

How a swarm of libel suits are giving publishers the willies

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BOOKS IN CANADA



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The chief glory of every people arises from its authors. — Samuel Johnson

BOOKS IN CANADA

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CONTRIBUTORS
 Freelancer **Bob Blackburn** is a regular contributor to *Starweek* magazine and has been choosing his words with unusual care since he became our watchdog for the English language. Between writing assignments, **Barry Dickie** help keep the Toronto Islands looking beautiful. For more

details about **Howard Engel**, who likes to put a dash of Hammett in his prose and Foo drawings. see page 32. **Beth Harvor** is an Ottawa short-story writer. **Douglas Hill** subsists on cod and first novels in Port Kirwan, Nfld. Regular contributor **Christopher Hume** wishes never to look a gift book in the mouth again. Novelist **M.T. Kelly's** latest work of fiction, *The More Loving One*, will be published soon by Black Moss Press. **Linda M. Leitch** is a Guelph, On... freelancer who recently settled in Toronto. Poet and critic **Albert Moritz** is an editor with **Dreadnaught Press**. **Stephen Overbury** teaches a journalism course for the Toronto Board of Education. **I.M. Owen** is a Toronto editor, critic, and gentleman scholar. **Myfanwy Phillips** is an artist, photographer, and connoisseur of humanity — from political exiles to Newfoundland seamen. **Robert Rusick** is a Toronto artist. **Rupert Schieder** teaches English at U of T's Trinity College. **Stephen Scobie** teaches English at the University of Alberta and lobbies the provincial government between lectures. **Chris Scott**, the Balzac of Balderson, Ont... is contemplating a Canadian version of *Cold Comfort Farm*. **Barbara Wade** is an elusive Toronto freelancer



EDITOR: Douglas Marshall. ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Michael Smith. COPY EDITOR: Doris Cowan. ART DIRECTOR: Mary Lu Toms. GENERAL MANAGER and ADVERTISING MANAGER: Susan Traer. CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Aihoshi. CONSULTANTS: Robert Farrelly and Jack Jensen.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Eleanor Wachtel (West Coast); Stephen Scobie (Prairies); Wayne Grady; Douglas Hill; Christopher Hume; Sheila Fischman (Quebec); Phil Milner (East Coast); Tim Heald (Europe).

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For the past 10 years a swelling tide of expensive libel actions has eroded a basic freedom in Canada: the right to print the truth. At the heart of the problem is a legal climate that encourages plaintiffs to believe they can

SUE AND BE DANDY

by Stephen Overbury

THE OMINOUS predictions of George Orwell's *1984* are creeping up on Canadians. Just ask the staff at McClelland & Stewart about a certain nightmarish weekend.

A few weeks before Christmas, 1975, scores of workers and their relatives were called into M & S's offices to paste a special insert over a section of Peter Newman's latest book *The Canadian Establishment*. The insert was pasted over a paragraph dealing with the way Paul Desmarais treated minority shareholders in one of his deals. Desmarais had obtained an advance copy of the book from a reviewer and, through lawyer J.J. Robinette, sought an injunction against its publication.

Since *The Canadian Establishment* was already behind schedule, and M & S staff were hoping Christmas sales would make the book financially successful, the threat was especially serious. Newman and lawyer Julian Porter decided that the only thing to do was cover the offensive lines. Newman tested 20 different glues to ensure the insert could not be pulled off!

The incident is a reflection of the growing wave of libel threats and the diminishing powers of fair-comment laws in Canada. Libel laws are being used to intimidate writers and publishers end out-of-court settlements are becoming common. In a series of interviews with some of Canada's leading publishers, editors, writers, and libel lawyers, it becomes evident that freedom of information — indeed, freedom to print the truth — is becoming scarce.

Libel involves any partial statement that injures a person's reputation. In legal terminology, this means: "Any printed words, picture, cartoon or caricature which tend to lower a person in the estimation of right-thinking men, or cause him to be shunned and avoided, or expose him to hatred, ridicule, or disparage him in his office, trade or calling, constitute a libel."

The basic law for libel is the same throughout Canada and applies in the same manner for all forms of publishing and electronic media. How a libel suit is conducted, however, varies from province to province.

The requirement of a plaintiff (the person launching a suit) is apparently easy: the subject must prove that he or she is being written about in an injurious way. There is no need to prove the statement is not true.

Defending libel actions also seems very straightforward. First, the most widely used defence is truth. Second, magazines and newspapers can plead "fair comment": as a defence for extreme statements, provided of course no malice was intended and that the writer believed the information was accurate. Third, "qualified privilege" enables publishers to report on legislative debates and government reports without fear of libel, provided that a fair and accurate report of the material is presented.

Despite the apparent simplicity of libel procedure, the fact is that such actions have become one of Canadian law's most complex mechanisms.

Jack McClelland, president of M & S, points to a libel action against Judy La Marsh as a turning point for book publishers. In *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage* (1968), La Marsh singled out a radio reporter as being "... heartily detested by most members of the Press Gallery...". The reporter claimed he had been libelled, and La Marsh's defence of fair comment was thrown out because she could not prove that other members of the Press Gallery felt the same way she did. The costs to M & S, all told, amounted to \$25,000. It was the first time in McClelland's recollection that an M & S book had been found to include libellous material since he joined the company in 1946.

"It was an experience we're not keen on repeating," says McClelland. "We're publishers, not litigators. The prevailing mood of lawyers and publishers is that you should try to settle out

McClelland has a clear message for writers: "Authors have" to be increasingly careful and sensible. We don't have any interest in publishing something with libel possibilities."

Of court because of the tremendous costs. We'll do just about anything legal to settle out of court - if we're wrong, or even if we're not."

McClelland appears extremely cautious about libel and has a strong, clear message for writers: "Authors have to be increasingly careful and sensible. We don't have any interest in publishing something with libel possibilities. We don't want any pan in getting close to libel action. Life is too short for publishing companies, and libel is too costly."

The La Marsh case surprised some publishers, but the Inn Adams case is sending shock waves throughout the publishing industry. The author and publisher, Gage Publishing of Toronto, are being sued by Leslie James Bennett, a former member of Canada's Security Service. Bennett's claim is that the fictional character "S" in *S, Portrait of a Spy*, is bared on himself and that he is being unjustly accused of being a double or a triple agent.

A & M is the fiat Canadian novelist ordered by a court to reveal his sources for a work of fiction. The issue turns on whether the fictional S can be identified as Bennett. If Adams loses his case it could set a precedent whereby any work of fiction by a Canadian writer could be interpreted as non-fiction. What has apparently slipped by the courts unnoticed is that some of the world's most famous novels were based on real persons. Furthermore, fiction has always been, and will always be, a political and social commentary on life.

What is equally disturbing about a novelist being sued for libel is the vigorous support of the legal profession. Bennett's lawyer, Julian Porter, says he's handling the case for practically nothing

because Bennett can't afford the high-priced help. To add to the confusion, Porter is on the board of directors of the Writers' Development Trust Fond, a group devoted to the Promotion of Canadian writers.

Meanwhile, eight groups representing more than 3,000 writers and publishers have organized a defence fund for Adams, hoping to win a writ that could gravely affect freedom of information.

Publisher James Lorimer describes libel as an effective tool to scare writers and publishers. "There's no doubt people are using the libel laws as a way of trying to intimidate publishers and editors," he says. "There are more libel cases now than there were 10 years ago. It has nothing to do with being right or wrong, or sometimes, even with defamation. It's a power game. If you've got the money to spend then you can play the game."

James Lorimer & Co. published an intriguing exposé of Hamilton, Ont., called *Their Town: The Mafia, The Media and the Party Machine*. Three readers felt that the book was offensive to them. Diane and Domenic Morganti and Joyce McMullen launched a libel action against editors Bill Freeman and Marsha Hewitt, and the publisher.

The libel action began last November, after 2,000 copies of the book had been distributed, most of them in the plaintiffs' home base, the Hamilton area. Lorimer exchanged unsold copies of the book with a new edition that left out sections that were in question. Lorimer also notified reviewers of the changes. The settlement included an award of \$4,000 to the plaintiffs for legal fees and damages. A public apology was also involved. This took the form of a newspaper advertisement in the Hamilton *Spectator*, two columns wide and five inches deep. Because the settlement included a promise not to discuss the matter, Lorimer is not able to disclose the cost of his legal expenses. As a rule, legal costs are far in excess of the awards.

Some people are famous for using libel as a threat to keep them out of the eyes of the public. Igor Gouzenko, a one-time Soviet military intelligence cipher clerk who made Canadian history by exposing a network of spies, appears to be the trend-setter in this regard. Gouzenko's name cropped up frequently in interviews with writers and publishers. He has a reputation for being prepared to sue at the mere mention of his name. For instance, just recently he launched a \$500,000 libel suit against Doubleday Canada Ltd. and author John Sawasky for references about him in Sawasky's book, *Men in the Shadows: The RCMP Security Service*.

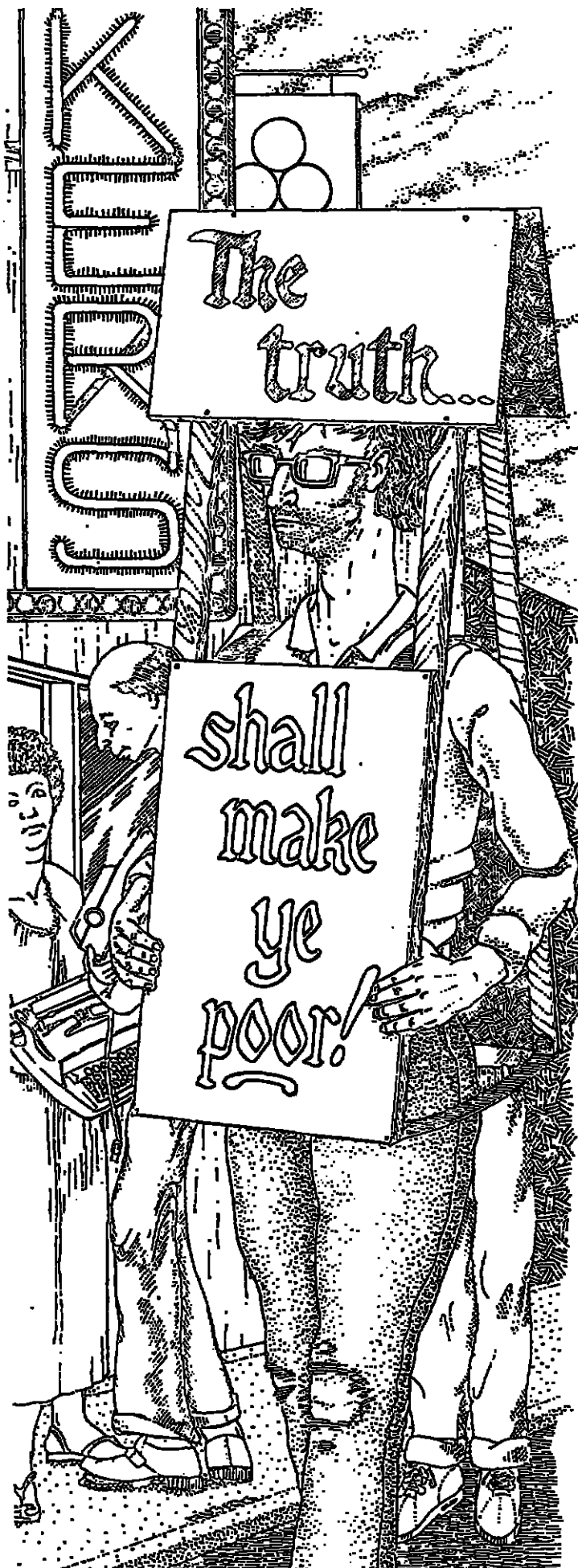
While libel actions are growing in book publishing circles, the numbers are still small in comparison to the cases involving newspapers and magazines. Some startling court actions have taken place in the last few years.

The most outstanding libel case was a lawsuit against the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, by a practising lawyer and alderman, Morris Chemeskey. Chemeskey successfully sued Armadale Publishers Ltd., the *Star-Phoenix*, and its editor for publishing a letter to the editor written by two law students, Hackie Dorgan and Connie Hoot. The substance of the letter was that the alderman held racist views. It was a response to Chemeskey's request for city council in 1973 to oppose a development of an Indian and Métis rehabilitation centre for alcoholics in a predominantly white neighbourhood.

When the paper refused to print an apology, Chemeskey sued. The defence of fair comment and truth didn't stick. The law students did not show up at court to testify that they had written the letter. Nor did the paper necessarily share the views of the writers. Because there was no proof anyone held the opinions expressed in the letter, an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the action and Chemeskey was awarded \$25,000 in damages and costs.

There were many ramifications from this decision. Two Halifax newspapers temporarily suspended letters to the editor. Ontario amended its Libel and Slander Act in a way that would have overruled the Chemeskey decision and allowed a defence of fair comment to hold. Other provinces are in the process of amending their acts.

But despite the Ontario amendments, it appears numerous newspapers have curtailed letters to the editor that they might have published before the Chemeskey decision. Almost half of the newspapers that responded to an Ontario Press Council survey said



that the Chermeskey judgement affected the way they handled letters to the editor. Many papers said they would discard possible defamatory letters that they would previously have published.

The *Globe and Mail* now is more cautious. At least, that is the impression given in the case of a letter by Ian Adams. He had written to the *Globe* to complain that a recent feature article about Bennett failed to mention that it was based directly on testimony from Bennett in his lawsuit against Adams. Adams was not mentioned in the story, nor was the lawsuit. The *Globe* refused to print Adams's letter.

Libel suits today are so far-reaching that they extend into the domain of newspaper cartoons. Two years ago British Columbia's Human Resources Minister Bill Vander Zalm sued the *Victoria Times* and freelance cartoonist Bob Bierman. The paper ran a cartoon that showed Vander Zalm smiling as he plucked wings off flies.

Vander Zalm argued that the cartoon made it appear that he enjoyed being cruel. The cartoon was in response to a comment he made on how native people should return to reserves because there were more opportunities for them there. The paper refused to publish an apology.

The Supreme Court of B.C. found the *Times* at fault and awarded 53,500 in damages to the minister. The decision shocked newspaper publishers even though a B.C. Court of Appeal decision finally reversed the judgement.

Gerard McNeil, veteran legal-affairs reporter for the *Canadian Press* news agency, says the Van&r Zalm case and the Chermeskey pronouncement "have narrowed the publishing field. If *Canadian Press* runs an item and there is cause for libel, all papers that carried the piece can be sued as well.

"This makes us very cautious. The fair-comment laws aren't really well developed in this country. The problem with libel laws in Canada is that you can't write realistically about anybody. We [CP] had a series recently in the *Globe and Mail* about millionaires. They all came out as nice guys. You can't write anything negative about them. Profiles in this country are poor because of

that. The classic case is the way the media refer to Vic Cotmni. The Canadian media call Cotmni a Montreal businessman. The American press refer to Cotmni as the Montreal underworld figure. You can't describe a politician here as being a notorious lush even if he is one. There are so many things you can't say here that it makes the whole writing exercise resemble public-relations handouts."

Macleans-Hunter attracts 60 libel actions a year. Only three of these will usually get as far as court. Nevertheless, it's enough to warrant \$11-million worth of libel insurance.

Newspaper libel costs, like everything else, are soaring. For example, a large number of libel actions taken against the *Montreal Gazette* in late 1968 and early 1969 were settled for under \$25,000. Today, however, a typical libel action that runs through court can cost a newspaper \$30,000 even if the paper wins, says the *Globe and Mail's* editor-in-chief, Richard J. Doyle.

"The costs can in fact become astronomical. *The Financial Post* recently won a libel action that cost the paper \$800,000 in expenses. If such monstrous costs are required for "A Victory For The Post", as the paper's front-page headline described it, then hard-hitting stories in Canadian newspapers are on the wane.

The Financial Post's libel suit involved a series of articles published in 1975 about shady stock-market deals around the world. Toronto promoter Allan Manus was a central figure in the series. He tried to sue the paper with two separate suits that claimed damages of \$42 million. The paper was forced to fly in witnesses from around the world to prove the stories were based on truth. Manus dropped his charges after 3½ weeks of trial. *The Financial Post* only claimed \$15,500 from Manus, the amount he had deposited in court as security for the costs in the court action.

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Maclean's editor Peter Newman calls the trial "a real landmark case. He [Manus] was a crook. No doubt about it." *The Financial Post's* editor, Neville Nankivell, suggests in rather subtle terms that the Manus case has affected the copy his paper will run. "We're more careful about dealing with off-shore incidents because we couldn't subpoena witnesses from abroad who were crucial to the case. We could if they resided in Ontario, but not if they live abroad."

Maclean-Hunter, which owns *Maclean's*, *The Financial Post*, and 60 other business publications, attracts 60 libel actions a year. Harvey Botting, corporate secretary for the publishing company, says only three of these will usually get as far as court. Nevertheless, it's enough to warrant \$1-million worth of libel insurance.

"A lot of people will throw a suit on us to throw up a smoke screen to protect their image in front of their friends," says Botting. "Six months down the road they drop it and it's forgotten. Anything that can be even slightly contentious goes before our lawyer."

Maclean's was the target of one of the most embarrassing libel suits of the century when Toronto lawyer and motion picture producer Garth Drabinsky sued the magazine over a small story written about him by Ian Bawn late in 1978.

Drabinsky tiled 12 typewritten pages to show in meticulous detail how he had been libelled. The story mentioned his office was on the 69th floor and this reference was interpreted as an implication that the lawyer was lewd and immoral in character. The words, "his resentful jowls" suggested, Drabinsky argued, he was a resentful person who dislikes people. "He drawls with a New Yorker accent" suggested, he said, that he is phony and unscrupulous. And so it went.

The case did not, however, go through the courts. In an out-of-court settlement, *Maclean's* paid Drabinsky \$50,000 for damages and another \$20,000 for his legal expenses. (The magazine's legal costs were extra.) The public embarrassment came when Newman made a public apology that was dictated by Drabinsky. It took up

almost half a page in the April 7 issue of *Maclean's* and included a picture of the plaintiff smiling.

The sting of libel laws has been felt by broadcasters just as often. Stuart Robertson, counsel for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation says that the CBC gets 600 threats of libel actions each year. Only 60 of these involve some sort of settlement.

Judging by the celebrated case involving a radio talk show (Syms vs. Warren), freedom of expression on the air is also evaporating. The topic of the talk show was the allegation that Syms, who was the chairman of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission and Liquor Licensing Board, had been charged with impaired driving, but had the proceedings quashed. Syms denied the allegations during the program. Warren, the talk-show host, allowed a contrary view to Syms's position to be aired after the denial. Syms sued for libel and was awarded \$2,000 in damages.

What can one conclude from these and hundreds of other libel cases? For one thing, lawyers are certainly becoming more sophisticated with their craft. But while their tools are becoming increasingly sharper, the ethics of the legal profession in some libel matters can be questioned. One wonders why some of Canada's most prominent law firms are representing dubious figures and charging ridiculously high rates to fight cases where freedom of speech is the issue at stake.

Lawyer Julian Porter predicts that the use of libel will increase "as time sets tougher". That may satisfy the legal profession, but judging by their track record, the increase in libel actions could result in their own demise. As author Margaret Atwood said at a benefit concert for Ian Adams: "We don't cut off hands here [in Canada]. We do it in other ways. In totalitarian takeovers, the first group to go are the writers. The second are union leaders. The third is the judiciary system. The judiciary system is cutting its own throat. If you wake up one morning and all the people like Ian Adams have disappeared, you'll know it's 1984." □

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Jan Morris

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PRUDE AND PREJUDICE

There's one squeaky wheel that hasn't been getting much oil revenue in Canada's richest province. It's called literature

by Stephen Scobie

IN VICTORIA THIS summer. I heard stories of Albertans driving round the streets, their cars loaded with cash, looking for houses to buy. The popular image all across Canada portrays Alberta as a land flowing with oil and money, money for everything — including, presumably, the arts. At national writers' meetings, people assume that writers in Alberta have easy access to the dollars oozing out of the ground.

Would that it were so. In fact, writers in Alberta are not well supported at either the private or the public level. There is undoubtedly corporate money for the arts in Alberta, lots of it, but most of the funding goes, naturally enough, to high-profile and prestige-laden operations such as symphony orchestras and major theatres. Small publishers, far less individual writers, have little access to it; recent private grants to NeWest Press by Alberta's Nova Corporation and Ontario's Harlequin Romances are the exception rather than the rule.

Public money is channelled through a government department, Alberta Culture, with a Minister, Mary Le Messurier, and a full staff of civil servants. Although there has been some pressure for an arts council form of organization, in which funding decisions could be kept at arm's length from the politicians, there are no immediate signs of a move in that direction.

Alberta Culture is not the best-financed of government departments. In the budget year 1980-81, the total budget for "cultural development" is just under \$17.5 million. Of that, the biggest allocation — 45.9% — goes to library services. The performing arts, with their obvious high costs, garner 23.8%. Visual arts, the price of canvas being what it is, get 7.3%. The film and literary arts branch is left with 1.9%. By the time administration has been accounted for, the largesse of the Alberta government to its publishers, its periodicals, and its writers of all kinds amounts this year to \$ 147,000.

(In contrast, the Ontario Arts Council has an annual budget of \$13.5 million. However, the OAC's literary and film section receives some 17% of that total and disburses about \$1.6 million a year — or nearly 11 times the Alberta figure — in various forms of grants to publishers, periodicals, and writers.)

It is not surprising, then, that there has been a good deal of dissatisfaction with the support programs Alberta writers have been asked to rely on. The figures make it clear that a large part of this dissatisfaction must be due to the financial constraints under which the literary arts branch operates. But many writers in Alberta — novelists such as Rudy Wiebe and Aritha van Herk, poets such as Douglas Barbour and Christopher Wiseman — have also been unhappy with the policies and administration of the branch.

It has been widely argued that Alberta Culture puts too much emphasis on showy competitions, such as the First Novelist Award, and on commercially oriented writing. To judge from the literary arts brooch's newsletters and publicity releases, publication in *Redbook* or *Reader's Digest* seems to be the highest degree of excellence aimed for.

Put even more bluntly, many writers in Alberta do not trust or

accept the literary judgement of the people making the funding decisions. This controversy came to a head early in 1980 with the publication in the *North American Review*, a well-respected writers' magazine in Iowa, of an article by Leo J. Hertzell entitled "The Indian & the Fish: A Report on Culture in Alberta". The article contained extensive quotes from John Patrick Gillese (rhymed with "ill ease"), the head of the literary arts branch of Alberta Culture; Hertzell presented his material without comment, allowing Gillese to condemn himself out of his own mouth. For example:

People in Alberta hate the Canada Council. They think the Canada Council is a bunch of liberals; that's where the avant-garde stuff gets started. People here are conservative. They want art they can understand, not that crazy stuff that makes no sense to a decent person. . . . We'd support a poet in a minute if it looked like he was going to be successful. . . . See, a poet around here writes "fuck" five times on a piece of paper, maybe a napkin from the cafeteria or something, and he says, "That's my poem!" That's what they show us and call poetry here. We're certainly not going to give any money for that kind of thing. That's what we're up against with the poets here.

"The Indian & the Fish" quickly became the most-Xeroxed article in Alberta, with copies circulating nefariously among writers, until early April, when poet Ted Blodgett wrote an open letter to Gillese demanding an apology. "The remarks attributed to you," he began, "are among the most disgusting, repugnant and

"People in Alberta hate the Canada Council. They think the Canada Council is a bunch of liberals; that's where the avant-garde stuff gets started. People here are conservative. They want art they can understand, not that crazy stuff. . . ."

contemptible I have ever read in respect of literature in general and poetry in particular" — and continued for 2% pages, single-spaced, of magisterial prose, interspersed with quotations in Greek (translated for the benefit of his readers) and Latin (not translated). The *Edmonton Journal* printed extracts from the letter under the headline, "A bee in his sonnet".

Gillesse replied by claiming that he had been misquoted, and that his remarks had been distorted and taken out of context. He accused the periodical of being "slanted" and said, "It appears to me that the interviewer was out to hang me for something." Hertzell in turn denied these charges: "Mr. Gillese's comments about poetry were exactly as I reported them." He pointed out that a previous article by him on Edmonton publisher Mel Hurtig had been commended by Mr. Hurtig for its accuracy.

For a few weeks we had a lively correspondence in the columns of the *Edmonton Journal*, not normally a sin of literary debate.

Writers who had been assisted by Mr. Gillese came rushing to his defence, offering impressive testimony of his support and encouragement. There were the usual accusations of élitism and ivory-tower academicism against Blodgett, Wiebe, and anyone else who ventured to suggest that a culture department should have high literary standards. It was all very entertaining, but not especially productive. By April, in fact, other initiatives were being undertaken, which led away from personal confrontation toward co-operative reform.

Over the course of the previous winter, Rudy Wiebe, Aritha van Herk, and I had, at various times, approached the Minister to suggest that there was a need for changes in the policies of the literary arts branch, and that, without denying much of the work accomplished by Mr. Gillese, there was also a need for broader consultation among the literary community. Alberta Culture, which had just been badly embarrassed in a controversy over the proposed purchase of Roloff Beny's photographs, proved responsive to these suggestions. As a result, a symposium of some 30 representative writers and publishers was convened in Edmonton on April 19, under the chairmanship of Mel Hurtig.

This one-day symposium proved to be an outstanding success. Personal controversies were ignored, and the discussion focused on issues of policy rather than on recrimination and abuse. Mr. Gillese and his officials were very amenable — surprisingly so, in the view of many participants — to most of the suggestions put forward. The need for increased funding was obvious to all. There was also broad general agreement that book and magazine publishers needed more support in the form of block grants instead of the partial and inconsistent funding to which they had previously been subjected, and which one editor concisely summarized as "application by supplication". In addition, there was approval for this proposal that all major grants should be awarded by a jury system rather than at the sole discretion of the officials of the literary arts branch. At the end of the day, in an atmosphere of general benevolence, a committee of nine writers was appointed to

codify the day's proceedings into specific proposals, and to present these to the Minister.

This Committee of Nine (which appeared to become ominously capitalized) met in Calgary on April 28 and drew up a series of proposals, some of which they hoped could be immediately implemented, but most of which they recognized as medium- or long-term targets. They then met with Mary le Messurier in Edmonton on May 7.

At this stage the clash between the somewhat euphoric idealism of the writers and the pragmatic realities of politicians became evident. While the Minister had few objections in principle to the proposals, she was clear that nothing could be implemented until the budget year 1981-82, and that even then what could be done would depend on how much of an increase could be argued out of the provincial cabinet. She did agree, however, to the immediate formation of a Literary Advisory Council, made up of Albertan writers and publishers, to advise her on matters of literary policy and funding. The intent to form such a council was announced to the press, and reported in the *Edmonton Journal* on May 14.

Meanwhile it was clear to the Committee of Nine that further negotiations had a political dimension, and would be facilitated if the writers of Alberta could speak to the politicians with a single, unified voice. To do so, they needed an organization with a broader base and more authority than the *ad hoc* collection of 30 people who formed the April 19 symposium. Rudy Wiebe proposed the foundation of an Alberta Writers' Federation, which would be open to all writers, in whatever genre, and which would have a provincial rather than a national base. (Such federations already exist in Saskatchewan and the Maritimes.) A preliminary organizational meeting for this venture was held in Edmonton on June 21 (writers in Alberta this spring spent more time meeting than writing, and also had to distinguish between symposiums, councils, federations, and other proposed nomenclatures), and a full-scale inaugural meeting was planned for Calgary on October 18.

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But while the federation was proceeding apace, the advisory council appeared, for most of the summer, to have bogged down. It was not until the end of September that it emerged, now under the title of Writers and Publishers Advisory Committee, and invitations were sent out for an initial meeting sometime in October. Whether this will be in time for the all-important 1981-82 budget remains to be seen.

As it stands at the moment, all the talk, all the meetings, all the fine statements of principle from this spring have yet to produce anything concrete in the way of aid to writers and publishers in Canada's richest province in its 75th anniversary year. One

member of the Committee of Nine was Sharon Ban, editor of *Branching Out*, the only Alberta-based cultural magazine with a national distribution. This summer *Branching Out* folded for lack of funds to pay an editorial staff. Good times may be coming, but there are some Albertan writers and publishers who can't afford to wait.

One of those writers is Aritha van Herk, who in 1978 won the \$50,000 Seal Books first-novel award with *Judith*. A few weeks ago she announced she is leaving Edmonton to take a teaching post at the University of British Columbia. The reason, she said, was to escape Alberta's "oppressive and dangerous" political atmosphere. □

academic literature imitating art imitating life) and gets off on oral sex with a native woman. (George has his jollies too: he slobbers while a sailor is flogged for sodomizing an Indian.) "James Wolfe knew what to do with those fucking Scotsmen!" George exclaims to Quadra, who is cast improbably as a substitute father-figure for the dead Cook, and who replies with equal improbability that Wolfe will have a "secure place in history. They will pint pictures of his triumphant death, with his body folly-clothed in the colours of his homeland." Didn't they just. One wonders whose hindsight is shortest, which of the three Georges is most purblind. Finally, it makes little difference.

Somewhere in the wings of this book there is a clever little boy snickering. Can one imagine, for example, a Spanish colonial administrator, even of the Revolutionary period, speaking like this? "Now I am going to wrap you in your clock and send you home. Give us a little hog now." Thus Quadra to Vancouver according to Bowering. There is more. Vancouver, on hearing a Nootka woman's song, says: "Very nice. I especially liked that last number." (Bowering used to be a disc jockey.) George, looking for the Northwest Passage, "addressed the young barbarian directly, in a rough estimation of the Nootka tongue. 'How through forest it days with canoes many is?' Years later Benjamin Wharf would be built where this aching query was pd." (Aren't your sida aching? Benjamin Wharf, you see, the linguist. Ho-ho. So the book must accommodate this silly joke cod Vancouver be made to prate like a transformational grammarian.) Distance, as one of the Nootkas says, is a "relative concept." (These are sardonic savages.) So, too, is the novel a relative concept, not a historical novel but a "real historical Action."

How far reality is bent in the interests of the fiction may be seen from the ending. "You will be confined to your quarters where you will be outfitted with irons upon your foot and hands, you son-of-a-bitch Scotch lamb-fucker." Menzies, sorely provoked by this kind of dialogue, shoots George (Vancouver), which is probably the best thing to do with him and certainly a convenient way of ending the novel.

This is a truly ugly book, ugly in spirit as in appearance (computypeset, in a golden and brown wrapper like a chocolate bar, a blotchy imprint giving off a fool chemical odour), a book possessing no authentic voice, no authentic sense of time or place, a book adrift in the author's fancy (yes, he uses that word), wallowing in post-colonial guilt. "Without a storyteller, George Vancouver is just another dead sailor," avers George Bowering in his prologue to *Burning Water*. With that dead sailor, George Bowering is just another deadbeat academic scribbler, though to be fair George Bowering has done for George Vancouver what Fletcher Christian did for William Bligh. Historical novel this ain't, real fiction it is, cod how. Remember that junk. □

A bum rap for poor George Vancouver

by Chris Scott

Burning Water, by George Bowering, Musson, 258 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7737 0046 3).

GEORGE VANCOUVER (1757-1798), who served as a midshipman in the *Discovery* on Cook's third voyage, was in 1791 sent as her commander to take over the Nootka Sound territory from the Spaniards. During this voyage, one of the epics of marine navigation, Vancouver charted the Pacific Northwest, failing, as so many before and after, to find the Northwest Passage, he returned to England in 1795, spending the last three years of his life preparing his journals for publication. He died in May, 1798, in his bed, a prosaic fate compared with that of his mentor Captain Cook. The journals were published by his brother John as a *Voyage of discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and round the world in the years 1790-1795*.

Vancouver was not the only memorialist of his voyage: the ship's surgeon Archibald Menzies also published a journal. George Bowering quite rightly quotes and uses both sources in this fantasy version of Vancouver's voyage; what he makes of his sources is something else.

In his prologue to *Burning Water* George Bowering attributes his interest in George Vancouver to the fact of their shared given names. In Bowering's case, it would seem, the man is father to the child: "When I was a boy, I was the only person I knew who was named George." In time boy George (Bowering) moved to Vancouver and learnt the origin of that city's name: "And so now geography involved my name too. George Vancouver. He might have felt such romance, sailing for a king named George the Third" (*sic*). In the 1960s, Bowering continued. "I was a poet, so I wrote a poetry book about Vancouver and

mc. Then a radio play about us, and on the sir we all became third persons." (A jest, as Osric might have said, a very palpable jest. Fortunately George's nominalism does not incorporate the Holy Ghost, also a third person.)

The radio play led to a Canada Council grant, the grant to Trieste when, in a cheap Chinese notebook called Sailing Boat NB 2220 H, with Chinese characters and a picture of a junk reproduced here before each section of the novel, Bowering began the jottings that make up a portion of this book. They concern the activities of the eponymous author and I quote one, as they are given, more or less at random:

He kept sitting down in a trattoria at 7:30 and eating *salsicce con krauti*. He had never eaten so much *krauti* in such a short period.

(The novel is structured like an open-field poem: everything will depend on the controlling consciousness, on the nerve exposed. Seldom is that nerve more than a mental tic: George cats *krauti* because Vancouver was a stickler for the stuff — it's high in vitamin C. As for the third person, George finds that pronoun more congenial, after a while, than the first, and in the multiplication of his single self proves the point with the democratic we: "We cannot tell a story that leaves us outside, and when I say we, I include you." The first half of this sentiment is dubious, the second insulting.)

What of this story? The narrative, such as it is, concerns a fantasized homosexual relationship between George (Vancouver) and Don Joan Quadra (Spanish governor of the Nootka territory), and its effect on the *Discovery*'s sawbones, the botanizing Doctor Menzies.

George (Vancouver) does not like Scotsmen and scientists, and Menzies is both. Menzies shoots an albatross (an example of

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Collins Publishers

Not all talking heads deserve equal time

by Beth Harvor

Contract with the World, by Jane Rule, Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch (Academic Press). 339 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 15 122578 8).

VISUAL ARTISTS tend to be very wordy people — wordier, probably, even than writers — and this wordiness, transposed from life to fiction, can weigh a novel down. In Jane Rule's fifth novel, *Contract with the World*, (set in Vancouver in the 1970s), there are several very wordy characters who are either makers of art or dealers in it and who weigh the work down: a sculptor; a painter; a photographer; a composer who briefly becomes a visual artist when she makes a sound map on a living-room wall: an art dealer; and a woman who ends "p working in the art dealer's gallery.

The painter paints some of the characters, the photographer photographs them, the composer records some of their sounds (the sounds they make walking up and down stairs, the grunting sounds they make as they move in their bathtubs), they all visit one another's exhibitions, and they often meet at one another's houses and studios. In fact they are like a large family of brothels and sisters who are constantly keeping tabs on each other, constantly trying to assess one another's strength, madness, selfishness, giftedness, loyalty to the group, loyalty to one another, and sexual proclivities.

They talk a lot about happiness and a lot about art. And above all, they talk a lot about each other. And if they didn't dignify their incredible obsessive curiosity about one another by what looks like a genuine desire to find some kind of sense of themselves, a good deal of their talk would seem malicious and gossipy. Instead — and this may be because there's so much talk — their curiosity seems largely unhostile, although inevitably there's considerable desperation in it.

The style of the book is strangely "eve". There are sentences that suggest a scorn for lyricism, and even a scorn for clarity:

She had had to compete from birth as one of a litter for the attention of a parent who anyway saw in an infant's lying in its own excrement the equivalent of some self-imposed adult penance.

There are sentences that have been written in too much of a rush:

Mike realized she was the kind of woman he never really noticed until he had noticed her.

And there are sentences that are lyrical in

the best sense — unadorned, evocative, and clear:

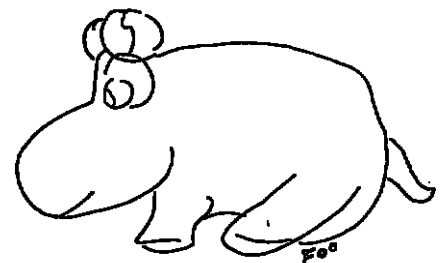
Roxanne was making a sound map of the house. What other people might have fixed, a dripping tap or squeaky hinge, she listened to. What other people blanked out — the refrigerator or furnace going on, a plane passing overhead — she heard. She was interested in the difference in tone between eggshells and chicken bones in the garbage disposal. She compared the refilling timer of the two toilets. She recorded the boys' feet up and down the stairs, in and out of the house, and she asked them to spend one rainy afternoon doing nothing but sitting down over and over again on different pieces of living-room furniture.

"Victor farted — on purpose," Tony said, outraged.

"It's okay; it's okay." Roxanne reassured him. "Everything is okay."

Of course, *Contract with the World* is a novel of ideas and as a novel of ideas it might be permitted a certain artificiality of characterization and unevenness of style. Certainly one almost always senses the author's intelligence and commitment. Still, a great deal of the book's information does seem sociological and gratuitous rather than emotional and integral to the story. I'm not suggesting that Rule is a flashy writer but only that something — anxiety about the weakness of the novel as a story maybe, or a wish to provide relief from the cerebralness of long stretches of it-has driven her to insert a number of scenes that seem imposed rather than emotionally right.

Most of these scenes are sexual and several of them are homosexual. Of these, the lesbian scenes recall others in women's movement literature, being rhapsodical in style and almost botanical in detail. And yet in spite of a fairly great preoccupation, all through the book, with homosexual relationships, one doesn't get the impression that the author is allowing herself to idealize these relationships much. In fact, almost all the really decent people in the novel are straight, and the two most shrewd and vicious people, the beautiful temperamental



Alma and the clever vengeful Allen, are gay. (Even Allen's harsh and honest remark about himself and Alma, expressed to Alma. "It takes a certain amount of breeding to be morally trivial, as you and I are", didn't much endear him to me. Which may mean that as a fictional character he is a success. Certainly, compared to Allen and Alma, the other characters do seem rather stern and innocent.)

Jane Rule is not as original a writer as Doris Lessing but she's not so irritatingly instructive either. And although she's not so readable as Marilyn French, she does strike me as being more thoughtful, and more fair to men. Still, her affection for her characters is too great: she indulges them all at the expense of the work as a whole. She seems to suffer from a very fair (but also very un-novelistic) preoccupation with giving them all equal time. This preoccupation may have made the novel relatively easy to write but it often makes it a terrible chore to read. And a novel that preoccupies itself so frequently and so intellectually with questions dealing with the nature of man does run a specific risk: it can become an exemplar for almost everything real art is not. Or should not be. C

Is there no bomb in Gilead?

Periscope Red, by Richard Rohmer. General Publishing. 282 pages. \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7736 0080 9).

The Scorpion Sanction, by Gordon Pape and Tony Aspler. McClelland & Stewart. 358 pages. \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 b936 71).

By BARRY DICKIE

IF THE WAR drums beat any louder, these two thrillers might be the last books we get to read. Both novels focus on the Middle East conflict. They both feature an Arab terrorist group with sufficient weaponry to frighten Allah. Yet the books are as different from one another as cardboard is from solid wood.

Periscope Red has a delightful beginning: a team of PLO frogmen are planting mines on the hulls of American-owned oil tankers moored in the Persian Gulf; these mines are later activated by an electronic signal and the ships explode while we see. It could happen. Richard Rohmer knows it could happen, for he is Chief of Reserves of the Canadian Armed Forces. He knows that America's oil imports could be effectively stopped and that the powerful Soviet Navy could laugh in their faces. He also knows that a greenhorn Yankee president could panic in such a situation and reach for the magic button.

Rohmer is a seasoned writer with eight books under his belt. He knows the military

world inside out. He has a knack of devising brilliant plots. Indeed, he has the blockbuster of the century at his fingertips. He needs only one thing more: he needs a ghost-writer.

What is wrong with *Periscope Red*? The pace is lively enough. There's lots of clever military strategy and an excellent battle scene between a British and Russian submarine. Even the right-wing politics message is convincingly presented. But there are no people in *Periscope Red*, that is what's wrong. At least not the kind of people who live on earth.

True, I've never met an American president or a PLO terrorist or a Chairman Romanov of the Soviet Union. All the same, it's reasonable to expect that these sorts of people do have thoughts of their own, thoughts that exist outside of Rohmer's political scheme of things. It is also reasonable to expect that these men have an emotional range that goes beyond wanting to bear up the other guy or to cup their hands around a pair of firm breasts. For \$12.95 a reader has a right to expect these things.

A thriller is supposed to make you fall out of the chair with excitement. When there are no believable characters there is no sympathy, no personal involvement. There is no action, only frantic movement. And worst of all, there is no suspense. *Periscope Red* is a long, fact-filled cartoon. A bad cartoon because it isn't even funny. The reader is left dangling at the end, wondering if the U.S. and Russia ever do go to it tooth and nail. If the world were actually inhabited by such cynical bores as Rohmer's Robots I'd certainly have a solution: I'd say, "Bomb 'em all!"

The Scorpion Sanction also has a delightful beginning: a bloated, radioactive corpse floats to the surface of the Nile River. It is the corpse of a Latin American terrorist. The president of the U.S. is arriving in Cairo next week for a friendly visit. There is an atomic bomb waiting for him. To find this bomb, the Egyptian president requests his top intelligence agent to work hand-in-hand with Israel's top man — an expert on nuclear weapons. The two agents naturally hate each other. They have a big job ahead of them.

I had high hopes for this book. After all, it was written by two distinct authors: Gordon Pape and Tony Aspler. Two brains are better than one, I figured. And the blurb promised: "*The Scorpion Sanction* is a chilling tale of political intrigue and intense personal conviction, a gripping work of fiction that is improbably close to reality."

Never mind the blurb. Just read the book. It is beautiful. It is an action story, a romance, a comedy, a nerve-wrenching thriller built around three sub-plots and half a dozen flesh-and-blood, real-life people. It is a travelogue of Egypt, a look at the many faces of Islam and the complexities of the world's oldest political conflict. It has murder and rape, tender love, torture, tears, and joy. And it all culminates at the base of the High Aswan Dam. The Bomb and the

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At the end of a life

Final Thing, by Richard Wright. Macmillan, 145 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1881 8).

By I. M. OWEN

IT WOULD BE misleading to say that I liked this novel. The author carries out his intentions superbly well. but adding to my joy in life was clearly no part of those intentions.

It's about the last few days in the life of Charles Farris, a near-alcoholic failed journalist, divorced against his will from his second wife, whom he still loves. He lives in a dreary apartment in a down-at-heel part of Toronto, where his only child, a "stem and secretive" boy of 12, visits him on Saturdays. The book opens on a grey November Saturday afternoon. Farris is growing uneasy because his son went to a variety store two blocks away an hour ago and isn't back yet. He never does come back, and early next morning a pair of winos find him behind a factory, stuffed into two garbage bags. He has been raped and murdered.

A few days later Farris receives a tip from a frightened young man. He knows who killed the boy and, for a price, tells Farris. Instead of reporting this to the police Farris sets out to seek revenge, and finds it. The story ends violently, with blood staining the first snow of winter.

Into this very short novel Richard Wright has packed, without giving any feeling of congestion, a variety of incident and a gallery of characters drawn with a sure hand and immense economy of line: Pat, Farris's ex-wife; the young Englishman who now lives with her, her amiable father. Bill Langford; her senile grandmother, a former beauty and romantic novelist; her crass brother Teddy, once a flower child, now doing well in real estate and running to fat; and his good-natured but constantly exasperated wife Sylvia. The family's clergyman, a mildly unctuous Anglo-Catholic, is with a fine fitness called Bunny Buckley. (Farris, who has known him for years, doesn't know what to call him: "Father" is too formal, and "Bunny" is preposterous.) And there are effectively contrasted portraits of the two women, one old and one young, with whom Farris has brief sexual encounters.

I wonder a little whether the work might have gained by being either shorter or

longer: condensed into a short story to concentrate its impact; or extended to give us more of Charles Farris's life. If we could have seen him and Pat when they still enjoyed each other's company, if we could have lived with him through the year spent in Gloucestershire writing a novel, "the happiest year of an unhappy life" - if, that is, we had been allowed to know him when he was more than the pitiable slob he has become - this final episode of his life might have risen to tragedy.

But the fact to be celebrated here, without reservation, is that Richard Wright has now completely mastered the art of telling a story. In addition, his narrative prose is faultless; my editorial fingers didn't twitch once as I read it - a rare experience. And his dialogue seems effortlessly natural, an effect attained only by a great deal of effort. This book might indeed be called his masterpiece, in the word's original sense - the *Meisterstück* a member of a medieval guild presented as his final credentials for recognition as a fully qualified practitioner of his craft. I look forward to Wright's next novel-hoping, though, that he is keeping his mind on cheerful things. □

Mute, inglorious, but no Milton

The Mad Trapper, by Rudy Wiebe, McClelland & Stewart. 189 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 8976 7.)

By M. T. KELLY

RUDY WIEBE SEEMS to be trying to create Canadian mythology in his work. Even the titles of his earlier books - *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (1962), *The Blue Mountains of China* (1970), *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973) - send shivers down the most insensitive spine by virtue of their mythic overtones. In his latest book, *The Mad Trapper*, Wiebe has taken the story of Albert Johnson, the mad trapper of Rat River, and told it in a simple, straightforward narrative that tries to give this tale of murder, chase, and capture the effect of a parable.

The book opens with the silent trapper - he'll remain silent, almost mute, through the whole novel - paddling a raft toward Fort McPherson, 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle. At Fort McPherson we find Mounties in scarlet dress uniforms, square dancers, a pie-eating contest, weathered farmers, colourful trappers, wooden dialogue, and similarly ludicrous interaction between men:

"Ha no?" Lang roared, triumphant anyway. "But I ate one good pie, the whole one myself!"

"You smart son of a gun," Millen chuckled into the laughter from the crowd, and punched the trapper in the shoulder.

"Whew, I'm not so sure." He was rubbing his stomach ruefully.

Millen is the Mountie who winds up chasing the mad trapper. If Monty Python had collected these Canadian stereotypes from the opening scenes of *The Mad Trapper* and put them on the air, he'd be accused of overdoing it. Wiebe seldom gets so heavy-handed & in, but the book is uneven, and much of it is stock.

The trapper, apparently, wants simply to be left alone. He never says much, the well-springs for his motivation seem to be a little ditty he hums: "Never smile at a woman. . . . Call no man your friend. If you trust anybody, you'll be sorry. . . you'll be sorry. . . you'll be sorry in the end." That and the fact that he pops Dodds Kidney Pills and broods on faded photographs.

In fact, nobody talks much in this book. The characters belong to the school that holds that twitching cheek muscles indicate great internal torment. The Mounties don't take the press at all. Their emotions are unfailingly bureaucratic. There's more than a hint of a Watergate mentality in their secrecy and contempt for reporters. Snardon, the journalist, is regarded as scarcely human, certainly not a macho man like the others. Wop May, the First World War flyer who's brought in to help track Johnson, refers to Snardon as "this fop". The reporter is terrified in the airplane, while Millen doesn't even glance at the dangerous "peaks edging in closer with each hammering revolution of the Bellanca's straining engine".

Thou & there's a story-telling tradition in the North, it's missing from *The Mad Trapper*. The book's strength lies in Wiebe's obvious imaginative obsession with the land. There's some lovely feeling in his description, in the smell of wind, of two grizzly cubs feeding while their mother's claws "waved as gently as wings in the air above them". Wiebe intended his tale to be a simple one, and on one level it works. He builds to a good climax, and a scene in which Wop May is under a tarpaulin fixing his airplane and an old Indian woman come in to chant and prophesy is well done. Johnson is compared to the Indian spirit Wendigo, and the comparison is haunting. But such simple and effective scenes are too few. In spite of the straightforward structure, things seem a muddle in the book.

We do need myths in this country, and the mad trapper's story obviously fascinates, and perhaps obsesses, Wiebe's imagination. But even in Greek mythology, and certainly in North American Indian mythology, the gods are all too human, capricious, and arbitrary and sexual. In the Irish saga *Tain Bo Cuailnge*, the blood-soaked heroes sometimes seem as if they're in a Dublin pub, talking their lives away. To be effective myths must be made articulate, and that doesn't happen in *The Mad Trapper*. Our own ghosts and gods and legends must be made to speak before they fall back into silence. □

Gunpowder, treason, and excessive plot

by Rupert Schieder

Setting the World on Fire, by Angus Wilson. Seeker & Warburg (Collins), 296 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 436 57604 X).

ANGUS WILSON's following has never been a large one, but it has been devoted. Expectations about this book have been great, since it is his first novel in seven years. It is also his first publication since he was knighted, after a distinguished career as critic, author, wartime intelligence officer, and most significant for much of his fiction, superintendent of the Reading Room of the British Museum, that centre of scholarly and often arcane research. It is significant, too, in a consideration of this latest work, to note that his earliest and perhaps still his finest work appeared in two collections of short stories, *The Wrong Set* (1949) and *Such Darling Dodos* (1950), followed later by the significantly titled collection, *A Bit Off the Mop* (1957). These displayed the skilful application of a scalpel to the pretensions,

weaknesses, and sexual particularities of a variety of characters in unusual, often decaying situations. The stress lay on the depiction of character and situation rather than on narrative. Each of the succeeding novels from *Hemlock and After* (1953) applied this dissection to a variety of people and situations, geographical and cultural, that served Wilson's wide, often specialized interests.

In this latest fiction, his 11th, the interest in character and situation continues, but it is dominated by an all-consuming concern for theme, embodied in two brothers and the great house of their patrician family. The fundamental narrative structure is simple, based on the relation of two antithetical yet complementary brothers through a school production of *Richard II*, a French opera, and a quite anticlimactic original play, all produced near or in Tothill House.

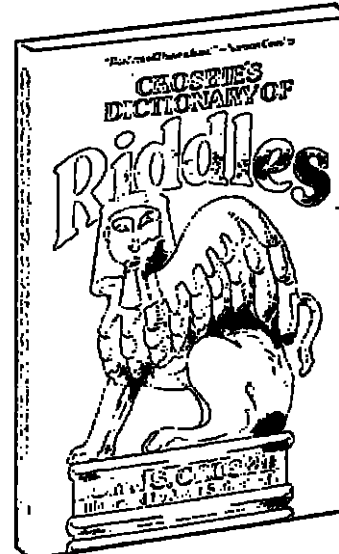
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the family, stands at the heart of England, in the centre of London itself, near Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, and the Ministry of Defence. Tothill House, like the brothers, embodies an antithesis. For at the centre of the original classical 17th-century building, built by the architect Pratt, stands the baroque Great Hall, designed by Sir John Vanburgh. The classical order, balance, and proportion of the House has at its centre, not disorder, but the "ordered disorder at the baroque." So too, the brothers: Tom, the lawyer, maintainer, timid, full of tears; and Piers, whom Tom lows, the director-producer, the artist-creator, confident, scornful of safety and limitations, rash enough to court disastrous Failure.

The ceiling of the Great Hall is dominated by the painter Verrio's depiction of the myth of Phaethon, who rashly seizes the chariot of the sun, drives wildly, endangering the

earth, and — struck by Jove's thunder-bolt — Falls to his death. Fascinated, perhaps carried away by ingenuity, Wilson has Piers stage a performance of the 17th-century composer Lully's opera. *Phaethon*, establishing situational and thematic parallels and layers. Contrary to easy expectation, however, Piers does not Fall; he rises to heights of acclaim.

But wait. With one chapter, one tenth of the novel, to go, Wilson strains our acceptance and admiration by presenting a third production: this time an original play, written by an assistant gardener of the estate. It is a pastiche, in two senses of that literary term, of a 17th-century play, including among other heterogeneous materials, aspects of the Gunpowder Plot. Actually, the carefully guarded preparations for the play serve as a cover for the digging of a tunnel by the revolutionary playwright and his subversive confederates, to blow up the

conveniently nearby Ministry of Defence. During the performance, five pages from the end of the novel. Scotland Yard arrives, makes last-minute arrests, and order is restored. One of the figures of disorder, however, attempts to shoot Piers, but perfect love having cast out Tom's fears, he jumps, fatally, between Piers and the assassin, a substitute Phaethon, rising in his fall.

I'm not devoted to reviews that trace plots. This summary, however, illustrates a shortcoming in the form of this novel. One rejects the possibility of Wilson's having become bored or impatient. He has never been a "modern" novelist in the sense of being interested in the "well-made novel" and experimental technique. His interest is elsewhere, in character and setting and theme. The characters here, sharply and economically presented, are thematically grouped as figures of order, (Tom and the lesbian librarian), extreme disorder (the

David Annesley: eyes and the man

WHEN DAVID ANNESLEY drowned, stupidly and incomprehensibly, in the mouth of the Rio Grande in February, 1977, at the age of 33, Canada lost an artist and caricaturist with an uncanny ability to peer into men's souls. The *Annesley Drawings* (Exile Editions, unpaginated, 59.95 paper), a small-format portfolio of 60 of his earlier sketches (three, including the self-portrait on the cover, in colour) is a handsome epitaph. And Barry Callaghan's introduction-cum-memoir is a touching word portrait of the artist as a very young man, not long off the boat from Northern Ireland, big-boned and blushing, beginning to find his unique, squiggly line as a draughtsman on the book pages of the old *Toronto Telegram*.

Publisher Callaghan, who ran the *Telegram's* book section in the late 1960s and was Annesley's first patron, has also seen fit to include two of his own literary essays from that period. It is hard to see why. They read as though the essayist were on an intellectual acid trip. If the drawings once complemented the words, the words no longer complement the drawings. They merely prove that the young Callaghan, for all his flashy insights, lacked something Annesley possessed innately: control.

Anne&y was a good friend of this magazine and we commissioned several drawings from him in our early days. I can remember his glowering George Woodcock and an unkind version of Pierre Berton as a dandiacal Mountie. He also did Diefenbaker for one of our covers, although he warned us he was growing powerfully bored with Diif and the boredom showed a bit. The role of the editorial-page cartoonist, constantly putting new expressions on old faces, was anathema to Annesley. He might try the same face several times, but once he was satisfied he had caught the essence of the subject the lines became locked in his creative computer and he tended to lose interest.

However, he was fascinated by the prospect of reproducing the Annesley line in three dimensions and began working with clay during the last year of his life. Visitors to his

studio, a converted one-room schoolhouse near Beaverton, Ont., watched a striking bust of George Bernard Shaw form and reform itself under his curious fingers. The eyes wouldn't come right, he kept complaining.

The eyes, the windows of the soul, are the crux and glory of any Annesley portrait, the sparks of character that turn caricature into art. Some critics, noting the, Annesley generally drew from photographic references and seldom from life, dismissed him as just another clever copy draughtsman. They were blind. The haunted eyes of his Hider, the sad-eyed humanity of his elderly Churchill, the bleary-eyed humour of his Sir John A., the defiant glare of Bertrand Russell and the blank stem of Joyce Carol Oates, never came from my photograph. They came from deep



within Annesley and expressed a communion between artist and subject that transcended time and space.

Annesley liked drawing large, preferably life size, because his style needed space. A typical Annesley portrait has no bold edges. Instead, the form emerges as if by magic from a tangle of apparently unrelated lines or is suggested by few deft strokes. His style was ideal for posters and he was justly proud of the

ones he did for the Toronto Symphony and the Shaw Festival. However, the drawings often lost much of their impact when squeezed down by space-conscious magazine editors to fit standard column widths. And when Canada Post unwisely commissioned Annesley portraits of the Queen and six prime ministers for the definitive set of stamps in the early 1970s, the results were ludicrous.

Money was always a problem with Annesley. We could never afford to pay him what he was worth, of course, but he kept insisting that exposure and freedom from editorial interference were more important than the size of the fee. He was equally generous in his dealings with *The Canadian Forum* and *Saturday Night*, less so with the richer *Toronto Globe* and *Mail*. He was beginning to receive regular commissions from such U.S. publications as *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic*, and probably would have received more had he not had his telephone yanked out after a 133.50 feed with Bell.

But as he cheerfully pointed out, he didn't need much money. As long as he could scrape together enough to pay the mortgage and taxes on his beloved schoolhouse, run his dilapidated Ford, and down a few jars with the boys at the Gamebridge Inn on Saturday nights, he was content. Besides, he could always pick up a bit on the side by helping a neighbour with the ploughing or the haying.

There never was a less temperamental artist than David Annesley and no memoir can adequately capture the aura of his appearance and personality. In looks he reminded some people of D. H. Lawrence, and he certainly shared a lot of Lawrence's raw intensity. But where Lawrence was dark, Annesley was all light. He melded life more not only with life but also with hope and well-being. He had the son of charm, utterly spontaneous, that melted women's hearts and made men glad. At his funeral it seemed that half of Beaverton tried to crowd into the small Anglican church and sin strong men, fighting back unmanly team, carried him through the freezing rain to his grave.

— DOUGLAS MARSHALL

playwright and the assassin), end those who present a constant menace to order and proportion, such as the erratic great-grandfather, the alcoholic mother, and the uncle, a victim of his taste for flagellation. The father, a fighter pilot, fell to earth, a victim of a little monster who set the world on fire. Hitler, and there are other parallels that I have not mentioned.

The characters are not developed but revealed, serving Wilson's usual concern, the exposition of a thematic situation. This purpose is, I believe, best embodied in his short stories end in *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*, an early novel that is really a most skilful interweaving of a number of related but separate threads. This latest novel, like some of its predecessors such as *The Old Men at the Zoo*, *No Laughing Matter*, and *As If By Magic*, I enjoyed for Wilson's invention, his solid, quite Victorian and Edwardian evocation of place, his fascination by particular subjects, some "a bit off the map", and his constant brilliance. He, however, his brilliance is unfortunately dimmed by his excessive ingenuity. □

Jerusalem, in Canada's pure and snowy land

The Elements, by Tom Marshall, Oberon Press. IS3 pages, \$17.50 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 336 5) and \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 337 3).

By ALBERT MORITZ

TOM MARSHALL's impressive selection from his four books organized around the classical elements (fire, water, earth, air) is a work primarily concerned with the enigmas of history and guilt. Marshall has sharpened the outlines of his ambitious undertaking by pruning and (to a lesser degree) reordering the contents of the individual books, *The Silences of Fire* (1969), *Magic Water* (1971), *The Earth-Book* (1974), and *The White City* (1976).

"The most important textual changes modify sequence poems to clarify intentions and continuity. For instance, Marshall has helpfully removed the page headed "More Definitions" in *The White City*, when it interrupted and confused his fittest poem, "Out There". "MK and the Implosion of the FLQ", the long dialogue that dominated *The Earth-Book*, has been limited to two brief excerpts, and other deletions or rearrangements also help *The Earth-Book*.

Other excerpts are not as successful. The sequence "Words for an Imaginary Picture" from *Magic Water* is represented by a selection that is not self-contained, since it fails to define its three characters. Marshall has treated *Magic Water* severely,

reducing it to 31 pages here: but it might well have been cut to only "Politics" end the sequence "Islands".

These and other such changes make *The Elements* the authoritative Marshall text, at least for the time being and for the poems included. But it is regrettable that the publisher and author did not make this a more definitive book. There is no author's foreword or statement of intentions, criteria of selection, or theme. Not even a table of contents 10 offer an overview of the book. "Only a vague publisher's blurb states that Marshall chose his "best poems" and that his work is "a way of seeing reality as being composed of the four elements...".

The poet's statement on theme and structure would be valuable, because structure — purposely made so prominent — is precisely "the weakest aspect of *The Elements*, and dramatizes Marshall's difficulties with his vigorous, large-minded poetic attempt. The grouping of the poems under the four elements is often far-fetched, and this reflects other, deeper structures unjustifiably imposed on the material.

The Elements deals with the problem of pain, but in very concrete and local terms, the terms of Canada and its history (this is to leave aside a more specifically universal counterpoint theme based on metaphors from physics). Marshall is impressively successful in making his national vision both topical and symbolic of all mankind's blood and guilt relationships to the earth and ancestors. Like many North American poets, he is concerned with reclaiming the "second chance" that Europeans squandered by inscribing their old lusts and crimes on the supposed *tabula rasa* of the New World. In "Politics", snow symbolizes the new beginning that, historically, was offered us, and which is always possible for each individual:

*Hypnotic snow. Eradicating line
and banishing history from consciousness
you deceive us and begin us.
How shall we live with such blankness?
Shall we invoke the unjust past
or the equally false utopian future?*

Marshall's concern remains constant, though his stylistic and imaginative strength grow in de&g with it. The early "Macdonald Park" mythologizes John A. Macdonald, end the book's last poem does the same with Laurier. Though neither man can be exempted from the attitudes or actions of his time, Marshall manages 10 see both as visionaries of a new order, rejecting old ways 10 start afresh:

*The accession of light
is almost pain. . .
"The twentieth century shall be
the century of Canada. . ."
Old universes. . .
running down, old universes that
fall endlessly away to
become husks. . .*

For Marshall, the social struggle of Canada is identical with the inner effort required of each person. "Listen," he says,



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"every 'thing' inside is outside too." And he re-interprets Laurier's doubtful remark that this is Canada's century—a prediction that has not come to pass politically — to mean something true in the inner, poetic realm. The efforts of Canadians to redeem history, to live up to their fresh start, form the 20th-century project *par excellence*.

This movement from the social, objective sphere to the inner life occurs throughout *The Elements*. "Politics", for instance, is followed by "Islands", a sequence that traces a personal purification in dialogue with Canada's landscape and people.

The two major poems that conclude the book — "Out There" and "A Message from the Garden of the Gods" — cover the same ground of historic guilt and personal renewal. They forge persistently "toward what new direction/ what new flowering that is not empire", and lead to Marshall's parting call:

*Citizen,
give your naked self
up to the green grass, to the air,
to the water, to the sun's fire,
to the snow and its blinding bird of light,
the white city
the garden of the gods is here*

In one way this is true and fine: certainly individual inner renewal must precede social renewal. But in another way it is an evasion. The passage is too facilely made from unresolved, objective social problems to the claim of an inner renewal that somehow, unspecifically, subsumes or supersedes them.

"Politics", for instance, knocks down a man of straw, a simplistic concept of the imperialism of "conquest, cross", and then proceeds to an unearned assertion:

*now the sleeper awakens into time,
and no mythology finally will matter
(theirs or ours) unless it is true
to a single room with its large windows. . .*

This room is the new self, the new arbiter of history and the future. But has it really overcome the deathly forces? And are we today really more oriented toward social justice? Following "Politics", "Islands" does not at all show the sleeper waking into time to deal with these questions. It shows instead the self receding out of time, still probing within and meanwhile gazing rather numbly at the encircling outer forces that compel it.

Marshall himself raises this dilemma, and to this extent is tied to the central Western idea of the full reality and dignity of the objective world, and the need to harmonize it with the requirements of spirit and justice. Yet his thought is weakened by an automatic *au courant* disregard of this tradition, from which all his most insistent yearnings and aspirations in fact spring. His seeming preference for Eastern and

shamanistic modes of thought abets his tendency to slip away from the essential paradox of his material, the impossible demand that inner light should have power upon society and history, toward the idea of the sufficient self. Still, like the Bible and in contrast to other mythographies, Marshall's vision ends in "city".

The Elements leads us to expect — though it does not give — a great epic, the epic of the culture-bringer, the founding god who establishes a new life based on revelation. But to say so is only to honour Marshall, for large poets make us expect this. And in *The Elements*, he is surely beginning, not concluding: □

Mutters of fact

A Planet Mostly Sea, by Tom Wayman, Turnstone Press, 64 pages, \$5.00 paper (ISBN 0 88801035 4).

Blue Sunrise, by Bert Almon, Thistle-down Press, 60 pages, 814.00 cloth (ISBN 0 920066 30 5) and 86.95 paper (ISBN 0 92006629 1).

By STEPHEN SCOBIE

IN A BRIEF note at the end of *A Planet Mostly Sea*, Tom Wayman quotes Keats's famous and problematical dictum, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty", and comments that "while he [Keats] and many artists since have come down on the side of the first of these equations, it should be clear from my poems that I believe only the second". Both of these recent books of poetry from Western publishers are in fact more interested in truth than in beauty; both of them refuse most of the traditional techniques for making statements "poetic" — elaborate metaphors, intricate rhythms, arcane symbolism — and rely instead on the authority of fact.

*"Well, we eat at that place
because he likes Harvey's
better than McDonald's.
Depending on how hungry he is:
McDonald's, when he says he's really
starved."*

These lines come from "What the Women Said", the second section of "Asphalt Hours, Asphalt Air", one of two long poem-sequences that make up Tom Wayman's small collection from Turnstone Press. Wayman records these words not as part of a superior satirical poke at people who eat at McDonald's, but as fact, as part of the daily texture of life in an industrial town. Fact is the accumulating evidence on which Wayman builds the increasingly political assertiveness of the later sections of the poem:

*They have told us that time is money
and since money can be owned
you can possess a man or a woman's time*

*and spend the human beings who live in that
time
like a coin or a dollar.*

This theme of money end time, and Wayman's insistence on work as a central experience of human life that finds far too little expression in our culture, will be familiar to readers of his poetry. In this sense, "Asphalt Hours, Asphalt Air" contains few surprises: like all of Wayman's work poetry, it is acute, intelligent, and necessary.

It's the other poem — "Long Beach Suite" — that gives a different and interesting perspective on Wayman's poetry of fact. He approaches the traditional domain of the lyric poet — descriptive, meditative portraits of nature — and even here he refuses the techniques of transformation. There is one gesture towards metaphor — the tide as a "furious/ washerwoman/ throwing out/ pail after pail" — which would be a pleasant if unremarkable image in any other poet. In *Wayman* it seems startling by virtue of its isolation. His nature poetry, in his work poetry, seeks its authority in the naming of facts:

*A hot morning: vapor rising
from the wet sand, shouts,
dogs barking, the tide lower
but the waves still white-capped
from yesterday's storm.*

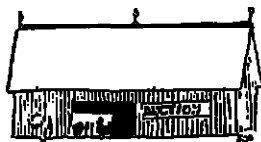
Many readers will find such lines flat, prosaic, lacking in "significance". Insufficiently image-making. But over the length of the sequence, the technique has its own effectiveness: again, there is an accumulation, an accretion of detail, that creates, out of the most impersonal of means and materials, a personal voice.

Bert Almon's *Blue Sunrise*, appositely and attractively minted in blue by Thistle-down Press, is also a book that makes very little use of metaphors, symbols, or striking transformations. Like Wayman, Almon writes about everyday life, appealing to the reader's recognition of the familiarity of what he says rather than in the reader's admiration of his imaginative power to transform reality. But Almon does shape his material more than Wayman: he does search for the situation that will become an image, and his narrative impulse is more clearly directed toward the well-formed anecdote. Many of his poems are concise, economically related incidents, closing on a neat line that unobtrusively but firmly suggests the innate significance of the event, or its possible wider applications.

The opening poem, "For Nancy Going to War", is a good example. It tells of how Almon picked up a young girl, Nancy, hitch-hiking with a large but placid dog, Maggie. The poem briefly and effectively sketches the girl's character: innocent, idealistic, trusting, naive. The only overt comment comes in the final lines:

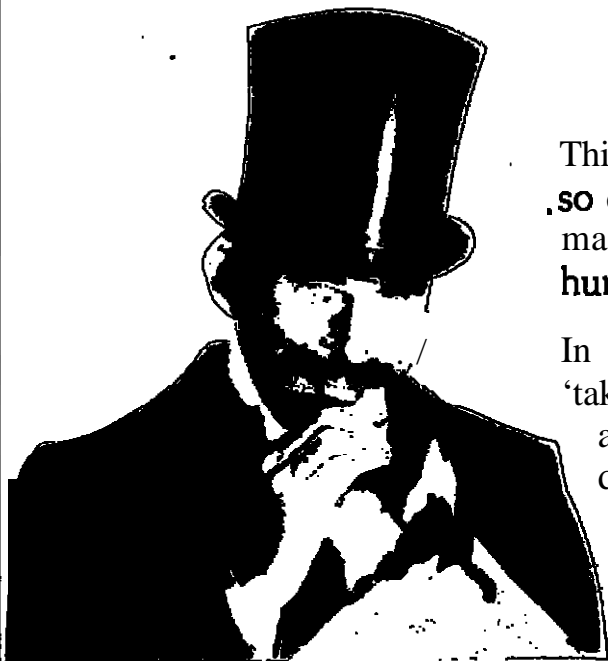
*I've met enough pirates
and slave merchants on the roads*

continued on page 20



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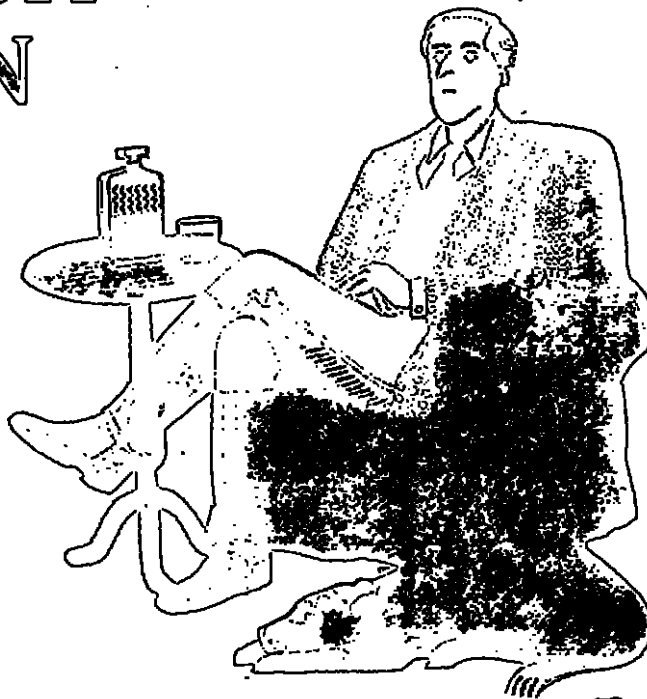


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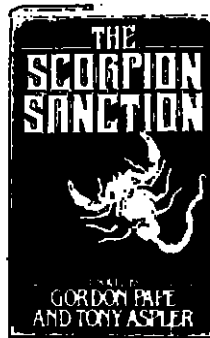


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*to wish Nancy had more armor
and Maggie was a little fiercer*

If you like, you can read this poem (written in December, 1970) as an emblem of the whole flower-child generation of the 1960s heading into the wintry realities of the 1970s, but Almon does not insist on that kind of expansion. The poem works best at its immediate, anecdotal level.

That first poem also establishes Almon's own stance for the book: an observer more than a participant, but a sensitive, concerned, sympathetic observer. Having observed a possibly fatal ear accident during the day, he himself goes to bed "thinking of a house where no one is sleeping". "Marking the less grammatical papers" of Hong Kong refugee students, he reflects uneasily that "the red pencil is an oar blade coming down hard/on heads that cling to the side of a small boat".

Almon's poetry makes no large claims to cosmic significance. His work is quiet, understated, intelligent, informed by nice sense of humour, finely crafted without overtly displaying its technique. *Blue Sunrise* is scarcely one of the major books of the year, but it's a very pleasing one. □

Hébert with Anglo-Saxon flair

Poems, by Anne Hébert, translated from the French by A. Poulin Jr., Quarterly Review of **Literature Poetry Series** (Princeton). New Jersey), 60 pages, 510.00 paper.

By ALBERT MORITZ

THIS NEW ENGLISH version of Anne Hébert's poems displays the qualities that have made A. Poulin, Jr.'s 1977 translation of Rilke's *Duino Elegies and Sonnets to Orpheus* perhaps the most admired and quoted book of poetry to appear recently in the United States. Poulin, a distinguished American poet, a native of Maine but of French Canadian descent, points out in an afterword that this work "marks the first time that a relatively substantial collection of Anne Hébert's poems in translation has appeared" in the U.S. Hébert herself has assisted in his translation and selection from her *Poèmes* (1960). He renders 10 fewer poems than did. Alan Brown in his still indispensable *Poems by Anne Hébert* (Mussion, 197.5).

Poulin refers to the work of Brown and F. R. Scott, and the many words and phrases he shares with them certainly represent not coincidence but careful study and use of the prior versions. On the other hand, numerous words, lines, and passages are

seen from a fresh, revealing angle. The book's chief importance, however, is the new tone Poulin has found in Hébert — a more colloquial, speech-based tone than we heard by Scott and Brown. With Hébert, as with Rilke, Poulin achieves a voice that does not disguise the poet's own, and yet speaks a language based on standard conversational English. The poet's beauty and intensity are made to rise directly out of our daily talk.

Generally, Scott also draws Hébert out of a standard modern English, but it is clearly a written, more literary language than Poulin's. Approximately the same is true for Brown, who in addition goes further than the other two toward emphasizing a note of hentic, incantatory surrealism.

These distinctions are more cumulative than local, but can be observed to some extent in brief passages. Here are the three versions of the first stanza of "La Chambre fermée". Poulin:

*Who led me here?
Surely someone
Breathed on my heels.
When did that happen?
With what quiet friend's complicity?
The total consent of what long night?*

Brown:

*Who can have brought me here?
Surely there was someone
Breathing at my heels.
When was all this done?
With the complicity of what quiet friend?
The deep consent of what long night?*

Scott:

*Who then brought me here?
There was certainly someone
Who prompted my steps.
But when did that happen?
With the connivance of what quiet friend?
The deep approval of what long night?*

Both Canadian translators are more concerned than Poulin to preserve the comparatively *latinate* syntax of French. Combined with Hébert's solemn, unadorned nouns and verbs, this leads their translations a gnomic formality appropriate to one side of Hébert's genius. But Poulin's Anglo-Saxon compression and speed result in a poetry that, though still reserved and commanding, impresses us with its urgent relevance.

Poulin's Hébert appeals as one segment of a five-book volume published by Theodore Weiss's *Quarterly Review of Literature*. After more than 30 years as a magazine, this distinguished publication has decided to produce instead two omnibus volumes per year, each containing at least four complete books. Of the IO books in the first two volumes, Poulin's Hébert is the best by a very great margin indeed. It is hoped that it will soon be available separately, perhaps expanded and without its occasional typographical errors ("scapulas" — meaning "shoulder blades" — is a translation of *scapulaires*, when surely the correct "scapulas" was written). Poulin has produced a book of great importance to both of Canada's literatures. □

HAPPY HAIDA WAYS

Although the emphasis is on the rugged West this season, there are plenty of other treats for those who measure out their lives in coffee-table books and talk of Michelangelo

produced by Christopher Hume

THE WEST

THIS IS THE year of the West in Canada. Publishers have spent considerable energy discovering Canada west of the Rockies. Perhaps the proper word is "rediscovering": the big item this season is Pacific Northwest Indian art and there's nothing "new" about a cultural tradition that dates back thousands of years. The appearance of these books — there are five — is a result of the general rebirth, or renaissance, the native arts are experiencing throughout North America. Last year saw Pollock/Sinclair's *The Art of Norval Morrisseau*, a large and colourful production that has enjoyed some success. Before that, and since the early 1960s, it was Inuit prints and carvings. The only really "new" native art is that of the Woodland Indians. (It can be dated from the "discovery" of Morrisseau in 1962 by Toronto art dealer Jack Pollock.) The case of the Pacific Indians differs hugely: they have concentrated on adapting ancient art forms to present-day technology and economics.

Most Indian languages have no word for "art". So it took awhile for the concept to sink in. But it did. And with good result. Haida carver and printmaker, Robert Davidson, is an excellent example. If one individual can embody the changes Northwest coast Indian art has undergone in the last 15 years, it must surely be this man. His story is told by Hilary Stewart in Robert Davidson: *Haida Printmaker* (Douglas & McIntyre, 117 pages, \$24.95).

Born in the Queen Charlotte Islands, Robert Davidson benefited from a remarkably traditional Haida upbringing. To non-Indian eyes, the Davidson family would have appeared poor; their one-room house had no running water or electricity. None of that bothered young Davidson. Author Hilary Stewart tells us, "What young Robert's life lacked in modern facilities was made up for in the warmth and love of family and relatives." From a very early age Davidson showed a strong interest in carving. He produced his first miniature

argillite totem pole before he was 13. He learned from both his father and grandfather, who perhaps kept in mind the fact that Robert Davidson's great-grandfather was the renowned Haida carver Tahayren (Charles Edenshaw). By the age of 19 Davidson was studying with master sculptor Bill Reid. Two years later he had achieved enough recognition to be teaching at K'san, the reconstructed Haida village near Hazelton, B.C., which houses a school for Indian artists.

In 1969, Davidson, "saddened... that there was no art in [his] village [Old Masset], nothing left of the greatness he had come to know about", decided to carve and erect a totem pole. It would be raised amid much pomp and circumstance and a great potlatch. The project started quietly but when CBC and NFB film crews arrived, the villagers became excited. The pole-mirring ceremony was directed by Davidson's 89-year old grandfather, one of the last to remember old Haida ways. Three weeks later the old man died.

Davidson took up print-making because, he wanted "something inexpensive to offer



for sale". From his rather modest first efforts in 1968, he has developed into one of the most accomplished Haida printmakers to have appeared so far. Hilary Stewart's book follows his growth and progress, print

by mint. It makes for remarkable viewing & reading.

Of all the Pacific Northwest Indian arts, argillite carving is the most exclusive. And for good reason; argillite, a soft, jet-black slate (carbonaceous shale, for those who care to know) is unique to one remote valley in the Queen Charlotte Islands. For centuries it remained a Haida secret. In the hands of Haida carvers, argillite was transformed into miniature totem poles, bowls, boxes, plates, and so forth. Much of the mystery surrounding this ancient art has been cleared up by Leslie Drew and Douglas Wilson's *Argillite: Art of the Haida* (Hancock House, 300 pages, \$40). Wilson, himself a Haida carver, and Drew, a repotter and editor, have done a thorough job of illuminating virtually all aspects of argillite carving and carvers. Their book comes copiously illustrated and ends in a high-light of the season.

Next we have *Objects of Bright Pride* (Douglas and McIntyre, 128 pages, \$22.95), a catalogue prepared by Allen Wardwell to accompany an exhibition of Northwest Coast Indian art at the American Museum of Natural History. The book contains numerous illustrations, many in full colour and all absorbing. The title comes from Bill Reid, the Haida carver. His words deserve repeating:

It is easy to become entranced by the soft curtain of age, seeing this instead of what it obscures. An ugly building can make a beautiful ruin, and a beautiful mask in the dark of many years, softened by wear, becomes a symbol which tells us that the cycle of life, death, decay and rebirth is a natural and beautiful one.

This is not what their creators intended. These were objects of bright pride, to be admired in the newness of their crisply carved lines, the powerful flow of sure elegant curves and recesses — yes, and in the brightness of fresh paint. They told the people of the completeness of their culture, the continuing lineages of the great families, their closeness to the magic world of universal myth of legend.

The objects in the collection are more



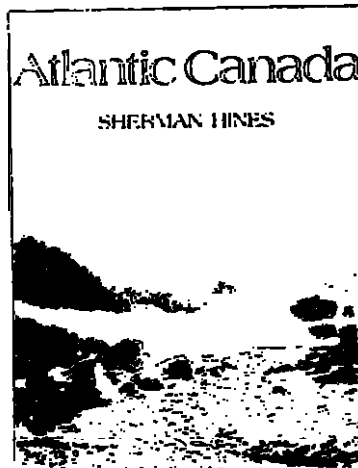
OUTHOUSES OF THE EAST

Text by Ray Guy

Photographs by Sherman Hines

\$9.91 72 pages 50 colour plates

This is the photographic study of rural conveniences that has taken Mr. Hines across fields and end bugs. He has captured in full photographic colour the seat of many solitary sojourns which, with Ray Guy's humorous text becomes a handsome hardcover book. Now in its second printing, *OUTHOUSES* is a proven bestseller from coast to coast.



ATLANTIC CANADA

Photographs by Sherman Hines

\$24.95 160 pages 100 colour plates

A portfolio of glorious images depicting the landscapes and lifestyles of the four provinces, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. It is an ideal gift for all who wish to celebrate the pastoral beauty of the Atlantic coast.



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artifacts than art. The masks, pipes, blankets, charms, cooking utensils, and daggers all had a purpose. Usefulness, however, didn't preclude beauty. Pacific Northwest Coast Indians never talked of "art", but they did have a highly developed aesthetic sense. Even the most utilitarian items — spoons and ladles — provided an opportunity to decorate and celebrate.

Many pieces in the museum were originally made to be used in various ceremonies. This proliferation of rituals, so characteristic of West Coast Indian life, is partially explained by the natural abundance of their land. All basic requirements of life — food, shelter, and clothing — were readily available. "It has been said," writes Wardwell, "that the Northwest Coast Indians attained the highest development of any culture ever to exist without the benefits of agriculture and animal domestication." Freed from the constant demands of daily survival, they "had time for the development and enactment of elaborate ceremonies end for the creation and manufacture of the objects that were to be used with them." The remnants of these once-flourishing civilizations are on display in climate-controlled museums and galleries. If you can't make it to the exhibition, the catalogue is an excellent alternative.

AR nourishes the hungry soul: bodies crave food. And so the people of K'san have given us *Gathering What the Great Nature Provided: Food Traditions of the Gitksan* (Douglas & McIntyre, 127 pages, \$18.95). The Gitksan people, members of the Tsimshian tribe, lived in north central British Columbia around the Skeena River. Their diet was as diverse as the flora and fauna of their environment. In the old days, all the Gitksan had to do was gather and enjoy. "It was a good time," say the tribal elders. "There was no need for our ancestors to work et gardens, because so many roots and berries and plants just grow here. There was no need to grow beef or pigs, because lots of goats, caribou, deer, groundhog, porcupine, and beaver lived close by..."

Among the delicacies described are pine noodles (not needles, noodles), boiled moose nose, roast rabbit ears, smoked and roasted porcupine ("It tastes better cooked over an open fire"), barbecued beaver tail ("The main thing to remember about beaver tail is not to overcook it...") plus many more. Also included are chapters on preserving and storage, cooking methods, and — for a particularly revealing few pages — etiquette: "A well-brought up person did not speak unnecessarily while eating nor did he refuse proffered food." The Gitksan answer to the age-old problem of being unable to finish the meal is a model of simplicity; "If there was more than he could possibly eat he... packed the food in a container and carried it home." Instead of noisy thank-yous and copious compliments, Gitksan guests would happily smack their lips and emit loud, satisfied burps. *Gathering What the Great Nature Provided* struck me as a very unprepossessing book.

Although one might approach it the way one would a snack — expecting little — the K'san people have put together a feast that leaves the reader "full and pleasantly satisfied."

From pine noodles to celluloid... Film buffs will be fascinated with a rather curious book from Bill Holm and George Irving Quimby. Edward S. Curtis in the *Land of the War Canoes* (Douglas & McIntyre, 132 pages, \$18.95). Curtis, the great pioneering photographer, spent three decades working on his classic 20-volume photographic history of North American Indians. "I went to produce an irrefutable record of a race doomed to extinction," he said, and did just that. In 1914, Curtis made a drama-documentary film about aboriginal life among the Pacific Northwest Indians. Despite rave reviews in New York and Seattle, it was a box-office bomb; Curtis and his backers lost their shins. For some unknown reason his movie. In the *Land of the Head Hunters: A Drama of Primitive Life on the Shores of the North Pacific*, got lost shortly afterwards. The world forgot about its existence until 1947, when George Irving Quimby accidentally stumbled on it while sorting through an old film collection donated to the Chicago Field Museum (where he served as curator). Running the ancient nitrate reels through a projector, he immediately recognized the work as Curtis's. Unfortunately it exploded. Thus began a 20-year, \$25,000 odyssey that saw the film restored, edited, sound added, and, now, the publication of this book.

The authors actually tell four stories: the sage of Curtis; the making of the film; the film itself; and their adventures piecing it together. When Curtis reached the Northwest Coast, he had already completed work on the Navajo, Apache, Sioux, Crow and Cheyenne tribes. He had met, interviewed, and photographed such men as Chief Joseph and the legendary Geminio. Despite the romance long associated with those names, it was the Kwakiutl Indians to whom he devoted the largest of his 20 volumes and his only film.

Inhabiting the coastal area around Nootka Sound, the Kwakiutl possessed a rich and dramatic ceremonial life. Although in almost constant contact with Europeans since the late 1700s, Kwakiutl culture remained relatively whole in 1914. When Holm and Quimby had finished restoring Curtis's film, they immediately took it to Port Hardy, B.C., to show the local Kwakiutl, some of whom knew original cast members. It was the Kwakiutl who suggested that a sound track be added and undertook to provide it.

The text is clear and concise and full of fascinating tidbits. But the many photographs are what make this book so extraordinary. Most are production stills. The best were shot between takes: Curtis's fierce head-hunters turn out to be overgrown boys having a good time hemming it up for the cameras.

Holm and Quimby deserve much credit

for their efforts to restore Curtis's film. It is something they accomplished with obvious skill and much love. Together they have added a chapter to film history and provided an affectionate, intimate glimpse of Indian life.

It didn't take white men long to realize that the Pacific Northwest is one of the richest natural settings in the world. For architects, the coastal regions running from northern Oregon to southern British Columbia have provided some measure of inspiration. Dick Busher and Harry Martin, photographer and architectural writer, explore "one of the most distinctive and distinguished regional styles of residential architecture in the world". Called Contemporary Homes of the Pacific Northwest (Douglas & McIntyre, 224 pages, \$37.50), their book offers some mouth-watering examples of what can be accomplished when the well-heeled decide to pool resources with the best architectural talent available. The book takes a detailed look at 32 houses designed by 22 architects. Busher's photographs reveal, plate after plate, how a variety of tastes and styles have been adapted to a specific environment. The major architectural objective is to conform to the natural setting without disturbing it. On the West Coast, problems stimulate the architect and the solutions delight the client. The rest of us must remember that there are laws against trespassing. In the meantime, we read and dream. ...

The historic Yellowhead Route traverses the country from Prince Rupert, B.C., to Portage la Prairie, Man. From its beginnings in the early years of the fur trade, the Yellowhead Route has been transformed into a modern interprovincial highway. Starting at the misty Pacific coast, through the snow-covered peaks of the Rockies to the endless flatness of the prairies, the Yellowhead Highway offers nearly 2,000 miles of incredibly varied landscape. With The Yellowhead Route (Oxford, unpaginated, \$14.95), Oxford University Press continues its wholly remarkable Regional Portraits of Canada Series. Fully aware that these books are meant to be seen rather than read, the people at Oxford concentrate on the visual. Some are better than others, but of the 17 books in the series there isn't one clunker and The Yellowhead Route, with photographs by John de Visser, Bill Simpkins, and Robert Taylor, rates as one of the best. By avoiding artiness, the three contributors to this book succeeded where many would have failed. There is a crisp, clean, unsentimental record; the camera is new allowed to intrude. The pictures do the talking.

Saskatchewan Landscapes by Rusty Macdonald (Western Producer Prairie Books, 91 pages, \$24.95) comes across as a self-intentioned book by a man who has deep attachments to that province. The author, a veteran journalist and winner of the Kodak International Color Certificate of Excellence, doesn't get a fair shot at displaying his talents because of the book's

poor reproduction qualities. It can't compare, for example, with the Oxford series; the colours never ring true and some pictures are downright fuzzy. Each photograph comes with a short excerpt from prairie literature. Saskatchewan's landscape has not been done justice.

The Canadian north has been discovered once again. This time the explorer is British-born artist and writer Ted Harrison. His book, The Last Horizon (Merritt, 112 pages, \$24.95), represents a triumph of production over content. The strongest adjective that comes to mind is nice — a nice book by an even nicer man. For an artist, Harrison makes a nice writer. His stories, nice, possess a niceness that makes the reader feel nice. The introduction by Pierre Berton (it too is nice) must set a record: How many has he written so far? My main complaint is with Harrison's painting; I wish I could be nicer but, let's just say they're not so nice. For an artist who relies primarily on colour, Harrison gives every indication of being the visual equivalent of tone deaf. The word gaudy comes close to describing his work. Restricted to black-and-white, Harrison fares much better; his drawings are the most successful aspect of the book.

The following books from or about the West are expected this fall but were not yet available as we went to press: A Picture History of British Columbia, by George Woodcock (Hurtig); and Canada/The

Mountains, by Randy Morse (McClelland & Stewart).

ART BOORS

THE GREAT Canadian Art Boom continues. A new gallery opens in Canada almost every day. If the boom continues much longer, there will soon be more artists than philistines. For publishers this must be good news; art is the stuff of which big, expensive gift books are made. This year's crop may lack the glitter of the 1979 offering but a lot of ground has been covered and the choices are many.

The Canadian art book of the year is unquestionably Paul Duval's extravagant look at the last surviving member of the Group of Seven. A.J. Casson/His Life and Work/A Tribute (Cerebus/Prentice Hall, 285 pages, \$75). By virtue of his membership in the Group of Seven and his longevity — he was born in 1898 — Casson's paintings are probably the most sought-after of any Canadian artist. His exhibitions at the Roberts Gallery in Toronto open to long, anxious queues. When the doors are finally unlocked, art lovers practically wrestle each other to the ground making sure they don't miss their chance at what may just be one of the master's last works. After the dust has settled a few hours later, the walls are plastered with little red stickers signifying that all has been sold. Unused cheque books are put back into well-lined pockets; the unlucky will have to wait for the next show.

Gift Books From Gage



WHERE'S THE FIRE?

by Elizabeth Willmot

Miss Willmot takes the reader back to the early days of fire fighting in Ontario when fire brigades consisted of volunteers who passed leather water buckets from hand to hand.

\$17.95 cloth



NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS OF PREY

text by William Mansell

paintings by Gary Low
Forty-eight full-colour portraits by Canadian artist Gary Low capture the twenty-six most widely distributed species of falcons, hawks, eagles and owls in their habitats. They are accompanied by Mansell's lively and informative text.

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Coming Soon from Clarke Irwin



DRAPEAU Brian McKenna and Susan Purcell

This magnificent piece of reporting is the first biography of Jeon Drapeau the political dreamer whose grandiose vision lay behind Expo '67 and the Montreal Olympics, and the man who dominates the city to this day. Three years of meticulous research coupled with innumerable interviews have led to behind-the-scenes biography that is also a full-scale life and times a vigorous portrait of Quebec and Montreal from 1916 to the present. On a scale appropriate to its subject, this fascinating book crackles with energy resembling that of Mayor Drapeau himself. Illustrated

320 pages
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Casson was not a founding member of the Group; he didn't join until 1926. Writing of Casson and Frank Carmichael, Dennis Reid says they "never approached the position of leadership held by [A. Y.] Jackson and [Arthur] Lismer. Both remained modest. If enthusiastic followers of the Group style.... Casson in particular produced a number of large oils... that... are uniquely his own in color and mood." Duval doesn't provide a critical appraisal of the artist as much as an affectionate biography. More than anything, the book is a visual pleasure. Eighty-seven colour plates, all chosen by Casson, highlight this giant publishing effort. If the response to Duval's book is as overwhelming as it has been to Casson's paintings, book-store owners had better hire bouncers.

On much less exalted scale is Jerrold Morris's latest volume. 100 Years of Canadian Drawings (Methuen, 197 pages, \$16.95). Morris occupies a unique position on the Canadian art scene. Not only does he say what he thinks, in terms that can be understood, he also has a sense of humour. One gets the impression that Morris is a man not easily impressed, yet his love for the medium always shines through. Because drawing has remained beyond the normal preoccupations of Canadian critics and collectors, Morris's selection gives a new perspective on the artists included. Drawing, he tells us, demands to be viewed as an art form in itself, not simply as a preparation for paintings or sculptures.

The most scholarly work this year comes from Dennis Reid. Our Own Country Canada: Being An Art of the National Aspirations of the Principal Landscape Artists in Montreal and Toronto, 1860-1898 (National Gallery of Canada, 454 pages, \$29.95) is its full title. Reid opens with a couple of interesting "cautionary quotes": "This is not the absolute truth — don't believe everything I say." (From Jean-Luc Pepin, who suggested these words precede all Canadian history books.) Whether we believe everything Reid says, there's certainly enough of it. His text is as exhaustive as the title. The most thorough study yet of an especially intriguing era of Canada's development, Reid's book is required reading for serious students of our country's art history.

Andre Bieler has spent his lifetime somewhere just beyond the mainstream of Canadian art. During his 83 years Bieler's contribution has remained all but unrecognized. In addition to the 27 years he spent at Queen's University as Professor of Art and Resident Artist, Bieler organized the historic Kingston Conference of 1941, which led to the creation of the Federation of Canadian Artists. Born in Switzerland in 1896, he arrived in Canada in 1908, almost 12 years old. He returned to Europe to fight in the First World War, and later to study painting.

During his lifetime, Bieler has embraced a number of styles, all very colourful and pleasing to the eye. He is a thoughtful painter whose paintings of rural Quebec and

its inhabitants are evidence of deep humanitarian impulses. More than any other book, Frances K. Smith's Andre Bieler: An Artist's Life and Times (Merritt, 176 pages, \$34.95) should serve to make the artist better known in Canada. For that reason it is an important book. Smith's book is entirely worthy of its subject; the many colour reproductions are of excellent quality and her text does a competent job of telling the artist's story.

David Douglas Duncan's Viva Picasso (Penguin, 153 pages, \$19.95) is the happiest book of the lot. Picasso would have been 100 in 1981 so Duncan, a good friend of Picasso's for 20 years, prepared this celebration. Duncan's photographs show Picasso at work, at play or both. (Often they were the same.) Sometimes he is portrayed sitting and staring pensively at one of his own canvasses. In other shots, Picasso clowns with his kids, with Cocteau, with whomever. Duncan's pictures are wonderful — every one of them. Picasso combined endless energy with unlimited creativity. Here we see him surrounded by the clutter of his studio: elsewhere he turns the skeletal remains of a fish eaten at dinner into instant art. Blake wrote about energy being eternal delight. Picasso surely knew what Blake meant.

The Great Book of French Impressionism by Diane Kelder (Methuen, 440 pages, \$110) is just that. Reading it might be almost as good for the muscles as pumping iron. This gigantic production should be shown only on gold-plated, diamond-encrusted coffee tables. Pictures galore, with a text printed big enough for the sight-impaired, make this volume stand out. Come to think of it, the book is so big and lavish, it should probably be given a table all its own — far away from any coffee drinker.

"Starting out to write about Karel Appel makes one feel like a mosquito in a nudist colony — one does not know when to begin." With these words Marshall McLuhan opens his introduction to Jean-Claence Lambert's Karel Appel: Works on Paper (Methuen, 256 pages, \$71.50). The book is another visual beauty, but there's too much author end not enough subject. Appel's colourful and chaotic paintings are accompanied by little poems ("Clown I want to be like you/The anti-robot") as well as text. But anyway, the best feature of the book is Appel's art. All 261 works were chosen by the big Appel himself. They are typical of his playful, always happy approach to art. "My art is childlike," says Appel. One can almost hear the smile in his words; certainly one can see it in his painting. Appel's pleasure in form and colour make this book a delight.

A number of art books were still in the works as we went to press. Clarke Irwin is offering Rebecca Sisler's The Royal Canadian Academy (224 pages, \$24.95). This year marks the centennial of the Academy and author Sisler chronicles its history. One hundred colour plates and an additional 100 black-and-white photographs will be in-

cluded. Collectors and dealers will no doubt look forward to **Art Auctions: Sales and Prices, 1976-1978**, edited by **Harry Campbell (General Publishing)**. Also from **General Publishing** is a six-book series entitled **The Artist's Pointing Library**.

PHOTOGRAPHIC BOOKS

PHOTOGRAPHY HAS not been ignored. The most interesting new face on the photographic scene belongs to **Joyce Baronio**. Her book (**the first**) is called **42nd Street Studio (Beatty and Church. \$50)**. It consists of 41 photographs taken in her studio located on **42nd Street** in the heart of **New York's sex industry**. The subjects — all locals — dmp in between sets to pose for **Baronio's curious camera**. Most are erotic entertainers — strippers, bondage and discipline performers, porno movie stars, and so forth. Some glare into the camera, others leer: **one well-known stripper brought along her partner, a young male lion, to romp with.**

And so we asked: "What's a nice young girl like **Joyce Baronio** doing in a place like **42nd Street**?" "Fantasy," she explains, "has always been important to me." After years of beauty contests, parades, tractor pulls, square dances, horse shows, and so on, she decided she wasn't getting enough: "I got tired of finding Fantasy only on the weekends." That problem was taken care of by **42nd Street**, where it's Free-floating fantasy 24 whores a day. Erotic entertainers suit her needs perfectly: "They're not shy."

Baronio's major concerns are, however, photographic. Once the film has been exposed her subjects cease to be people and become pictures instead: "The solutions to the problems are photographic." And photography is something this **34-year-old Long Islander** takes very seriously. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa from **Ohio's Kenyon College**, she entered **Yale** to study with **Walker Evans**. He impressed on her the value of natural lighting. Now she insists on sunlight; nothing else will do. **Baronio has said** that photography comes closer to literature than any other art. She considers herself a stay-teller and it's hard to disagree. Her pictures sometimes re- pulse, sometimes amuse, but always intrigue.

The Art of **Canadian Nature** Photography, edited by **J. A. Kraulis (Hurtig, 128 pages, 527.95)**, is a different kind of book. **Kraulis gives a** splendid behind-the-scene look at 37 photographers. Not only does he detail the technical aspects of their work, but also he tells how they manage to avoid getting killed by irritated subjects. **Stephen J. Keasemann gives** some helpful hints to those planning to snap an *ursus horribilus*: "There is a rule of thumb. If you are using a **200-mm lens** and the grizzly bear fills your frame, you're in trouble." It's such titbits that make this book so entertaining and so helpful. Examples of the best nature photography being done in **Canada** abound. Reading this book gives one as much insight into photography as it does

Storytelling.

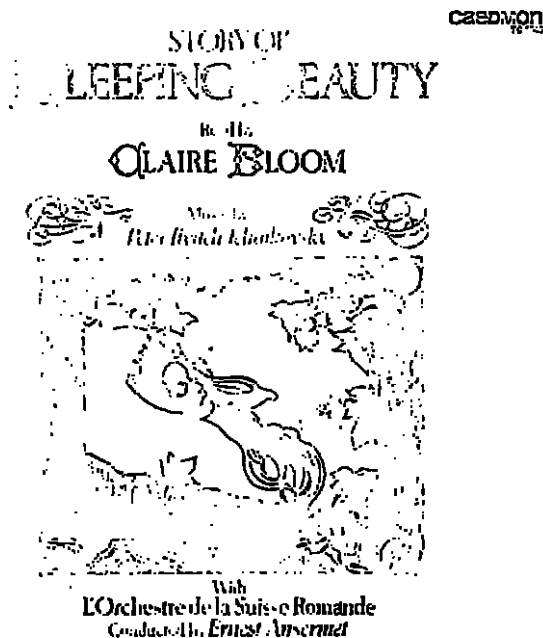
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wildlife. For these reasons alone, it comes highly recommended.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the most spectacular photographic/art/gift book of all time. It comes in two volumes, weighs 65 pounds, measures 17 by 20½ inches, costs a mere \$5,400, and is entitled **The Vatican Frescoes of Michelangelo**. For six months, well-known art photographer Takashi Okamura spent his evenings climbing a scaffold erected nightly in the Sistine Chapel and taking pictures of Michelangelo's frescoes. No expense was spared. Even the printers had to clamber up the scaffolding to check the proofs. Ninety-nine of the book's images are printed life size. So accurate and complete is the production that the publishers promise "a truth, clarity and intimacy never before possible". (Too bad it's just a book.) The two volumes are currently touting Canada. Significantly, this marks the first time a book, not its author, has been sent to make the rounds. Only 600 copies have been printed and Canada rated no more than 25. Several have already been sold so promptly is advised. Methuen is handling Canadian distribution. An advance of \$1,000 will be required. Of course, for that money you just might be able to arrange a trip to the Vatican to see the real thing.

The Lipman sisters, Marci and Louise, have teamed up with Lester & Orpen Dennys to produce a kind of sequel to their very successful previous collaboration, *Twenty/Twenty*. The new book **Images**:

Contemporary Canadian Realism (\$14.95) consists of 20 reproductions, suitable for framing, of works by an equal number of Canadian painters. All type of realism — magic, photo, super, and hyper — are represented. Most big names on the figurative art scene are included; names such as Danby, Pratt, St. Clair, Colville, and Forrestall.

Also expected: Clarke Irwin will release Rick Butler's **Vanishing Canada** any day. Butler has assembled some 250 photographs of Canada all taken before 1914. And Gage has announced a book by Nina Nelson, called simply **Canada**. All we know is that the photos can be expected to be superb.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE WEIGHTIEST offering of the year in the reference category is the monumental **Cambridge Encyclopedia of Archaeology** (Prentice-Hall, 495 pages, \$35), edited by Andrew Sherratt. In addition to highly detailed chapters on humanity's earliest eras, there are interesting sections devoted to the development of archaeology itself. What makes all this so intriguing is the fact that archaeological science has undergone something of a revolution during the past decade. Technology has enabled modern man to hob-nob, in a sense, with his distant ancestors. Each chapter comes from the pen of a recognized expert in the field. The reader can be assured he or she is getting the facts straight from the Ur text.

The Dictionary of Imaginary Places (Lester & Orpen Dennys, 438 pages, \$24.95, \$29.95 after Dec. 31), by Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi, tops off the long list of books chronicling the fantastic. Fantasy has always been a part of human experience but these days we seem to be growing deadly serious about it. There's something almost contradictory about the notion of a dictionary of imaginary places. The first place I locked for was Hell: it wasn't included. Neither was Heaven. Not to worry. Gynographia is listed. In case you don't know, Gynographia is "a country where women are totally dominated by men, and where all laws are entirely dependent on the will of the male". The dictionary tells more about this curious place but, unfortunately, "its location remains unknown. . .". So much for Gynographia. What about Jabberwocky? Again location remains a mystery, but the authors deduce it probably exists "somewhere in England". Unfortunately, "the only information on this place is contained in an Anglo-Saxon poem published in **Looking-Glass Land**". The country I want to visit is **Romancia**: "Legend has it that travellers who enter by the Gate of Love leave by the Gate of Marriage." The climate is much better than Canada's: "The air is so pure and nutritious there is no need to eat. The two main foods of this area are air and love." By the way, all Romancians are "young, healthy and very beautiful". But best of all, "whoever travels will become as

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Take My Family . . . Please! Gary Lautens, Illustrations by Lynn Johnston

Gary Lautens, Toronto *Star* columnist for nearly twenty years, has written the definitive book on living and loving at home with a wife, three kids and Sarah, the wonder dog. Here, at last, is the inside story about the struggle of his children to survive their upbringing in an unbroken home. To help Gary illustrate the point, the wonderful Canadian cartoonist, Lynn Johnston has penned a hilarious raft of poignant cartoons. This talented combination has produced what we think is the ideal family gift book for you to give to anyone you know who likes to laugh!

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Galaxies Timothy Ferris

A stunning celebration in text and photographs of the wonder and beauty of the universe we inhabit. The photographs — 39 in colour, 106 in black and white — have been taken by astronomers at major observatories around the world. Here is a succinct history of galactic discovery linked with a visual panorama of the colour and form of the ultimate environment — the universe.

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The Great Canadian Chef's Personal Recipe Book Designed and illustrated by Brian Fray

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The Great Canadian Chef Wall Calendar is also available at \$5.95.

The Mystery of Migration

The story of nature's traveller through the cycle of the seasons
Dr. Robin Baker

Why do species migrate? More intriguing still, how do they achieve such pinpoint navigation? Man is lost without compass, chronometer and sextant, yet the tin sedge-warbler flies 2500 miles to the African savannah and returns to the same nest site. The variety of species which do migrate is astounding — not only bird and fish but plankton, frogs and salmon display migratory patterns. This concise, informative and densely illustrated gift book examines the remarkable phenomenon and mystery of migration.

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beautiful as its inhabitants". What are we waiting for?

If turkey vultures, rough-legged buzzards, sharp-shinned hawks, and the like are what make your imagination take flight, this is your lucky season. William Mansell and painter Gary Low have put together a detailed, beautifully illustrated, and extremely readable *North American Birds of Prey* (Gage, 176 pages, \$29.95). Low's paintings have a strange, almost foreboding quality reminiscent of Alex Colville. His work transcends wildlife art. He arranges his canvasses so that the viewer wants to look beyond. The action is either about to happen or is going on where we can't see it. Mansell's text combines a scientific concern for accuracy with an engaging informality. His knowledge and affection for these winged carnivores is in evidence throughout. Closet bird-watchers be warned: this book will bring you into the open. No matter

what the neighbours may think, some people are attracted to bii. Not to be outdone, the University of Toronto Press has brought out an exquisite study of North American plants — *And Some Brought Flowers* (164 pages, \$24.95), selected and introduced by Mary Alice Downie and Mary Hemilton. The delicate, precise water-colours are the work of E.J. Revell. Each of the 70 entries — from ash to wintergreen — comprises a painting and quotations from a wide selection of early explorers and settlers. The title comes from an account of Martin Frobisher's arrival at Labrador in 1576: "He commanded his company if by any means possible they could get ashore to bring him whatsoever thing they could first find .. and some brought flowers." Revell's many minor masterpieces are the chief glory of this quietly beautiful book. The more one looks, the more one finds. □

first impressions

by Douglas Hill

From Gothic houses to mildewed shamuses, the old genres are always the best genres

IN *Odd's End*, by Tim Wynne-Jones (McClelland & Stewart, 228 pages, \$14.95 cloth), the folks at Seal Books have chosen, finally, a first-nite book for their \$50,000 first-novel award. *Odd's End* is inventive and skilfully written, yet trendy enough to assure commercial success.

As the novel begins, Malcolm and Mary Close the's an English professor, she's a painter! are returning to their isolated home (*Odd's End*) on a peninsula in Mahone Bay on Nova Scotia's south shore. They find candles lighted and a lavish meal prepared, but no cook and no explanation. Days pass, and peculiar and disturbing events occur; it's obvious that someone is trying to frighten them, and succeeding at it. By the conclusion, Malcolm and Mary are nearly driven apart and driven mad, the police are involved, terror and violence have become the order of the night.

Wynne-Jones tells his story through alternating narratives: an objective voice for the desperate couple's actions and reactions, a "theatrical, overblown, unreal" voice — a sort of Gothic baroque — for their creepy house-guest. The structure works well, as does the author's attention to atmosphere, to details of climate and season and setting.

I'm not a fan of the literature of evil possession that seems recently to have gripped the mu-market, best-seller list by the throat, but I'd judge *Odd's End* to be an exemplary contribution to the genre. The nature of the terror involved may lack the depth that a few similar stories have, but on the surfaces and psychological under-

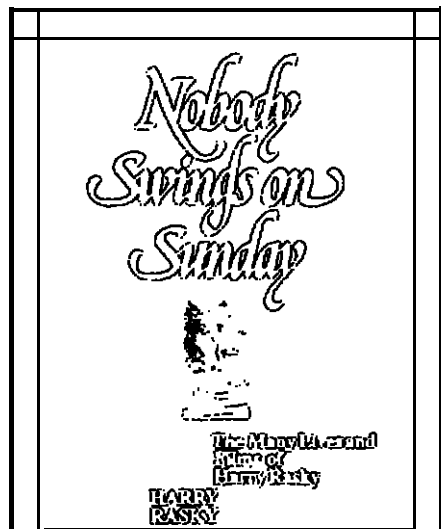
surfaces, things should be scary enough for most readers. And the imagination in evidence is a bonus.

* * *

The *Suicide Murders*, by Howard Engel (Clarke Irwin, 200 pages, \$12.95 cloth) introduces Benny Cooperman, a small-town, small-time private detective. The novel has several pleasant features: a strong sense of place (St. Catharines, Ont., or thereabouts, and Toronto), good police-procedural work, a great (meaning horrific) Jewish Mother. On the whole, however, it's rather amateurish and rather too close to its Chandler/Hammett/Ross Macdonald models.

The plot is complicated, but carefully and convincingly put together. It concerns just what the title suggests — murders that are taken for suicides. There's considerable good, old-fashioned sleuthing, enough violence to keep things moving, and some characters you can believe in. Only the dialogue occasionally falls below competence.

The narrative is first-person shamus, and it's the key to the book's effect on the reader. Benny talks as if he's committed his favourite detective novels to memory: "My breath tested like I'd been baby-sitting somebody else's false teeth, and when I sneezed my sinuses smelt of mildew." There's a surfeit of this, but some nice touches, too: "I got up with what in a taller man would signal that the interview was concluded." If this sort of private-eye prose, and the view of the world it expresses, is to your taste, you'll enjoy the book.



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by Harry Rasly

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Engel subtitles The *Suicide Murders* "A Bunny Cooperman Mystery." To me, this implies more will follow. If he can tighten up his style a bit, sod stake out his own territory even more firmly and less derivatively, the next novel(s) could be quite good. This one was certainly fun to read.

* * *

Entropia (Circle Publications, 160 pages, \$4.95 paper) was not. The author, Tyler Trafford, raises dullness to a "insistent whine. Only the typos, and the errors in grammar and spelling, provide relief from the tedium. The hook is so ineptly written and produced as nearly to obscure the possibility that Trafford is intelligent and has something cogent he wants to say.

the browser

by Michael Smith

Farley's people and what we did to their minds looking for the Northwest Passage

FOR MOST OF US, Farley Mowat needs no introduction. He has become notorious over the past 30 years, if not always as the prolific author and editor of 25 books, and for many of his readers The World of Farley Mowat: A Selection from His Works (McClelland & Stewart, 338 pages, \$16.95 cloth) will contain nothing new. Still, hi.. editor, Peter Davison, did feel an introduction needed writing, and though Mowat is one of the few Canadian writers who has always enjoyed international publication — it leads me to believe this book is directed mostly toward the U.S. market. After all, why else would Davison, a resident of Gloucester, Massachusetts, find it necessary to offer the superfluous identification of Stephen Leacock as "the great Canadian humorist"? Even the jacket photo comes from that dreadful American popularizer, *People* magazine.

A glance at the map that fronts the collection shows a Mowat world that's dominated by the Arctic and the Atlantic Ocean — both places where, as Davison points out, man shares with the animals a "elemental conflict with nature and against himself. Beyond the physical world, Mowat charts a sea of desperation — in his terrifying battle memoir reprinted from *And No Birds Sang* (1979), in the perils of a shipwreck from *Grey Seas Under* (1958), and in particular in his portraits of the Eskimos he wrote about in such books as *People of the Deer* (1952) and *The Desperate People* (1959). His description of the ordeal, arrest, and trial of Kikik, a " Eskimo woman who killed her own half-brother and daughter during a " Arctic famine gives sensitive but unremitting witness to the rather innocent remark, in another excerpt, that for the Eskimo "food means more . . than almost anything else."

The novel is set in Calgary. Hooper, the hero, is in the middle of some sort of philosophical/emotional crisis. He loses his job as a reporter, wanders and drinks, takes up with a sympathetic young woman, has dreams of the symbolical sort. None of this is the least bit interesting. It's all solipsism, and nothing redeems its banality. "The reason he didn't, or couldn't, get out of bed in the mornings was not that he didn't want to go to work and not that he wanted to stay home. It was that he didn't want to do anything." Well, now.

My dictionary gives, as one definition of "entropy", "an ultimate state of inert uniformity." Imagine that as you will. It's a fair description of *Entropia*. "Boring" is another. □

Three centuries earlier, in May, 1619, the Danish explorer Jens Munk left Copenhagen with two ships and 64 men in search of the Northwest Passage. When he returned, in September, 1620, only two of his crew were still alive. The *Journal of Jens Munk 1619-1620*, edited by W. A. Kenyon (Royal Ontario Museum, illustrated, 40 pages, \$3.75 paper), relentlessly tallies the deaths of the others as they wintered, ice-bound, on Hudson Bay near what now is Churchill, Man. Kenyon's introduction says most of the men probably died from a combination of scurvy and trichinosis (whatever it was, the expedition's two physicians were unable to diagnose or treat it), complicated by the unexpected severity of the Arctic winter. By latitude, Munk's wintering place was about 75 miles farther south than Bergen, Norway, and the explorers knew that the entire Norwegian coast remained ice-free. They didn't realize that the coast of northern Europe is warmed by the Gulf Stream, while Munk and his men were to face temperatures so low that their water kettles cracked, and the ship's cannons broke from their mountings when fired as a funeral salute.

The Bella Coola region of British Columbia was visited by explorers seeking the Northwest Passage under command of Captain George Vancouver and, almost simultaneously, by Alexander Mackenzie's overland for-trading expedition. *Bella Coola* by Cliff Konaas (Douglas & McIntyre, ill&&d. 296 pages, \$9.95 paper) is an anecdotal, somewhat speculative history that begins with the Indian migrations from Asia across the Bering Straits and ends in modern times. It dwells mainly, however, on the plight of the Indians in the 19th century as white traders kindled an epidemic of smallpox (some re-sold in-

fect blankets plundered from Indian corpses) and brought illicit liquor into their communities. Konaas translates their conflict into a series of adventure stories, replete with heroic dialogue, ambushes, and gore.

On first blush, there appears to be nothing but lists of names — 267 pages of them, front census records, church files, and various directories — in *The People of Owen Sound*, researched and edited by Melba Morris Croft (114 Seventh St. E., Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 1H7, \$11.00 paper), but historical detectives with a predilection toward minutiae will find some entries fascinating. It's interesting to speculate, for example, on the events — presumably involving slavery — that led a 100-year-old African-born black man, known only as John, to be registered in the census of 1881. The same census lists the vocations of most adults, so I'm curious why occupations aren't given for seven young women who lived together in a local hotel. Or perhaps I have a dirty mind.

I enjoyed reading *Below the Bridge* (Breakwater, illustrated, 126 pages, \$9.95 paper). Helen Porter's recollections of growing up poor in the South Side district of St. John's, Nfld., during the Depression and Second World War. I would have enjoyed them even more if she had turned her reminiscences into fiction. Porter writes believable dialogue, and has a fiction writer's sensitivity to the small distinctions of language and gesture that turn real people into characters. Her memoirs are warm, earthy, and wryly observed, but — probably because they stick too close to fact — they finally comprise only an album of small lives. Her memories of her practical, complicated family, a birthday party in a warehouse, and the local coal dealer's white horses, black from the dust, provide the kind of raw timber that, treated differently, invites the talents of a " East Coast Alice Munro.

The biographies of eight Prince Edward Islanders sketched briefly by Lester B. Sellick in *Some Island Me" I Remember* (Lancelot Press, 72 pages, \$2.95 paper) invoke an old-fashioned moral didacticism that's obvious in such chapter subtitles as "The Long Road to Success". Sellick's subjects range from his father, Edward W. Sellick ("A Christian Gentleman"), to Keith S. Rogers, the man who introduced "Do" Messer to the airwaves ("Radio Pioneer"), and a remarkably dextrous tinker, John M. Macleod ("He Solved People's Problems"). In case his readers don't get the message, Sellick also likes to end his compositions with a homily, printed in capital letters. My favourite is his comment on a saintly senior citizen named John E. Cameron, who exemplified the philosophy, "LIVE SO THAT YOU NEED NOT WORRY EVEN IF YOU SOLD YOUR PARROT TO THE BIGGEST GOSSIP IN TOWN."

The portraits in *Did the Earth* Mow??, 180 drawings by Aislin (McClelland & Stewart, unpaginated, 96.95 paper) are

rather less flattering. Aislin, a.k.a. Terry Mosher, is probably the country's foremost editorial cartoonist now that Duncan Macpherson has retired, though he's not likely ever to match Macpherson's deft maliciousness (Aislin does a devastating Robert Stanfield, but none of his caricatures seems to get Trudeau quite right). Appropriately, one of his non-political drawings is of a beaming Ben Wicks emerging from a

box of Crayola crayons with the comment, "Now I ain't no Daumier... but I get by!" Actually, judging by Wicks's newspaper cartoons, collected in Wicks (McClelland & Stewart, 223 pages, \$8.95 paper), even crayons are too sophisticated a medium for his primitive, miniature doodlings. It seems all too typically Canadian to revere an artist who, by his own admission, is "rotten at drawing." □

interview

by Linda M. Leitch

Why problem-solver George Bowering vows never to write another historical novel

BORN IN THE Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, in 1935, George Bowering is a major literary force in Canada. He attended the University of British Columbia, where he was a founding editor of *Tisb*, the influential West Coast poetry newsletter. His numerous publications range from literary criticism to short stories, novels, and many volumes of verse including *The Gungs of Kosmos* and *Rocky Mountain Foot*, for which he received the Governor General's Award for poetry in 1969. Bowering's latest work, *Burning Water*, is reviewed on page nine. He has been a writer-in-residence and lecturer at Sir George Williams University and is currently a member of the English department of Simon Fraser University. He spoke with Linda M. Leitch during a recent East Coast reading tour.

BiC: Do you think we will be seeing less of the historical or documentary style of fiction in Canada?

Bowering: I am utterly bored by the Don Gutteridge syndrome, the Gary Geddes stuff, all that business of saying, "Let's go and find a Canadian hero like Riel and write a play or an opera or a long poem or a novel about him." All you had to do to have a hit Canadian play dotting the past five years was to have a one-word title and that one word would be the name of some famous priest or RCMP officer or politician or Indian or whatever. William H. Gass [*Figures of Fiction*] says what most people want in fiction is easy history or lazy sociology, sociology without the statistics. People want to go to wherever it is in Ontario and say "Gee, it's just like Alice Munro's stories." The thing that keeps her going is that it's content-oriented. In the United States we had the young kid growing up to learn to be an adult in the South, in Chicago. Munro's given us the Canadian girl growing up to be an adult. All these have succeeded on the basis of content, on the readers being able to see themselves reflected in the book.

I went through that once, but we really don't have to do that again.

BiC: That kind of identification seems to be a necessary stage for most people.

Bowering: But here's an example of where literature is supposed to reflect people's lives to them so they will go out and say, "I'm not going to take any more of this shit!" The CanLit pmfs went to do that on a national scale, they want Canadians to be able to see what it is that makes Canadians tick.

BiC: The articulation of a national identity. . .

Bowering: Yeah, and of course coming from the West Coast. I see that as another kind of exploitation, in the same way that the CPR was, or as another kind of colonialization. I also see it as an affront against what I think literature is for. I don't think that literature is a tool of self-improvement or industrial well-being or



George Bowering

psychological comfort or anything like that.

BiC: Then what would you say the writer's role is?

Bowering: I see it totally the other way around. When I'm writing and after I've written, I'm not interested in the relationship between the book and the public. I'm only interested in the relationship between

the book and the writer, myself. If I felt as if it became clear to me who I'm trying to speak to, that's when I would be suspicious enough to quit writing.

BiC: But in a lot of your work there is an explicit consciousness of the audience.

Bowering: I talk straight to them. You see, the realist novel that pretends that there is no book them, that pretends that there is no audience, depends upon gelling the audience. You should admit to them straight off, "Look, I'm making this book up." How many times have you heard a writer say, "Well, first of all I created the characters and then they took on a life of their own and I just tried to follow through." That is bullshit. They're fooling themselves. I want to come clean with the audience. I don't want to play that game of saying this is a novel, therefore it's fiction, and then trying like crazy to make it seem like it's true and then saying none of these characters represents anyone in real life. The only time anyone ever says that is when it's a lie.

BiC: Not only have you moved through poetry, short stories, and novels, but your work often reflects a preoccupation with the shifting of boundaries between those genres.

Bowering: When I was a kid I lived in a small town in the interior of B.C. and the only writing to be found was in the drugstore and the bus station. That meant I was reading American novels and short stories. So that was my idea of how to get out of there and meet whatever I was capable of doing. So I started out and wrote a couple of realistic novels. But I was also interested in writing poetry and I found out that I got reception for it, that is to say it got published. I wrote lyric poetry for a long time until I found out I could really do that. After that, why do any more? So I got into longer poems. I found out that the distinction was not between prose and poetry but prose and verse, and poetry can be either. And pretty soon these long poems begin to be written with sentences instead of lines, but they're still not fiction necessarily because they don't do things that fiction usually does. I do several of these, like *Curious* and *Autobiology*, and then I think, "Heh, maybe I can do this as a novel", and what happens is *A Short Sad Book*. So now I've written *Burning Water* and it's a historical novel. I can't stand the idea of writing two books in a row with the same premises. It's got to be a problem that needs solving. The historical novel was a problem that needed solving given the context of the things that I'd been writing, so I'll never write another historical novel.

BiC: You see each work as representing a problem to be dealt with?

Bowering: Yeah, it's a term borrowed from painting. For painters it generally means solving problems with the medium and that's what they have always done. They have to work at a way of getting paint to stick to the wall, for instance. I figure that if I'm not solving problems, then I would probably be producing a commodity. I feel writing without theory is a waste of time.

BiC: *Would you say that the novel is dead?*
Bowering: Five years ago I said that the last novel was published in 1950 and that was *The Unnamable* by Sam Beckett because what he did in it was take what had been happening in the novel from 1750 up to 1950 and go as far as he could possibly go. He got rid of those things that are the worst enemies of fiction: theme, plot, character, setting, all those things, and he produced a 150-page book that one picks up and reads the way one reads a novel. Since then, I

haven't exactly dropped the idea, but I guess I've flipped the coin over and said, "Okay, the novel is simply a suggestion on the part of the author." There was a time when they drew graphs showing what a novel or a short story was. It is a person's duty then if he has that in his background to find every way he possibly can to counter that notion. It would then become inventive and creative on his part to cut through that with something else to destroy what was happening before. □

english, our english

by Bob Blackburn

Why people who try and guess about the foreseeable future need a dictionary

IN THIS TIME of the so-called communication, explosion, we are losing valuable words at an alarming rate because so many of today's communicators are ignorant and careless of diction.

Diction is one of those words. If you tell a newspaper reporter today that his diction is bad, he may reply that it doesn't matter because he is not on radio or television. You will then explain that, no matter what the lamentably permissive Webster says, diction has to do with the choice of words, not the manner of pronouncing them, and if diction is used to replace enunciation, then we are left without a suitable replacement for diction. He may then say he is sorry, and will try and do better.

Try and is a vulgar idiom that has been with us for more than a century (Thackeray and Matthew Arnold used it). It can be useful as a quick way of saying, "I will do it, but it will take effort", but the formal idiom, *try to*... makes more sense. It requires less physical effort to say, "I'll try 'n' do it" than "I'll try to do it", but that is not a good reason for wiling the former.

The same culprit may plead that his faulty diction is not very unique, possibly he likes the sound of the word *unique*, and prefers it to *unusual*, which is one of several words he could have used to say what he meant. *Unique* has a unique meaning, and is in danger of being made worthless by being forced to keep company with such inapplicable adverbs as *very*, *more*, *most*, *somewhat*, or *rather*.

It was a problem unique to such oral means of communication as broadcasting that brought about the destruction of the word *momentarily*, which for hundreds of years meant for a short time. A newspaper writer is not likely to be called upon to tell us that something is going to happen a moment from now; a broadcaster is. And so broadcasters, with characteristic indifference to good diction, began using *momentarily* for that purpose, so diligently that today those

of us who wish to use the word correctly most, for fear of being misunderstood by a generation educated by television, resort to some unsatisfactory circumlocution.

The verbal offences of these dunderheads deserve unrelenting anger, but at times it is difficult not to smile. A commentator told us recently (and it was no slip of the tongue or typewriter — he said it twice) that the provincial Premiers were blaming the failure of the constitutional conference on the Prime Minister's intransigence. While it might be true that some Premiers yearn for a more transient Trudeau, the context should suggest to anyone, especially a professional communicator, that *intransigence* was meant.

But wipe that smile off your face. The same person is about to tell you that the situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. If he can foresee the future, he shouldn't say unlikely, because he must know whether the situation is or is not going to change. Politicians in particular love that phrase. It appears with astonishing frequency in the daily press, as it should, because if anyone actually can foresee the future, that's news. And you'll notice the phrase is always used in a negative sense: not in the foreseeable future. They don't tell us what is going to happen. The term belongs in the astrology column, not in the news pages.

Should time demonstrate that the politician misread the "foreseeable" future, it is sometimes said it was because "his facts were wrong". Now, by definition a fact cannot be wrong. His information may have been wrong. It would be all right (please, please not alright) to say that he chose the wrong facts on which to base his conclusion: it was the choice that was wrong. The facts may have been mistaken (by him), but either they were true or they were not facts.

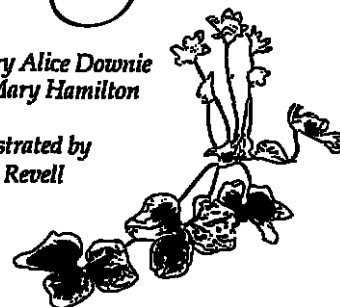
And that's a fact.

What's the issue here is not merely sloppiness of style. It's the wanton destruc-

'and some brought flowers' PLANTS IN A NEW WORLD

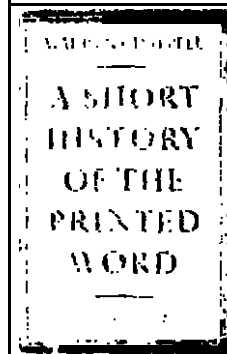
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tion of our chief means of letting each other — or ourselves — know what is on our minds. In an essay on the decline of the art of editing, *Time* magazine recently came to the conclusion that "proper usage matters because writing is thought and clear writing is essential for clear thinking". Time is certainly not without sin, but that at least was an expression of good intentions. The true enemy is not the writer who makes a mistake. It is the writer who doesn't give a damn, who is ignorant of his ignorance or simply comfortable in it, who is unaware of or indifferent to his destructive power. He is guilty of perversion, and if he thinks that is a nasty thing to say about him, he should look it up in his dictionary, which is a book designed to help him with his diction. □

Editor's note: Readers who care about the declining standards of English are invited to provide examples of errors drawn from the print or electronic media. Themes for general discussion are also welcome. Address: English, Our English, Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4.

Letters to the Editor

GLEAM IN HIS EYE

Sir:

I read Douglas Hill's review of *Falling in Place* (August-September) with considerable interest, since I had just read the book without very much. I decided early on that characters who were encouraged to grease their penises with sputum or use them as microphones were not quite my thing — or rather that writing that relies so heavily on that kind of attention-grabbing was a bit too coy for my taste.

But I'm writing not to take issue with Hill's evaluation of Ann Beattie (since, as they said in the old days, *quot homines tot sententiae*), but rather to ask if you or he can clarify the sense of the dosing evaluation in the last sentence: "The book shimmers." I suffered from a Stodgy old-fashioned education, in which books were usually good or bad, and I'm quite out of touch with the new terminology. Are "shimmering"

books good things or bad things? My dictionary is not much help to me here — admittedly I only have the OW et hand. According to that, the most common meaning of "Shimmer" is "to gleam with a tremulous or flickering light". Is Hill being ironic then? Is he very subtly informing us La, *Falling in Place* is really rather vague?

Or is he using "shimmer" in an original sense, meaning something like "glitter"? Even so, I'm still somewhat at a loss to understand his values. Is glitter (shimmer?) a good thing? Somewhere at the back of my mind is Pope's censure of "glit'ring Thoughts struck out a, every Line". That's old-fashioned criticism, of course; I admit I'm not up with the trends. So I would be grateful if you, or Hill, could shed a little more — or a little less — light on the question. A glimmer would help.

John K. Lucus
Toronto

The *Editor* replies: Mr. Lucus obviously found the book glaring.

ABUSIVE PUBLISHER

Sir:

I find it is fully 18 years since Iack McClelland last wrote an abusive letter about a review by me of a book he hoped to make a million out of (*Letters*, October). The book at that time was

A sleuth is born

IN THE MIDDLE of a successful career producing such literary and cultural programs as *Anthology* for CBC-Radio, Howard Engel has begun producing detective novels as well. His first, *The Suicide Murders* (reviewed on page 27) is to be followed next year by *The Ransom Game*. The detective in these books is Benny Cooperman, a 35-year-old bachelor living in a small Ontario town and earning his living from the divorce and family cases most detectives ignore. Engel says: "I started writing *The Suicide Murders* in 1979 just after rereading *The Big Sleep*. In *The Big Sleep* Marlowe takes a lot of abuse from other people, mostly from cops, far being a cheapie, a peeper. He thinks he's somewhat better than that, and says grandly that he doesn't do divorce or family work. And I thought, what about a detective who just does that? The biggest thing in his day would be to get involved, like Marlowe, in murder. With Benny Cooperman, murder will always son of come in by the Side door."

The Suicide Murders was written in Engel's spare time, after he decided he could forgo his watching television for a while. There's a possibility that the antics of Benny Cooperman will themselves be the subject of a TV series. Actor Al Waxman and some producers are currently reviewing scripts and discussing ideas. A Canadian detective is made as are writers of Canadian detective fiction. "Of the two writers of detective fiction that I can think of in Canada," says Engel, "One was John Harris, who did *The Weird World of Wes Beattie*, but that was a one-shot book, because he died soon after that. It was a book of brilliant promise. He could have become as interesting as the other Canadian I'm thinking of, and that is Ross Macdonald. His Lew Archer books are very well put together, digging back in time sometimes to second and third generations, well below the calm surface level of the story:

Engel, 49, began with the CBC as a

freelance journalist, then was hired on staff in 1967 to work with Harry Boyle on the *Project* series. Among his early work were several profiles of such writers as William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. Most of his time, however, has been spent harnessing and packaging the creative talents of other people. He has never harboured a secret desire to get into the limelight himself: "I guess in working with writers and actors and creative people it doesn't seem to divide into the people 'out front' and the people behind the scenes until after it's presented. When I was a kid I listened to the old *Stage* series and heard 'produced by Andrew Allan' or 'produced by Frank Rose'; well, that was the nicest kind of credit I ever thought I'd want."

Nor was his literary career launched with any thought in mind of his former wife, author Marian Engel. He seems to write because it's his. "Sometimes, writing *The Suicide Murders*, it seemed as if I, was all

coming out of the typewriter. I remember particularly one scene toward the end in which Benny knocks on a door. I broke off there, and when I picked it up again I didn't know what was going to happen on the other side of that door. I only knew vaguely who was going to answer it. It just came out of the typewriter, and I was delighted. It was like playing back a tape recorder."

His biggest influence in choosing to write detective fiction goes back to his childhood. "My mother was a great reader of detective stories — a great reader, period, and not a snob about it either. When I was sick as a kid she would always read to me: sometimes a Frank L. Packard mystery novel, an Agatha Queen, or a Nero Wolfe. I can still remember the characters in some of those books."

Clarke Irwin is interested, not only in more Benny Cooperman stories, but also in other types of novels Engel may have to offer in the future. He writes poetry as well and had an 11-page poem published in *Queen's Quarterly* two years ago, and his fanciful drawings — under the pen-name "Foo" — appear frequently in *Books in Canada*. Currently at the CBC he is building up a low-budget series called *Focus Canada*, which features literary, musical, and historical topics from Monday to Friday after the two o'clock afternoon news. He is not yet interested in becoming a full-time writer. "Right now I find the work I'm doing still challenging, just as I found doing *Anthology* challenging. I think one of the pitfalls a writer falls into is that he becomes a writer, and in the end that's all he knows. There's nothing coming in. Maybe being a producer at the CBC is pretty rarefied breeding, too, but at least it gets me on the subway regularly. If you have to make the pilgrimage from bed to typewriter every day, and the typewriter's in the next room or just downstairs, there aren't any conversations in the corridor that you haven't heard before."

— BARBARA WADE



Terence Robertson's sensational production on Dieppe, and the publication in which the review appeared was the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

I hope I, won't, be so long next time. I lack's letters are great fun.

C. P. Stacey
Toronto

OWEN HOODWINKED

Sir:

I have come to expect a certain pedestrian quality in I. M. Owen's writing. However, I now see that there is a strong correlation between his writing and reading skills. You describe him as someone who "has long been a critical follower of Hugh Hood". A follower he might well be, but as far as his critical faculties are concerned, I prefer to judge them an evidence rather than on rumour.

Nowhere in his notice of *None Genuine Without This Signature* (August-September) does he ever reach the core of Hood's latest collection of short stories. Hood's book of 12 stories (numbers do mean something beyond themselves to Hood) is no, simply about "the falseness of consumer society" or about "popular music". It is about the signatures of our times, be these in commerce, media, sports, or private lives. But, in all fairness to I. M. Owen, I should not expect him to see beyond the literal or merely documentary aspects of Hood's fiction. After all, doesn't Owen look upon Hood's first three novels in *The New Age* series as a charming album of Toronto life in the 1920s and 1930s? Such innocence hardly warrants any reply as devastating as one that textual criticism could provide.

But I cannot let Owen live in his Torontonian bliss without taking up some points he makes about my introduction to the book. He is surprised to see that I find Christian allegory in

Hood's works. I suggest to him that Hugh Hood would be more surprised if I did not make such a reading, especially in view of the fact that Hood has repeatedly invited critics to interpret all his fiction as such. For example, Hood calls *White Figure, White Ground* "a religious allegory or parable"; *You Can't Get there From Here* a "largely Christological" work; and do I have to repeat what he says of *The Swing In The Garden* and *A New Athens*? Owen could save himself further embarrassment if he only took the trouble to read more carefully. He is unctuously smug about everything— even Hood's hockey players — and I don't want to stardle him, but I should quote Hood on his own biography of Jean Béliveau: W's about a hem, and the last word in the book is 'Graii', and the last lime we see Béliveau he's wandering around holding this huge silver chalice in his hand wiiih is the Stanley Cup" No, it's not quite the Last Supper, but it's certainly an Arthurian, or Christian, emblem. Or am I being too academic for Owen?

As for the "trinitarian" title of *The Fruit Man, The Meat Man, and The Manager*, I refer Owen to Hood's own explanation, quoted in an interview with J.R. (Tim) Struthers in *Before The Flood*. Owen is the type of critic CanLit could well do without, if it is ever to mature, ever to survive its descriptive critics who measure an by their own very provincial imaginations which apply only geographical or thematic criteria.

Owen gives himself away by the jest he chooses to play on "method". Critics don't jump to conclusions nearly as quickly as Owen does, nor do they invent interpretations on the flimsiest of textual evidence. They read very carefully — unless, like Owen, they prefer being ad men for their own very mediocre minds.

Keith Carebian
Dollard des Ormeaux, Que.

Can Wit No. 57

*Cowboys and lawyers,
Gus-wells and rodeos:
Yippee!*

"My own Nation" —Trudeau.

"Reject everything anglais" —Levesque.

ACROSTIC FANS WILL quickly spot Calgary and Montreal in the above verses (look at the first letter of each word). Readers are invited to provide further examples based on any Canadian city. Stephen Scobie of Edmonton ("Energated dreary minds/originate nothing. I Thick oil nauseates") receives \$25 for this urbane and witty idea, thus contradicting his own rather unkind acrostic, and a similar sum will go to the winner. Address: **CanWit No. 57, Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4.** The deadline is Dec. 1.

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 55

GIVEN THE constipated nature of the nation's mails this fall, it was hardly surprising that Canada post should emerge as the favourite target in our mottoes comes. The winner is J. A. D'Oliveira of Don Mills, On... who receives \$25 for these highly appropriate sentiments:

The *Toronto Star*: "All the views that's Grit to print."

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 The New Democratic Party: "Dieu et mon canuche."
 The Women's Christian Temperance Union: "Blessed are the poor in spirits."

Honourable mentions:

Canada Post: "Forever and forever and forever."
 The Council for the Northwest Territory: "In space, no one can hear you scream."
 The Air Traffic Controllers' Association: "Show me the way to go home."
 The Government of Alberta: "The power of the people comes out of a barrel."
 The Metro Toronto Roads Commission: "Jam yesterday, jam tomorrow, and jam today."
 The Government of Newfoundland: "Something is fishy around here."
 — W. Ritchie Benedict, Calgary

Canada Post: "Neither wind nor rain nor hail nor snow can keep us from the picket line."
 — Michelle Turnbull, Winnipeg (and similarly from several other contestants).

Canada Post: "Philately will get you nowhere."
 — John Buckberrough, Vancouver

Canada Post: "In God we trust."
 — Tony Kyle and Susan Gillespie, London, Ont.

The Canadian film industry: "Ass gratia artis."
 Canada Post: "Festina lente."
 Revenue Canada: "By their SINS ye shall know them."
 Air Canada: *Sick transit*.
 The *Books Politic*: "The bottom line."
 The Toronto Argonauts: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they doo."
 The RCMP: "Better red than Red."
 McDonald's of Canada: "Ate thirty in Newfoundland."

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The Ontario Board of Film Censors: "The penis mightier than the sword."
 — Barry Baldwin, Calgary

The Ontario Board of Film Censors: "Blessed are the censors, for they shall inhibit the earth."

The Supreme Court of Canada: "The subject who is truly loyal to the chief magistrate will settle out of court."

The Greenpeace Foundation: "Nothing without a porpoise or a seal."
 — Martin H. Zeilig, Winnipeg

Revenue Canada: "We came, we saw, we audited."
 — Miriam Ram, Winnipeg

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

The Third Temptation, by Charles Templeton, McClelland & Stewart. With his third stab at fiction, Templeton has hauled himself out of the shock pi, of clever plots and produced a serious novel of character and moral dilemma. More power to him that it's also highly entertaining.

NON-FICTION

The Sacrament, by Peter Gzowski, McClelland & Stewart. A harrowing *We* of modern survival plus a first-rate journalist equals the son of factual thriller that *The New Yorker* is justly famous for.

Deference to Authority: The Case of Canada, by Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Random House. An immigrant American sociologist puts his finger on the unique quality that makes us different from his native countrymen.

The Northern Magus, by Richard Gwyn, McClelland & Stewart. The magus (or magician) is Trudeau, but by the time Gwyn has finished exposing all his tricks you'll wonder why he ever got on stage in the first place.

POETRY

Collected Poems of Raymond Souster, Vol. I, 1940-55, Oberon Press. A natural populist takes us wandering through the city streets, finding love and whores and poverty and pace.

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:

The Adventures of Mikkey, Taggy, Puppo and Cica and how they discover Vienna, by Kati Rekal, Canadian Stage and Arts Publications.

After Abraham, by Ron Chudley, Talonbooks.
The Agatha Christie Who's Who, by Randall Toye, Collins.
A. J. Casson: A Tribute, by Paul Duval, Prentice-Hall.
Aleola, by Gideon Charlebois, Talonbooks.
The Allergy Book, by Harsa V. Dajetia, Personal Library.
Amazons, by Cleo Burdwell, Lester & Orpen Dentys.
Another Way, by Anthony Turnbull, Deneau & Greenberg.
Answer to History, by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Clarke Irwin.
The Art of Canadian Nature Photography, edited by J. A. Kraulis, Hurtig.
Aurora 1980, edited by Morris Wolfe, Doubleday.
Bakunin on Anarchism, edited by Sam Dolgoff, Black Rose Books.
Being Pregnant, by Louise T. Levesque, Dillion Publications.
The Black Cockade, by Victor Suthren, Totem.
The Blueberry Connection, by Beatrice Ross Buszek, published by the author, distributed by Douglas & McIntyre.
Bluenose: Queen of the Grand Banks, by Feenik Ziner, Nimbus Publishing.
The Book of Aphrodisias, by Raymond Stark, Methuen.
Bread and Chocolate, by Mary di Michele, *Marrying Into the Family*, by Brown Wallace, Oberon.
The Canadian Old House Catalogue, by John Hearn, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
Cape Breton Historical Essays, edited by Don Macpillary and Brian Tennyson, College of Cape Breton Press.
The Ceremony, by Marie-Jose Theriault, translated by David Lobdell, Oberon.
The Charcoal Burners, by Susan Musgrave, M & S.
Children of My Heart, by Gabrielle Roy, Seal Books.
The Christmas Birthday Story, by Margaret Laurence, illustrated by Helen Lucas, M & S.
The Cranberry Connection, by Beatrice Ross Buszek, published by the author, distributed by Douglas & McIntyre.
A Darkened House, by Geoffrey Blison, U of T Press.
Dear Teacher, by Diana and Emile Lize, Potlatch Publications.
Desert of the Heart, by Jane Rule, Talonbooks.
The Design of Federations, by Albert Breton and Anthony Scott, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
Discipline of Power, by Jeffrey Simpson, Personal Library.
80: Best Canadian Stories, edited by Clark Blaise and John Metcalf, Oberon.
The Fall Guy, by Chuck Roberson and Bodie Thoen, Hancock House.
First Impressions, edited by John Metcalf, Oberon.
From a Seaside Town, by Norman Levine, Deneau & Greenberg.
Ghoul, by Mark Ronzon, PaperJacks.
Hag Head, by Susan Musgrave, illustrated by Carol Evans, Clarke Irwin.
Helen in Exile, by Ian McLachlan, M & S.
Honor Bound, by Mary Alice and John Downie, Oxford.
How Are We Governed?, by John Ricker and John Saywell, Clarke Irwin.
How to Keep Fit in 5 Minutes Per Day, by Warren Scheiffel, Choice Publications.
Imaginary Letters, by Mary Butts, Talonbooks.
Jarvis Street, by Austin Seton Thompson, Personal Library.
Jitters, by David French, Talonbooks.
Juve, by Campbell Smith, Pulp Press.
Killing in Klusane, by Jim Lotz, PaperJacks.
The Land of Milk and Money: The National Report of the People's Food Commission, Between the Lines.
Late Romantics, by Robert Allen et al., Moonhead Press.
Life Before Man, by Margaret Atwood, Seal Books.
The Lionel Touch, by George Hulme, Talonbooks.
The Lost Treasure of Casa Loma, by Eric Wilson, Clarke Irwin.
Malcolm Muggeridge: A Life, by Ian Hunter, Collins.
The Mangan Inheritance, by Brian Moore, Penguin.
Men with the Yen, by Zavis Zeman, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
Michelle Remembers, by Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder, Nelson-Canada.
Mrs. Blood, by Audrey Thomas, Talonbooks.
My dear Mr. Mt Letters to G. B. MacMillan from L. M. Montgomery, edited by Francis W. P. Bolger and Elizabeth R. Epperly, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Ottawa: The Capital of Canada, by Shirley E. Woods, Jr., Doubleday.
Paper Stays Put: A Collection of Inuit Writing, edited by Robin Gadslof, Hurtig.
Petrouchka, by Elizabeth Cleaver, Macmillan.
Pissolak: A Canadian Tragedy, by David F. Raine, Hurtig.
Pluralities 1980, National Museum of Canada.
Pool's Bedtime Book, by A. A. Milne, illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard, M & S.
Raffles on my Longjohns, by Isabel Edwards, Hancock House.
Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, by James W. Nichol, Talonbooks.
The Second Herman Treasury, by Jim Unger, Gage.
Seventeen Days in Tehran, by Robin Woodworth Carlson, The Snow Man Press.
Stories from the Canadian North, edited by Muriel Whisker, Hurtig.
Summer of Promise: Victoria 1864-1914, by Derek Pethick, Sono Nis Press.
Take my Family ... Please!, by Gary Luten, John Wiley & Sons.
Thinking About Sex and Love, by J. F. M. Hunter, Macmillan.
The Third Power, by Neville Frankel, Nelson Foster & Scott.
The Umbrella Pines, by Gilles Archambault, translated by David Lobdell, Oberon.
The Wollin-Maker's Gift, by Donn Kushner, Macmillan.
The Way Out, by A. R. Bailey and D. G. Hull, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
What's the Difference?, by Marietta and Isaac Bickerstaff, Macmillan.
Why Men Rape, edited by Sylvia Levine and Joseph Koenig, Macmillan.
Winter Lily, by Carolee Brady, Sono Nis Press.
Within the Barbed Wire Fence, by Takeo Ujo Nakano, U of T Press.
Yes We Can!, by Elizabeth Amer, Synergestics Consulting Ltd.

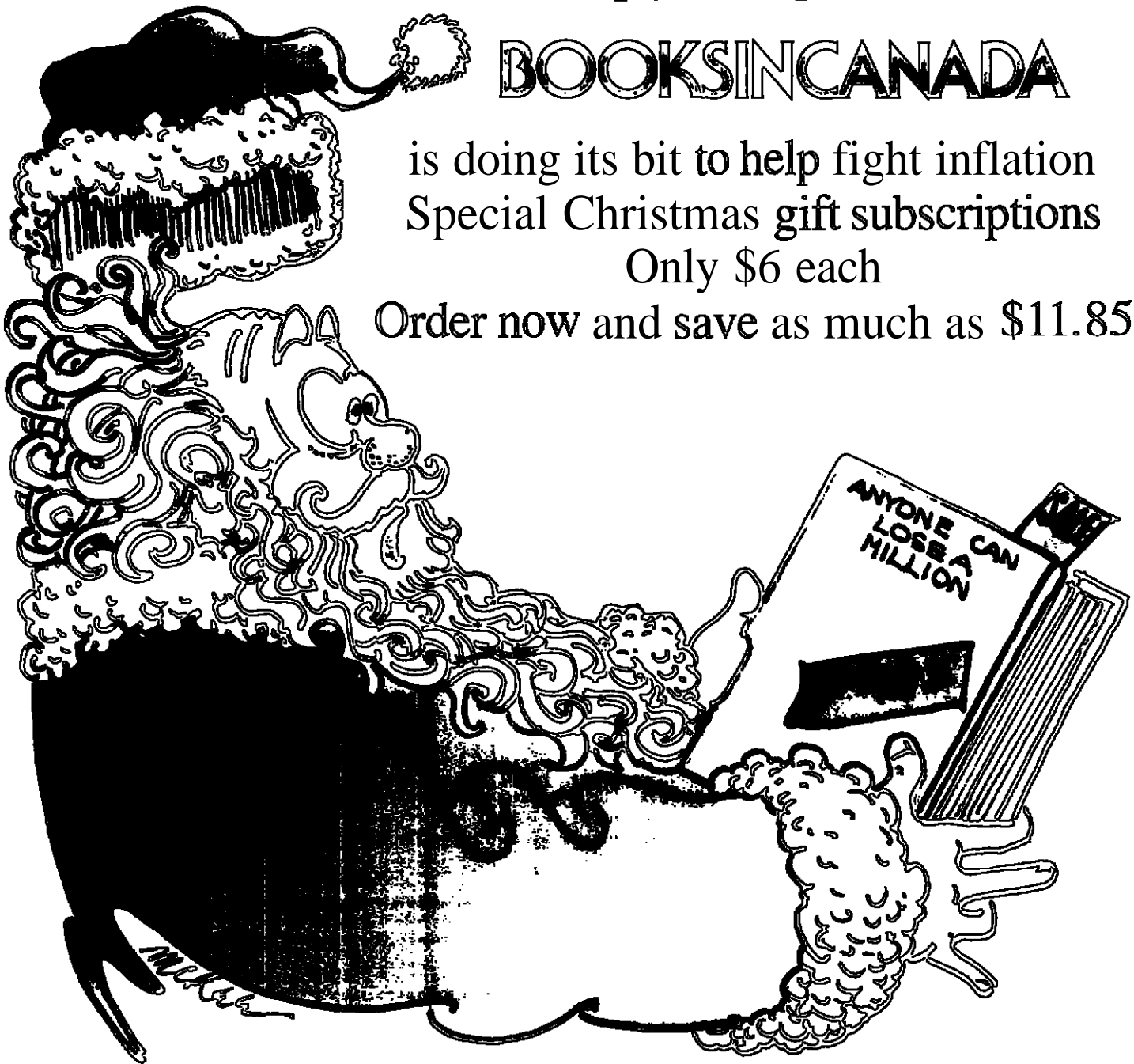
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