style). They make up a breed, like Americans in Paris. In coy number of these stories stronger characters suffer from their dominance and purposely exile themselves from those they love. In *The Cutting Edge Peregrine.* the older brother, possibly tbe more accomplished, does everything he can to diminish himself so as not to outshine Benedict. And Benedict returns the same as soon as he feels his own power. In a wry. yet warm and funny ending Joanna. Benedict's wife, may win both brothers, though each has transformed himself into the other, in order to please her more. So instead of tbe familiar sort of symbiotic relationship we find in fiction. in which one person feeds off the other, here each starves himself so that the other may eat. It is in this pattern of abnegation that what is left of family survives, subterranean pools that constantly threaten to swell up into the characters' dignified and alienated style.

Gilliatt does a beautiful job of holding the brothers together by the merest artistic thread, while the characters, like all the people around us. are thrown to tbe wind. The scenes you read are the uneventful ones in their lives, while great, cogent characters and dramas arc elsewhere, just memories. In a time of strenuous dispersal, a subtle art devoted to the survival of discrete emotion. ❑



Pull up your pants and fall in love

The Tough Romance, by Pier Giorgio Di Cicco. McClelland&Stewart, 96 pages. $6.95 paper **(ISBN** 0 7710 2710 **9).**

By **RALPH GUSTAFSON**

HERE IS A book against death, authentic poetry with great joy **of affirmation** in it, knowing **that** death spells everything **wrong,** that we **all** are **in** for it. but for **the** meanwhile

it is all right, you can come
out now, god is sorry about the wrong
wrapper.

Even if God isn't, we can still be like the man of **this** book who "pulls **up his** pants, and **goes** to **work for** happiness." Pier **Giorgio Di Cicco** knows what **poetry** is about. **Caught in** the tough **romance** of **this** world, he **is** still ready "to stand **up** tall and kiss heaven **with** half-parted lips, to lie down in clean bedsheets and forget the dark **coins of the eyes." He is ready "for the kick in** the back of the head" but writes love lyrics.

Only at night I whisper terrible reproofs,
the last anger of a man watching himself grow,
dreaming his way, like birds against
hard walls; while his heart stands still,
long dead, the beautiful cadaver the air
keeps praying to.

The man who can write such a poem **as** "The Bii Is **a** Whistle" is **on** the way toward memorable things.

This is Di **Cicco's first** substantial **collection.** Through all his **work, the** early *We Are the Light* Turning. his limited publication *Dolce-Amaro* (mast of which is happily collected in **his latest** title), his **native Tuscany** is never far **from his** mind and imagery.

In *the middle of*
the night I will get up and dance on the
bedsheets, out of
love for two continents.

Di **Cicco's** hometown is **Arezzo** where the **musical** scale we use **was first** put together. Here is **Tuscan** music in Canadian poetry. Recently **Di Cicco** put together **an anthology** of Canadian-Italian poets, *Roman Candles.* **It** is another illustration of the largesse of our multiplicity of cultures, **the Canadian richness** that is **our saving grace in this** fragmenting world. Would that **Canada were more** graceful about it.

What Di Cicco wants, **he** writes, **is:**

to testify
that he is strung to one star out of ten, that
he goes
nowhere without dragging the whole
high heaven with him.

This is the right stuff, if the world is **to survive. Poetry** is the **revitalizing** art.

That
horse-laugh, death, spells everything
wrong, even the leaves on the trees.

Di Cicm drags love into everything. It **is** the **right occupation.**

What one wishes different about **this** bwk is certainly not the romantic toughness. the bleak haloes; sentimentality is abolished thereby. The book read all **at once, the wish is for sparencss.** what **Di** Cicco's **talent** cries **out for** is **concision** and **coherences. Here** is volubility, **an** excess of imagery, **a** rhetoric **that** pleads for **pruning,** for structure, for formal tension. **The richness is out of control,** the verbal **music** lax; disconcerting hyperbole **disperses the co**henna of hi imagery. Sentences **ride** off in all **directions,** participles lost, imagery **scattered.** It's fun but it is tiring. It's those bareback horsemen of **the palio** in **Siena.** Pegasus needs **a snaffle.**

Di Ciiw knows **this:**

I *have to talk to*
myself, to call back what I have let escape –
another hope. . . .

Meanwhile, authentic poetry is scattered everywhere.

I throw my arms out and botch the morning
air, announcing
a last ditch effort to love, keeping
no secret alive, I tell the world, I am
making it one more time.

He will. □

Bone hurt and battle-weary

A Man to **Many, A Man to** Bury. by Susan **Musgrave,** McClelland **&** Stewart. **123 pages,** $6.95 paper **(ISBN** 0 7710 6655 **4).**

Anniversaries, by Don **Coles,** Macmillan. 76 pages. S4.95 paper **(ISBN** 0 7705 **1745 5).**

By **A.5 MORITZ**

NORTHROP FRYE **SAYS** somewhere **that poets often** instinctively seize upon the title **or** a **phrase** fmm **a** particularly representative poem and use it to name **a** volume. **This** is certainly **true** of Susan **Musgrave's** new book, A ***Man*** to Marry, A *Man to Bury.* **The title comes from a brief poem called "A Man from France,"** which can be quoted as completely typical of the level of **writing here:**

He's a dancer
he makes you wild

he dances the dance of
lonely women

he's a deserter.

I lived with him
he made me smile

that was enough for me
but not for those
French ladies.

Bitches, they were brought up
differently.
They wanted a man to marry,
a man to buy.

They didn't want Harry.

One wishes that tbe ludicrous awfulness of this could be seen as purposefully humorous. But such an excuse is impossible in view of this book's dead level of hierophantic monotony, broken only by an occasional bit of slipshod colloqualism culled, so ii seems, from the newspapers. Further, the greater proportion Of poems in this collection display the same qualities of insipid phrasing. lack of rhythm, a more-sensitive-than-thou attitude, a vaguely "eternal feminine" pwe, and a supercilious condescension lo world-views other than her own popular jet-set primitivism — that of the horrible French ladles, for instance, who have probably never written any poetry about Indians.

What passes for "vision" here is the easy repetition of fashionable pessimism and violence -what one guileless reviewer of an earlier Musgrave volume called an exploration of "sexuality at the primal level of bone hurt." Here it is: "Always with the trap in mind/he enters her body." Or, "This love, an iron lung." Or,

to prove his love
he sent a severed hand.
She imprisoned it
in a bottle. . . .

To prove his need
he cut himself into small pieces
with a dull knife.
She was already a ghost;
he grew less assured.

Feeble as is this primal bone hurt, it alone preserves great swatches of the book from descending to the level of unrhymed greeting-card verse. It does not *always* succeed, however:

All *night I lay awake*
thinking of you.
All night I lay thinking
maybe it was.

Above all, this volume is characterized by total flatness, a lack of interest or energy or originality of any kind.

There could not be a sharper contrast than Don Coles's second collections, *Anniversaries*, an impressive hook full of music and variety , wit and meditation. Coles's voice is supple and urbane as it ranges with no lack of passion over tbe traditional lyric themes of beauty. age. loss. decision, how to live, what to live for, the struggle to make terms with death.

But this is not disembodied reflective poetry. Coles does not — and cannot — engage these subjects except in and through the realities of our time and his own experience. His poems fill with closely observed people and things, from television wrestlers to a girl in a terminal ward, from a lake to a 1918 newspaper clipping. from a photo album to a group of war veterans. And his music modulates to suit them all.

Perhaps most impressive is the precise, intelligent, yet deeply involved style of such major poems as "Always the Effort to Gather It All" and "Old," a sequence of brief internal speeches lo a dying girl that includes these lines:

As you grow so comprehensively down to it
Is the world terrible?
Are our voices insect wings?
Do memory's glints humiliate?
When I go do unsilhouetted tides resume?

Also *effective is the style that* combines agile thought with verbal ingenuity and dense imagery à la middle Auden and MacNiece. It is the vehicle of such fine poems as "Guide Book," "Codger," and "On a Bust of an Army Corporal Killed.. . in the Boer War," which hauntingly leaves the statue looking across lbe town green at night,

Finding it odd, still, those distant, paused
horsemen,
That roaring hurt, reins gone slack,
In Africa.

As *a whole. Anniversaries shows* a poet who is earnestly weighing human accomplishment against the sorrows of nature and the human condition. At one pole is the "Gala at Schonbrun," where the visage of nature appears suddenly at the core of the most effective creation of human art:

Among all these how easily have appeared
The de luxe white bosoms of the girls
In the corps de ballet, effortless revelations
Of opulent Hapsburg centuries.
Everything here
Is secretly designed to honour them —
The room, the music, me.

And at the other pole is "That Mountain":

Above I hear the silent surge
Of the mountain, sheer,
Unlivable, unmanageably beckoning to be
known. □

From screen gems to animal acts

Screens, by Eugene McNamara, Coach House Press, 62 pages, 54 paper (ISBN 0 88910016 0).

Heaven. by Don Domanski, Anansi, 62 pages, 54.95 papa (ISBN 0 88784 069 8).

The Salmon Country, by Greg Gatenby, Black Moss Press, 80 pages, 54.95 paper (ISBN 0 88753 0451).

Snake Music, by Kenneth Sherman, Mosaic Press/ Valley Editions, 47 pages. 53.95 paper (ISBN 0 88962 082 2) and $8.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88962 081 4).

By LORNE DANIEL

THE GROWING, HEALTHY diversity of Canadisn poetry is represented in these four books. Of the four. Eugene McNamara's Screens grabs your immediate attention. Its intriguing graphics *of* overlaid TV screens/ window screens/ screen stars are cleat and simple, yet suggestive of the tide's numerous applications (as detailed in an exhaustive epigraph/definition).

McNamara's poetry itself is lean, energetic. He uses language economically, making every word and line count, without forfeiting the casual voice. Each poem is like a comfortable, ambling path that seems to have no particular destination, but at each turn leaves you facing the unexpected; the observations McNamara leads you to are made all the mote startling by their unassuming origins.

McNamara's use of line breaks and unpunctuated lines is simply masterful. yet he is not a wordsmith who lets craft dominate: his poems retain a poignant humanity. *Screens* is a thematic collection that is fully realized, yet not boxed in or limited by its theme. A charming look at the details of human lives perceived through the screens of our physical. historical, and psychological environments. Screens deserves to be read. And re-read.

There is little in the style or content of Heaven, Don Domanski's second book of poetry, to surprise those familiar with bis earlier *The Cape Breton Book of the Dead.* Domanski's "heaven" exists underfoot, not overhead, in the depths of nature. and in an elemental but animated world. In this heaven, a lily is "a pythoness/ pyxis of heart-beats in her hand," a worm "dances/ like a prophet atop a mountain/ like a swan through the darkness." At times, thii semi-surrealism becomes a bit much, as in "Tilling." when "the door of earth/is flung open" to a strange outpouring of "rhetoric . . . preaching .. carping"; "why does every inch rattle on?" the poet demands, and the reads is lost among all the noise.

Overall, however, Domanski's poetry is

engaging work. His involvement with nature is deeply felt: "the mole's blind journey/ eats at my side/ the fly wrestles with my head." he writes in "The Prophet." To quote the opening epigraph from Gerard Manley Hopkins: "And for all tbii. nature is never spent; There lives the dearest Freshness deep down things." *Heaven* included.

Different entirely from both Screens and *Heaven* is Greg Gatenby's *The Salmon Country* — a big (by poetry standards), brash, bold book. Gatenby *is* like a streetfighter: he taunts, takes on all comets, and uses all devices available (eve" stoop ing to the lowly pun).

The Salmon Country is many books In one, an apparent attempt to display the full range of Gatenby's poetry. At its heart are Gatenby's satirical poems on writing, writers, and in particular, Canadian poetry. I" a number of irreverent *parodies* Gatenby takes on Tom Wayman, Milton Acorn, Leonard Cohen, Al Purdy, and many others, including unspecified "vulture poets" who want "advice on/how to become great writers without work."

Less successful are some of Gatenby's more personal poems. I" "Glen" he takes 46 lines to explain "there were lifetimes" between two separated brothers "rather than merely my four older years." Mote notable are the poems where Gatenby manages lo line his sarcasm and wit with a meaningful poetic intent. The title poem, using salmon as a metaphor for the Canadian people. simultaneously mocks and admires "these stupid fish" that persist in challenging the barriers that "the inquisitor, Geology. has shaped." A" entertaining and challenging book, The Salmon *Country* is nevertheless elusive; a table of contents, grouping of poems into specific sections, and some judicious editing would have gone a long way toward making the overall publication mote impressive.

Kenneth Sherman's *Snake Music is* the least satisfying of these books. Most of the poems deal with Sherman's travels in Asia, and often his observations are too broad, too judgemental, to have any impact. His criticism of a student (and a generation) that "has never heard of Auschwitz" in one poem is oversimplified and too self-righteous to make one fear the "future dark and brutal" that Sherman portends. Similarly. the condemnation of an Indian doctor's "5300.000 house/that sickness and suffering built" is no more poetically impressive than it is politically novel.

The best poems of Snake Music are the more purely descriptive ones: the imagery of such poems as "Lepers" ("each face rots identical .. a live glimpse/of that stinking sameness/we all break down to") is not soon forgotten. I" "Preparation" Sherman speaks of collected images as fish. in nets, that "billow/ in the cold black sea" and concludes simply "Let those fins/ flash in my sleep." With such clear and memorable writing, Sherman not only retrieves *Snake Music* from the realms of pop sociology. but creates a poetic model that could lead him to mote consistently engaging poetry in the future. □

Up the peak with the nosy parkers

Men for the **Mountains,** by Sid Mctty. McClelland & Stewart. 270 pages, $12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 5852 7).

By **ERLING** FRIIS-BAASTAD

SID MARTY'S *Men* for *the Mountains* is an enthusiastic celebration of life in the wilderness. It is also an account of Marty's own education as a warden, an informal history of park wardens in the Canadian Rockii, and a strenuous attack on those bureaucrats and rapacious tourists who are ruining Canada's more accessible wilderness areas.

The first chapter is prefixed with a quote from Brian Ii. Coulter: "The ability to laugh *al one's* self cc" be the beginning of a lifetime of comedy." Among Many's many strengths as a narrator is his ability to handle humour. He doesn't spare the greenhorn that he was when it comes to telling the story of how he learned the skills necessary to work and live clone in the high country. His accounts of his early attempts to come to terms with recalcitrant pack horses and nosy tourists are hilarious — which isn't to say he has written a self-effacing book. As Marty masters what he must doting the course of this book, his pride and sense of accomplishment become tastefully evident.

Marty didn't arrive at his philosophies by distilling the rhetoric from current ethical fads. Everything he comments on, you know he has had to cope with first hand. It is one thing for someone to declare that regulations are making it impossible for us to take risks anymore. and that we should have control over our own destinies even if that means we may break our fool necks. When the person who makes such a statement *is also* the one who most rappel fmm a helicopter and down a cliff face through tricky mountain air currents to save some climber who has show" mote guts than brains, the observation carries weight.

Marty must posses* some rare inner resources. Much of what he encountered as a park warden would turn the average person into a drunken Satanist. Once, he was dispatched to retrieve the victim of a drowning. The operation would have been dangerous and depressing enough without the crowd of tourists that pressed in to take souvenir photographs and ask hopefully morbid questions while the victim's widow and children were crying in a car beside them.

0" another occasion, Marty was called upon to make some park visitors put out a bonfire they hsd built in downtown Banff. The visitors were leftovers from the Age of Aquarius who had gone sour; they turned on Mctty and threatened to kill him. While hc parried the blows of a club with a shovel, a crowd of tourists circle I around to enjoy the fun.

The episode that stands out most miserably in my mind occurred during an elk hunt. Because of the diminishing- number of predators. the elk herds were becoming larger the" the food supply could handle. Game officials opened a previously restricted area to hunters. These "hunters" proceeded to create a memorable slaughter. They shot at every animal they saw and wounded many, which were left to crawl off 10 die unclaimed. The hunters nearly bagged a mounted observer. They also ended up fighting over those truly dead elk they could find without searching too long or walking too far.

Marty is intrigued by the experiences and personalities of his predecessors in the Parks Service, me" who were on their own with a rifle and a horse in some of the most rugged country south of the 60th parallel. Whether the results were humorous or tragic, those old timers were left clone with their duties and could only consult higher authorities long after they had made their decisions. Some of tie me" saw little "ccd to be in contact with Ottawa at all. Bill Neish once confronted two men who had already gunned down four policemen. When the gunmen opened fire on Ncish. he shot them both. Hi official report read, "Oct. 7th. Shot two bandits. Snowing like hell." Eve" that was the expanded second version of his report.

Men for the Mountains is a requiem for a way of life. The parks are becoming less wild and more regulated all the time. The wardens' jobs are becoming increasingly tangled in red tape. The culprits, of course, are certain government bureaucrats, people whose experiences with management courses and love of power are greater than their experience in or love of the wilderness. There will always be those who see every bit of geography and every job in terms of study sessions and graphs. One wonders how old timers like Bill Neish, Bill Peyto, and George Busby would have reacted to a tribunal asking such questions as: "Which theory do you think Parks Canada should be following for the purpose of managing the environment? The evolutionary concept, with all its unpredictable connotations? Or a mote dynamic approach, with active manipulation of the eco-system?"

Though then is evidence that shows that much of the modernized approach to wildcmess management hampers the efficiency of the wardens, there are few who would stand up to such tribunals today. Marty is one of the few. He is used to being outnumbered and he is one hell of a good writer. Maybe he can change something or at least postpone the inevitable. □

Swabbing on a prairie schooner

The Commodore's Barge is Alongside, by Max Bnitbwaite. McClelland & Stewart. 193 pages, $12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 16107).

By MICHAEL 0. NOWLAN

THERE ARE MANY memorable characters in Canadian fiction and Max Bnitbwaite has just created another:

> Imagine standing up beside your seat on the first day of school and announcing to the world that your name is Robin Evelyn Francis Diespecker. The only thing I could do about the laughter that swelled from every side of the mom was join it. Which may account For the clownish twist to my nature . . .

That Robin Evelyn Francis Diespecker is nicknamed "Dink" is more than sufficient to ensure immortality, but Braithwaite's wit and satiric turns give Diespecker the dimension of another Turvey or Peter Pupkin.

The Commodore's Barge is *Alongside* is set "In the small city of Wabagoon in the middle of the Canadian prairies" where., of all places, the Royal Canadian Navy has a "ship" — HMCS *Porpoise* — a "one-storey brick garage, long abandoned and Falling apart." Garage it might be, but to Chief Petty Officer Lightson *Porpoise* is all ship from bow to stem. Moreover. CPG Lightson is part of the "greatest navy in the world. Nelson's navy." The time is September. 1939. Since Dink Diespecker sees the war as "a release from the terrible boredom of the Depression." he signs up For the Navy and is posted to HMCS *Porpoise* right in his home town.

Lightson and Diespecker are destined to cross paths at every turn of Dink's basic training. (In another time and another war, they might well have crossed swords.) Church parades, parties. boxing matches, and agricultural exhibitions all provide episodes in which Diespecker is the clown. He even rivals the commanding officer For the favours of Patricia Reilly. These capers end rather ignominiously for Dink. Perhaps the crowning moment is the firing of a 12-pounder al 4:00 a.m. at the "enemy" — a milk wagon with frisky horse and sleepy driver.

The Commodore's Barge is *Alongside* is a semi-sane treatment of the silly things of wartime; of the suspension of reason and the performing of ridiculous tasks; of the pomp and ritual of military circumstance; of the mistakes of politicians; of the characters that people the navies. armies and air forces; and, above all, of one Robin Evelyn Francis Diespecker. He is a welcome relief compared to the dull-coloured characters of recent Canadian fiction. □

The magnificent men in their flying machines

Canada's Aviation Pioneers, by Alice Gibson Sutherland, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 304 pages, $24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 07 082704 4).

The Tumbling Sky. by Hugh Halliday, Canada's Wings (Box 393, Stittsville, Ont., K0A 3G0), 324 pages, $12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 920002 03 al.

By J. A. S. EVANS

CAPTAIN JAMES DALZELL McKee's connection with Canada lasted only two years. His first Right in Canada took him to Sudbury in the spring of 1926. when hews 33 years old and "a handsome man . . . over six feet tall, well-proportioned and exceptionally strong and muscular." A few months later. in early autumn, he made the first trans-Canada seaplane flight, from Montreal to Vancouver, with Earl Godfrey of the Royal Canadian Air Force as his navigator and first pilot. McKee's own experience with seaplanes was not great. and he acted as second pilot. The flight took slightly more than a week. In 1927, McKee, who was wealthy as well as being handsome, tall. and muscular, donated the Trans-Canada Trophy to the Ministry of Transport to be awarded to those men who significantly advanced Canadian aviation. That same year, he died in a crash landing of a flying boat at Lac LaPêche in Quebec.

Canada's Aviation Pioneers is a series of potted biographies of McKee Trophy Winners over 50 years. In 1977, the winner was McKee's first pilot, Earl Godfrey; 50 years after McKee's trans-Canada flight, Godfrey had retired from the RCAF as an air vice-marshal. In the years in between. the trophy had gone to pioneers such as Grant McConachie, who presided over Canadian Pacific Airlines from 1947 until his death in 1965; John McCurdy, who piloted Alexander Graham Bell's Silver *Dart,* which made the first successful flight in the British Empire; Max Ward of Wardair; and a good many others. Tbii book is solid journalism, and in fact. many of these biographies began as sketches published in *Canadian Aviation* magazine. It is a coffee-table book. but with a difference.

The Tumbling Sky by Hugh Halliday follows a parallel theme. A curious tide, that. Yet a good many aviators tumbled out of the sky in the Second World War. It is the Canadian aces who caused some of the tumbling, and in some cases tumbled themselves, that Halliday writes about. These are potted biographies too, strung together on a single theme. Halliday celebrates tbe best Canadian fighter pilots of tbe war.

It is perhaps odd that the Canadian aces of the 1914-1918 war are better known, perhaps because aviation was in its infancy then, and a high proportion of the RAF pilots were Canadians. But the aces of the Second World War were a remarkable lot. Most famous of them all was "Buzz" Beurling, who was credited with downing about 30 planes. Peace came at last. but not for Beurling. It brought an unsuccessful marriage, and an equally unsuccessful attempt to earn a living flying. In 1948, he crashed at Rome while ferrying a Norseman to Israel, and his father's words when he heard of Beurling's death summed things up: "This is the way I expected his life to end — in a blaze of smoke from the thing he loved most — an airplane."

But most of the aces who survived the war — and most did — adjusted to peace fairly well. A few gave their lives, and the most spectacular ending of all belonged to "Hammy" Gray from Trail, B.C., who dove his burning Corsair toward a warship anchored at the Japanese naval base at Onagawa Bay off northern Honshu, and hit it with his last bomb before sinking into the sea. He won a posthumous Victoria Cross, and a moment of glory.

Writing *The Tumbling Sky* must have been a labour of love. and reading it was a trifle laborious too. But for those who are

old enough to remember Spitfires and Hurricanes, it mast recall bygone heroes. They were admired, lauded perfunctorily, and are now largely forgotten. They deserve better. □

Tales of the foreign legion

Land of *Pain, Land* of *Promise*, research and translation by Harry Piniuta, Western Producer Prairie Books. 225 pages. $11.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88833 002 2).

Men in White Aprons, by Harry Vjekoslav Herman, PMA Books, 88 pages, $3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88778 178 0).

The Metis of Manitoba, by Joe Sawchuk, PMA Books, 96 pages, $3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88778 177 2).

Toil and Peaceful Life: Portraits of the Doukhobors (*Sound Heritage, Vol. VI, No. 4.1977).* Aural *History Series,* Provincial Archives of British Columbia (Victoria, B.C., V8V1X4), 78 pages, $1.75.

By BARBARA NOVAK

FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNTS generally make more compelling reading than anthropological swdies. Neither of these two approaches, however. is likely to hold as much interest for as many people as a book such as Myrna Kostash's *All of Baba's Children* (Hurtig, 1977). Kostash manages to combine the warmth and sympathetic understanding of someone who is personally involved in ho subject with the elegant prose and objective clarity of a professional journalist.

Of these four books, two are extremely objective, scientific, and unbearably dry, while the other two present a collection of first-person accounts. many of which are intensely moving. All four will have a limited audience, consisting primarily of the people belonging to the ethnic groups under study.

Joe Sawchuk's *The Metis of Manitoba* is a careful study of the history of the Red River metis. It deserves serious attention, if only because the *metis* are one of the most neglected groups in Canada. Like the Indians, the metis were separated from their land and means of livelihood a century ago, but they continua to be denied the rights of status Indians. Subtitled "Reformation of an Ethnic Identity," the book argues that the metis identity has emerged as a direct response to economic and social deprivation. It includes a thorough documentation of the Manitoba Metis Federation, which was established in 1967 to try to persuade the government to recognize the legal rights of the metis.

Although most of the material collected in *Land of Pain, Land of Promise* has been previously published in Ukrainian books and newspapers, thii is the first time it has been available in English. From Ivan Pylypiw's first impressions of the Canada to which ha immigrated in 1891, to Phillip Yasnowskyj's recollections of his experience in a Canadian internment camp for aliens during the First World War. the accounts provide an insight into the hoped and frustration of life in the new country for these early immigrants. I was disappointed, however, that only four of the 15 essays were written by women, especially since the compiler noted in his preface that: "It is an understatement to say that pioneer women were true heroines in the best sense of the word."

The preface to *Toil and Peaceful Life notes that the Doukhobor societv is an oral* society, in which "any serious statement, whether factual or not. may embody a truth, emotional, social, or mythic, of far greater importance than its material accuracy." The 13 first-person accounts presented in the book focus on particular, sometimes even trivial, problems encountered by the Doukhobor immigrants. Their honesty of expression. and the excellent black-and-white photos that accompany the text, convey a spiritual realism that could never be approximated by an anthropological study, no matter how well documented. Compare, for example, the words of 91-year-old Polya Vasilevna Kanigan of British Columbia.

> The food was good, but of course, we didn't have tarts or pancakes. Mostly soap. I liked it here so much. The air, the clover was so fragrant. Bat Cecil wanted to go back [to Saskatchewan]. So I'm crying I don't want to 80 and he: "Let's leave." Well, I managed to hold him back.

with H. V. Herman's peculiar insight into Macedonian culture in Toronto:

> Their behaviour sad conversation, I believe, do not differ fmm groups of different ethnicities of the same socio-economic status. They talk about their families, vacationing in Florida, dentists and doctors, family gossip, and generally enjoy the activity of bowling. When comparing their group with other ones in the bowling alley at the same time, it is impossible to notice any difference.

Men *in White Aprons undertakes to* explain why then is such a high concentration of Macedonian immigrants in Toronto's restaurant industry. In the course of his analysis he touches on everything most readers will ever want to know about the Macedonian culture in Toronto except where to find a good Macedonian restaurant. □

Toward a new code of ethnics

Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education, edited by Martin L. Kovacs, Canadian Plains Research Centre (Regina, Sask.), 495 pages, $12.00 paper (ISBN 0 88977 009 31.

Minority Canadians: Ethnic Groups, by Joseph F. Krauter and Morris Davis, Methuen, 120 pages, S5.95 paper (ISBN 0 458 927.40 4).

By KEITH McLEOD

THESE BOOKS ARE important additions to the literature on Canadian ethno-cultural groups. Kovacs's book, a collection of the papers presented at the University of Regina conference on Culture, Education, and Ethnic Canadians held in October, 1976, tends to emphasize ethno-cultural development and group relations in Canada, while Krauter and Davis specifically studv several minority groups — Indians; metis, Inuit, blacks, Chinese and Japanese, other Asians. and migratory workers. For general reading and school "se the Krauter and Davis book is more utilitarian while Kovacs's is mm-e academic. The breadth of subjects covered in the Kovacs book alone justifies buying it.

He has divided it into six sections. The first explores a variety of topics on ethnicity —Indian claims, linguistic trends. folklore, Ukrainian scholarship, the impact of the First World War. and the relationship between the resurgence of ethnicity and the nation-state. Jorgen Dahlie writes about a Norwegian radical who emigrated to Canada; his study is particularly timely with the current interest in radical movements in Canada. especially in the West. There is

also an article by June Wyatt of Simon Fraser University on native involvement in curriculum development, though it is a bit of a mystery why Kovacs chose not to *include it in the more appropriate section on* education.

The second section deals with the quest for continuing ethno-cultural identity. It is a

pity that Alan Anderson's paper on linguistic trends was not included in this section rather than the first. Section three is dominated by studies of the various historical disputes relating to language and assimilation. and in the fourth section Kovacs has Featured papers on ethnocultural adjustment. The issues include one on "The Decline of the WASP?" which is unfortunately all too short and sketchy, as is the succeeding article on the implications of multi-culturalism for elementary school students. Section five deals with ethnic research — both regarding resources and methodology.

Kovacs's article is the sole item in the sixth section. It largely reiterates and summarizes the points made in the various papers. He could have expanded it, and been even more definite on such points as that the word "ethnic" includes all groups in Canada including the English and French Canadians. And how do you refer collectively. in a non-pejorative manner, to those ethnic groups other than the Bngliih and French Canadians? The idea of the "Third Force" is unsupportable, "New Canadians" is long out-dated and the CBC's favourite phrase, "The ethnics," is derogatory and discriminatory. Someone inventive in language had better come to the rescue.

Minority Canadians: Ethnic Groups draws on published sources. old and new, For short but readable studies on the visible minority groups in Canada. There Is only one chapter devoted to European immigrants. The book will be especially valuable to those who wish to secure an accurate but initial knowledge of what has happened to the visible minorities both historically and in contemporary society.

Teachers, instructors, and general readers using the book will wish that Krauter and Davis had expanded their introduction, which deals with the ever-present problems of terminology (what is a minority?) and provides a cursory history of immigration. Perhaps they should have placed the section on terminology in a preface and devoted their introduction, in an extended form. to a more detail analysis of immigration policy, past and present, with special emphasis on immigration.

The studies and the notes at the end of each chapter indicate that they have done extensive reading on each group, but in relation to the Chinese and Japanese I was particularly struck by the absence of some recent works. Similarly the chapter on the blacks makes no reference to the study of blacks in New Brunswick or to the work of Harold Troper. Perhaps we can look Forward to a similar book to give us studies on the peoples from the Indian sub-continent and on such smaller groups as the Filipinos, Tibetans, and Vietnamese. It Is also time for some published material on the immigration and settlement of people from South America. We have nothing to lose but our ignorance of our many peoples and our lively heritage. □

How an arctic hero got the cold shoulder

Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic, by *Richard* J. *Diubaldo, McGill-Queen's* University Press, illustrated, 274 pages., $18.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7738 03242):

By ERLING FRIIS-BAASTAD

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON may have been Canada's greatest modem arctic explorer. He was certainly Canada's most hated arctic explorer. His ambitiousness, stubbornness. occasional glaring incompetence, and success inspired vicious resentment in the hearts and pens of colleagues, friends, and civil servants. Though he won prestige in the U.S. and Europe, in Canada his name became anathema: there were many here who seemed to wish Stefansson would perish on the ice.

Farley Mowat, in his book *Tundra,* declares that the battles that obfuscated Stefansson's accomplishments during his lifetime have been justifiably swept back into ancient history since his death. Richard J. Diubaldo, an associate professor of history at Concordia University. obviously didn't concur with Mowat an&Felt that an exhaustive and sometimes exhausting study of those battles was necessary to understand both Stefansson and the histmy of arctic exploration. As a result. he wrote *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic,* a book that gives us a thorough understanding of why Stefansson was considered such a creep, but does little to explain Stefansson's significance, or to further our knowledge of the arctic.

Stefansson was born in what is now Manitoba in 1879. Shortly afterwards, his parents moved down to the Dakota Territory. He began battling with authority early. After a quarrel with young Stefansson, the president of the University of North Dakota said: "No community can, or will, long *tolerate a* spirit *of insubordination* or *defiance* to its members. The spirit, of course. is anarchy, and everybody understands these days what anarchy is." It *is* doubtful that Stefansson ever considered himself an anarchist. He simply pursued his goals in his own slightly eccentric fashion. and if anyone got in the way he walked over them.

Fmm 1913 to 1918, Stefansson commanded the Canadian Arctic Expedition. Despite the fact he explored previously unknown areas of the arctic and despite his contributions to ethnology during the expedition, his reputation never overcame the damage caused it by insubordinate crew members, exasperated Royal Northwest

Mounted Police officers. and a major disaster et see.

From the outset of the expedition, Stefansson's authority was challenged. The other scientists Felt he put adventure before study. There is evidence to prove he did just that; a great proponent of living off the land, he preferred the mobility of the migrant hunter to the staid concentration of the research scientist. A bit of showmanship was necessary, however, if Stefansson was to succeed at hi life-long attempt to interest the public in the arctic. The adventurous aspects of his travels were essential to that cause.

At times, he was so ruthless he Frightened his colleagues. At one point. the expedition's oceanographer objected to putting their wooden barquentine *Karluk into the ice.* For fear of losing both the ship and his own life. The commander reassured him that, **Lives were secondary to the attainment of the objectives of tbe expedition." Eventually. the *Karluk* was crushed in the ice and sank. Eleven lives were also lost. Diubaldo admits that the sinking of the ship was the greatest arctic disaster since the loss of the Franklin expedition, but concentrates so heavily on the politics surrounding the sinking that a reader must go over that section several timer to Fully appreciate the fact that fatalities were involved. Diubaldo is quite at ease with Facts and figures. However. it is clear that so ability to recreate dramatic tension is not one of his skills.

Stefansson was involved in two otha major projects that ended poorly. He ettempted. along with the Hudson's Bay Company, to establish a reindeer-farming enterprise in the North. It failed miserably, due, in part, to his putting trust ins man who had more ambition than knowledge of reindeer.

Stefansson also sparked an international confrontation over possession of Wrangel Island. The embarrassment caused Canada by the confrontation was held against him, but Stefansson was aware of something the Canadian government was slow to catch on to: Japan. Denmark, the United States. and Russia were among the powers looking covetously at Canada's arctic. The explorer saw the Future clearly and it is a pity he had to struggle so hard to convince Canada that its Future strength and wealth would lie in the far north, and that Canada should waste no time establishing sovereignty there. As For Wrangel Island. it ended up going to the Russians.

This book's major failing is to have been saddled with such a grandiose title. *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic* is too specialized to be a complete portrait of the explorer or of the region he explored. Though the author worked hard at his research and produced much information that could Form a significant third of a biogmphy. he doesn't seem to have known exactly what to do with all the sorrows he dredged up. Then again. Vilhjalmur Stefansson didn't know what to make of them either. □

Variations on a theme

The New **Land: Studies** in a **Literary** Theme, edited by Richard Chsdboume and **Hallvard Dahlie, Wilfrid Laurier** University Press, **160 pages,** 84.50 **paper (ISBN** 0 88929 **065** 3).

Canadian Literature No. 77 (Summer, **1978; "Alberta** Writers"). edited by W. Ii. New. University of British Columbia. **132 pages,** 53 paper **(ISSN 0008 4360).**

By **JOSEPH PIVATO**

THEMATIC STUDY is the easiest **way to examine literature.** For 30 **years Canadian** criticism **has** bees dominated by **the simplistic** thematic approach to **writing, almost** exclusively in **terms of environmentalism: preoccupation** with **natural** setting, land **and** climate **(Northrop** Frye, Margaret Atwood, **Warren Tallman, Desmond Pacey, Gilles Marcotte).** *The New Land* **appears to** be the **latest** addition to thii trend, one long overdue For **redirection.** However, some **of** the **contributors** question the underlying assumptions **of literary environmentalism. Jack Warwick** maintains: "Them is **no** law of **cultural** determinism that dictates The **Canadian** Poem **... or inscribes** The **Canadian** Novel.. .." **In** French Canadian writing there is great variation **and** ambiguity in the **treatment of the** land. **Missionaries** used **bucolic** motifs For **religious** propaganda; in **Louis Hémon and** Joseph-Charles **Taché nature** is a complement to civilization but in **André Langevin** the **new land** myth is bankrupt with Failure and despair.

Clara Thomas finds that **women** writers of the **Prairies** -Nellie **McClung, Margaret Laurence, Laura** Goodman **Salverson, and** Adele **Wiseman —** share **an** immigrant **perspective of the** land. **This** is also **the case** with the Forgotten French **writers of** the West-Maurice **Constantin-Weyer, André Borel,** and **Frédéric Rouquette —** discussed by Roger **Motut,** who regards **Georges Bugnet's *La Forêt* as *the*** Alberta **counter**part to *Maria Chapdelaine*. Ronald Sutherland furnishes the **final** essay in the best h-edition **of comparative** literature and takes the **land** theme beyond **territorial** boundaries, **as** do the **essays of** Richard **Switzer and** Chsdboume. The notable **corrective** to **environmentalism** is Peter Steven's exami*nation* of the poetry **of** Florence McNeil, Andrew **Suknaski, and** Dale **Zieroth,** which considers language **and** poetic vision rather than simply theme.

The value of this **collection of** essays **can** be measured by the extent to which the contributors question **the cliché** of the new land and by the way they consider the forgotten **writers:** missionaries, immigrants. and women. It is only through the

expansion of Canadian literature by reading works outside the mainstream and by patient comparative scholarship that we can come to an understanding of the Canadian imagination. *The New Land* is a move in that direction.

Canadian Literature No. 77 is devoted to Alberta Writers. However, since only Rudy Wiebe and Henry Kreisel, of the authors considered, are now living in Alberta, it Is apparent that the province is a convenient way of drawing together some of tbe very diverse novelists of Western Canada. Rather than the homogeneity that has become an expedient manner of dealing with Prairie fiction we find instead variety: the sexual vitalism of Robert Kroetsch, the religious and moral preoccupations of Rudy Wiebe, the humanitarian concerns of W. 0. Mitchell, and the immigrant and European sensibility of Kreisel. Historical overviews are provided by Elizabeth Marsland's study of "Roads and Railways in the Prairie Novel" and Susan Jackel's review of Dick Harrison's Unnamed *Land: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction.*

It is not too much to hope that literary environmentalism is finally bell laid to rest and that the rich diversity of Canadian writing will eventually be appreciated. □

Encyclopedic flick flack

Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema 1895-1939, by Peter Morris, McGill-Queen's University Press, illustrated, 350 pages, 87.95 paper (ISBN 0 7735 0323 4).

By JIM WHITE

THIS BOOK WILL not make tbe bestseller lists. Which is not to suggest that it Isn't good; it's just that dry history tracts do not appeal to the mass market. Instead, look far used, underlined-in-yellow copies at university bookstores by the end of semester. As the only published history of early Canadian cinema — that is. before the National Film Board — it's sure to become required reading for university film courses. Where else would you expect to find a book witb 50 pages of footnotes and nearly half again as many pages of cross indexing?

Embattled Shadows is a well-researched, readable chronicle of the catastrophe of Canadian cinema from 1895 to 1939. We get a glimpse of the shams and the saints who pioneered our film community; we learn that the federal government failed to support our fledgling film industry at a time when countries such as Britain and Australia were legislating exhibition quotas to protect theirs.

In fact, this volume is a sort of companion to Pierre Baton's *Hollywood's Canada. Embattled Shadows* explains why we never got a film industry. Berton explains what we got Instead — stereotypic images of Canadians seen through American eyes. Coincidentally. both books were researched by Barbara Sears.

Peter Morris, formerly curator of tbe Canadian Film Archives, argues that Canada never developed a film industry because film-makers failed to centralize their studio and lab facilities; no core, no sense of community blossomed. Moreover, the economic crunch of the mid-to-late 1920s and insufficient government support prevented the growth of indigenous cinema.

And while, as Morris suggests. Hollywood's hegemony didn't deny Canadian film-makers a place in the sun (snow?) in their own country, it certainly drained off some notables. What did Mack Sennett, Jack Warner. Marie Dressler, Louis B. Mayer. Mary Pickford, Fay Wray, and Ruby Keeler have in common? Answer: they all left Canada to make it bigstateside.

Despite the encyclopedic approach to film history, this book is not without amusement or amazement. Parts read like Ripley's *Believe It Or Not:*

> Two Ottawa entrepreneurs opened the *world's Am* movie parlor in 1894. Where did they open their movie house? Why, New York City, of course!
>
> The first anti-smoking film ever, *Nicotine,* was halfway through production in Toronto in 1915 when fire destroyed the studio. Perhaps a carelessly tossed cigarette?
>
> Despite the overwhelming worldwide box office success of *Nanook of the North,* the real Nanook never learned of his fame; in fact, he died of starvation two years after the film was released.

Overall, Morris's treatment of the Canadian film industry is only one third complete; omitted entirely are the related topics of film distribution and exhibition. Insiders say the National Film Archives in Ottawa may try to "redress this serious omission" in colleague Morris's work. Ah well, rivalry prevails even in the archival film biz.

Sure, there are misspelled and improperly listed entries in the filmography, but Morris's work demands praise. At least it's a starting point. □

Sergeant Scott makes good

Gordon Pinsent played a forest ranger in his first TV series. Since then, he's come out of the bush

by Phil Surguy

Going east were, in the order Fred Davis introduced them to us: Catherine McKinnon, Ray Bellew, Norman DePoe, Gordon Pinsent and Tommy Hunter. Don't ask me who Gordon Pinsent is. lie's a star.

PETER GZOWSKI wrote that in September, 196.5, when (under the name *Strabo*, *Latin* for "the Squinter") he was the TV critic in *Maclean's* yellow pages. In that particular column, he described the start of two promotional toots with which the CBC was hyping its new season. and be was sarcastically surprised that the network was calling all of its program personalities, including the unknown Pinsent, *stars*. . .

On the tour. Pinsent says. "No one knew who I was except the kids in sick hospitals." They recognized him from his two seasons (1962-1964) as Sergeant Scott in a CRC series called *The Forest Rangers*. And be was on the road to promote his new show, Mr. *Member* of *Parliament*, a title that was changed in the course of the program's three-year run to *Quentin Durgens, M. P.*

His portrayal of Durgens made him as well-known to Canadians as Catherine McKinnon or Norman DePoe and since then he has been almost constantly in the public eye es an actor. screen writer, playwright, novelist. and all-round media personality. He is often several of these things et once. For instance, be is currently the creator, principal writer. and star of the CBC's popular A *Gift* to *Last* series. In retrospect. Gzowski has this to say about the curt manner in which he dismissed the idea of Gordon Pinsent being a star: "I'm embarrassed about that, bet looking back on it delightfolly embarrassed because Gordy certainly pet me in my place and. believe me, I like to see critics pet in their place. He is a wonderful actor, a wonderful writer, a wonderful man, one of the greet guests I've had on radio and TV."

Pinsent was born in 1930 in Grand Falls, Nfld., the sixth child of a papermill worker. A high school dropout, he worked briefly in the papermill, knocked around the Maritimes for a while and eventually made his way to Toronto. arriving in 1948 with three cents in his pocket. Shortly afterwards, he joined the army and served until 1951, first es an infantryman and then as a paratrooper in the Royal Canadian Regiment. He was discharged in Winnipeg. where he soon married. To support his young family he went to work as a dance instructor at Arthur Murray's and es a commercial artist. With characteristic confidence. Pinsent took on the letter occupation without any formal training. "It was a natural thing. I was an artist in school. it was about all I could do. I've always been an intuitive artist as well as an intuitive actor."

He had always had acting in mind, known he belonged in the theatre, but until be settled in Winnipeg had had no opportunity to do anything about it. Then: "I went to a theatre one night — et a YMHA. I think — saw a play, stayed afterwards and reed. I lied to them that I had experience and got the lead in their next production."

He says he was rather cocky about his acting in those days. "Cocky without being cheeky. I used to infuriate people by claiming that I already had 50 percent knowledge of any character I would ever tackle even before rehearsals began."

Tom Hendry, the playwright and president of the Toronto Free Theatre, doesn't remember any cockiness on Pinsent's part. *He says he first knew* him around Winnipeg simply as "a commercial artist end an amateur actor. lie came in and auditioned and acted in the first show John Hirsch and I pot on." That was The *Italian Straw Hat*, the first production of Theatre 71. Pinsent played a butler and had four lines. He must have had something else, too. because in that same year (1957) Hendry and Hiich cast him es Happy in *Death of a Salesman.* "That was when he started to look like an actor," Hendry says.

In the following year, after Theatre 77 had evolved into the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Pinsent was given the lead in the new organization's initial production, A *Hat Full of Rain.* For the Centre be also played Tom in The Glass *Menagerie.*

In 1959, determined to make his living es an actor, Pinsent moved to Toronto and got work on CBC-TV shows and in various live theatre productions. In 1962, he spent a season et Stratford, generally es part of crowd scenes. though in a production of *The Three Musketeers* he understudied *all* of the musketeers. "There were about 50 of them," he says.

Then came his first two CBC series: *The Forest Rangers* (1962-1964) and *Quentin Durgens, M.P.* (1965-1968). During that period, in the fall of 1966. he also acted in a CBC *Festival* production celled *15 Miles of Broken Glass, Tom* Hendry's first full-length work for TV. John Hirsch directed the show. Eleven years later it would be Hirsch, by then the heed of CBC's TV Drama department. who would commission from Pinsent the first A *Gift to Last* show, a one-shot Christmas special that became a series.

About Quentin Durgens, the conscientious young government backbencher from Hampton County, Ontario. Pinsent says, "I made the role my own. It had that very special energy a young actor puts into something to make it work."

It worked very well end the next step in his career seems to be the inevitable one for any successful Canadian actor. After *Durgens was* cancelled Pinsent, hi second wife, the actress Charmion King. and their daughter moved to Hollywood. They lived there until 1974. Pinsent worked fairly steadily, appearing in several films, including *The Thomas Crown Affair,* and many *TV* shows.

It was in California that he started a project celled *John & the Missus* and wrote a screenplay and a novel. each celled *The Rowdyman*. *"Hollywood made me* realize the necessity of having more control over my own career, of mending myself out es a fuller. more creative entity. I started writing *John & the Missus* first, but didn't finish it. 1 didn't take writing seriously then. Also, 1 realized that *John & the Missus* wasn't as commercially viable es something else would be. So I started *The Rowdyman* — as an acting vehicle as well es whatever else it would be."

After finishing the screenplay he started the novel, but had to put it aside when the film went into production. *The Rowdyman*, directed by Peter Carter, was shot in Newfoundland in 1971. Pinsent then returned to Hollywood and finished his book. Doubleday offered to publish it. However, the advance they bed in

mind was too small. so Pinsent offered the novel to McGraw-Hill, which was then publishing his friend Don Harron's first Charlie Farquharson book. McGraw-Hill brought oot *The Rowdyman* in October. 1973. It sold 9.000 copies and was later reprinted es a Signet paperback.

Soon after he and his family returned to Toronto. Pinsent got back to work on *John & the Missus*, which seems to have been written simultaneously es a novel and as a screenplay. McGraw-Hill published the novel in October, 1974. It sold around 7,000 copies and, in the following year, also came out in a Signet edition.

Al Waxman had an option on the movie rights to *John & the Missus*. He says. "I first saw it in the form of an overly written tint draft of a screenplay. It was a mess of emotion, energy, end humour. It was all there. My task was to sharpen It with Gordy into a 90-minute screenplay.". Waxman was to have produced and perhaps directed tbe film. Robert Shaw and Colleen Dewhurst were interested in playing the leads, but the money never came through. Waxman points out that movies like *Death Wish* were making *the big* bucks in 1974. and tbe industry considered John *& the Missus to* bee "soft" production.

But no Pinsent project ever really dies. In 1976, with him es the lead in both shows, his stage version of John *& the Missus* was produced at the Neptune Theatre in Halifax. and a musical adaptation of *The Rowdyman* was staged at tbe Charlottetown Festival. "And there's still room for a straight stage version of *Rowdyman*," he says today.

The *Rowdyman novel* is not jest a ripoff of the screenplay. It's a good first novel and, unlike tbe film, et least half of it is devoted to the rowdy childhood and youth of Will Cole, the roistering Grand Falls papermill worker who (depending on your point of view) is either an overgrown child or an admirably free spirit who refuses to be shackled by other people's ideas of responsibility. Pinsent soys he gave his own childhood to tbe Will Cole we meet in the book -in a manner of speaking. that is. For instance, in one scene young Will, envious of the men who are going off to the Second World War. makes a fool of himself by donning a ridiculously inadequate disguise and trying to joie the army. Pinsent didn't actually do that; but. he says, "I spent that whole period trying to look older. trying to be older." With most of the men away et the war, he says. he felt personally responsible for Grand Fells.

John & the Missus is essentially a series of intertwined. deep, exhaustive, and exhausting internal monologues by various residents of a disintegrating Newfoundland copper mining town. It's a difficult book to read. and the mot of the difficulty is the feet that Pinsent is not primarily a literary man. During a discussion of bis novels I asked him which writers bed impressed him the most. He immediately named Shakespeare and Ibsen and went on to list several more playwrights before mentioning any *novelists.* In other *words,* he brings to his fiction mainly an actor's passion for character. As he pets it, "My writing has a tendency to get off the ground and never land. I throw myself at a character's mercy. From an acting standpoint that's the way to go." True; but in going that way exclusively with prose fiction one risks missing other aspects of the novel.

Which isn't to-say Pinsent is unaware of those aspects. "It's a very tiring and unpleasant procedure I go through. I learned it all wrongly. My approach going into a project is one of overconfidence because of an innate sense of character and language. Theo I end up having to backtrack because I have not defined the structure, a job that should've been Number One on my list of things to do as an author."

The number one thii he has to do as an author is write six of the eight A *Gift* to *Last* scripts being prepared for tbe next season, and be has had to pot aside two novels end several other projects. "My great frustration these days is I've got these thii half-finished. I don't have tbe luxury of being a straight novelist. But they are there and I em going to finish them."

In tbe first of the conversations we had (in February, shortly after he had returned from Edmonton, where he'd hosted the CBC's People *Talking Back* program) he was exhausted and said his doctor had told him to stop working altogether. As a compromise, he war going to go away witb the story outliner he'd worked out with A *Gift To Last*'s producer and story editor, forget everything else and get the jobs done.

I'm not sure whether he dii get away, because during our next conversation, though still tired, he was preoccupied with the CBC people's insistence that he do one complete script before starting the next. He. on the other hand, wanted to whip through six first drafts, get a complete overview of the series and eliminate as many unknowns as possible before tackling any finished scripts.

He seems to have made his point. During the lest conversation he was relaxed, cheerful and working on bis third first draft. He was also looting forward to the time, later this year. when he will only be acting in A *Gift* to *Last* and will have time to get back to one of his novels — which, of course, he plans to do simultaneously with the stage and screen versions of the story. It is no longer necessary for anyone in Canada to ask who Gordon Pinsent is. He's ester. □

Talonbooks has kept dramatic writing alive for more than a decade- but 'for whom? A Canadian house goes international by a process of evolution. • •

'Downhill all the way'

by Eleanor Wachtel

AT THE BOOK display of tbe American Booksellers Association in Seattle last fall, Edward Albee was leafing through some plays. "Where can I buy these in New York?" he asked. "At the Drama Book Shop." said the men in the booth, who then studied Albee, realized who he was, and threw his arms around him. "I want to publish you," he declared; "I mean let's get a few things upfront."

David Robinson. founder of Talonbooks, the largest publisher of plays in Canada, is going international. He is embracing (quite literally) British and American playwrights to add to the more than 40 Canadian titles he's produced in the last decade. At 32. with mischievous good looks, and invariably seen — indoors and out -in an unbelted tan trenchcoat over black turtleneck and trousers, Robinson is clearly conscious of image. But he claims he's not seeking the traditionally necessary, exotic bright lights and promises to legitimize a Canadian outfit. "We can offer *them* established editorial and technical expertise. Americans are getting out of play publishing and a lot of major playwrights can't get their

work into print." At the same time, he admits, netting Edward "A" would boost Talonbooks' credibility, especially in foreign markets. And that's what he's after.

The first sortie is *Ashes by* Britain's David Rudkin. It sports a glossy cover from Paul Davis' poster for Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival ("We had to negotiate the rights for that through a N.Y. ad agency end pay through the nose") end a Los Angeles address in addition to the Vancouver one. Back cover blurbs are courtesy of the New York *Timex* and *The New Yorker* instead of *The* Globe *and Mail's* or *Vancouver Province's* critics. Is this the same company that bemoaned the lack of support and opportunity for Canadian plays (and still does)?

WHEN TALONBOOKS started publishing, there wasn't much Canadiin theatre. It was a lime when Canadian playwrights couldn't get produced because they weren't American or British or French. The exuberant egoism of the Centennial (end its various awards) changed that a little: in 1967, James Reaney's *Colours in the Dark* was performed et Stratford's Avon Theme. and Vancouver's Playhouse Theatre commissioned *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe Fmm George* Ryga. Talonbooks was a fledgling poetry publisher. offspring of a high-school literary magazine, *Talon, that* Robinson edited at 16. continued at tbe University of British Columbia (where he majored in English and minored in theatre), end then began production on a 1930s Addressograph Multilith 1250 in partner Gordon Fidler's basement.

In 1969, Peter Hay, an Oxford graduate, theatre aficionado, end son of Hungarian playwright Julius Hey, was working at tbe Playhouse. At a chance meeting with Robinson, he offered him both the Reaney play and *Rim Joe* for publication. No one else wanted them. Hey teemed up with Talonbooks es its freelance drama *editor,* end tbey produced *Colours in the Dark* in 10 days — collating it et night, running around the table while upstairs Fidler slept in anticipation of the following day's printing job.

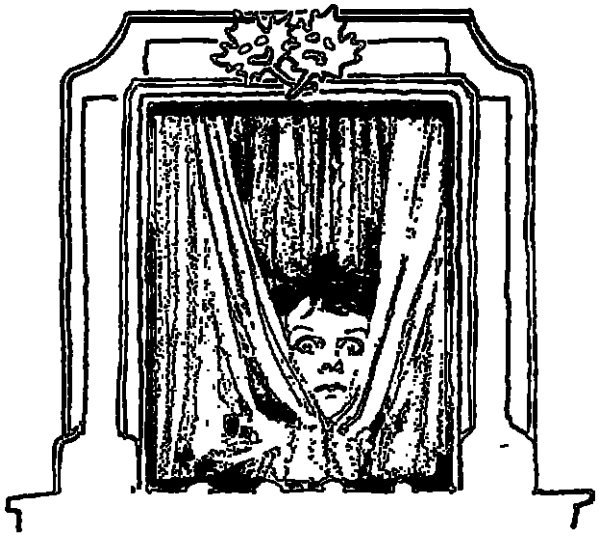
A month later, a first printing of *The Ecstasy of Rim Joe was* completed, 750 copies. "We were a little press, we didn't know." It's now sold 34,000 and is into its tenth printing. Robinson loved the play when he first sew it produced, and was surprised it hadn't been published by '69. "In terms of starting to publish Canadian plays, you couldn't do any better then James Reaney end George Ryga. It's been." he laughs. "downhill all the way."

Although the impetus to increase their play list came from Peter Hay. who acted with the zeal of a missionary to save lost plays, Robinson was far from reluctant. Peter may yet get his wish, he admits. "We may wake up in 1981 end be publishing only plays."

Reaney and Ryga were followed by West Coast playwrights: Beverley Simons, Herschel Hardin, Sharon Pollack, and more Reaney and Ryga. In 1974. Karl Siegler joined as business manager, sorted out tbe books (there weren't any), started paying token salaries of $3,500 a year (and worked 19-hour days), and developed coat-to-coast sales agents on a commission basis. Al the same time the editorial thrust shifted; the bii push was on. "We decided we didn't want to be a regional play publisher but a national one. So we'll pick up one playwright from Ontario and one from Quebec end that'll do it, right?" Robinson smiles. He found David Freeman in Toronto (*Battering Ram* and *You're Gonna Be Alright Jamie Boy).* end in Quebec. he went after Michel Tremblay, starting with *Hosanna*.

Here the peculiar selling point of Talonbooks, or more particularly of Robinson, came into play. Aesthetics. There had been signs of it already in the -quite simply -beautiful presentation of the novels of Audrey Thomas and short stories of Jane Rule. a happy conjunction of covers by B.C. artists to complement the prose. How else but with tender loving care can authors be lured away from big publishers who guarantee wide distribution and promotion?

Tremblay was a case in point. Robinson recognized his importance. and determined that *Hosanna* would be "a knock-out of a production job, that if we couldn't sell en extra thousand copies because we weren't in Toronto. we'd come up witb en extra-fleshy



product that looked really good." (The result is a cover featuring Richard Monette es Elizabeth Taylor es Cleopatra in iridescent gold on a wine background.) In the next two years, live more Tremblay plays were published. end he became Talonbooks' best-selling author.

In a more serious attempt to be national, Ann Henry Fmm Manitoba (*Lulu Street*) end Newfoundland's Michael Cook (*Jacob's Wake*) were recruited. A concurrent desire was to publish the best of whatever was produced each year along with older, Forgotten plays of some significance. Tom Hendry's *Fifteen Miles of Broken Glass,* dating from 1966 was published in 1975; *The Great Wave of Civilization* had been written by Herschel Hardin in 1962 and rescued by Peter Hay in '76, the year that also saw plays by David Fennario, John Herbert, end Marie-Claire Blais.

During this period of expansion, Talonbooks was plagued by the boringly familiar problem of Canadian publishers -penury. Words like "quality publishers" or "specialized market" only exacerbate the problem; operating from Vancouver (i.e., outside the bosom of the Ontario Arts Council) guarantee it remains chronic. So it's something of a Feat that Talonbooks survived. — nay. prospered: kept its authors and its production standards. Robinson swears he's wrapped 100,000 books end testifies to its theraputically calming effect. A secretary (half-time) didn't come until 1975; a warehouse service not until '76. Until then, it was just a two-man operation — he and Siegler (Fidler, tired of working for nothing, had left). They approached tbe B.C. government for publishing subsidies. arts funding, small business development grants, whatever. And fame up empty. Siegler threw himself into the politics of publishing. With Dave- Godfrey, he founded Literary Presses. He set up the B.C. Publishers Group and For two years was its chairman. At one point, in Fact, Siegler sat on a dozen publishing-related committees, chairing four of them.

At last year's annual meeting of the Association of Canadian Publishers. he presented a paper (excerpted in *Perception as* "Publish and Perish") in which he did a "cost comparison" of live theatre versus drama publishing. Government subsidies to tbe Forma avenged $4.07 per viewer while the same material in printed form received a production subsidy of 39 cents per reader. The lest person to argue that beleaguered theatre groups should be cut, Siegler simply wished to demonstrate tbe disparity per-. petuated by the Writing & Publication section of the Canada Council.

The drama publisher is in a difficult position in another sax. working with material once removed from its intended Format. The play must work on the imaginary stage, the theatre in the eye. On the other hand. this cots out the usual intermediaries end interpreters, tbe producers, directors, and actors normally necessary to

reach an audience. In the introduction to the fifth printing of Beverley Simons' *Crabdance,* Peter Hay observes that tbe play has had more printings than professional stage productions, which he attributes to the still prevalent reluctance to perform Canadian work. Noting the acclaim the play has received, Hay is confident that if "Beverley Simons had written a novel with tbe same power.. . her name would be as well known in Canada as that of Margaret Atwood."

At the very least. the plays themselves are available to theatres ("Where would Shakespeare be without people like us?" quip Robinson). *He's* pleased that now some colleges (40 percent of their market) are offering complete courses on Canadian drama, whereas a decade ago there was nothing. Still, he feels Talonbooks has done its duty. For 10 years they published the best of new available Canadian offerings (W. 0. Mitchell and John Murrell have been cool), plus a few older "chestnuts." There aren't any "historical" pieces that they still want to do. So it's a natural evolutionary line to move into an international market. At the same time though. there's another, more negative impetus. "I just feel the temper of the times — so we published all this Canadian stuff and where the hell has it gotten us? With 40-some plays in print [they've allowed only one title to go out of print], only about IO sell well. The other 30? So we're keeping the body of dramatic literature alive. For whom?" he sighs.

GOING INTERNATIONAL doesn't just mean publishing more foreign playwrights and thus fewer Canadians (they'll still try for the pi& of the Canadian crop — about six a year plus an equal number of non-Canadian titles); it's a whole new approach to marketing. Buoyed by a receptive American climate, Talonbooks is no longer content to acquire English Canadian rights only. The editors want North American or preferably English-language rights. With *Ashes,* they were able to disentangle Canada fmm the Commonwealth bloc rights and obtain exclusive North American control. . They are the sole publisher of New York's Israel Horovitz (The Primary *English Class and Mackerel),* and they're negotiating a two-volume set of Sam Shepard, and, of course. waiting for Albee. Similarly. they expect Noah American rights from their Canadian stable. The idea is that as they wallow in that huge U.S. college market. tbe Canadians can benefit too.

It's a policy integral to their new international thrust, but one held at the risk of jettisoning their best seller. Michel Tremblay, whose Quebec publisher, Leméac, has its own rule about selling English-Canadian rights only. A recent package of Tremblay plays and fiction; along witb Antonine Maillet's popular *La Sagouine,* is now on the back bunter. Talonbooks is determined. but also dedicated to Tremblay, so some sort of compromise may be worked out.

What seems increasingly certain, however. is that Talonbooks will leave Vancouver and move to Toronto. Rumours have persisted for years, and last fall production shifted east because it was 12 percent cheaper to print and bind a book in Toronto and ship it to Vancouver than to manufacture it locally. Them's always been a certain cachet in operating from the boondocks. a kind of reverse prestige given the intrepid loner. It will be ironic indeed if broadening internationally means huddling in Toronto. □

A question of class

First in peace, first in war, blame the bloody mess on the autocrats, says Edward Bond, master of gore

by Tim Heald

MANY COUNTRIES have a class system, but only the English have refined and elevated theirs to a point where it permeates every aspect of life. In England you can make an educated guess about almost anyone's social status by listening to his vowel sounds and watching the way he holds a knife and fork. Whatever you may think. it's a game that is usually played in earnest. Everything is susceptible to class analysis.

Theatre is essentially middle class, a bourgeois taste elegantly served by squads of immaculately professional playwrights such as Christopher Hampton, Simon Gray. Tom Stoppard, Alan Ayckbourn. and Michael Frayn. Nice, witty plays for Alan Bates. On the right or aristocratic wing there is still William Douglas-Home, brother of the former prime minister, author of *The Reluctant Debutante* and similar plays; and OR the left, the workers' side, there is a growing strength, but no one to rival in either commitment or stature. the post-Shavian, post-Brechtian figure of Edward Bond.

Tony Coult, who has written a short and adulatory study of Bond (A Methuen Theatrefile) says that he is "probably tbis country's finest living theatre writer." Certainly the National Theatre Production of The *Woman* -which is to be performed at the Stratford Festival this summer- was one of the most powerful theatrical events in London last year. It was also one of the most inexorably serious, a harsh lecture in the rights and wrongs of the world as Bond sees it.

Bond's world is. above all, violent. His defenders profess themselves bored by tbii observation, harking back to tbe stupendous row that greeted Bond's arrival on the theatrical scene in 1965. In a play called *Saved* Bond wrote a scene in which a baby was stoned to death in its pram by a gang of bored young Londoners. It is an extraordinarily horrifying scene and it led, under the bizarre laws of tbe time, to official censorship and a court action that the playwright lost. Since then Bond's plays have continued to include scenes of violence, but the outcry has died down. We have become used to violence in everyday life and even bis critics now recognize that Bond is serious. The corpses that litter the stage in hi productions are not just cheap theatrical flummery but crucial to his purpose. In an introduction to his version of *Lear he says: "I mite* about violence as naturally as Jane Austen wrote about manners. Violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent we have no future. People who do not want writers to write about violence want to stop them writing about us and our time. It would be immoral not to write about violence."

In *The Woman he is* as good as his word. It is a story of the siege of Troy and last year's well-fed London audiences were treated to the murder of some plague-infested Trojan women, the

walling-up of Heros' wife Ismene, the violent murder of Hecuba's son on the temple steps, and the stabbing to death of Hems himself. AU this happens on stage. unlike the murder of Hecuba's infant grandson (he is thrown from the walls), but to compensate for this uncharacteristic squeamishness Hecuba puts her eyes out and strides the stage, face gushing with singularly realistic gore. The direction was by Bond himself and there was nothing amateur about the deaths. They were calculated to revolt, and they did.

Religion. another of Bond's abominations, is give" short shrift, ridiculed in the person of some vacillating, self-obsessed priests on both sides; but the real enemy is the militarist class system, which is. in Bond's eyes, the cause of all the carnage. The ultimate good guy is a cripple who has escaped from the Athenian-owned silver miner and who is confronted by Hems. the Greek warlord..

"It's not true the guilty go to hell," shouts the man. "Only the weak."

"Enemies of the state or criminals!" says Hems. to which the man, disbelieving. shrieks. "I was *born there.*"

What's wrong with the world, Bond's world, is that it is ruled by a small group of maniacal autocrats grinding the faces of the poor. "We have N understand," he writes in another of his introductions, "that not only is capitalism destructive in war *and* peace, but that it is *as* destructive in peace as in war." The only solution to the mess is the substitution of socialism for capitalism and if that has to be done by violent means then that is nothing new. "for whenever you walk quietly down the orderly street of a capitalist society you are surrounded by the hidden debris of waste and destruction and are already involved in a prolonged act of communal violence."

The Woman is a powerful rehearsal of these beliefs, and in its London production it was lavishly staged and produced in a manner made possible by generous subsidies from income ax, in a theatre designed by a man whom the Queen knighted for his services N architecture, and named after Laurence Olivia. who was created a lord for his services N acting. In the foyer hoardings advertised plays by Congreve and Noel Coward. Then is something supremely English in such a socialistic offering being played in such a temple of the bourgeoisie. A nicely ironic occasion,

Edward Bond

though it was difficult N be sure quite who was laughing at whom.

Bond seems such a committed writer, so keen N pm over a message, that I wondered why he doesn't use more conventionally political forms of expression -books or essays. In fact he does write poems and essays to supplement his plays. some of which appeared alongside the cast list and other notes for the London performance of *The Woman.* After I saw the play in London. I asked him about his work. Bond replied: "I write for the theatre because the theatre has a very potent influence in English society. It incorporates ideas with physical images — and the combination of these two things, the mental and physical. attacks our total consciousness. I have seen people leave the theatre white with anger -and I have heard from others gratefully acknowledging that they or their life has in some way bee" changed by what they've see". Those ate dramatic and unusual reactions — but there is a general effect.

"The theatre is also innovative for other mediums — such as television and film. Both of these are tightly controlled by money or censorship (usually 'house' censorship — TV officials often act with the arrogance of the Medicis but unfortunately without any of their taste) and would in themselves soon atrophy eve" more than they have. Human consciousness struggled constantly to relate N a rapidly changing world. The theatre is one of the few places where this can happen in a creative. normative way. The theatre must be highly entertaining — but richly entertaining, not trivially entertaining to the standards of tired businessmen who are too afraid N think about their lives or what they do N others."

Bond adds "things" (stories. poems and so on) to his plays because "we don't live in a unified culture. If you say 'white' some people will hear 'black': that is the condition of our cultural disunity. We have no standards of truth because we are not interested in the truth and so we never investigate it — or hardly ever. So my 'bib and pieces' are a guide to the play — or an elaboration. If you have a good experience you recollect it afterwards and perhaps think of various aspects that you hadn't noticed before -whether it was a party, a visit, or a holiday, for example. Things don't exist in themselves as far as culture is concerned; culture ramifies out into your life. For example, I might write a poem about a Rembrandt portrait not because I thought the portrait was 'inadequate' but because out of ik adequacy it gave rise to other thoughts and speculations. But, as I said the exposure to a play is relatively short and intense -the" it is probably a good idea to provide some indications."

I was also interested in seeing how well Bond thought his work would translate to Canada. I suggested N him that his attitudes N class were particularly English, rooted in his own experience. and that tbey simply weren't relevant to relatively classless, relatively unmilitaristic Canada. He said I misunderstood: "Everyone in Canada could be members of one class and still live in a class society — because they live in" class world. The values and operational relationships of a class that achieves ik privilege from the manipulation of others (this is anyway true of all Western democracies) creates ik own irrational world of myth and irrational behaviour. In fact, in places like Canada and America you find class society heightened, not lessened.

"In cultural terms England is a far less 'class society' than America. The standards of unjust affluence them are highly corrosive: perhaps you'd call it the rat race. A society like America must have a class relation N Russia — not so much because of what Russia really is but for what it stands for. Perhaps you could say the class world of Canada was encapsulated — there are perhaps no obvious slums (apart fmm those of the Indians. I believe). But class structures have world-wide mega-forms, and the culture of Canada seems N be that of" class society as much as America's is. Culture in Canada is derived from the norms and activities of capitalism. As for militarism, well since all Western democracies are garrisoned by American nuclear weapons (and if those rockets are in the sea or the sky, you are garrisoned by them) Canada is clearly one of the most militaristic societies that has ever existed." □

The revolution scripts

Sifting the cultural fallout from a theatre boom: an inventory of the past year's drama publications

by Don Rubin

IT USED TO be. some time back, that the publication of a new theatre book in Canada was a major event. In many ways, it still is an event. but no longer quite as unusual. Today some half dozen publishers issue theatre titles yearly and of those. Four now are specializing in theatre books. Over the last year alone, these houses will have published more than three dozen theatre titles. more than six dozen if one adds tbe manuscript publications of the Playwrights co-op.

A Formidable number, probably an astonishing number to people still unaware that a revolution took place in tbe Canadian theatre during the '60s and '70s — a revolution whose cultural Fallout is represented by such publication figures. Need the obvious still be said? Perhaps so: there is a Canadian theatre in Canada these days. one that now is being fairly reflected and represented by our publishing houses. It is no longer necessary For anyone to apologize For our theatre or its writers and it is no longer necessary — nor politically expedient -to ignore Canadian theatre titles in book displays, book stores. or book buying.

What Follows is a subiective and far From comprehensive inventory of major theatre. titles over the last year:

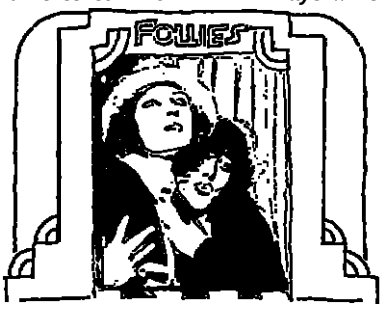
PLAYS

Canada's largest and most consistently quality-conscious English play publishing house is, without a doubt, Vancouver's Talonbooks. Since its Founding in 1967 Talon has published nearly 100 scripts by virtually every important playwright in the country. The quality is generally high, the scope truly national, and the design and layout quite extraordinary. Talon's new list includes Joe Wiesenfeld's *Spratt*, a powerful study of a contemporary everyman that has already proven its stage worthiness in productions both in Vancouver *and* Toronto; *Walls*, an effective and often moving documentary-drama based on tbe Andy Bruce-Mary Steinhauser hostage-taking incident at a British Columbia penitentiary in 1975; Rex Deverell's delightfully mad *Boiler Room Suite;* Roland Lepage's sensitive and touching Chalmers *Award-winning drama* of youth, maturity. and old-age. In *a Lifetime*; and David Fennario's latest foray into comedic socidim, *Balconville. Talon's* is consistently an impressive and high profile list, befitting a publishing house

determined to prove that playscripts are not only important but that they are marketable as well.

Talon's only competition in tbe playscript field is Toronto's Playwrights Co-op. which later this year will change its name to Playwrights Press. The Co-op was created by Canadian playwrights to serve their own needs. Whet the trade needs to understand is that when the Co-op talks about having published 300 playscripts, it is talking not of books primarily, but of manuscripts that have been mimeographed and inexpensively bound. Nothing wrong with that, mind you. It would have been a great loss indeed if some of these scripts bed not made it into print. Among these I would include plays by some of this country's most interesting younger writers — Sheldon Rosen *(Ned and Jack, Frugal Repast, The Grand Hysteric)*, Erika Ritter *(The Splits). Tom Cone (Stargazing)*, James DeFelice *(Take Me Where the Water's Warm)*, Clive Doucet *(A Very Desireable Residence)*, Ken Goss *(Winter Offensive)*, James W. Nichol *(Gwendoline)*, Sharon Pollock *(The Komagata Maru Incident)*, Tom Grainger *(The Injured)*, Tom Hendry (How Are *Things With the Walking Wounded).* Michael Hollingsworth *(Clear Light, Trans World)*, Henry Beissel *(Goya)*, John Palmer *(Henrik Ibsen on the Necessity of Producing Norwegian Dmmo. A Touch of God* in *the Golden Age.* and *Blond Hysteria).*

In terms of more traditional book publishing. the Co-op's program is somewhat less exhaustive. Nevertheless. their "book" tides are all valuable editions and well worth stocking. This year's list is particularly impressive. It includes a collection of Larry Fineberg plays *(Death, Stonehenge. Hope* and Human *Remains)*, a collection of Carol Bolt scripts *(Buffalo Jump, Gabe*, end *Red Emma).* and a third volume celled *Five Canadian Plays* which



includes Ken Mitchell's Heroes. John Lazarus's *Babel Rap*, Brian Shein's Cow *boy Island, Ken* Gass's *Hurray For Johnny Canuck*, and Cam Hubert's *The Twin Sinks of Allan Sammy. The* Co-op is also currently preparing an edition of this past year's most talked about playscript, George F. Walker's Gothic fairy tale, *Zastrozzi.*

One should also note the introductions to most of these volumes. American critic Michael Feingold's introduction to the Fineberg volume is especially incisive. For many years. Talonbooks' drama editor, Peter Hay, wrote a series of equally provocative introductions to his company's volumes. He has stopped that in recent years and we are all the poorer. Such critical materiel is valuable and we obviously could use much more *of* it. Ken Gass's introduc-

tion to three George F. Walker plays (Cptch House), in this regard, should in itself be required reading for anyone interested in contemporary Canadian culture.

A third specialty house making a name for itself in recent years is Simon and Pierre. Its editions are generally handsome to look et, though heavy to hold and expensive to buy. Unfortunately, they are else occasionally dubious in terms of the playwrights chosen for inclusion. Its current edition, Seven *Authors From Quebec* (volume five in its Collection of Canadian Plays series), is a happy exception to that caveat and, es such, is a genuine contribution to the available literature in the field. In this case. the writers chosen are all important in Quebec, the plays published are all eminently stageworthy, end the modest introduction by Claude DesLandes, formerly of the *Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatique*, does put the scripts into some context. Included are scripts by Michd Garneau, Serge Mercier, Andre Simard, Renald Tremblay, Serge Sirois, Claude Roussin, and Louis-Dominique Lavigne in translations by Allen Van Meer, Henry Beissel, John Van Burek, Christian Bedard, Keith Turnbull, and Arlette Franciere.

One does have to wonder, et least a little bit, however. 'about the impression created of Quebec dramaturgy in a volume that does net include a single script by Quebec's foremost dramatist, Michel Tremblay, or scripts for that matter by Jean Barbeau or Robert Gurik. Nowhere in this volume are these writers' contributions discussed; the names are merely mentioned in passing. It would seem that in publishing some Quebec writers, Simon end Pierre has slighted some important others. No doubt this had to do with the availability of works by Tremblay, Gurik, and Barbeau through other publishing houses and/or because of problems connected with rights. Nevertheless, some indication of why they were not included should have been made, if only out of fairness.

Other playscripts of special interest: John Murrell's adaptation of Chekhov's Uncle *Vanya* by Toronto's Theatrebooks; John Coulter's historical Quebec drama, *François Bigot* by Hounslow Press; James Reaney's The *Dismissal.* a *play* commissioned for the University of Toronto's 150th anniversary celebrations and published by Press Porcépic; and. Maxim Mazumdar's latest one man extravaganza, *Dance For Gods,* a *monodrama b&d* on the living realities of a Greek actor during the time.of Euripides published by Personal Library.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

Two books especially stand out. The first is not a good book es much es it is an extraordinarily important one, because it is the first on the subject: Wayne' Edmonstone's *Nathan* Cohen: *The Making of a Critic* (Lester and Orpen). Essential reading for anyone interested in the development of the Canadian theatre since the '50s, the book traces Cohen's career from the Maritimes to Toronto and his development into Canada's most important and outspoken theatre critic and commentator. The problem is that Edmonstone himself knows little about theatre and his judgements of what is important handicap tbe materiel from beginning to end.

Suffering from somewhat the same problem is Geraldine Anthony's *Stage Voices* (Doubleday). a unique collection of first-person essays by a dozen of Canada's

most significant playwrights. Included are pieces by John Coulter, Herman Voaden, Robertson Davies. Gwen Pharis Ringwood, Tom Grainger, James Reaney, John Herb.% Michael Cook, David French. David Freeman, Michel Tremblay, and Michel Garneau. Each speaks about his approach to playwriting, his influences and then about some of the forces that first brought him into contact with the theatre. Professor Anthony's introduction is less helpful than it could be, but the fact that she did manage to bring this unusual collection together is reason enough for it to be mandatory in Canadian schools and libraries.

ARCHIVAL *AND* **SCHOLARLY**

Any overview of theatre publishing in Canada without mentioning et least something of the growing interest in documenting and analyzing Canada's theatrical past would be incomplete indeed. There are several important bibliographies. including a revision of the ***Brock Bibliography of Published Canadian Plays*** in ***English (1766-1977)***, a supplement to Richard Plant and John Boll's ***Bibliography of Canadian History (1583-1975)*** and Patrick B. O'Neill's *Supplementary* Checklist *of Canadian Plays to 1945.* These are, without doubt, all essential documents for any collection of Canadian theatre material.

Essential too ate the ongoing series of scholarly titles being released by Canadian Theatre Review Publications. Its annual Canada On Stage series documents the performance activities of every professional theatre in the country. A second CTR series of import is Canada's Lost Plays. Volume one in that series, already released, concentrates on the 19th century and features five comedies and a verse tragedy on such timely subjects es nationalism. regional politics, and feminism. The book also contains a Roe introduction by editors Anton Wagner and Richard Plant. □

Less than meets the eye

Take your pick of TV dinners: junk food catered privately, or plain fare from the motherly CBC

BY Mary Jane Miller

THE FACT THAT this annual review of Canadian television drama comes a month earlier this year probably does the CBC a disservice. A very good start to the *For the Record* series. with the epic version of ***Riel*** to be aired this month, could change a rather bland diet into more exciting fare. On the other hand, with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission looking at the renewal of CTV's licence, this may be a good time to *review* its record in television drama. Mother CBC may be setting a nourishing, if safe, table this season but the fast food outlets of private broadcasting offer neither flavour nor food for the mind. They don't even offer simple fun.

First a few facts. Lord Thomson of Fleet — who had one — once called a private broadcasting licence "A licence to print money." Nest. it is worth noting that the various networks who make up ITV in Britain here produced ***The Avengers***, ***Up stairs, Downstairs***, ***A Family at War***, and superb anthologies of original plays for television. Also, whether you live in Britain or Canada, as the CRTC pointed out in the tide of its 1974 report "Radio Frequencies are Public Property," the taxpayers give away their collective rights to the air waves every time the CRTC issues a licence in whet amounts lo a public subsidy. What Canadian drama specials. adaptations. sitcoms, family, or adventure series have we been given in return by CTV? Thanks to the long life of reruns, some made necessary by the wholesale cancellation of new U.S. shows, we can see for ourselves.

Trouble ***With Tracy***, made *eight or* nine years ago, and still appearing seven days a week on some affiliates, is a typical example: good Canadian actors wasted in sketches that would disgrace a high school assembly; a stereotyped "dizzy broad" going through the motions wilb neither polished slapstick nor sharp observations to alleviate the stale characterizations and predictable situations.

Then there's ***The Starlost***, hauled off the shelf to till en awkward gap in tbe January schedule. Devised long before ***Star Wars*** and ***Battlestar Galactica***, it began with a promising SF premise — a chain of biospheres launched from a derelict earth are now disastrously off course. Originally, it had a good cast (two Canadians and Keir Dullea), reasonable production values. and a huge potential audience growing emaciated on reruns of Star *Trek. Yet The* ***Starlost*** barely survived one season. The three young leads were not well differentiated, nor developed es time went on. The other biospheres were pretty dull — often paper-thin précis of chapters fmm a prima on abnormal psychology. It was not good sword-and-sorcery space opera (vide *Galactica*), *nor* imaginative extrapolation from present trends in technology and *social* behaviour, not a look at some of the stepchildren that science has abandoned on our doorstep. It might, perhaps, have improved. It was not given the chance -no U.S. sales.

Whet about dnma specials? Like ***Hallmark Hall of Fame***, *Roofs. or Rich Man/ Poor Man to* name a few cousins from across the border? The answer is that CTV gives us one a year. Last year it was ***Separation***, based on the Richard Rohmer novel — our national agony seen through lbe apparent influence of Harold Robbins rather then Hugh MacLennan or Roch Carrier. Not even very good schlock. This year it was ***Christmas*** Lace — a half how that lovingly recreated a 19th century village in Quebec, with glimpses of Monique Mercure and other fine Quebecois actors. The simple tale of a poor widow, bet

granddaughter. a penitent thief and the child's Mtb in the power of the baby Jesus made a pleasant family show — but one half hour in one full year? Even Santa Claus is around for longer than that.

Things are somewhat better at the CBC. A new series. The *Great Detective*, is good fun on " cold midweek night. It has bizarre plots, line fluffs galore. and above all, Douglas Campbell very comfortably larger than life. ad having a good time. Once in a while tbe series wobbles between comic thriller and more serious social issues, as when Don Francks gives depth and dignity to an old Indian wise man. Suddenly the Christmas cracker pops out with an unexpected message. but usually the funny hats and satisfying noises simply entertain. In fact, for connoisseurs of Sax Rohmer *et* al. tbe mad doctors. body snatchers, and dope fiends are packed into each episode, then placed in imaginatively detailed, carefully researched. and beautifully executed settings. I particularly enjoyed the eerie hospital in "Nightwalker of the Wards."

A Gift to Last is not a curious mixture of genres like *The Great Detective* but family entertainment. It's believable. It has a strong sense of" particular time and place, the main characters relate well to one another, the minor ones are sharply drawn. The dialogue is Full of nuances with credible idioms and accents.

The sentiments are forthright, the emotional interplay fully motivated and well paced, and the laughter is genuine. Thanks to Gordon Pinsent, his "family and friends" in the series. and good direction,

the customs, rituals. ambitions. the social structure, and tbe rich subtext of casual encounters that are part of life in a small town with a specific past come to life. The acting is first rate. Equally to the point, the large audiences of A *Gift to Last* enjoy it.

Shorter series have not succeeded as well. What has the CBC got against the Establishment? After *The Masseys* and *The Albertans*, the captains of industry should sue. Obsessive, humourless, workaholics. ruthless schemers — what a composite portrait. According to these scripts. the only magnetism belongs to a German can man; the only machismo is to be found in A.I.M. Indians; the only strength is rural and aging. The women are prim, tired or bitchy, and the only excitement is illness. with a little dynamite thrown in. Worst of all, the morals are spelled ""t in case you missed them. *The Masseys:* "We believed tbat we could change ourselves and so change the world." "We tried to be givers not takers." On second thought, given lines like that *The Masseys may* have paid for tbe whole thing.

Alberta, on tbe other hand. may pack up its transmitters and leave after the insulting clichés handed out to native people, ranchers, plucky middle-aged daughters (Frances Hyland must be tired of her patent on that role), bored wives, engineers, and self-made me". To catch the previews was to catch the highlights. The three-part series managed to be racist, sexist. reinforce Eastern prejudices about Western parvenus, and be tedious, all at once.

The *Day My Grandfather Died*, a drama special done with Polish speaking actors, by the reliable CBC team of David Peddie and Renee Bonnière, looked. sounded, and felt authentic to its western milieu. *A* very simple plot unfolds obliquely, slowly, but with real surprise. In the end one does care "bout the old man, his daughters, grandchild, neighbours, and friends. Not so with *Stacey* — a very uneven adaptation of pats of Margaret Laurence's *The Fire Dwellers*. The CBC did well a few years ago with A *Bird in the House*, but, in this instance, despite good performances and some striking moments the predictable plot and heavy-handed closeups made the audience as tired and restless as the protagonist.

For the Record had just started as deadline arrived — but *Cementhead* was the best play of the season to date. The humiliation of the Challenge Cup was still fresh in our minds. With Rick Salutin's *Les Canadiens* the play of tbe year across the country, this show took a sharp look at where the game comes fmm. how it's played, and what it costs. Hockey is a passport out of layoffs and dead end jobs, a business, a personal dream, a myth of "manhood" and nationhood used as a place to let out the pent-"p frustrations of its fans in brawls on and off tbe ice. and as a surrogate arena for larger wars.

Cementhead counterpoints the "impractical" but lovely vision of a young goalie who prefers building a plane and flying it to being number 17 in the draft for Detroit and

bis close friend Bernier (37/Toronto) who eventually makes tbe team. Two *of* many highlights came when Eric Nesterenko, pinned down in a restaurant by an earnest young female student· quoting Sartre and Gcnet on tbe Mystique of Violence, takes out his teeth, puts them in a glass. and laughs companionably with his young rival at her shocked face; and the last scene when Bernier takes his girl out to the empty rink. having filled the ice re-surfacer with paint, and gives her a joy ride as he stains the ice a gleaming, streaky black.

For *the Record* has always promised and usually delivered good drama with a clearly defined documentary style. The subjects arc current: long distance swimming, bagman politics, union struggles, farmers' fights with Ottawa — now hockey. It is rarely didactic, overdrawn. or strung-out on a tenuous thread of plot. Location shooting. tight editing. and an ear for ordinary speech patterns give the series much of its impact. It is the CBC at its best -a blend of good entertainment, reliable information. and new insights about familiar subjects.

Over this year, the CBC has provided us with a reasonably flavourful and nourishing selection of drama entrees. witb only a few half-baked dishes on offer — and all of them home grown. I'll take the CBC over Kentucky-fried CTV any day. □

IN BRIEF

Indirections: Shakespeare and the Art of Illusion, by Anthony B. Dawson, University of Toronto Press, 194 pages, $15.00 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 5413 7). This book will find its way into university libraries and be used by many undergraduate English students. It deals with Shakespeare's use of illusion — deceit. disguise. manipulation, role-playing. Such devices were meant to lead the characters within the plays to self-knowledge and truth, and also to pm. vide the audience with an awareness of the value *of drama* as an illumination of reality. But sometimes the reality of evil in the world was apparently too dark to bc illuminated which. according to Dawson, explains *Hamlet*'s failure to solve anything. He argues that as Shakespeare developed as a playwright, he came to terms with the limitations *of* theatrical illusion. Obviously, no one writes about Shakespeare in a vacuum, and Dawson, of course. acknowledges his indebtedness to other scholars. It is annoying and distracting. however. to have to search for his reference notes at the back of the book rather than to find them at the bottom of each page.

—MARY AINSLIE SMITH

on the racks

by Paul Stuewe

Screenplay tie-ins: popularizing Riel and a boost for a one-legged highjumper

SOMEWHERE IN publisher's heaven there's a special corner reserved for the genius who thought up the "paperback tie-in," that novelization of script or screenplay which attempts to cash in on lhc release of a new film or TV show. Such recent softcover blockbusters as *Star Wars* and *The Holocaust* have obviously impressed at least two Canadian publishers with the possibilities of this type of marketing, with PaperJacks stepping out with a novelization of the much-publicized CBC-TV drama Riel ($2.50).

Authors Janet Rosenstock and Dennis Adair have done an extremely creditable iob of transposing script into novel, and have retained the dramatic conflicts and historical sweep of the filmed version while sketching in some convincing backgrounds of 19th century Canadian life. Their decision to preface each chapter with a quotation from some intellectual heavyweight (Hegel, Camus, Santayana) struck me as both superfluous and pretentious. and the re-creations of behind-the-scenes Ottawa politicking seemed a bit too schematically cut and dried for comfort; but in the more important respects of vivid characterization and narrative drive this is a very successful novel, which makes good theatre out of the raw material of history. In its own popularizing manner, *Rid* does more for the creation of a national mythology than all of Northrop Frye's "mythopoetic" disciples have so far managed, and it should give a wide audience a great deal of reading pleasure.

At least one other major tie-in project is in the works. as Bantam/Seal plans on an autumn release for John Gault's novelization of *Crossbar*, a 90-minute CBC-TV drama about a one-legged highjumper's struggle to qualify for Canada's 1980 Olympic team. The story is fiction based on fact, in that there ate apparently several one-legged highjumpers who compete and do quite well — although not olympically well -at track meets. and I'll be able to tell you more about it when the book appears. If these two big-budget, high-profile efforts succeed, we'll be seeing a lot more *of* marketing strategy that has already given several American publishers a new lease on life.

This month's other softcover releases are the usual mixed bag of agony and ecstasy,

with the latter most consistently supplied by the quality-paperback edition of Barry Broadfoot's Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame (PaperJacks, 55.95). I'm sure you're already familiar with Broadfoot's engrossing series of oral history compilations, so I'll simply advise obtaining a copy of this moving account of our shameful treatment of Japanese-Canadians during the Second World War.

George Radwanski's Trudeau (Signet, $2.50) isn't the critical biography we could sorely use. but then it doesn't pretend to be: what it does provide is the record of some extended conversations with its subject and a once-ova-lightly account of his career, and the result is a superior piece of journalism that seldom approaches anything resembling analytic insight.

In tie fiction department. M. T. Kelly's I Do Remember the Fall (PaperJacks, $2.25) is a young-man-on-the-loose effort that pokes clumsy fun at everything and everyone except its unbearably smug narrator. Many writers have begun their careers with this sort of thing. but most have wisely chosen not to publish it. After this book's sophomoric ramblings. it's a pleasure to relax with a well-crafted thriller such as. Derek Askey's Get 'Em! (PaperJacks, 52.500). a classically simple drama of flight and pursuit in the wilderness. The author's no great shakes at character delineation, but he's a dab hand at inventing exciting situations that grab your attention and don't let go until the last baddie has met an explosive end.

Sheila Burnford's Bel Ria (Seal. $2.25), finally. is another incredible animal journey — and sales-wise. probably another *The Incredible Journey* -chock full of indomitable spirit and spunky charm and all that sort of thing, well-calculated to dissolve a stiff upper lip in a bath of weepy sentiment. It's *certainly* "good of breed," but will not completely satisfy those of us who suspect that the idealization of animals has about the same degree of validity as the deification of human beings. □

endpapers

by Morris Wolfe

How Malcolm Lowry makes it as a great Canadian, but Pierre Laporte doesn't

WILLIAM STEWART WALLACE, Chief Librarian of tbe University of Toronto from 1923-1954 made an enormous contribution to Canadian reference materials. Large portions of his Dictionary *of Canadian Biography* (1926) — prepared almost entirely by Wallace — were incorporated in the six-volume *Encyclopedia of Canada* (1935)). which he edited. That encyclopedia was subsequently purchased by Grolier and became the basis of the present *Encyclopedia Canadiana*. *Many of* the biographical entries in *Canadiana* still reveal the hand of Wallace. The trouble is that *Canadiana is now* largely out of date and only of limited use. Also of limited use is **The Macmillan Dictionary** of Canadian Biography. edited by W. Stewart Wallace, fourth edition, revised, enlarged, and up dated by W.A. McKay (914 pages, $49.95). But until U of T's superb multi-volume *Dictionary of Canadian Biography is* complete, it's really all we have. The Macmillan *Dictionary* contains biographies Of more than 5,000 Canadians who died' before 1976. But there are curious anomalies. Malcolm Lowry is here but John Grierson isn't. H. W. Ha-ridge is here but Tim Buck isn't. I would have thought Pierre Laporte would get an entry. You're actually better off looking at the updated entry on political economist James Mavor in

Canadiana than the old Wallace entry which is still in *Macmillan. Canadiana* at least tells us that Mavor was a friend of Tolstoy and was responsible for bringing the Doukhobors to Canada. The style and organization of new entries in *Macmillan* leaves a great deal to be desired. The entry on Lester Pearson lists some dozen honorary posts he held after he stepped down es prime minister. bet mentions none of the major legislation his government passed while he was in office. We're told, "He was the first Canadian to receive the Nobel Peace Prize *and [my* emphasis] the Gold Medal Award of the National Institute of Social Sciences of the United States." *Caveat emptor.*

* * *

IN CASE YOU come across some poor young soul — a Four-year-old Kaspar Hauser, say -who doesn't know how to behave like a child end would like to learn, may I recommend How to Eat Like a Child and Other Lessons in Not Being a Grown-•p by Delia Epbmn. with drawings -wonderful drawings -by Edward Koren (Viking Press. 87 pages. $5.95). Here, for example, is Ephmn's lesson on how to eat meshed potatoes: "Pat meshed potatoes flat on top. Dig several little depressions. Think of them as ponds or pools. All the pools with gravy. With your Fork. sculpt rivers between pools and watch the gravy flow between them. Decorate with peas. Do not eat." Here's Ephron on how to give yourself a laugh: "Call up a stranger. Tell him that you are the telephone company repair person. You are working on tbe line. IF he answers the telephone within the next ten minutes. he will electrocute you. Call beck and let the phone ring and ring until he finally answers it. Scream." I bought my kids this book For Groundhog Day and it did more to relieve temporarily the February blahs than anything we've tried before.

* * *

IN ITS FEBRUARY 10 issue. The New Republic published some interesting comments by Leon Edel on the art of biography. Edel. author of a line five-volume biography of Henry James. was one of seven contributors to a symposium organized by the National Portrait Gallery in Washington. The greatest problem faced by a biographer to&y. says Edel, is "the oppressive weight" of the "Himalayas" of paper to be found in modem archives. "Our concern," he goes on. "is how to deal with this clutter ... how to achieve the clear mastery of the portrait painter unconcerned with archives, who reads only tbe lines of the Face,. . . tbe brushstrokes and pencilmarks of time." The method Edel proposes is that employed by those two great detecliver -Holmes snd Freud. "It requires a certain kind of talent. a certain kind of inwardness .. to know when end where to seek the figure under the carpet: The good biographer, he says, has "to go behind the facade, to penetrate tbe mask." The trouble with that analogy is its somewhat simplistic assumption that underneath the mask of a subject is the real subiect. In fact, like the layers of Ibsen's onion, underneath one mask lies another, and underneath it, yet another. Them is no real me. Leon Edel, biographer, knows this; Leon Edel teacher. doesn't.

* * *

TWO NEW BOOKS about Canadian film from the Canadian Film Institute. One good, one not so good.

The good one is The Films of Don Shebib by Piers Handling (148 pages, S5.95). It contains a 78-page essay on Shebib's work, a long interview with him, a complete filmography, an extensive bibliography, and lots of stills (many of which are too small or too dark to be of much use). The author reminds us wisthdly in his introduction of the excitement and hope *Goin' Down the Road* generated. "For some, the promise the film held out has not been met. neither by Shebib nor by his contemporaries .... Bet mired in today's Faceless reality of co-productions, turning profits. and wondering what kinds of films are going to sell internationally, times look a little bleak." His essay explores in some detail the central theme of most of Shebib's films — the nature of the male bond. So pervasive is that concern, that it wasn't until *Goin' Down the Road*, Shebib's *eighteenth* film that women actually appear on the screen. And the women in that film Fall into two categories — sex object and whiny nit. All in all, a useful book.

Alison Reid and P.M. Evanchuk's Richard Leiterman (120 pages, $5.50), on the other hand. is disappointing. Reid writes poorly and her 30-page essay is a chore to wade through, fell es it is of sentences like, "Thus the course of Leiterman's career can perhaps be defined es a process which describes the refinement of his practical techniques in combination with this sequential experience in a variety of cinematic Forms." Huh? And although Evanchuk's interview with cinematographer Leiterman contains some useful material. it appears to have been printed verbatim. Leiterman is long-winded and answers most of Evanchuk's questions three times. Sorely some editing might have helped.

* * *

THE TITLE OF Mind War: Book Censorship In English Canada by Peter Birdsall and Delores Broten (Canlit, P.O. Box 6274. Depot C. Victoria, V8P 5L5, 66 pages, 56.00) makes it sound like a much better book than it is. Unfortunately; it covers only tbe period since 1935 end is based almost entirely on tbe files of a smell handful of newspapers. Newspapers are a good first place to start doing certain kinds of research — end a terrible place to stop. The result in this case is a book that devotes two pages to the 1930s, five to tbe 1940s, nine to the 1950s, 18 to the 1960s, and 20 to the 1970s. The inescapable conclusion is that the situation now is much worse than it was 40 years ago. It's not clear why film and magazines were omitted fmm the study, or why it begins so late; there are some excellent earlier examples — the banning of True *Confessions* and of F. P. Grove in the 1920s, for instance. Still, there's *some* good stuff here. Officials at the Toronto Public Library couldn't bring themselves to say they disapproved of *Lolita*, only that they couldn't afford to buy the number of copies they needed. Pierre Berton, generous soul thst he is, sent TPL 400 copies of tbe book with his compliments. The gift was refused. Or there's a lovely quotation Fmm a 1952 letter to tbe editor by Northrop Frye: "The motivation for the hysterical clucking which begins whenever sex is mentioned is that it is considered something exceptionally improper because it is one of the luxuries of the lower classes." □

the browser

by Michael Smith

Spring has sprung, the grass has riz, Gzowski's tonic 'could use more fizz

ACCORDING TO USUALLY reliable sources, spring is here. Bet when I read Peter Gzowski's Spring Tonic (Hurtig, 208 pages, $12.95 papa), in the midst of a rural Ontario deepfreeze, I wasn't so son we would make it. What bothered me most about Gzowski's book was his despicable optimism — of the Goody, goody, it's coming! variety. This treacly compendium, much of it recycled material, is full of fiction. verse. memoirs; and miscellany from Gzowski's many buddies and some other people he admires. Presumably his intent was to use them as myriad reflections of his own beamish personality. Frankly, one Gzowski is enough. The book is relieved by Sid Barron's cartoons, Helen Gougeon's recipes For asparagus (my passion), and an interview with Margaret Atwood, who suggests that spring, season of mud. is a damn nuisance. Good for her.

Fmm the same publisher comes Colombo's Book of Canada, edited by John Robert Colombo (176 pages, $12.95

paper). A long time ago Colombo's magpie instinct for collecting spoken and written snippets presented him with an idea whose time had come. Now its lime has gone. Styled by Hurtig a "patriot's handbook." this nervy collection even re-recycles stuff that Colombo previously recycled in his other books. In addition to verse, scraps of oral and documentary records, some radio drama, and obscure fiction. it provides the complete words to "Dief Will Be the Chief." Bobby Gimby's nauseating "Ca-m-da," and "A Place to Stand" -better known as "Ontar-i-ar-i-ar-i-o" — which Colombo touts as second only to Gilles Vigneault's "Mon *Pays"* as a provincial anthem. Some competition. No wonder Confederation is straining.

A more pleasant, and original, collection of oral history is Bill *McNeil's* Voice of the Pioneer (Macmillan. 258 pages, 814.95 cloth). Instead of slogging through library files. McNeil went out and taped some real people whose brief reminiscences he began broadcasting on CBC radio in 1968. Still, with 75 entries, the book can get tedious. It includes both famous and unknown "pioneers," some of whom have lived through phenomenal events — such as the 1917 Halifax Explosion -and others who have simply been busy living. Among them: John Diefenbaker, Cyclone Taylor, A. Y. Jackson. and cross-country skiw Herman "Jackrabbit" Smith-Johannsen who. at the age of 103, recently told *me* what I could do with my tape recorder. (Good for him.)

Two other books of oral reminiscence are complicated by rather intrusive gimmickry. Some readers probably won't be annoyed by Images of Lunenburg County, compiled and photographed by Peter Barss (McClelland & Stewart, 163 pages, 512.95 cloth), but I was. Barss has edited his tapes so that they're still larded witb dialect ("An'. Jesus, I don't know . . . I might of been in about an hour, an hour an' a half, an' first t'ing — Bango! She hit."). which no doubt *sounds terrific,* but very quickly becomes difficult to read. On the other hand, some of his photos (all of these books are illustrated) ray it all. Much more pernicious is the treatment Glen Ellis gives in The Road to St. Ola (J. *M.* Dent, 143 pages, 58.95 cloth) to the stories of David Trumble who, at Ill. is as old as Confederation. Ellis has rendered poor Trumble into verse!

There's nothing slick about Straight Lines in Curved Space: Colonization Roads in Eastern Ontario, by Marilyn G. Miller (Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Heritage Planning Studies 3. 193 pages, 55.00 paper). Naturally. a lot of it is written in researchese, but parts are fascinating. The colonization roads were built by the government In the 1850s to bring agriculture into the southern rim of the Canadian Shield. and some of the settlers' shanties, houses; and barns, split-tail, stone. and log fences still stand. Illustrated with photos, maps. and drawings, and documented in &tail.

WHAT A CURIOUS impression is given in the special Commonwealth Literature issue of the Sewanee Review (Winter, 1979, University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn., 196 pages, $3.50). Two poems by Harold Farmer, who teaches at the University of Rhodesia — a country that lost Commonwealth recognition with the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. Two poems by Colin Style, a third-generation South African who "has recently returned to England" — as if England were somehow still the Mother Country after South Africa's exclusion from the Commonwealth (over apartheid) in 1961. Two essays about Rudyard Kipling. Nothing by black Africans. Canada is represented by an excerpt from Matt *Cohen's new novel. The* ***Sweet Second*** *Summer of* Kitty Malone. an essay on Robertson Davies, and one on R. K. Narayan and V.S. Naipaul by George Woodcock. A review of *Canadian* books combines. oddly, Cohen's collection of short stories, ***Night Flights; Toronto Short*** *Stories.* edited by Morris Wolfe and Doug las Daymond; and *The Wars* by Timothy Findley. An essay on "The Shape of Canadian Poetry" by William Walsh, professor of Commonwealth Literature at the University of Leeds, concentrates on Anne Wilkinson, Robert Finch. A. *M.* Klein, and Earle Bimey. Eclectic, wot? □

by Wayne Grady

Susan Musgrave comes to grips with the mystical world of West Coast mythology

SUSAN MUSGRAVE, born in Victoria, B.C., in 1951, has lived in Ireland, England and on tbe Queen Charlotte Islands, but now lives near Vancouver. where her writing table commands a fine view of ocean, cliff, and beech. Her first book of poems. Songs of *the Sea-Witch*, was published by Sono Nis in 1970. end she has since brought out nine books in as many years. Ted Hughes has celled her "one of Canada's most authentic and accomplished voices." She has recently completed her first novel, *The Charcoal Burners' Camp.* While in Toronto to promote her latest book of poems, *A* Man to *Marry*, A *Man to Bury* (see page 10). she spoke with Wayne Grady about her life es a poet and novelist:

Books in Canada: *Is there any connection between the facts that you write so much about death and your name having the word "grave" in it?*

Musgrave: I've *sometimes* thought about that. A friend of mine used to call me "Grave-muse." But unless there's something beyond me that's responsible for what I'm doing there's no connection. I must admit I get very angry when people cell me Musgrove. There's a major difference between a grave and a grove.

BiC: *The language in your poems is both terse and obscure. It seems to combine surreal, dream-like qualities with simple, matter-of-fact statements.*

Musgrave: The words I hear most often are "mystical" and "mythic"; I don't think my poems are that, though. because for me they're very earthy. But "mystical" is an easy word for people to use when they can't get a grip on something. But you're talking about *The Impstone*, poems I wrote between 1972 and 1975. I change pretty quickly. In those poems I tied now that the language is really limited, partly because they were written when I was living on the Queen Charlotte Islands, which is a fairly limited place.

BiC: *Do you find you were too greatly influenced by Haida Indian legends and folklore?*

Musgrave: People say I write out of northwest-coast myth. but it's not really that I know so much about the myths or that I was imposing those myths onto my own experience; rather the other way around. I would see birds, for example, and have a sense that they were really people who had been turned into birds. There were always strange birds hanging around the villages, and they'd fly up just et the moment when you were thinking about someone. There's a canoe I used to call the Spirit Canoe in Naden Harbour, and it had cormorants on it that were drying their wings. They looked like old hags, and I remember I was looking out from the beach to the sea and they suddenly all took up end made the most incredible cries, end I thought, Those are Edenshaw's people. Edenshaw was the chief up there. He started the village where I wy living. It's called Kung, which means Village of the Moon. Then's a poem in *The Impstone* called "Yatsa" in which I turn the animal into the spirit of a person I know. It just seems always to work like that; tbe animals and biis were in touch with the people who live out there around them. And that's how the Indians saw it, too. It wasn't conscious mythologizing on my part.

BiC: *Tell me something about your novel,* The Charcoal Burners' Camp. *What prompted you to write it?*

Musgrave: Knut Hamsun once said, "I write to kill time." and that's more or less true of me too. The novel started witb an idea I had on a bus from Sudbury, Ont., to Kingston. I'd seen a stuffed moose beside the road, outside a zoo, and tbe person I was with said, "That's a Canadian symbol; every Canadian novel begins with a stuffed moose." And then later I remembered I knew someone who bed made a whole moose into salami, so it just took off from there. The novel has two communes in the north of B.C., one of vegetarians and one of cannibals. and the cannibals *live* off the vegetarians. The vegetarian commune is called Ephratah, which means Bethlehem. and *is made* up of women. And then there's the Charcoal Burners' Camp. made up of men who are headhunters, and they're burning wood to make charcoal to make gunpowder to overthrow the government. It's a kind of Jonestown situation. It's really an adventure story, not an artistic novel, although friends tell me it's a poetic novel because it's very dense.

Susan Musgrave.

BiC: *What kind of influences* were *at work on the novel? Have you read Jack Hodgins, for example? He seems to blend fantasy and realism much the some way you do.*

Musgrave: I haven't read Hodgins, except for one or two short stories. From tbe reviews of *The Invention of the World* I could tell that it was too similar to mine and I should stay away from it until I was finished witb *Charcoal Burners.* Brother Twelve, Canada's false prophet, *is one of the models* for Chela. and I knew that he was also a model for one of Hodgins's characters. My Chela is a dwarf end an ex-Hutterite, so he is only partly modeled on Brother Twelve, who was more of a Rasputin. I never really thought I'd mite a novel until I was 60 or 70, partly because I didn't have any heroes or models. My favourite novelist is D. H. Lawrence. 1 like Sylvia Plath's poetry but I found *The Bell Jar* dull, maybe because my own experience was so similar to that. tbe suicide attempt, the crawling away to hi&, bell found. Except that I crawled into an attic instead of a basement: a fundamental difference, I feel.

BiC: *What about the future? Any projects* in *the works?*

Musgrave: *I* have an idea for another novel. but for now I'm trying to keep it at bay, let it gestate. It'll be written from tbe point of view of an SO-year-old woman, and set in a town on the West Coast settled by a group of Anglo-Irish gentry. The town is bared on Duncan, where I grew up. but it will be celled Blowtown. I've been wanting to write a novel called *Blowtown Covert* for a long time. The old women has all these eccentric relatives she's been wanting to get away from. They all hate each other and they all seem to visit on the same day. so she goes out into tbe coal shed and hangs on a beam. which is what my great-aunt in England does. It's her way of escaping. She pulls herself up on tbii beam and hangs by her hands: she says it's good for her back. She only does it for a minute or so at a time. but my old woman is going to hang there for longer and longer each day. The coal shed is her covert. you see, her hiding place. □

Letters to the Editor

TAILS, WE LOSE

Sir:

As a Canadian, clearly attached (some would say neurotically attached) to my wildlife like George Galt ("Departmental Ditties," February), I would like to have the experience of handling a quarter with a moose on it. All I can find is nasty ol' caribous on my coins. Cm you help?

Clive M. Sykes
Vancouver

RANDOM DISSENT

Sir:

The short and sour paragraph by Sandra Martin on Katherine Govier's *Random Descent* (February) hardly does justice to a compelling book. It is a sense of the past that informs the present, and Martin's pat assertion that all is "futile" as "we know from the beginning that Ms. Beecham cm only find solutions in the present" misses the point of Govier's saga. It is precisely this exploration over five generations that makes *Random Descent* so interesting. The present is put in perspective as contact with the past is made. It is refreshing to read a novel that has such sweep to it. one that spans generations lyrically and vividly.

Marsha Barber
Galiano Island, B.C.

Sir:

Are we to assume that the seven sentences at the end of Sandra Martin's First Impressions column constitute *Books In Canada*'s formal review of Katherine Govier's *Random Descent*? Perhaps things were a little hectic there when the review copy arrived. and nobody had time to work out that Govier's predecessors in the past couple of years include Jack Hodgins, Pauline Gedge, and Oonah McFee. I think that your readers would agree that all of these first novelists deserved more than a seven-sentence review, but then of course I'm hopelessly prejudiced.

Douglas M. Gibson
Editorial Director
Trade Division
Macmillan of Canada
Toronto

PUBLISH OR PERISH

Sir:

You might like to publish the enclosed open letter to Karl Siegler of Talonbooks, because it cm-cerns ourselves. hem ad now:

I am glad to have heard of the campaign initiated by the Vancouver Poetry Centre to find support for Talonbooks — community effort rather than dependence on a government body. In the '30s we *had* to do our own thing — or perish. Often we perished!

What I do feel unhappy about in the series Writing in Out Time is the disproportion given between men md women writers. Out of 27 listed, there are only four women — and only two of them are Canadian. B.C. women poets have played a significant role in the development of Canadian literature. I cite, of the older group: Anne Marriott, Phyllis Webb, P. K. Page. Marya Fiamengo, Gladys Downes, Helen Rosenthal. They are all active today and giving creative writing courses or workshops. Younger women poets who should have been canvassed are: Susan Musgrave, Leona Gom, Florence McNeil, Maxine Gadd — all of them concerned with their roots in this land. So why cannot we hear their voices? Along with poets such as Peter Trower, Pat Lane, Tom Wayman — instead of having half the *programs* devoted to *Americans* who have long since outlived their "movement: It's time Vancouver stopped being so old hat! It's dangerous also. Just as the best Canadian playwrights are giving us a vital mirror of ourselves today. so are the best of Canadian poets. We do not need a branch plant culture.

Dorothy Livesay
Galiano Island, B.C.

IKONS AND BONES

Sir:

As I was reading the January *Books In* Canada I came upon the review by A. F. Moritz of Theresa Kishkan's book of poetry, *Ikons* of *the Hunt*. Suddenly it brought back a memory of a conversation I had with a very good friend of long, long ago. She not only last bet whole family in a concentration camp in the Second World War, but also both her legs (frozen, they bad to be amputated up to bet knees). She said to me then: "I cannot bring myself to despise the Germans as much as I suppose I should. Hating us as much as all that. they at least acknowledged our existence and their feat of us. To be ignored is finally what destroys men." As I finished reading Moritz's review, I could not help but think that Kishkan must be very proud to have produced such a violent reaction in him. I must apologize for using a word so obviously distasteful to him. and be must forgive me. But bones will be boner. God must have goofed in creating his creatures with them, but I must admit that It is a very good feeling for me to know that I do not have to live inside Moritz's.

Lala Koehn
Victoria

RURAL ROOTS

Sir:

In *your* January issue Pier Giorgio Di Cicco describes Charles Noble's *Haywire Rainbow* as being "... too much wrapped up with the quotidian," meaning the commonplace, or everday occurrence. b's true that. like most books, Haywire *Rainbow* comes wrapped in a paper jacket, which is commonplace enough. But what happens inside the bwk signals the advent of a young poet at odds with the worship of ethnicity and locale so evident in the "roots" trip that many recent poets have embarked upon, a phenomenon that is supported by various Multi-Kultur bureaucracies throughout this country, since it has gained their political favour, in places as disparate as Edmonton. Regina, and Toronto. As opposed to a Poetic culture harnessed to political purpose, we have in Noble's book a voice not only imaginative and serenely humorous, but an intellect generous enough to transcend regional boundaries. Yet according to Di Cicco this book merely ". talk[s] of farming, of Alberta, of small towns."

Di Cicco's demographic arrogance must be irritating to anyone in this country living in a small town or on the farm, who not only finds rural life interesting and important, but quite worthy of writing about. But at the risk of sounding condescending. and speaking as an experienced rustic, I would like to point out that these poems are not *about* agriculture, any more than are those of John Thompson in his book, *At the Edge of the Chopping There* Are No *Secrets*. What they are about is the deeply felt engagements of a talented. poetic intellect witb reality, whether that takes place behind the wheel of a combine or in a city apartment. What they are about is a unique way of perceiving life, a process that all of us are engaged in, and since it's the only one we have, *I for one cannot find the process* commonplace.

What. for example. smacks of the quotidian in verses like this, from "Bowling Ball Strikes Back Occultly"?

> *Her husband had become a dull*
> *bowling ball with indented finger holds*
> *She picked out another and knocked*
> *the old one away. She was learning*
> *how to bowl.*

Although I happen to be very well acquainted with the habits of coyotes from a previous occupation. I don't see anything mundane or ordinary in a poem lii "The Last of a Coyote's Howl Goes Into Outer Space. and Forms the Collar of Love." Perhaps Di Ciao has some Toronto coyote stories to tell me; perhaps his life is so breathtakingly exciting that be finds Noble's life dull in comparison. I might believe he could read Theodore Roethke and tell us the poems were nothing but instructional tracts on greenhouse keeping. if I were to take literally his conclusions about *Haywire Rainbow*.

Mr. Noble takes some chances witb language, syntax. and idea in his poems. Tbls is his first book. and I think it fair to ray that in several places he falls flat on his sensibility. But at least half the time he succeeds brilliantly in disturbing, informing. or entertaining hit reader. Such a poet deserves a more objective review.

Sid Marty
Canmore, Alta.

CanWit No. 42

THOSE MASTERS OF the reprint. McClarkan & Newspider, are planning to recoup part of their losses from Joyce Castor's *Resurfacing in Sarnia* by bringing il out in their paperback Northern Conundrum Library. The problem is designing the back cover. They have the biographical sketch and the plot outline. What they don't have is a selection of quotations from rave reviews of the hardcover edition. They have *reviews, all* right. One. from the Flin Flon *Examiner*, contains tbis passage.:

> Utter trash. Banal, execrably executed, and without a redeeming feature_ I cannot recommend this book at all; I think too highly of literacy and intelligence.

Fmm which an exasperated blurb writer culled the following blurb:

> I cannot recommend this book ... too highly. ."
>
> —Flin Flon *Examiner*

Readers are invited to submit similar back cover material to aid M & N's desperate blurb writer. We'll pay $25 for the bat group of blurbs, accompanied by their originals. received by May 1. Address: CanWit No. 42. *Books In Canada.* 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A1N4.

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 40

OUR REQUEST for plot summaries for a series of No-Name paperbacks made many readers think *of Hamlet and the Bible.* We felt that genetic descriptions of these easily recognized classics didn't capture the real challenge of No-Name packaging — that is, to discover exactly whose product the conning merchandisers have hidden behind the anonymous labels. The winner is Brian McCullough of Ottawa, who receives $25 for these brandless conundrums:

> No-Name Adventure #86: Hard-hitting, action-packed '40s drama with relevant social implications about the violent struggles of several immigrant families trying to establish themselves in a new land and focused on the problems encountered when one man suffering from delusions of grandeur attempts to satisfy hir obsession for family loyalties by subserviating his compatriots with thinly-veiled threats and horsy theatrics.
>
> No-Name Adventure #77: Fantastic and imaginative adventure of a farm wench and her menagerie of synthetic travelling companions as they seek out a dwarfish faith-healer in a mystical kingdom of mutant denizens.

Honourable mentions:

> No-Name Adventure #15: Steeped in sexual symbolism for those who dare to delve beneath its deceptively smooth surface, this passionate woodland romance of a male child and his ursine companion delineates lightly — with the help of All the Other Animals — the complexities of life in the Forest of Time, with its frustrations and triumphs ending on a dying note of the ultimate truth of Age.
>
> —H. E. Emson, Saskatoon
>
> * * *
>
> No-Name Fiction #007: Pastoral love story-cum-mystery in which penniless pedagogue, lured by gastronomic evidence of wealth. pursues farmer's lovely daughter. Rural rival aided by oafish friends. harasses hero with bucolic humour inspired by local superstitions. Mysterious denouement comes in dead of night with appearance of grisly phantom equestrian.
>
> —Dorothy Simpson, Port Robinson. Ont.
>
> * * *
>
> No-Name Western #46: Soul-roiling, heart-wrenching yam of boy who loses grandmother, pet. and paternal next of kin while experiencing poignant revelations besmirched by unrelenting environment and grim reapers.
>
> —Bruce Filson, Montreal
>
> * * *

CLASSIFIED

The editors recommend

THE FOLLOWING Canadian books were reviewed in the previous issue of Books *in Canada. Our* recommendations don't necessarily reflect the reviews.

FICTION

Lunar Attractions, by Clark Blaise, Doubleday. A tine first novel of adolescent self-discovery, written in the same confessional style as much of Blaise's two collections of short stories.

Dreamspeaker and Tem Eyos Ki and the Land Claims Question, bv Cam Hubert, Clarke Irwin. Two novellas about native people by a white writer who wears a brown skin with ease and humour.

NON-FICTION

Operation Morning Light. by Leo Heaps, Paddington Press. In which we learn about the strange bureaucratic dance that was inspired by the crash of a Soviet Cosmos 954 satellite in the Canadian arctic.

A Picture History of Ontario. by Roger Hall and Gordon Dodds, Hurtig. A highly successful marriage of text and illustrations that charts the history of Ontario from the 18th century to the days of Premier Leslie Frost.

POETRY

Empire, York Street, by Erin Mouré, House of Anansi. A consistently interesting first collection that contains several truly remarkable poems.

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:

Adrift on Course, by Jerrold Morris, Hawthorn Art Press.
Big Bird in the Bush, by Earle Birney, Mosaic Press/Valley Editions.
The Birds of Prey, by John Ralston Saul, Totem.
Borrowed Ladies, by Dermot McCarthy, New Brunswick Chapbooks.
A Calendar of Airs, by August Kleinzahler, Coach House Press.
Canadian Folklore Perspectives, edited by Kenneth S. Goldstein, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Dept. of Folklore.
Children of My Heart, by Gabrielle Roy, translated by Alan Brown, M & S.
The Corridors of Time, by M. Jane Scott, G. R. Welch Co. Ltd.
Dragon Spoor, by Jack H. Crisp, Simon & Pierre.
Egerton Ryerson and His Times, edited by Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton, Macmillan.
Final Act, by Jack H. Crisp, Simon & Pierre.
The Green Damsel and the Silver Doctor, by Leon Berrouard, Square Deal Publications.
In Medusa's Eye, by Reshard Gool, Square Deal Publications.
Incompatible Prophesies, by Louis Greenspan, Mosaic Press/Valley Editions.
Killer Whale, by Paul Jeune, M & S.
Louis 'David' Riel: 'Prophet of the New World', by Thomas Flanagan, U of T Press.
Louisa_Clark's Annual 1843, Beverly Fink Cline, Press Porcepic.
May Be, by Tarlochan S. Gill, Asian Publishers.
The Oyster and the Mermaid, by Emily A. Lavioletie, Elaine Harrison & Associates.
Peckertracks, by Stan Dragland, Coach House Press.
People in Process, by Maxine Hancock, G. R. Welch Co. Ltd.
Peter Lougheed, by Allan Hustak, M & S.
Physics, by George Laundry et al, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Planning and Building Down Under, by Harry Seidler, University of British Columbia Press.
Practicing Up to be Human, by Lionel Kearns, Coach House Press.
The Punjabees, edited by Tarlochan S. Gill, Havelock Press.
"Some of our best friends are in business", cartoons by Trevor Hutchings, text by Robert L. Perry, Financial Post/Macmillan.
Thistlecreek, by Hanna Neil, Borealis Press.
Under the Spell of India, by Olga Dey, Vesta Publications.
The Unveiling of Jesus Christ, by H. Harold Kent, edited by Grace Irwin, G. R. Welch Co. Ltd.
Visions: Ballet and Its Future, edited by Michael Crabb, Simon & Pierre.
Wall of Words, by Joan Ryan, PMA Books.
When Cancer Strikes, by John A. MacDonald, M & S.
Writings on Canadian English, 1792-1975, by Walter S. Avis and A. M. Kinloch, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
Zoom, by Andrew Brycht, Simon & Pierre.

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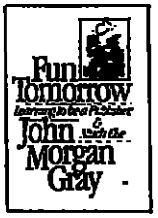

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