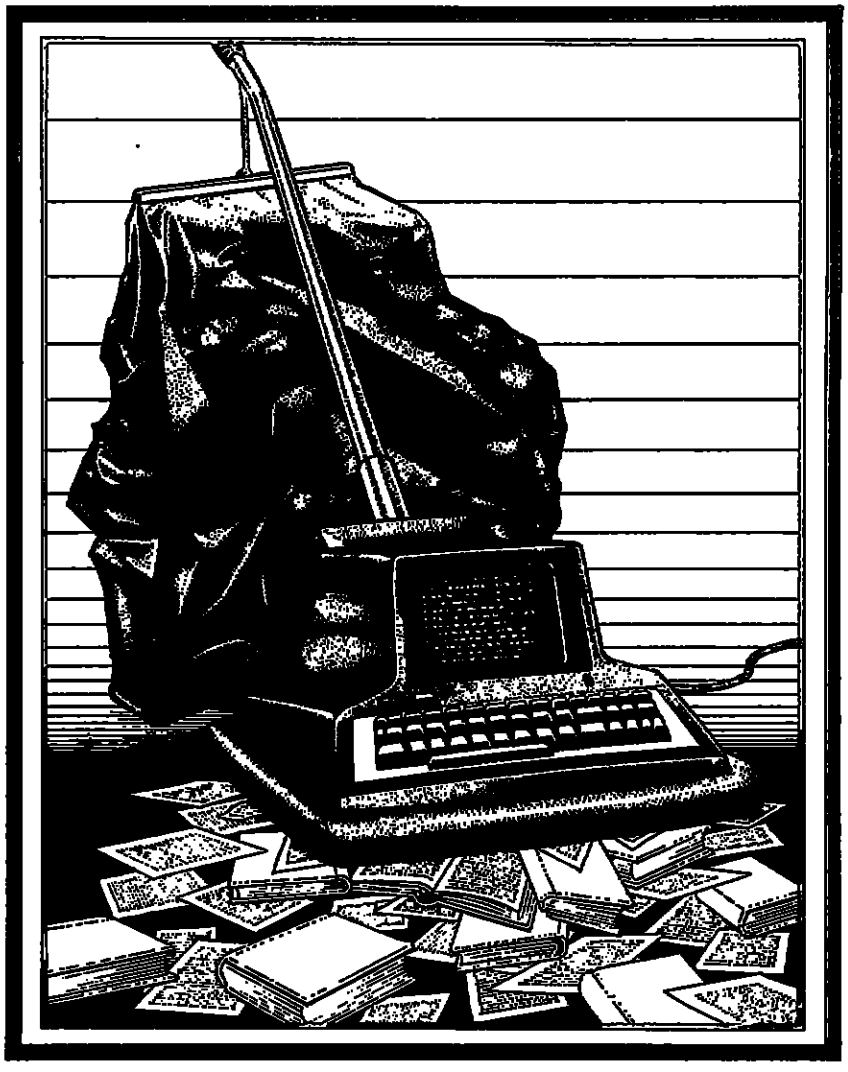
A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS

BOOKS IN CANADA

VIDEO TROUBLE: VIDEOTEXT VS THE BOOK



How the Iowa Writers' Workshop became the thought control centre of CanLit
The dislodged world of Rachel Wyatt
W.D. Valgardson on the Viking invasion

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Poetry and politics: the battle for peace and equality at home and abroad

The feminist mystique

THE MAN NEXT to me on the Air Canada flight from Vancouver to Toronto is a little bald, but his tie is luxuriously flowery and his suit is opulent pin stripe. From his briefcase he pulls out brochures, figures, stress-factor charts: "I'm into Masonite," he says. "What about you?"

"Immortality," I say, repeating a joke among poets. It's a laconic retort, an abstraction, about all a poet can hope for in business-oriented Canada. Not that belonging to the League of Canadian Poets — to whose AGM I am bound — guarantees anything. Despite the exhortations of presidents present, past, and hopeful, the League is a struggling organization with serious inbuilt problems.

Few people read poetry in 1982. Fewer still buy the books or attend the readings. The League has little economic, social, or political clout. It controls no major awards or grants or international tours. The Canada Council makes decisions about poets with little direct representation from the League, and some "name" poets like Irving Layton and George Bowering won't join because they feel that too many poets with too little ability have been admitted. Detractors call it the Little League of Canned Poets.

Financial woes are legion. Last year the executive overspent $5,230 on a flashy if successful International Poetry Festival, and the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council are loath to bail the League out. Some old-time members, like co-founder Fred Cogswell, have coughed up as much as $600 each in response to a plea for money, but many of the newer members have less sentimental ties to the institution.

The biggest issue this AGM, however, is the unease over the Women's Caucus, which has recently emerged from within the League itself. This group wants to use the League to investigate discrimination against women poets in Canada; they're even suggesting that female nominees to the League be judged by an all-woman panel. First Vice-President Joe Rosenblatt resigned last February over this. "Feminism and Marxism," he said, "are the antitheses of poetry. The Feminist Caucus used the League and its facilities without my knowledge to apply to the Secretary of State for a grant to investigate discrimination. Now they're trying to legitimize their political action by asking for a motion of support from the AGM."

Susan Musgrave also resigned from the League, and a number of other poets are grumbling. As Robin Skelton said in a letter to the members, "Quality is the only criterion for poetry." Defending the Women's Caucus, Sharon Nelson argues that hidden prejudice and false standards apply to women poets in Canada. The fact that the League president, its executive director, and a healthy number of its officers are women is not seen as enough.

The situation seems explosive enough to threaten the existence of the League,

but driving into Toronto from the airport, I wonder if the humid fog hanging over the horizon is a mocking metaphor for the AGM. Why do I come to these meetings each year?

Western poets complain that the League is an Ontario organization and it's true that most of the members live in Ontario, that the Ontario Arts Council supports the League and Ontario poets get the lion's share of exposure in Ontario high schools. Still, the League serves a purpose. It brings together most of the poets in Canada once a year for an invaluable discussion. To me, it is a kind of haven, a place where this uncertain and odd habit of poetic composition is acknowledged as a serious occupation. If nothing else the poets cheer each other up, get a few drinks under their belts, and kick around a few notions of the art and craft. I get to find out what writers like Allen and Amabile and Harvey and Suknaski are doing in the exercise of the art. It's stimulating. And for that alone the organization is worth it.

But motions and votes and resolutions and disagreements — how do you pick a thread and unravel such a diverse tapestry? And as David Day says in the plane on the way back, what was *not* discussed at the meetings was all important. The reasons for the recent resignations of Earle Birney and George Johnston were not made public, despite Miriam Waddington's efforts. Men mutter about the stridency of some of the female poets, but they admit confidentially they don't want to run the risk of seeming "anti-feminist." As one wit put it, "Feminism is the new sacred cow." Perhaps this is why even the Women's Caucus members were surprised at the easy passage of their motion. Privately, some male poets conceded that they "rolled over" on the issue, that the discussion had been settled beforehand in an 18th-floor workshop where poets — Pat Lane among them — had urged the membership to "forget the past" and "bury the hatchet" for the sake of the League. And in the subsequent vote, 35 to 17 with 11 abstentions, not all member poets voted. The majority thought the Women's Caucus was a legitimate enterprise but others wondered whether this was not the thin edge of the wedge of "affirmative action" which emerged later in discussion about membership in the League itself.

I wonder if I'm like most men when issues like this come up. I feel it is something I should support, but I ask myself whether "balancing the books" is merely repeating the same mistakes in another sexual/political contest. I agree with Robin Skelton about the single criterion of quality. But I have to answer the question about the importance of the uniqueness of feminine perception and "style." I accept the fact that Hemingway's women, for example, are no more

than "crisp crunches of lettuce," as Stanley Cooperman once wrote, but I still think Hemingway is a great writer. Margaret Atwood's male characters are often limited, insensitive clowns without passion who interfere in my mind with the success of her novels. How to be fair? Objective? How should a male poet view a prize like the Pat Lowther Award, which the League offers only to women? How can a male writer feel comfortable with presses and magazines that will not publish his work, regardless of merit, on sexist grounds?

While aware that "male" is developing a pejorative context in some literary circles, and that "chauvinist pig" is a new anti-word, I continue to submit my manuscripts to the numerous women editors in the hope that male perceptions are not inartistic in themselves, that somehow merit comes through all this second-rate maneuvering and ranting and posturing, political or sexual. I believe somehow that bizarre resolutions — such as posthumous membership in the League for Miriam Mandel, woolly support for nuclear disarmament and old left pro-USSR stands, and a data base for women's bibliographies — wash away quickly, and only the stark and lonely job, the poet alone with the language, making and singing and forming the rich artifacts out of time, this is important. More important than brass or stone — or Masonite.

— KEVIN ROBERTS

Pens for peace

IT'S NOT OFTEN, at major international conferences, that the Canadian delegation outnumbers the Americans by five to one. But this was the case at Interlit 82, a gathering of some 230 writers from 49 countries, held at Köln, West Germany, during the summer. The conference, sponsored by the German Writers' Union, with financial support from the Trade Union of Printers and Papermakers (of which the Writers' Union is part) and from various levels of government, municipal to federal, was on the theme "Contemporary Writers and their Contributions to Peace: Limitations and Possibilities." While the American delegation was confined to one poet, the appropriately named Rita Dove, Canada was represented by Rudy Wiebe, Aritha van Herk, Miriam Waddington, Jan Drabek, and myself.

A conference on this topic, held in Germany, could not fail to be intensely political. Speech after speech recalled Germany's responsibility for past wars, and her highly vulnerable position in any future one. The major public session, at which Heinrich Böll gave a moving and subtle speech on the linguistic image of "the enemy," was disrupted by pro-Palestinian demonstrators protesting Israeli genocide in Lebanon.

The imbalance in the selection of delegates — which seems to have been a fairly haphazard process — resulted in an imbalance in the tone of the private sessions as well. Since there was no "official" representation from either the U.S. or Israel, and scarcely any "unofficial" testimony to the extent of the peace movements within these countries, unanswered attacks on capitalism and imperialism became the order of the day, and, while much of the rhetoric was undoubtedly true, it was scarcely productive. Very few statements, indeed, were made about what the writer can do for Peace *as a writer* (as opposed to what he or she can do as a citizen of whatever country). Ritual noises were made about how we must (a) write in support of Peace, yet (b) not let our art degenerate into propaganda.

The sheer size of the conference had two inevitable but nonetheless unsatisfactory results. First, the discussion had

to be on a *general* level; we could not discuss individual authors or works simply because we had so few texts in common. And the kinds of aesthetic problem facing a Canadian writer are vastly different from those facing writers in the Third World, who, paradoxically, often have much vaster "audiences," in that their role is still interpreted as being that of the spokesman for an illiterate mass.

Second, the discussion was incredibly *scattered*. One speaker would describe the peace movement in Finland; the next would be a Korean testifying against the split in his country; then a German delegate would warn us that the police would have files on all the delegates; next a Syrian delegate contriving an oblique attack on Israel while ostensibly talking about translation; followed by a poet from Mali telling us how many people starved to death in his country last year; then an exiled Arab would deliver a passionate attack on the official Syrian delegation; and somewhere at the end of a four-hour session a woman from Austria pointed out that she was the first woman to talk all afternoon, and surely peace means also feminism. All good and worthy causes, but after several hours on the simultaneous-translation headphones, the most sympathetic responses began to go numb, and one longed for a coherent, developed treatment of *one* subject rather than this smorgasbord of crises.

And so the official sessions of the conference, burdened with too much information and too little direction, moved inevitably toward a blandly generalized final resolution. As with most encounters of this kind, the greatest rewards were personal: my own greater understanding of the scale, if not the finer points, of the problems being discussed; the friendships started; the books and addresses exchanged. What I remember is drinking beer late at night with Köln author Jens Hagen; or watching the Russia-Scotland soccer game in the demonstrative company of Yevgeny ("Sticky Gloves") Yevtushenko; or the moment in the middle of a long speech by the aforementioned Syrian delegate when he quoted an Arabic poem, in which a warrior's horse, returning to its pleasant pasture from a field of battle, reproaches its master and asks him why he always wants to go from places like this to places like that: "But I know," says the horse, answering its own question, "you are men, you are the children of Adam, and the one thing that your father Adam taught you was how to leave Paradises."

— STEPHEN SCOBIE

Interfacing with intervals: our columnist wages guerrilla warfare with the enemies of the Queen's English and discovers more than one upset victim

By BOB BLACKBURN

THERE WAS A FUSS in our neighbourhood this year about a proposed rezoning by-law. Some concerned residents persuaded our alderman to oppose it. In a letter riddled with solecisms, she reported to her constituents that "I moved to have the By-law rescinded. It was carried unanimously by City Council."

I tripped first on her use of rescinded. You can't rescind a law that isn't a law yet. But what was important was that she was reporting that the cause was lost. The only noun in the first sentence was "By-law" (which needs neither a capital letter nor a hyphen), so that was the only possible antecedent for the "It"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JON McKEE

that began the second sentence. Council had passed a law. The blasted building would be built.

It was a day or so later that I took another look at the letter and started wondering how it could have been passed "unanimously" when she was opposed to it. It became obvious that what she had *said* was opposite to what she had *meant*.

Wouldn't it be grand if the alderman's old English teacher had received that letter, believed what it said, and rushed out and sold his house below market value?

That letter angered me. I went out to the garden to calm down, only to find that the aphids were at my roses again. I then went out and bought a container of Fossil Flower natural bug killer for roses. I read the label, and it said "read label before using."

That should have tipped me off. However, I took it to mean that I should read the *directions* on the label, and I did so, not without giggling at the implication that if one of your fish should happen to swallow some of the stuff you should induce vomiting and rush him to a hospital. The directions, however badly written, were understandable right down to "Repeat at frequent intervals."

If I had it to do all over again, I'd just giggle at that, too, and not bother wondering whether it meant every 10 seconds or every 10 years. But no, I had to start thinking about the fact that *frequent intervals* is a very common phrase and wondering why it is. It doesn't really mean anything at all, unless it has a modifier. You could say you now do something at more frequent intervals than you used to do it, but you should really say "more frequently." *Frequent* means, among other things, happening or occurring at short or brief intervals so *frequent intervals* surely is redundant. *Interval* means, quite simply, a space or period of time between two things or events.

I just don't understand all this. Dictionaries, including the *OED*, are saying that *frequent* means occurring *at* (go look up *at* for yourself; it takes up barely more than seven columns in the *OED*) short intervals. There were relatively brief intervals of peace before and after the Hundred Years' War. Could things that happened *at* those intervals be termed *frequent*, when in fact they were separated by 116 years? Is there another word for the intervals that come between intervals? Can you believe that the editors of this magazine don't understand why this column is always late? Would you like to have something to spray on those "consumer advocates" who are always yelling at us to "read the label, read the label!"?

TURNING TO THE WORLD of sports, I've just read that "Guillermo Vilas was an upset victim in a tennis tournament in . . ." (Somehwere — who cares?) The story revealed neither what he was upset about nor what he was a victim of. There are many potholes in the road to tight writing, boys and girls.

A CBC newscast, dealing with World Cup Soccer, contained a reference to "Italy's defeat over Poland."

A wire service story about Peter Pocklington said "after he tried selling the team, he . . . ." He didn't try selling it. He tried to sell it. Do not ask why this is so. Trust me. It has less to do with infinitives and gerunds than it has to do with the pesky *try* (not quite five columns in the *OED*). To try doing something is to experiment; to try to do something is to make an attempt to do it. The way things are nowadays, a chap might have to try selling vacuum cleaners, and, if he were not to succeed in that enterprise, he might have to try to sell his own vacuum cleaner.

SOME OF MY FRIENDS who are "into" computers (in the manner of *TRON*?) tell me that you can't discuss the subject without saying "interface." I have a computer glossary that defines *interface* as "that which connects one thing to another thing." What ever happened to *connector*? But never mind that. What are we to do with the police consultant who wrote "constables will be expected to interface with the various minorities"? We don't need *interface* as a noun, let alone as a verb, in general usage. Let's lock that man up with the police inspector who said, ". . . evidence tends to support the fact that there is more than one killer . . . ." Who should know better than a cop that a fact is a fact, not a theory, and exists with or without support?

Guerrilla evolved from meaning little war to meaning one who is an aggressive

soldier in such a war. What's done is done, but there should be an effort made to stop the use of guerrilla as a synonym for terrorist.

Some people who should know better went on and on during a CBC network radio program, confusing perquisites with prerequisites.

The term is heart-rending, not heart-rendering. You know who you are. And astrology is not a science.

And that damn stuff *does* kill aphids. □

CATCHER IN THE CORN

With so many of its graduates now teaching creative writing in Canada, the Iowa Writers' Workshop has become the thought control centre of CanLit

By DOUGLAS GLOVER

PAUL ENGLE, the aging Moses of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, its director for 24 years, and the man who almost single-handedly convinced Americans that creative writing could be taught in a classroom ("I have led my people into the wilderness," he is reputed to have said at the time of his resignation in 1966), is dressed suitably for a poet-emperor: wine-coloured jumpsuit belted at the waist and thick-soled climbing shoes. Arrested in mid-flight up the stairs to the office of his latest project, the International Writing Program, housed just down the hall from the Workshop in the University of Iowa's English-Philosophy Building, he claps a hand to his forehead in an effort to recall the many Canadians who have pilgrimaged south to learn craft at the well-spring.

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSS MACLENNAN

The names are lost now, but his eyes flash and he jabs the air with his index finger with all the éclat of a veteran Shakespearean ham. He remembers an occasion shortly after the Second World War when the Workshop sustained an "invasion" by three Canucks — they were Robert Harlow, Paul Wright, and Jim Jackson — all living in the same basement apartment. It was Christmas, and Engle and his wife Mary had dropped over to boost the spirits of the boys far from home. One of the Canadians rushed out to forage for a bottle of scotch. He returned shortly, shouting from the top of the steps, "I've got the stuff!" "And then he dropped it," says Engle tragically. "We went to our house after that where we did some drinking, and I lost track of them. But much later in the evening I became aware of a strange *thrumming* sound emanating from behind a chair in the corner. Upon investigation it turned out to be those three Canadians singing — well, I guess you could call it singing — 'The Maple Leaf Forever.'"

ON TUESDAY NIGHT the back room at the Mill, the current Workshop bar, is jammed with 40 or more fiction writers ordering pitchers of draft and rounds of vegetable cheeseburgers from a harried waitress. Fiction workshops are held Tuesday afternoons, poetry workshops on Mondays, but in either case the method is the same: students submit their works to verbal body slams from their peers, led by an instructor, usually an established author, who guides discussion or participates in the dismemberment. Afterwards it is considered *de rigueur* to congregate at the Mill to commiserate with the fallen and congratulate the smiling hero who has "had a good workshop." Commonly, when a story is praised in class the drunken pundits damn it in the Mill as nothing more than "a typical Workshop story," and the poor writer whose story was mauled to chopped steak will be assured that it was only because he refused to toe the party line.

The Mill's management prefers the workshoppers to stay in the back room. Writers are disorderly, notoriously bad tippers, and prone to indulge in forbidden substances in the washrooms. Though drawn from every corner of the United States, a fact that betokens the grip Iowa has on the literary mythology of the country, the workshoppers are a homogeneous lot. They are mostly white, upper-middle-class, and tamely eccentric. They have all been to university (you have to pass the Graduate Record Examination to get into Iowa), and a lot of them have done nothing else. They dress in poverty chic, and they complain about the lack of financial assistance, but most of them would rather do almost anything than work. That's why they came to the Workshop.

At one small table sits the Workshop's latest Canadian contingent — Clark Blaise, Mark Jarman, and myself — deep in discussion of CanLit arcana over a copy of the latest *Maclean's* smuggled in a CARE package from home. From time to time an unwary American draws near and catches our mumbled shibboleths: Buffy Glassco, Matt Cohen, *Fiddlehead*, Seal, Peggy Atwood. A look of confused boredom mixed with polite interest informs the American's tanned features. (Clark Blaise is a teacher this semester, and it pays not to be insulting.) Uncomfortably reminded that there is a world beyond Bismarck and Detroit about which he or she knows almost nothing but the exploits of Margaret Trudeau, the American slinks quietly away to join his boisterous compatriots. An old Workshop pro, Blaise graduated from Iowa in the early 1960s before emigrating to Canada, as did his wife, novelist Bharati Mukherjee (they were married in a lawyer's office in Iowa City), with whom he now

shares an alternating professorship at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Last year he spent two days a week at the Workshop, consulting with students in an office that commands a fine view of the field-hockey pitch and the university's stately Pentacrest. This year he returns to Skidmore, while Mukherjee replaces him at the Workshop.

The other Canadian, Mark Jarman, is a short-story writer and poet from Edmonton. With his thick beard, trendy clothes (most workshoppers haunt Iowa City's second-hand clothing stores), and encyclopedic knowledge of the latest rock groups, Jarman is perhaps the most culturally up-to-date writer in town. He doesn't like the Mill, preferring the lower-class cachet of a biker bar called the Shamrock, on South Gilbert. ("A lot of my stories take place in bars.") He likes to tell how, long before he had ever heard of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, he and his high-school classmates had enthusiastically handed around a battered copy of John Irving's novel *Setting Free the Bears*. "We even started stealing the salt shakers and stashing them in our lockers," he says, referring to a form of petty larceny practised by one of Irving's endearing sociopaths. As it happens, *Setting Free the Bears* was Irving's thesis at Iowa. Five novels and a Garp later, Irving is the Workshop's most successful graduate and its best testimonial. Indeed, if the Workshop's influence is pervasive, it is because of the success of its graduates in reaching the reading public: from Wallace Stegner, Iowa's first "star," through Nelson Algren, Tennessee Williams (a dropout), Flannery O'Connor, and Irving to its latest illuminati, American short-story writer Jayne Anne Phillips and her Canadian classmate, W.P. Kinsella.

The first Canadian winner of the highly regarded Houghton-Mifflin Fellowship for his novel *Shoeless Joe*, Kinsella left the Workshop in 1978 for a teaching job at the University of Calgary, taking with him the Iowa City girl he had married and a special love for the state, if not its creative writing program. Next year he plans to leave Calgary to return to the land of corn fields and hogs, "to write full time for a few years." Kinsella explains it this way: "For me, the wonderful thing was that I fell completely in love with Iowa. I had never felt at home anywhere until I went there, and I fully intend to spend a few months of each year there for the rest of my life . . . . Although most of my Iowa experience came from outside the Workshop I have been greatly influenced by Iowa. I plan to set most of my stories and novels in the Midwest. In fact, *Shoeless Joe* . . . has been praised as the finest novel ever written about the Midwest."

At the Workshop itself, Kinsella found little but sour disappointment. "It was a particularly low point when I was there. Vance Bourjaily, who I'm told is a good teacher, was somewhat burned out, and the two female guest lecturers I had were incompetent, to say the least." Kinsella had attended the University of Victoria's undergraduate writing program, run by Dave Godfrey (Iowa '67), and studied with W.D. Valgardson (Iowa '69). "The graduate program at Iowa," says Kinsella, "was pale by comparison [with Victoria]. Iowa demanded nothing. I have seen people use as their thesis the same material they used to get admitted. This cheapens my degree, and I deeply resent it. Fully half of the people in the fiction program had no right to be there. They were sadly lacking in ability, hadn't the slightest critical awareness, and were writing self-indulgent slop when they were writing at all."

Clarke Blaise
Iowa '64

Rudy Wiebe
Iowa '64

Kinsella, however, is an exception. Most Canadian graduates rave about the Workshop. In my own case, the experience of factions, friendships, literary ferment, and Iowa's best football season in two decades was solid gold. Certainly I suffered my share of uninspired teachers and administrative bumblers, but in one dazzling semester Kansas cowboy Robert Day *(The Last Cattle Drive)* opened up the novel like a cadaver with its heart still beating and showed us how to make it live. And there is no denying that many of my classmates were talented writers; stories went almost directly from the seminars into *Esquire*, *The Atlantic*, and *Playboy*. Two of us published books before graduation. As Robert Kroetsch (Iowa '61) says, "I liked Iowa, loved the place. The heat, the cornfields, the smell of pigshit in the evening, the beer in Irene's, a half-order of steak at Joe's on Friday night, the arguments about manuscripts, the chaos of writers and writerly egos."

Robert Harlow left Iowa in 1951, worked for the CBC for 15 years (during which time he helped start the radio program *Anthology)*, and was chairman of the Creative Writing Department at the University of British Columbia from 1966 to 1977. He remembers Iowa as "the Left Bank of the 1940s. It was the first time in my life," he says, "that I was surrounded by a group of professionals, people who took writing seriously." Valgardson is even more emphatic. His Iowa experience was "the best two years of my life. It was the first time I was ever in a school and didn't want to burn the place down. Only wish I could have stayed around for a Ph.D. Any excuse would have done."

CIRCE, THE temptress who changed men into swine, now is a dark-eyed, wide-hipped Greek cashier at the Best Steak House on the corner of Dubuque and Iowa. Best Steak is third on the list of Workshop eateries, following Amelia Earhart's Deli (Manhattan chic) and the Hamburg Inn (the original greasy spoon). Situated a block from the Pentacrest, half-way between Iowa City's largest book stores, Iowa Book and Supply and Jim Harris's Prairie Lights, and offering nearly unlimited table space and coffee, Best Steak is an ideal writers' hangout. (Americans enthusiastically follow Hemingway's practice of scribbling in public. I knew one woman — Darrah Cloud, whose first play, *House Across the Street*, will be produced off-Broadway this fall — who preferred to write at a downtown Hardee's hamburger franchise.)

On this day last October I have introduced Mark Jarman to Circe and the gyros sandwich, and he has seen that they are good. We are discussing whether or not there is a Workshop style. We both agree the answer must be no, if only because of the variety of instructors and an obvious diversity in the mature styles of published alumni. This semester the fiction staff includes Blaise, a Canadian Thomas Mann; James Alan McPherson, a black Pulitzer Prize winner who loves Isaac Babel and Miguel de Unamuno; and Barry Hannah, an Alabama cracker who writes like Faulkner on chemicals. And the program that nurtured W.P. Kinsella is quite capable of conferring a degree on Valerie Kent (Iowa '72) whose collection of experimental stories *Wheelchair Sonata* (Coach House Press, 1974) is a spectrum away from *Shoeless Joe*'s magic realism. Indeed it's difficult to find an Iowa graduate who will even consider the idea of a "creative writing" style; no one wants to be branded as a formula author.

But critics outside what former Iowa staffer R.V. Cassill calls the Academic-Media Complex often dispute the Workshop dogma. Writing on patronage and the arts in *Harper's*, Paul Theroux said, "The effect of this creative writing on the profession of letters in the United States has been profound. It has changed the profession out of all recognition. It has made it narrower, more rarefied, more neurotic; it has altered the way literature is taught and it has diminished our pleasure in reading . . . . " Theroux blames creative writing programs for everything from the decline of humorous writing and book reviewing to the rise of the "university novel." Similarly, British critic Robert Hewison, reviewing five U.S. university-produced volumes (including a winner of the Iowa Short Fiction Contest) for the *Times Literary Supplement* a year ago, decided that what their authors "have in common is that they live to write by teaching writing; and their classes and the new arrangements in publishing appear to be evolving a new genre: Creative Writing writing. The work that comes out of Creative Writing classes is likely to be strongly autobiographical; it will tend to contain cultural references that make it acceptable in non-commercial publishing conditions: it will be 'experimental,' but not dangerously so. It may be short. Reasonably, because short fiction is all the novice graduate author has the experience for; cynically, because it can be discussed easily in one seminar and its length will not stretch the resources of a university press."

Hewison is right about seminars and short stories. Time and again writers at the workshop are told, "Short stories don't sell." On the other hand, it was the rare instructor who would put up with reading a whole novel, and Workshop director John Leggett limited class contributions to 20 pages. It should also be noted that Blaise, McPherson, and Hannah are predominantly if not exclusively short-story writers. And since, in general, commercial publishing houses avoid short fiction like a bad smell, it has fallen to the universities themselves to take up the torch for their students. (Pittsburgh, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa have short fiction contests or book series.) At the same time, creative writing programs themselves have banded together to form the Associated Writing Programs (AWP) — in Canada, writers form a union; in the U.S. they form a professional association — which also publishes new books by members. It may be that creative writing schools, coupled with Canada Council patronage, have had more to do with the popularity of short-story writing in Canada than any national predilection for prose in small doses.

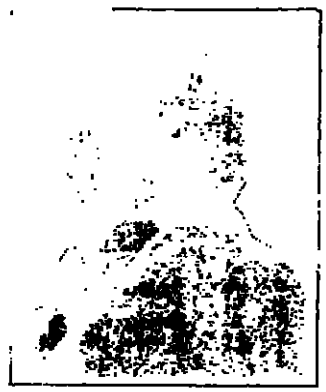
THE BLACK ANGEL is a corroded monument to a wealthy Iowan's dead wife. Legend has it that the stricken widower ordered the statue from Italy to stand over his wife's grave and then married the deceased woman's sister. As if in shame, the angel turned black en route to the hilltop cemetery, where it now broods over the town and university. Just across the street, in Happy Hollow Park, the workshoppers, many of whom remain in Iowa City between semesters, play softball all summer long. Both the Black Angel and Saturday afternoon softball are Workshop traditions; the former commemorated in the sometimes annual Black Angel Awards, the latter in the memories of former students. "In those days," says Kent Thompson (Iowa '62), "the poets played against the prose writers. I remember that Donald Justice [Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry] played first base for the poets, and chubby Bourjaily played first base for the prose-writers. Bob Mezey, the lyric poet who looked a bit like an ape — his arms were long — played shortstop for the poets. He was very good. But I was the best left fielder the prose writers had had in some time; I was even believed to be a pull hitter."

However, according to Thompson, Blaise, Valgardson, Kroetsch, *et al.*, it is not the memories or symbols or any par-

W.P. Kinsella
Iowa '78

Dave Godfrey
Iowa '67

Robert Harlow
Iowa '51



Robert Kroetsch
Iowa '61

ticular style of writing that has had the greatest impact on Canadian letters. If the Iowa Writers' Workshop has had an influence, says Clark Blaise, it has been "mainly pedagogical — all these people going out and starting little Iowas." Says Kroetsch: "I suppose that Iowa is the granddaddy to all the creative writing programs in North America, good and bad."

In an appendix to his book *The Iowa Writers' Workshop* (1981), Stephen Wilburs lists 31 major creative writing programs in the United States either founded or currently directed by Iowa graduates. In Canada, Godfrey and Valgardson have just exchanged places as chairmen of the creative writing program at Victoria; Robert Harlow founded and still teaches at UBC's department, and agrees that he set it up with Iowa as a strong influence. Kinsella and Christopher Wiseman teach at Calgary; Rudy Wiebe, who studied at Iowa in 1964, teaches at the University of Alberta; Kroetsch is a member of the English Department at the University of Manitoba; Bob Castow teaches at York; Christopher Levenson at Carleton; Clark Blaise and Bharati Mukherjee taught at Sir George Williams and McGill; and left fielder Thompson presides at the University of New Brunswick. (It is worth noting that Godfrey may

W.D. Valgardson
Iowa '69

Kent Thompson
Iowa '62

have spent more time at Iowa than any other Canadian, taking three degrees in seven years.)

"I don't think there's a Workshop *style*," says Kroetsch. "There's a Workshop method of teaching creative writing, but that's a different matter. At its best the method brings young writers together, gives them a sense of community, gives them a sense of how to rewrite. When I teach creative writing, which I sometimes do, I work from the Iowa model." Similarly, Valgardson avers, "Of course the Workshop has had an impact on Canadian writing. Look at the names and the fact that they are teaching creative writing right across the country. I still haven't found a better method of teaching creative writing than what I saw at Iowa."

Thompson, an American-turned-Canadian ("Hell, I *am* a Canadian. I go all mushy over the maple leaf flag; I have second thoughts about nearly everything; I am wary of the weather") came away from the Workshop "convinced that creative writing, if it can be taught at all, can only be taught by means of a workshop. So that's the system I use; I suspect most of us who graduated from Iowa use it." But, although a few years ago he would have guided a promising writer toward Iowa, now he wouldn't: "Just because I think some of us can offer as much now as Iowa could offer me then." Thompson adds: "Look at the people now teaching creative writing or in charge of creative writing programs in Canada who have gone to Iowa. We all share a common attitude about literature but have a huge influence on Canadian writing. I hope it's a benign influence." □

VIDEO TROUBLE

Videotext may well have the same effect on books as photography did on painting: the heart of our culture could become an obsolete *objet d'art*

By SUSAN CREAN

WE HAVE ALL HEARD of the Communications Revolution; been hearing about it for years, in fact. And the many stories about how human habit and habitat are going to be utterly transformed by the media of the '80s (or '70s, or was it the '60s?). The cliché has had a long run, but still no one seems to agree on what the revolution actually is or where it's headed. Speculation about the shape of the future has become a business, contriving its own literary genre (probably best described as science faction), and, just as in ancient Greece, the marketplace teems with soothsayers peddling forecasts of the future.

One popular prophecy concerns the evolution of an electronic system of publishing that would do for books what the invention of the printing press did for medieval manuscripts. Gutenberg 2, they say, will open up the process even further and widen the circle of participants. At the bottom of it all is Technology, which often isn't really new but is rather an ingenious combination of conventional items — telephones, TV sets, computers, and the like. Hook a typewriter to a computer with a video screen and, *voilà*, the word processor. These smart machines are fascinating, no doubt about it. But they also intimidate people, partly because of the breakneck speed at which they are being developed and refined: today's state-of-the-art is tomorrow's 45-rpm record. (I'm told Revenue Canada allows full depreciation of word processors in the year of purchase, on the assumption that they become obsolete within 12 months.) At times the hardware does seem to have a life of its own, and given the cultural bias of our age it is easy (and entertaining) just to sit back and watch it all unfold like a mystery movie. Who isn't enthralled by the time- and space-defying acts of satellites and microchip computers? Who bothers to worry about the noxious effects of the new wonder-toys — the rise in truancy among school children who cut classes to hang out in videogame arcades, for instance, or the gathering evidence of the harmful effects of constant use of VDTs (video display terminals)?

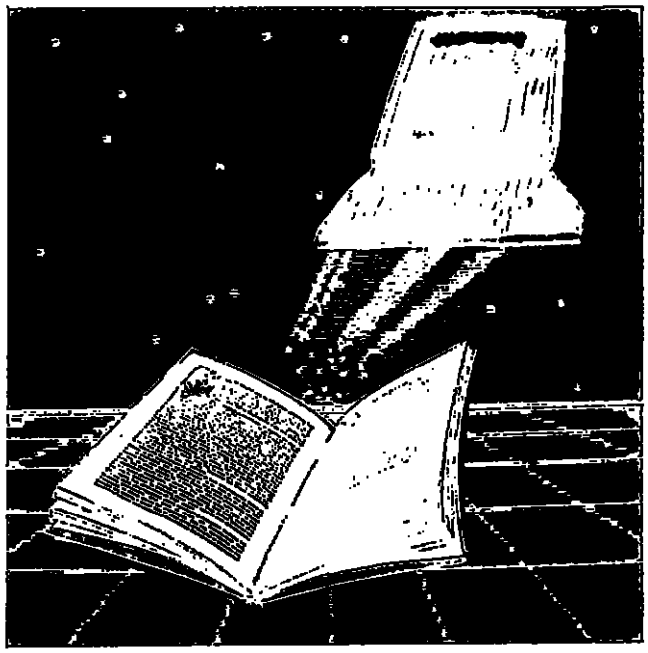


ILLUSTRATION BY JOSS MACLENNAN

That's the trouble; too many people promoting and explaining the revolution and too few trying to work out its meaning, its impact and social purpose. Of course, the boffins and businessmen running the show don't usually think about such things and rarely ask the advice of people who do. Nevertheless, writers and publishers ought to be trying to make cultural sense of the New Technologies, developing perspectives on their organization and use. And that requires rearranging some attitudes and abandoning the belief that it is necessary to understand how something works in order to understand its meaning.

For the revolution is a good deal more than the sum of its fancy parts. Far more disruptive than the sudden appearance of some exotic new equipment is the mere introduction of a new set of players to an old game. Pay-TV is the perfect example. Hardly a new invention, not even a very exciting refinement of existing television technology, pay-TV's chief distinction will be its use of a satellite-to-cable delivery system, replacing the cumbersome terrestrial networks built by broadcasters in the past. This means a single station with $1 million can rent a transponder on ANIK for a year and reach roughly the same audience CTV or the CBC do, the old microwave way (which today would cost about $85 million to construct). In the United States the upstart superstations and the networks are already locked in deadly battle for supremacy, and both sides understand that the ground rules have shifted for good. Now, with six services licensed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to bring pay-TV to Canada, we will soon see for ourselves whether Canadian broadcasters will survive the impact of more channels (and more American programming) competing for audiences that are not growing in size. Of one thing we can be sure: nothing revolutionary is about to happen in the programming department. Feature films and variety specials, even without commercials, are not strangers to television. They are, in fact, the medium's most dependable crowd pleasers.

On the surface of it, then, CRTC chairman John Meisel's comparison of pay-TV to the first moonwalk seems wildly farfetched. But he went even further in his opening remarks at the pay-TV hearings last fall, describing it as the last frontier of Canadian broadcasting, a *terra incognita* whose exploration

will likely precipitate "radically transformed conditions of existence." These conditions, it turns out, are mostly structural and economic, for once the rhetoric settled it was plain to see that pay-TV's only true originality is as a marketing strategy.

Instead of setting out to capture the traditional audience of advertising-based television, pay-TV (or subscription TV) is geared to particular, special-interest audiences (which is why the method is sometimes called "narrowcasting"). In the United States, pay-cable is selling all-sports and all-news sta-

In the halls of learning it is still acceptable to rip off creators in the loftier interests of 'free flow of information'

tions along with specialty channels for children, blacks, and Christians. As the CRTC sees it, pay-TV's job in Canada will be to generate a lifesaving flow of investment funds into program production; and American movies will prime the pump. That isn't a novel idea either. It's been around since radios were wirelesses, and it has always failed to attract Canadian audiences to Canadian programming; it is another way to skin the cat.

In this revolution, looks are deceiving. Cable-TV didn't fire the public's imagination when it was introduced in the 1960s, but it *did* re-jig the economics of commercial television. The photocopier is another example of the banal taking us by surprise. Its significance, too, was not in its technical prowess but in its ecological after-affects. Instant printing abolished forever the security of standing type; it made Everyperson a printer. At the same time it undermined the legal and economic basis of publishing, inviting widespread violation of copyright. The trouble with reprography is that no mechanism was devised to allow for legal copying of material that both credits and compensates authors for its use. In the hallowed halls of learning it is still perfectly acceptable to rip off creators in the loftier interests of "free flow of information."

AS I HAVE SUGGESTED, one characteristic of the Communications Revolution is the interconnection of systems that used to be separate. Telephones, data banks, computers, and video terminals can be programmed to do a vast variety of tasks, and a whole branch of engineering has evolved under the name of *telematics* (or *informatics*). The growth in size and sophistication of these systems has been largely at the instigation of private enterprise (led by Japan and the U.S.A.), and development has therefore been directed to applications in business, government, and industry, which is where the Information Age is in fullest flower. By the mid-1970s the information industries (broadly defined) had achieved the status of a heavy industry in the U.S. economy, accounting for half of that country's GNP and more than half of its salaries. That tells us several things: that information is one of the few remaining growth industries in the Western world, that it is *as* important to the smooth running of the economy as the energy supply, and that it has sponsored the construction of a new means of communication that is handling larger and larger proportions of society's exchange of "intellectual property."

The question is: How will book publishing and writing fit into the new knowledge networks? Computers, of course, are already commonplace in publishing, although so far they have been rather narrowly directed to improving speed and efficiency in editing, design, typesetting, accounting, and inventory management. The entire process, however, could easily be automated and integrated so that, even with a printer attached, the primary expression of the written word would become the electronic impulse on a video screen rather than the paper page. Moreover, as the costs of electronic publishing are falling, the costs of traditional book publishing are rising exponentially. Some day it might indeed be expedient to transmit most of our written culture by two-way cable in the form of videotext. And videotext might then become a mass medium in its own right, leaving books on the sidelines where they would continue to exist as luxury goods or *objets d'art*. Projecting this to an extreme, we could see literary publishing cease to operate at the heart of our culture, just as painting and sculpture were superseded by photography and film as the main mass media of the visual arts.

It does not take a huge leap of the imagination to recognize that certain types of books naturally lend themselves to electronic publishing. Reference texts, encyclopedias, listings, and how-to books, for example — information that needs constant updating and is not usually used repeatedly. Some areas of educational and scholarly publishing could happily convert to video distribution once the appropriate networks linking schools, libraries, and universities are in place. The rule seems to be, the higher the information content, the more adaptable a work would be. On the other hand, it is often supposed that literary texts (and trade publishing generally) are more likely to remain book-centred, not only because people like reading in the bath and on the subway, or because the essence of the literary experience is rooted in an intense and intimate relationship between reader and writer. "Reading" a VDT implies an altogether different physiology and psychology from reading a book. For one thing, we are not in the habit of reading television but of watching it, and studies of brain activity stimulated by television viewing indicate that a completely different set of cognitive skills are involved. So even if there are practical reasons for paperless publishing, the cultural disadvantages far outweigh them.

This is not to say that literary publishing will be unaffected. Dave Godfrey of Press Porcépic and Stan Bevington of Coach House Press have both been exploring the possibilities of adapting electronic publishing techniques to their operations. In a brief to the Applebaum-Hébert Commission last summer, Bevington outlined how on-demand publishing (in which the book version of a text is printed only when somebody turns up to buy it) could dramatically improve the economics of small-run, literary publishing. Godfrey — Gutenberg 2's articulate, roving enthusiast — has been encouraging interest in developing small-scale, community-based, non-commercial uses for new technologies, and to that end his company has published two titles, *Gutenberg 2* and *The Telidon Book*.

HOWEVER FAR we go with electronic publishing, it already has terrific implications for writing. In one gesture, writer and publisher merge into one: both are Information Providers and it doesn't much matter, technically at least, whether an editorial process is involved. Everyperson the printer now can be Everyperson the publisher, and that plays havoc with old notions about what constitutes the act of publishing. Publication has always been associated with the manufactured object, but in an electronic world, when will a work be deemed to be "published"? When it is entered into a system, or when it is called up?

Writers have also been experimenting. Word processors are already a stock-in-trade of print journalism, and growing numbers of freelance writers are acquiring their own systems as prices drop (the cheapest available at the moment costs about $2,600). There are many theories about how far mechanical intelligence can (or should) be pushed, how much of the creative process it should be expected to simulate. But so

far word processors are being put to quite prosaic use in the editing of texts and organization of research.

Last February, members of the Writers' Union of Canada, Quebec's *Union d'écrivains*, and the Literary Translators' Association held a seminar to discuss issues relating to the care and socialization of word processors. A first concern, obviously, is copyright protection, and the proper (which is to say fair and legal) development of telematics as a subsidiary market, recognizing that it may soon be a primary market for some writers. It was also suggested that writers be compensated for submitting manuscripts to publishers on disc and in machine-readable form.

There is, however, a larger political concern having to do with ownership and control of the knowledge networks, in which there is great potential for good and evil. They could lead to an even higher concentration of power and even tighter control of information than already exists. If they remain creatures of the big corporations and big governments (who have the big bucks to invest in their development) we can look forward to greater centralization with all the dangers of manipulation that implies. Organized on a different basis, however, they could reverse the usual mass-media tendency toward uniformity. They could become tools for self-education, community participation, and, of course, cultural expression on a vast but localized scale. That won't happen on its own. As the writers' seminar concluded, government and business will have to be pushed. A revolution, after all, needs visionaries. And visionaries are hard to come by in bureaucracies. □

FEATURE REVIEW

Pride and prejudice

Are the characters in Rachel Wyatt's new novel high-principled, admirable human beings or pretentious nitwits? Perhaps a little of both

By DORIS COWAN

Foreign Bodies, by Rachel Wyatt, House of Anansi, 181 pages, $8.95 paper (ISBN 0 88784 092 2).

RACHEL WYATT'S fiction is entertaining, but sometimes hard to follow. It's a bit like a roller-coaster ride in a dream: fast and slow at the same time. Her characters trudge through scenes of mayhem, unaware of anything but their own thoughts. When at last they realize what's been going on, it's too late; it's all over, but by then some new disaster is speeding toward them. They're slow to react, trying to be contemplatives in a heartless world that laughs at them and steals anything they're not holding tightly. There's a Nabokovian cast to the way they are presented. The narrator sympathizes, seems to justify and defend them, then suddenly leaps aside for a quick look at the scene through the eyes of their worst enemies. Are they high-principled, well-intentioned, intelligent, even admirable human beings, or are they pretentious, self-absorbed nitwits? Is this sympathy or mockery? Oddly enough, it's both.

Foreign Bodies, her third and latest novel, tells the story of Ned and Ernesta Bolster, two innocents from Yorkshire who come to Canada. He has been invited to spend a year as visiting professor at Toronto's Institute for Improved Relations. He's optimistic, even enthusiastic, about his sabbatical; his duties will be light, and he'll have time to finish his book. She is not so sure she wants to leave her job and her settled life in England, but she thinks it will be good for her to be uprooted, to see new places and new people. In the back of her mind is the faint hope that she will have a love affair, though she laughs at herself for thinking of it. Ned, who feels guilty about having dragged her along with him, does his best to make her happy with the move, promising her all kinds of treats and pleasures.

"We're free, love. There'll be hot summer days. And sometimes I'll bring your breakfast to bed. . . ." But her response is wan, and a little skeptical. The truth is that they are bored with each other. Ned keeps forgetting his resolve to be extra good to her, because he can't keep his mind off his book (a sociological study of an incident of racial violence in England) and the flattering vision of himself as a published author. Musing on the capacities of the average man for violence, racial or otherwise, Ned gazes out at passersby in the street and decides that they look "as likely to turn to violence as himself to rape or Ernesta to petty theft." Little does he know.

In this book Wyatt moves away from the brittle, sarcastic fun of her first two books, *The String Box* and *The Rosedale Hoax*. Her chief targets there were such straightforward human failings as snobbery, greed, ambition, and the vast misunderstandings between the sexes, and she attacked them squarely. In *Foreign Bodies*, her approach has become more complex, her sympathies deeper; she turns her satirical eye to the relations between nations, cultures, and races (though she continues her inquiry into the war between men and women, too), and it seems she can't help taking it all more seriously. Her wit at the expense of her two main characters is almost gentle; she saves the sledgehammer (mostly) for the fools who surround them — the director of the Institute, for example, who says "The whole racial question is fairly new here," while "across Ned's mind whooped the Indians from old films and he seemed to hear the songs of chained slaves." But Wyatt jerks the carpet out from under Ned's feet in his turn. No one in this satire is allowed to represent virtue for long. When Monroe, also known as Haji, the inexplicable Pakistani "housekeeper" they find in their rented house when they arrive, offers to type Ned's manuscript for him, the staunch upholder of respect between races instantly visualizes his "precious manuscript typed out in an

incomprehensible jumble of Urdu and English" and he wants to "rush upstairs to protect it."

Wyatt's narrative techniques are inventive, but I found them, after a while, to be a little too elliptical. It gets confusing. Things happen offstage — there are muffled crashes, voices in other rooms, sirens approaching. But the foreground is usually in such close focus, and so crowded, that it all turns into an incomprehensible muddle. The author adds to the confusion by switching back and forth between the points of view of four main characters. It's sometimes very funny, and it's always a rich brew, but it's in danger of becoming *too* rich. I hope that in future novels she will slow down occasionally and give us an overview.

The same difficulty afflicts her own personal point of view, and I think this is a more serious problem. Her humour sometimes comes across as uneasy, unsure, because of the way she gives and withdraws her sympathy. It overbalances the book's structure, sending the book dipping and yawing like a wobbly boat in a storm; the reader gets seasick. If Wyatt would settle on what she genuinely likes and admires as firmly as she has on what she dislikes and finds ridiculous, her satire would have a truer aim. Once she does so, I think she will write even better books than *Foreign Bodies.* □

REVIEW

Lives of boys and men

By W.P. KINSELLA

Man Descending, by Guy Vanderhaeghe, Macmillan, 230 pages, $16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9713 4).

I HAVE SPENT a good part of my summer in the University of Iowa library at Iowa City, reading the latest offerings of American short-fiction writers. I have sampled dozens of individual story collections, anthologies, and literary magazines. The more I read of American writers the more impressed I am with Canadian short fiction. It is our genre of excellence. Per capita there are more quality short stories coming out of Canada than from the U.S.

Reading the stories of highly praised American writers only reiterates how marvellously relaxed and insightful a story-teller is Alice Munro, and points up how few writers can craft a story like W.D. Valgardson. And it seems that the critics are more and more realizing the importance of short fiction in Canada: instead of first collections being largely ignored, now, when a book of stories demonstrates excellence, it reaps the praise it deserves. A fine example is Edna Alford's devastating collection *A Sleep Full of Dreams,* which has been highly and unanimously praised by newspapers and magazines from coast to coast.

Now, we have another new and exciting voice in Canadian fiction. Guy Vanderhaeghe is a 31-year-old writer from Saskatoon, well known to those who read the literary magazines. In fact, "The Watcher," one of the most powerful stories in this collection of 12, won the *Canadian Fiction Magazine* annual contributor's prize for 1980.

In *Man Descending,* Vanderhaeghe demonstrates a great deal of poise and maturity as he explores men at various stages of life, through the eyes of narrators both very young and very old. There is also a wide diversity in tone and voice, while the moods of the stories range from manic to morose.

The best stories in any collection are invariably ones of high energy, of intensity, where no matter the moral or the message, the reader is first entertained. Such a story is "Drummer," not only the best in the collection, but one of the strongest stories I have encountered in recent years. "Drummer" can be, and I have used it as, a teaching model for the short story — voice, tone, mood, character development, are all used to perfection. "Drummer" was first published in the virtually unknown *NeWest ReView,* which now headquarters in Saskatoon; let us hope that the editors of *Best Canadian Stories* subscribe to that magazine.

In "Drummer" bewildered teenager Billy Simpson tells the story. He has a star-athlete, hell-raising older brother, who is also a bully and an informer. On a bet, the brother dates a girl Billy cares for because "she seemed like a very nice person who maybe had what Miss Clark says are principles." The older brother discovers that the girl does indeed have principles, abandons her to Billy, escaping with Billy's more worldly date. Much to Billy's chagrin the girl's "principles" dictate that to the end of the harrowing evening she is still the brother's date. At 16 Billy's life may well be in descent, as he attends the girl's church, against his

father's wishes, trying vainly to understand why the girl behaves as she does. What makes this story a bittersweet sensation is Vanderhaeghe's perfect ear for dialogue.

Billy Simpson appears again in "Cages," a brilliant story about choices, a story where man is descending literally, as well as figuratively, for the cages of the title are the elevators used to transport miners to the interior of the earth.

In the title story, Ed, a self-indulgent loser, finds his marriage breaking up. On one hand he wishes to prevent the break-up, while on the other hand the break-up fits his theory about life. Ed believes that each life and career follows an arc, peaking, then, descending. Ed believes his life is in descent. A self-fulfulling prophecy. The descent continues in the closing story "Sam, Soren, and Ed," where Ed comes at least partially to terms with his inability to will himself to do what must be done.

What these stories have in common is that in each story there is a man descending. In the award-winning story "The Watcher," a boy observes as a sleazy hippie-intellectual is brought down by the steely spirit of an old woman. In a confrontation of the strong pioneer spirit versus a product of a permissive society, there is little question of who will win, only when, and how severe the comeuppance will be.

In a number of these stories the descent is toward mental unbalance and death. In "What I Learned from Caesar," a boy, again a watcher, sees his father descend into insanity rather than accept charity. In "Going to Russia," a teacher, unable to cope, retreats into insanity. "A Taste for Perfection" and "The Expatriates' Party" deal with the nearness of death. In the former, a man learns to cope with life in an incurable ward by, for the first time in his life, making contact with another suffering human being. The latter story deals with the cruelties we inflict on ourselves and others in the name of grief. In "The Dancing Bear" an old man makes a defiant gesture while in his final descent toward death.

These are technically delightful stories with multi-themes and layers of meaning. The "death stories" though often moving and profound, are less successful than, say, "Drummer," "Cages," and "The Watcher." However, at all times Guy Vanderhaeghe is a writer in command of his subject matter; he displays a deftness of touch and maturity of vision seldom seen in first collections. These are stories to be reread and remembered. □

FEATURE REVIEW

Short but sweet

Whatever the problems, Canada's eminence in the field of short fiction persists, as two recent collections attest

By DENNIS DUFFY

The Penguin Book of Modern Canadian Short Stories, edited by Wayne Grady, Penguin, 546 pages, $7.95 paper (ISBN 0 14 00 6267 X).

Small Wonders, edited by Robert Weaver, CBC Enterprises, 176 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88794 104 4).

NEITHER OF THESE short-story anthologies is a thesis collection. The sole principle for inclusion seems to be that of quality rather than any sense of representation of a particular school or view. What makes for easy reading produces tough reviewing, unless one is content to give a sentence or two about each story.

The Penguin collection holds 24 stories, written from 1945 to the present. It's hard for the reader to come up with a top writer who has been left out, and those of the quality of Mavis Gallant, Norman Levine, Alice Munro, and Gabrielle Roy appear twice. Assume this book to be representative; what then does it tell us about the Canadian short story, then to now?

First, while literary modernism triumphed here as elsewhere in North America, the avant-garde established only a narrow beach-head in the short story. The thematic motifs of modernism-resignation, irony, discontinuity recur throughout many of these stories, but in style they for the most part avoid the fractured, "experimental," a-logical narrative modes we associate with avant-garde. No one would confuse the contents of this book with those of *The Story So Far*, for example.

This is not to state that the stories in form begin at O. Henry and conclude with Maupassant, but that their complexity of meaning is accompanied by an easily accessible mode of narration. For example, Malcolm Lowry's "The Forest Path to the Spring" remains one of the finest narratives in the collection. Stylistically it is ageless, in that it stands in the timeless mythopoeic attitude of attempting to pack a work with echo, association, and rhythmical variation and cadence. Couched in the form of a reminiscence, it forms a brief glimpse of Paradise from the creator of the Purgatorio of *Under the Volcano*. Yet, for all its complexity, the story displays the familiar pattern of a reminiscence. It encapsulates a vanished time in which the storms of life (that tore up the boat dock in the story) still could be seen as yielding to the sense of renewal symbolized by the ever-bubbling spring.

The staccato style of Gérard Bessette's "Romance" and the mythic recycling of Sheila Watson's "Brother Oedipus" link these stories closer to the avant-garde than is the case with any others included. They appear therefore as exceptions, while the remainder of the stories are "mainstream" in their methods of presentation.

The themes of the stories presented in this accessible and representative collection have been classified by the editor as dealing with "emergence from the past and acceptance of the future," a loose designation that could apply to virtually

any similar amalgam. The fact is, the stories work for the same reason the classics they taught us in high school succeed. The stories follow essentially the pattern of exposition, rising action, and revelatory climax we all learned about. Sure, the stories are more complex, their action is psychological, their implications are more subtle, their resolution is less dramatic than is the case with O. Henry. But Henry James would have had no difficulty in recognizing what lies on these pages: they tell of incidences, of moments, of processes that reveal a decisive time in a character's life. Rich in implication, subtle in form, the stories in the collection above all deal with *people* in ways we can all understand. This may reflect the editor's bias. I happen to think it demonstrates his sure sense of the best that Canadian short fiction has to offer. Any reader can discover unaccountable omissions — why is there no story of Dave Godfrey's here? — but no one can claim that any entry here ought to have been disqualified.

What may pleasantly surprise the reader is the frequency with which the stories convey a sense of life's larger possibilities. While Brian Moore's justly famed "Uncle T" comes out of *Dubliners*, with its acute perceptions of relinquished life and the acceptance of failure, Jack Hodgins's "More than Conquerors" and W.P. Kinsella's "Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa" remain splendid accounts of the imaginative and personal energies of ordinary

people. Without seeming forced, these and other stories bear the message that a person may still find a place to stand and do so with decency and dignity. Even W.D. Valgardson's grim "A Matter of Balance" displays a character who does what he must without flinching because circumstances forbid the exercise of compassion. Very much a story for the Cold '80s, its economical presentation compresses into a few pages a set of questions that could entail several volumes of casuistry.

Grady's Penguin volume, with its helpful notes on the authors of each story, deserves a wide readership, and will likely end up in classrooms. Such is the fate of solid collections.

The stories in *Small Wonders* first appeared on CBC-Radio's *Anthology* program. Even to state that recalls the immensity of the debt that letters in Canada owes Robert Weaver, producer of the program and editor of the collection. The dozen stories (relatively brief on account of air time; hence the title) range all over in their style and subject matter. Alden Nowlan's futurist fantasy on academic matters, "The Year of the Revolution," manages to be genuinely funny about a theme that has been worked to death, while Clark Blaise's "South" adds another chapter to his epic preoccupation with a Florida boyhood and displaced parents. All the stories are of this quality, and some even surprise the reader in their treatment of new subjects by a writer. Chief of these is Audrey Thomas's "Degrees," whose deft but feeling handling of a neo-colonial situation recalls that of Margaret Laurence. At a time of shrinking markets and publishers' reluctance to deal with single-author short-story volumes, *Anthology*'s endurance and quality offer grounds for rejoicing.

While it is obviously in the CBC's interest to issue this volume under its own logo, its price compares very poorly with the value of the Penguin volume. One wonders whether the writers themselves would not have been better served by commercial publication and the wider distribution that entails. Of course, most publishers wouldn't touch it, and a small press would likely have had to set the same price.

Despite all the obstacles, the three-dozen stories in these collections have made it as far as publication and (for most) republication. Sometimes issued as parts of books, sometimes as fugitive pieces, they attest to the vitality of the form and the persistence of their authors. Similar collections a decade ago would not have contained work by many of these writers, and behind these newly established authors stand newcomers whose work is now appearing in regional collections, little magazines, fiction journals, etc. An intelligent reading public exists for their work, as the publication of an anthology of (mostly) living writers by a commercial publisher attests. While the majority of the writers in the Penguin volume have attained a very assured status, that is not true of everyone included, thus making the collection more than a museum of old favourites. Try as I might, it's hard to be pessimistic about the continuation of Canada's eminence in the field of short fiction. Whatever problems may exist, the form still engages some of our finest writers, whose work continues to appear before delighted and impressed readers. □

A jest of God

After years of writing about unbelievers Graham Greene has returned to his religion in a high-spirited comedy of philosophic manners

By I.M. OWEN

Monsignor Quixote, by Graham Greene, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 248 pages, $15.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919630 25 1).

IN VOLUME XV of the Oxford History of England, A.J.P. Taylor says: "The two men who came to the front as novelists towards the end of the interwar period, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, were both converts to Roman catholicism, though this only served to increase their woe."

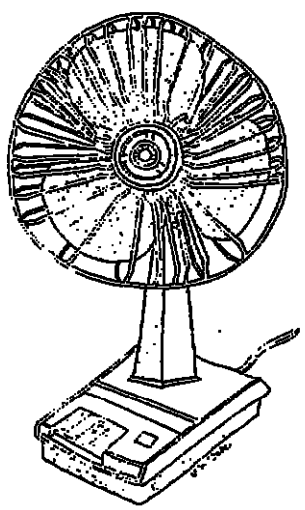
If we look back at those of Greene's novels in which his religion is the dominant subject, two things are noticeable: that they are relatively few, and that the subject has a deeply depressing effect on the author and the reader. I'm thinking of the gloomy *The Power and the Glory*, the glum *The Heart of the Matter*, and the positively repellent *The End of the Affair*, which ought to be required reading as the final test for candidates for reception into the Church; if you can accept that you will accept anything.

Since then Greene's central characters have mostly been unbelievers who take unbelief for granted as the normal human condition. This may be held to account for their misfortunes, but it does lighten the atmosphere. The very funny novella *Loser Takes All* even has a happy ending. And though terrible things happen in *The Quiet American*, *The Comedians*, and the recent *The Human Factor* and *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*, they're a joy to read, not just a duty.

When Greene had finished *The End of the Affair* and was planning *The Quiet American* he exclaimed to Waugh: "It will be a relief not to write about *God* for a change!" "Oh?" said Waugh. "I wouldn't drop God, if I were you. Not at this stage anyway. It would be like P.G. Wodehouse dropping Jeeves halfway through the Wooster series."

Now, about 30 years later, Jeeves is back. But he's stopped spreading gloom. *Monsignor Quixote* is a high-spirited comedy of philosophic manners; a lively conversation between a priest and a Communist set in the framework of a series of equally lively escapades. It's a conversation that picks up and develops the points raised in the talks between Brown and Dr. Magiot in *The Comedians*.

Father Quixote is the parish priest of El Toboso, the village in La Mancha in which his ancestor believed his imaginary lady, Dulcinea, dwelt. He's an innocent, and therefore much disliked by his bishop. But Father Quixote befriends a visiting Italian bishop by giving him an excellent lunch (horsemeat steak) and getting his Mercedes started for him. (The tank was empty.) As a result Rome elevates him to the rank of Monsignor, to his embarrassment and to the fury of his own bishop. It seems like a tactful moment to go on holiday outside the diocese. And his friend the Communist mayor of El Toboso has just suffered electoral defeat and would like a change of scene too. His name is Enrique Zancas, and since Zancas was



Sancho Panza's other family name his friend Quixote always calls him Sancho.

So they go off together in the priest's small, elderly, slow-moving car, inevitably named Rocinante. (I wonder whether there is any significance in the fact that this Rocinante is "she," whereas the original was a stallion.) They take with them, besides large quantities of Manchegan wine, their favourite books: Sancho takes *The Communist Manifesto* and Lenin's essays on Marx and Engels, Quixote takes St. Francis de Sales, St. John of the Cross, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux — his "books of chivalry," as Sancho says. To them he adds, to please his rigid young locum tenens, *Moral Theology* by a German priest named Heribert Jone, a work he hasn't looked at since his student days. I haven't found independent evidence that Father Jone was real, but I hope so. If he didn't exist, it was certainly desirable for Greene to invent him. Both travellers dip into him, and Jone on onanism, Jone on gluttony, Jone on the correct procedure for baptising a two-headed baby, provide much innocent merriment along the way.

It's a book about belief and its necessary companion — its shadow — unbelief. Each of these two believers has difficulties with some aspects of his faith, and at times with the whole thing. The priest believes in Hell "from obedience, but not with the heart," and prefers the Gospel according to St. John, which never mentions it. (Mark mentions it twice, Luke three times, and Matthew — the tax-collector — 15 times.) The mayor has a similar difficulty in reconciling the fact of Stalin with his favourite scriptures. But the recurring theme is the necessity of doubt. On the second night of the journey the priest dreams that a legion of angels rescues Christ from the cross: "There was no ambiguity, no room for doubt, and no room for faith at all . . . Father Quixote had felt on waking the chill of despair felt by a man who . . . must continue to live in a kind of Sahara desert without doubt or faith, where everyone is certain that the same belief is true. He had found himself whispering, 'God save me from such a belief.' Then he heard the Mayor turn restlessly on the bed beside him, and he added without thought,

'Save him too from belief,' and only then he fell asleep again."

Later they go to Salamanca, where the mayor once studied under Miguel de Unamuno, the liberal Catholic philosopher, poet, and novelist. He quotes him: "There is a muffled voice, a voice of uncertainty which whispers in the ears of the believer. Who knows? Without this uncertainty how could we live?"

The introduction of Unamuno is fitting in another way, since in one of the books he preached quixotism as an ideal. This would have surprised Cervantes, who portrayed Don Quixote as a man driven mad by reading too much unsuitable literature, who travelled the country prepared to kill in order to prove himself to an imaginary lover and was saved from being a murderer only by his incompetence with his weapons; in fact, a 17th-century John Hinckley.

But Greene's Monsignor Quixote isn't the Don Quixote of either Cervantes or Unamuno, though there are parallel incidents in his travels — notably when he helps an armed robber to escape, as his ancestor freed the galley-slaves; and he is pursued by Opus Dei and the Guardia Civil as his ancestor was by the Holy Brotherhood. The figure in literature he reminds me of most is Constable Kowalski in Leo Simpson's *Kowalski's Last Chance*, who also let an armed robber go. Monsignor Quixote has a better education than Kowalski, but they share a beautifully direct simplicity of thought, which leads crasser people to think them mad.

I've refrained from describing any of the incidents or many of the philosophical points made, in order to keep them fresh for future readers; so I'll certainly not describe the conclusion, beyond saying that it draws together in highly dramatic form all the themes of the comedy, and is profoundly moving; as fine an ending as Greene has ever given to a book. □

FEATURE REVIEW

Outposts of progress

Since the early 1960s, Afrikaans writers have been aware of their vulnerability. They also know they dwell at the centre of 20th-century concerns

By MARQ DE VILLIERS

Waiting for the Barbarians, by J.M. Coetzee, Penguin, 156 pages, $3.95 paper (ISBN 0 14 00 6110 X).

A Chain of Voices, by André Brink, Faber & Faber (Oxford), 525 pages, $19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 571 11874 7).

THESE TWO BOOKS represent diverging trends in Afrikaans writing: Brink's a continuing search for a correct parochialism (in the sense of drawing universal truths from the small doings of the parish), Coetzee's the obverse, an attempt to universalize by writing without any sense of place at all. Of the two, Brink's is, I think predictably, by far the more successful. But both of them stem from a natural ambivalence in Afrikaans writing, for it's a literature that is conscious of its smallness and its vulnerability while at the same time fully accepting that South Africa, which can seem almost a laboratory of poisoned human relations, is an idea at the centre of 20th-century concerns. Brink wrote much of the present work in English and translated it back into Afrikaans; he is fearful that an Afrikaans writer tied to the language and audience only of South Africa faces total silence; there is a respect for writing among Afrikaners that makes it more difficult for the authorities to silence Afrikaans writers, but, as Brink himself has seen, these scruples can easily be overcome when those authorities perceive the need.

Both Brink and Coetzee first emerged in the 1960s, a major turning point in Afrikaans literature. There were Afrikaans writers in South Africa before that, and good work had been done, but it was writing of a very different sort and with a very different purpose. Like Olive Schreiner in English, writers such as the poet van Wyk Louw turned out works celebrating, supporting, and cherishing the myths of the society they were describing. It was a comfortable literature, filled with a deep sense of place but without challenging ideas. The first intellectual generation to grow impatient with the achievements of traditional writing was educated at the Afrikaans universities of Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom in the late '50s, and when their work burst onto the literary scene in the early '60s it was greeted with a mix of hostility and relief. They were called *Die Sestigers* (the 60-ers), and though they were all, of course, very different, they did have one thing in common: a wish to be . . . disturbing.

Probably the best known of the *Sestigers* was Etienne le Roux, whose *Sewe Dae by die Silbersteins (Seven Days at the Silbersteins)* caused an uproar in the literature-conscious Afrikaans press. And the others: Karl Schoeman, whose *Na die Geliefde Land (To the Beloved Land)* shocked contemporary opinion, which had liked his first book, a traditional South African evocation of farm life; F. A. Venter, a less prickly writer who concentrated on re-examining the central myth of Afrikaans history, the Great Trek or the exodus from the Cape; Breyten Breytenbach, a dreamy poet whose romanticism later led him into pathetically inept attempts at revolutionary politics and who now is in jail; and André Brink, who was perhaps the slowest starter and looks to be the most powerful finisher of the group.

Venter and Schoeman are still writing, but their work no longer excites much interest. The new stars are J. C. Steyn, whose *Dagboek van 'n Verraaier (Journal of a Betrayer)* caused the same kind of uproar in 1976 as le Roux had a decade earlier, and, more provocatively, Elsa Joubert, whose *Die Swerfjare van Poppie Nongena (The Wandering Years*

of Poppie Nongena) gave shocked Afrikaans readers their first unflinching look at urban black life in South Africa. These two are very much in Brink's camp in their turning inwards and their clear-eyed examination of locally cherished traditions.

Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* follows two earlier novels, *Dusklands* and *In the Heart of the Country*. The latter was a short, tight, subtle exploration of the corrupt interdependence of master and slave, and I thought at the time it was an extraordinary achievement. Now, Coetzee seems to have backed away from harsh reality and has taken refuge in allegory. In a sense Nadine Gordimer did the same thing with her most recent book, *July's People*, though hers was more parable than allegory and was nevertheless place-specific; it couldn't have happened anywhere else, and it was filled with a kind of bitter veracity that gave it its power. *Waiting for the Barbarians* could be anywhere about any culture; in tone if not in setting it reminds me more of central Europe than of Africa, and though the Oppressor and Oppressed are universal archetypes, for me Coetzee's attempt to address them directly is a failure.

The story is set in a frontier outpost of an anonymous empire, which is never located geographically but has the feel of the Hindu Kush or the plains of Uzbekistan. The Magistrate, the central figure, has run the sleepy outpost of empire for decades, never quite noticing the imbalance between empire and barbarian, between powerful and powerless; he is only pushed into awareness by the arrival of some altogether tougher servants of the empire from the capital. The book takes the Magistrate from unwilling awareness to a tentative and inept act of rebellion against the state, and therefore into the status of an Enemy.

This is all very well, and it is not badly done — there are very few false moments. But throughout the book it's hard to escape the feeling that Coetzee is constantly demanding that his readers notice that the Magistrate is not simply a man living through a crisis of conscience but is all men at all times who collaborate with indecency. There is altogether too much self-consciousness about the execution.

Brink's book is another matter. Whether this is his best book I'm not sure; in some ways I think *Kennis van die Aand*, oddly translated as *Looking on Darkness*, was more successful, but it hardly matters; Brink has grown into a major writer of real power, and comparisons to Faulkner, as per a New York *Times* review, are not overstated.

Brink began writing with a series of three slim, rather conventional novels set in Paris, where he himself lived briefly in the early 1960s. Only one, I think, has been translated into English (*The Ambassador*). *Miskien Nooit (Maybe Nothing)* and *Olé* are heavily autobiographical and very much the work of a young man. But his work has been growing steadily in authority since he returned to live in South Africa and turned his attention to understanding what was happening there. *An Instant in the Wind, Rumours of Rain, A Dry White Season* — each book showed an increased sureness of touch, although even *A Dry White Season* was technically conventional, and its subject matter was the province of Nadine Gordimer, the relations between master and servant in modern South Africa.

A Chain of Voices is a historical novel, although like all good historical novels it is as much "about" the present as the past. It concerns itself with an abortive slave revolt on two isolated farms several days from Cape Town just after 1820, a time of ambivalence in Europe and of growing unease in South Africa itself. Brink has his characters, slaves and masters, speak for themselves in a series of monologues, the "chain of voices" of the title. All the characters, no matter how minor, get to put their point of view: the masters, wilful Barend and weak-willed Nicolaas van der Merwe; Galant, the slave who leads the revolt; Barend's wife Hester, whose extraordinary relationship with Galant forms the twin climaxes of the two parts of the book; the other slaves, a few "free" Hotentots kept in virtual slavery by the white farmers; old Ma-Rose, a slave woman whose sexual favours had in the past been commanded by the van der Merwes' stiff-necked old father; even a wandering civil servant from the district capital whose vice was making sexual advances to pigs. And although, inevitably, there are incongruities in using so many voices to express Brink's concerns (unlettered slaves reflecting on the condition of mastery with wryness and insight), such is Brink's control that he makes the incongruities work for him instead of against him, and midway through the novel none of them seem any longer to matter — the authenticity of time and place and character is so meticulous, and the examination of the ideas through the words of the sour, narrow, Calvinist farmers and their cowed but unbroken slaves is so recognizably true that the actual words seem to become invisible.

The title itself comes from a passage in a monologue by Ma-Rose: "We go on talking and talking, an endless chain of voices, all together yet all apart, all different yet all the same, and the separate links might lie but the chain is the truth," and the passage is a neat description of Brink's own method, using his characters to tell their own small truths and their own large lies, and through the totality coming to an understanding of how slaveholding corrupts not only the lives of the slaves but the moral imaginations of the masters. □

REVIEW

What makes Maximilian run

By PHIL SURGUY

The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick, by Morley Torgov, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 186 pages, $14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919630 29 4).

THE ONLY COMPLAINT I have with this generous, very funny novel is that the way it is being promoted undermines one of the funniest scenes to appear in Canadian fiction in quite a long time. The novel is set in a small northern Ontario city called Steelton, which resembles Sault Ste. Marie, the setting of Torgov's first book, *A Good Place to Come From*. The scene in question is the one in which Rabbi Kalman Teitelman exposes his dark, secret passion to the citizens of Steelton. The problem is that if you have read the front dustjacket flap, the publisher's publicity handouts, or any of the reviews of the novel that have appeared so far, you will already know what the rabbi's secret is. The scene is still laugh-out-loud funny. But if the secret was revealed to you without warning, as it is to the mortified Jews and incredulous gentiles of Steelton, the effect would be crippling, and there isn't that much cripplingly funny Canadian fiction.

Steelton's Jewish community is small, less than two dozen families, one of which is the Glicks. Maximilian, an only child, is growing up under the terrible burden of his parents' and grandparents' love. They want only the best for him and they have narrowed his

choices in life down to three: he can become a surgeon, a judge, or another Einstein. Anything less will break their hearts. But even so, Maximilian has a different future in mind, and he is secretly preparing for the day he can flee Steelton and the straitjacket his family is lovingly knitting for him.

Then Kalman Teitelman comes to town as a replacement for the old rabbi who, until he was run over by a bus, was preparing Maximilian for his bar mitzvah. Teitelman is a Lubavitcher, a member of a strictly orthodox sect, whose odd appearance — wide-brimmed black hat, black clothing, Charlie Chaplin shoes, red beard, and untrimmed sideburns — immediately pins the entire Jewish community under the microscope of Steelton's curiosity.

However, we are in the land of Leacock, not Richler, and the gentiles' curiosity is not malicious; in fact, they start attributing minor miracles to the rabbi. The Jews, on the other hand, find Teitelman an embarrassment and a pest.

Until he came along Steelton hardly knew they were there, which was fine by them. He proves to be not at all tolerant of little lapses in the observance of their faith. And:

> To make matters worse, there was the sermon he chose to preach for some unexplained reason during Chanukah — a festival of good cheer and gift-giving that fell early that December. Rabbi Kaminsky would have recited a passage of scripture, a song or two, and led the audience in singing Hebrew songs of rejoicing in his resolute baritone. Rabbi Teitelman, however, took the occasion to deliver a fiery message about — of all things — Evil. The dais from which he spoke, at the center of the modest sanctuary, was raised from the floor by only two or three steps. But the Lubavitcher's words cascaded down upon his listeners like a magistrate's verdict. Vanity, Greed, Lust, Hypocrisy — all these human failings were spread before them like a catalogue of sins, inviting admission of guilt.
>
> "Was he talking about *us*?" old Augustus Glick asked afterward, his disbelief bordering on outrage.

Maximilian's embarrassment is primarily that of an adolescent who is forced to endure the ridicule of his contemporaries for consorting with someone who is different — in this case, *really* different — and the heart of the novel is the story of how the rabbi and his student gradually come to trust each other and share their deepest secrets. Then one night, at the end of another extraordinarily well-written scene, Teitelman stupidly betrays Maximilian's secret plans.

Torgov first wrote *The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick* as a children's story and was then encouraged to develop it into a full-blown novel. Curiously, though, he has chosen a form that bears many resemblances to the modern "juvenile" novels that have been appearing for more than a decade now — realistic, uncondescending fiction that doesn't flinch from sex, divorce, crime, drug abuse, racism, and many other concerns that contemporary adolescents must deal with.

At their best these books are tight, sharply focused stories that differ from good "adult" fiction only in that the range and nuances of experience are somewhat curtailed and the authors' themes and lessons are delivered rather explicitly. In Torgov's novel, for instance, we find this conversation between Maximilian and his piano teacher, Derek Blackthorn, another mentor:

> "I've never told a soul about his deepest secret . . . . And I never will."
>
> "But you've just told *me*!" said Blackthorn. He peered intently into his pupil's face. "Don't you see, Max, how easy . . . how terribly easy it is for people to be less than perfect?"
>
> "But telling you now . . . it's not the same —"
>
> "Oh yes it is, Max; yes it is! If you'd kept the rabbi's secret perfectly, you wouldn't have breathed so much as a word of it . . . not even a syllable . . . not to me, not to anybody. What I'm getting at, Max, is that life is really a sloppy business. It's full of missed trains, unmade beds, friendships that are put together like puzzles and come apart in the same way. You may make a lot of things in this life, my friend: money, contacts . . . but nothing is more important than making allowances."

Fortunately, that's about as didactic as the tale of Max's struggle to keep from being stifled by his family's good intentions and come to terms with Teitelman's betrayal gets. And whether Torgov consciously or unconsciously chose the juvenile form, he has by no means written a juvenile book. His craftsmanship and his deep feeling for both the antic and the serious sides of comedy easily transcend the form and carry it off in the direction of the fable. The result is a delightful book for all ages. □

REVIEW

Scotch blend

By D.W. NICHOL

Tunes of Glory, by James Kennaway, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 200 pages, $14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919630 87 1).

The Kennaway Papers, by James and Susan Kennaway, Jonathan Cape (Clarke Irwin), 142 pages, $18.95 cloth (ISBN 0 224 01865 5).

JAMES KENNAWAY HAD, until a year ago, an unjustly non-existent critical reputation as a novelist of the late 1950s and '60s. The omission of his name from the usual rosters of contemporary writers is undeliberate — with six novels, as well as a posthumously published fragment of a seventh, Kennaway's potential for greatness had yet to unfold at the time of his accidental death.

With the help of an almost recklessly daring bid by Mainstream Publishing in Edinburgh (which has republished most of Kennaway's output) and his widow (who has assembled from her husband's notebooks and letters a poignant but uncompromising memoir of their marriage in *The Kennaway Papers*), popular and critical interest is being revived. Now, Lester & Orpen Dennys have brought out Kennaway's first novel, *Tunes of Glory*, which was originally published in the U.K. in 1956, and they are to be commended for doing so.

The English have tended to ignore Kennaway because he went to Hollywood; the Scots have largely overlooked him because he went to London; Lit Crits have eschewed him because he was a success; Hollywood has forgotten him because he didn't stick around long enough to be spat out. Born in Perthshire in 1928, Kennaway was thrust into responsibility by the premature death of his father. He later went up to Oxford (where, with a crate of champagne and some Black Magic chocolates, he courted — to the chagrin of his clan — a Sassenach's daughter), then returned to Scotland to serve as an officer in the Cameron Highlanders. Their barracks, where honour is measured as largely as drams, eventually became the backdrop for *Tunes of Glory*. After his National Service stint, Kennaway took up an editing position at Longman's, where he was allowed time off to ply his pen.

Propitious luck attended Kennaway's first novel. Published before its author was 30, *Tunes of Glory* was made into a film starring Alec Guinness, John Mills, and a shawl-clutching Susannah York. Kennaway received an Oscar nomination for his screenplay, which led to a well-padded invitation to Hollywood, which had only compounded its absurdities since the days of *The Loved One*. In a letter to his wife, who has recorded his initial reaction to the Mecca of celluloid in *The Kennaway Papers*, Kennaway wrote of a

> Hell beyond all description, money, fast roads with bitches in big box cars (not one of which, may I add, have I even spoken to. I've never felt so sexless anywhere). The feeding is gross to a degree, there is less straight vulgarity than I'd anticipated, more kind of limbo-like Hampstead garden suburb life and everywhere is miles and miles to the next place. There's a very great "relax kid" creed which surprises. I'm the most tensed up boy in the business. "You don't have to give me 100% kid; you wanna swim Jim?"

He would return to Hollywood briefly, but only out of the best of mercenary motives: to garner capital for family, travel, and the continuation of his craft.

Tunes of Glory is essentially a power struggle between the acting Commanding Officer, Jock Sinclair (tough, whisky-from-the-womb, Scots-without-saying), and his in-coming replacement, Basil Barrow (fastidious, a brandy and soda man, fresh-from-Oxford). Both contenders have been ground through the mill — Jock via Barlinnie Gaol (Glasgow's thug-academy) and Barrow (he's never, for obvious reasons, called Basil) in a Jap POW camp. In the fitness-to-rule conflict, both exhibit contrary weaknesses: Jock's natural authority is undermined by his whisky-bolstered pride whilst Barrow's artificial rigidity alienates him from his newly acquired battalion. Kennaway is artful enough to shift the balance either way without letting the reader assume that emotional exigencies will outweigh bureaucratic necessities.

Kennaway died just before Christmas 1963 while driving from London to Gloucestershire after a meeting with

Peter O'Toole. It was assumed that he'd had a heart attack at the wheel; his sports-car — a 40th birthday present to himself — went across the central reservation into oncoming traffic. *The Kennaway Papers* records the upsurges and downward spirals of James and Susan Kennaway's marriage, their success and estrangement, the wrenching permutations of adultery that were fictionally facelifted in *Some Gorgeous Accident*. Susan Kennaway presents her own and her husband's lives in a scrupulously honest document without stooping to widow's spite or appealing vicariously to the heart-battered masses.

Much of the material presented in *The Kennaway Papers*, as well as numerous typescripts of novels and screenplays, has been deposited in the archives of the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. In one box are various stenopads and notebooks containing outlines, ideas, doodlings, personal memos, nameless phone numbers. In another are carbon copies of *Tunes of Glory* (originally entitled *The Gun-Carriage*) and a 1960 shooting script. Early in the novel, just after Barrow has made his first appearance, there is an awkward silence and then,

> "You know, Jock; I once had a woman under water."
>
> Jock hardly seemed to be listening.
>
> "Aye, man? Was it salt or fresh?"
>
> Charlie sat up. He looked rather dazed.
>
> "Flesh," he said. "All flesh." But Jock did not smile.

Editorializing may be seen at its most English here: pencilled beside "I once had a woman under water" on one of the carbon copies is the comment "Isn't this a physical impossibility?" and — presumably Kennaway's — vermilion rebuttal, "No!!!" Then there is a quibble on "Flesh": "Presumably meant to be *'fresh'*." Under the fictional circumstances, Jock is understandably distracted by the thought and appearance of the man who is going to take over his command, but he still keeps his humour. Charlie, who has been paying sly visits to Jock's erstwhile lassie, feebly attempts to stir up some camaraderie with a little chauvinistic word-play and fails. Which shows how humourless editors once were. Further fastidiousness is apparent in such emendations as "bottom" in place of "bum." Kennaway stood fast by his draft.

Awkward in spots as most first novels are — Barrow's background might have been more filled in; Jock's daughter, Morag, doesn't have much of a part to play; the caricatures are often too clumped together to be distinguishable — *Tunes of Glory* flows as smoothly as Scotland's finest produce. Kennaway had an ideal blend of confident straightforwardness of narrative and pared-down lyricism. It is our loss that his talents were not allowed to reach full maturity. □

REVIEW

Fetal flaws

By HENRY MAKOW

Putzi, I Love You, You Little Square, by John Marlyn, Coach House Press, 96 pages, $6.50 paper (ISBN 0 88910 234 1).

A WOMAN TAKES an experimental drug and becomes pregnant with a fetus that speaks in a loud voice from the womb. The "unborn prodigy" (named Putzi) has an impressive vocabulary, a knowledge of science and literature, and a habit of interrupting his elders to give opinions. No, this novella is not an advertisement for the right-to-life movement; it is an opportunity for John Marlyn to speak his mind about modern society.

Marlyn, 70, was born in Hungary, raised in Winnipeg, and has lived in Ottawa since 1948. He gained recognition for his first novel, *Under the Ribs of Death* (1957), the story of a young Hungarian who tries to assimilate and make good but has success snatched away by the Depression, and is currently "polishing" another immigrant novel, one with a contemporary theme — it describes a farmwoman's struggle to acquire dignity and freedom by overcoming old-world roles and mores. An excerpt, "Good for you, Mrs. Feldesh," published in *The Dalhousie Review* (Winter 1980-81), suggests Marlyn's power to universalize the immigrant experience has grown rather than diminished.

The strength of these writings is their ability to arouse our emotions. Marlyn agrees that *Putzi* differs from his usual work; originally conceived as a play, it is a "comedy of ideas" that appeals to the mind rather than the feelings. As with the works of Aldous Huxley and Bernard Shaw (*Brave New World* and *Back to Methuselah* both influenced Marlyn), the success of *Putzi* depends ultimately on how much we understand and sympathize with the author's viewpoint.

Marlyn combines a philosophical conservatism with a deep interest in psychology. Putzi is called a "little square" by Ellen, his mother, for wanting to put order into her life. He wants her to marry Julian, a nice normal doctor and a father fit for emulation. But Ellen is incapable of a healthy relationship with a man because she feels she was rejected by her father when her younger brother was born. She vacillates madly between two other suitors: infantile Marty, who panders to her; and selfish, domineering Alvin, who intimidates her intellectually. Putzi threatens not to be born if she marries either of these "intellectual acorns." They reciprocate by calling the fetus names such as "little wart."

Marlyn believes Ellen is typical of many liberated women who seek either stronger or weaker men and are dissatisfied with both. He believes that with the decline of the traditional image of the strong trustworthy father, daughters have been denied a necessary model for healthy relations with men.

Marty and Alvin represent the post-war generation (people now in their 30s) who Marlyn believes do not have the stamina to stick to their ideals. Alvin, for example, is a '60s radical who harangues his working mother for doing nothing about war, yet complains when his dinner is late. Getting ahead is now

his chief concern, and his mother's embarrassing accent is his main complaint. Marlyn seems to suggest that the baby boomers are the victims of a mass Oedipus complex. Spoiled, they managed to supplant their fathers as the object of their mothers' love, and psychologically have no need to accomplish any more.

Marlyn has little faith in the current generation and looks forward to our children, represented by Putzi. In the "little square" he has created an unabashed, undeluded idealist. Putzi foretells a time when our children, an evolutionary rung higher, will reproach us for faintheartedness. Disillusioned as we may be, Putzi heralds a new generation whose hope and vigour are undiminished. "The world's on fire," he says, "so I want to be a fireman." □

REVIEW

Apocalypse then

By ERLING FRIIS-BAASTAD

Quantrill, by William Goede, Quadrant Editions, 246 pages, $7.95 paper (ISBN 0 86495 013 6).

KIT DALTON, who rode with the Confederate cavalry captain William Clarke Quantrill during the American Civil War, penned a quaint memoir entitled *Under the Black Flag*. In his hymn to his hero he declares that if Quantrill (or Quantrell as Dalton spells it) had died during the days covered by Greek mythology he would have been turned into a constellation and "could march triumphant through the heavens and view the scenes his genius had immortalized." Others prefer to dwell on the 150 to 200 citizens, men and probably women and children, that his band massacred in the abolitionist stronghold of Lawrence, Kansas.

Perhaps history can't decide whether Quantrill was a hero or a butcher, but British Columbia novelist William Goede invites our sympathy for his fictionalized warrior. Goede doesn't seem to have been able to decide whether he wanted to write a duster or an intellectual assessment of a gunfighter. At its best, *Quantrill* reads like a thinking person's western. There are lively if familiar six-gun duels, fist fights, narrow escapes, and a suggestion of kisses blown from saddle to saddle all described by a writer who at least owns an eye for what worked well for Hollywood.

At its worst, Goede's novel makes you suspect that the author has lessened his hero's greatness or balefulness by trying to make just another disturbed young man of him. Goede's Quantrill often has more in common with a late 20th-century creative writing instructor than with a man who effectively terrorized the American Midwest, the enemy soldiers, and his own military superiors.

Though he lessens Quantrill's impressiveness, Goede does tackle some weighty philosophical problems. Marlon Brando, in *Apocalypse Now*, delivers a soliloquy that shares some of the more cerebral concerns of *Quantrill*. Is there any justification for applying peacetime ethics and morals to the actions of warriors at work? War is disgusting business after all. Each side attempts to bring the conflict to as self-serving, quick, and inexpensive an end as possible. If an act promises to accomplish those ends, should it be avoided simply because it is abhorrent to civilized sensibilities?

In an interview with President Davis early in this novel and the war, Goede's Quantrill sounds sure of himself and of his methods; he declares that he will continue to fight as he had,

> Living close to the earth and under it if we can find a passageway. Breaking all the rules of war because by the rules the Northern armies are surely going to win.

It is a changed and slightly manic Quantrill in this novel who confesses to his wife after the raid on Lawrence, Kansas, "I knew I had made a mistake, but it was too late. Not that, Kate, not in going. I had to go. It was an evil city, there were evil men living in it, it was a city of loot, warehouses, barns, houses stocked with planters' goods, pianos, beds, tables, silverware. They had it coming to them." Goede suggests significance by the banality of that list. He often suggests when it would be more effective for him to swear. He is a creator of fiction after all; no one expects him to be an objective historian. His subject demands a more daring approach.

William Goede's hero dreams of leaving the war for a life of peace in British Columbia. The novel's back cover mentions a rumour that claims Quantrill

escaped to Vancouver Island where he was murdered. If there is anything historians seem to agree on about Quantrill it is that he died of wounds while in a Louisville, Kentucky, prison on June 6, 1865. I wish Quantrill had made it to British Columbia. An exciting and original novel could be created around the murder of a Confederate officer on Vancouver Island. If Goede is still interested in Quantrill, he might consider giving the gunfighter a chance to reach B.C. and middle age and a more convincing assessment of his own feats or depredations. □

FEATURE REVIEW

By a hair

In true whodunit style, modern research and a Swedish dentist's obsession combine to solve the mystery of Napoleon's death in exile

By HOWARD ENGEL

The Murder of Napoleon, by Ben Weider and David Hapgood, Methuen, 266 pages, $17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 458 95490 X).

AS FAR AS I know, this is the third book to deal with the murder of the Emperor Napoleon I. It's a curious historic sidelight made more curious when a quick review reveals that all three books have interlocking authorship, as conglomerates have interlocking boards of directors. The first, *Who Killed Napoleon?* (1962) was by Dr. Sten Forshufvud, a dentist from Göteborg, Sweden, with a consuming interest in toxicology and Napoleon. He co-authored *Assassination at St. Helena* (1978) with a Canadian, Ben Weider, another serious Bonaparte buff. Weider's name appears on the title page of the present volume, *The Murder of Napoleon*, along with that of David Hapgood, an American journalist and editor. A postscript just before the index informs the reader that Dr. Forshufvud cooperated with the authors in the writing of *The Murder of Napoleon*. In fact, he is its hero.

A careful study of these three titles will alert the reader to the obsessional nature of these books. But it is obsession in its most benign and agreeable form. For 27 years, Dr. Forshufvud has been driven to tell the world that Napoleon Bonaparte did not die of cancer of the stomach on that God-forsaken rock in the South Atlantic on May 5, 1821, but was poisoned wilfully, feloniously, and with malice aforethought. Somehow, a world corrupted by the horror of the 161 years since Napoleon's death has not responded loudly to the news. But that is more a commentary on our times than on the tireless work of the man from Göteborg.

The Murder of Napoleon reads like a thriller in the English style. Instead of Sir Henry Gattling-ffolkes being killed in his library at remote Farington Manor during a weekend shooting party of old friends and enemies, the greatest political figure of the 19th century, the greatest military conqueror since Alexander the Great, at the age of 51, was slowly murdered by a member of that clutch of foreigners on the island fortress of St. Helena. A good English cosy usually involves a closed community of suspects isolated from the outside world by a storm, the moors, the impassable roads or all three. At St. Helena, Napoleon was likewise surrounded by a finite number of suspects, many with a motive, and some with access. In a Christie, Allingham, or Marsh we would be content to listen to what the author told us was going on inside the suspects' heads. The narrative voice acts as stage manager moving things along toward the big revelation at the end. After Napoleon's death, most of the suspects wrote down everything they remembered about the period. Even casual visitors recorded their impressions of the caged eagle. If you can imagine an Agatha Christie in which all of the characters left diaries and memoirs telling what so-and-so said in the shrubbery, and how the Emperor took it, you will have some idea of the magnitude of the complex historical record of the final phase of Napoleon's career. Once that is understood, then the size of the historical detective work Dr. Forshufvud undertook can be grasped.

The Göteborg dentist's life was changed when he first read the memoir of Napoleon's valet, Louis Marchand, which was published as recently as 1955. Marchand had been closest to Napoleon, and his descriptions of Napoleon's symptoms and treatment aroused Forshufvud's suspicions. What Forshufvud saw emerging was a classic case of arsenic poisoning. In fact, it seemed almost a textbook example of the use of the element once popularly known as "inheritance powder." A century before Napoleon's birth, the Marquise Marie Madeleine de Brinvilliers used arsenic to do in most of her blood relations. She was a dedicated and scientific killer who tried out her potions on patients in hospital to make sure they were exactly right for her father and two brothers. If her accomplice had not left incriminating papers behind him after he perished, perhaps testing a new combination, Marie Madeleine might never have been discovered and executed. In Marchand's account of Napoleon in exile, Dr. Forshufvud recognized 22 of the 30 recognized symptoms of arsenic intoxication.

Since it was unlikely that the French government would open the red porphyry tomb under the dome of the Hôtel des Invalides to let him inspect the imperial corpse inside its six coffins to prove his theory, the doctor required a sample of the Emperor's hair. This had been removed and divided up into souvenir locks after his death; it only remained to locate one such source and beg a hair or two. When the tested sample showed 13 times more arsenic than is normally present in a human body, Forshufvud felt he was on the right track. Dr. Hamilton Smith of the department of forensic medicine at the University of Glasgow had tested the hair with a

nuclear-bombardment technique he had developed without knowing who had grown and worn the hair. Let into the secret at last, after the results were known, he published an account of his analysis in *Nature*, the respected British scientific journal. This was the first announcement that Napoleon had been murdered. In that same year, 1962, Dr. Forshufvud's first book appeared with an 1840 sketch of the well-preserved, unembalmed body of Napoleon on the cover. This caused a minor sensation and resulted in both Forshufvud and Smith being bombarded with certified samples of the imperial hair. From these, with more sensitive testing of the hairs a millimetre at a time, it was possible to trace with some accuracy the history of the crime. What he discovered was not only that Napoleon was murdered, but that he had been receiving regular amounts of arsenic from the beginning of his captivity until the end. Further, he found that this chronic poisoning was aided from time to time by periods of acute poisoning, which showed Alpine peaks on the graph of arsenic levels: ". . . if the hair were shaved at the root, on a known date [Dr. Smith's] new sectional analysis could date a dosage of arsenic with great accuracy, indeed almost to the day. . . . " From such samples it was determined that the poisoner was someone who remained on the island from the beginning until the end. That eliminated several suspects.

In cases of arsenic poisoning in the classic style, such as in the de Brinvilliers case, the ending is arranged so that arsenic is not the immediate cause of death, and is seldom detected in an autopsy. The trick is to finish the job with antimony salts and cyanide. On his deathbed, Napoleon was given tartar emetic, high in antimony, orgeat, a drink to which cyanide containing bitter almonds had been added, and calomel, a wonder-drug of the day, but in the presence of the other ingredients, deadly.

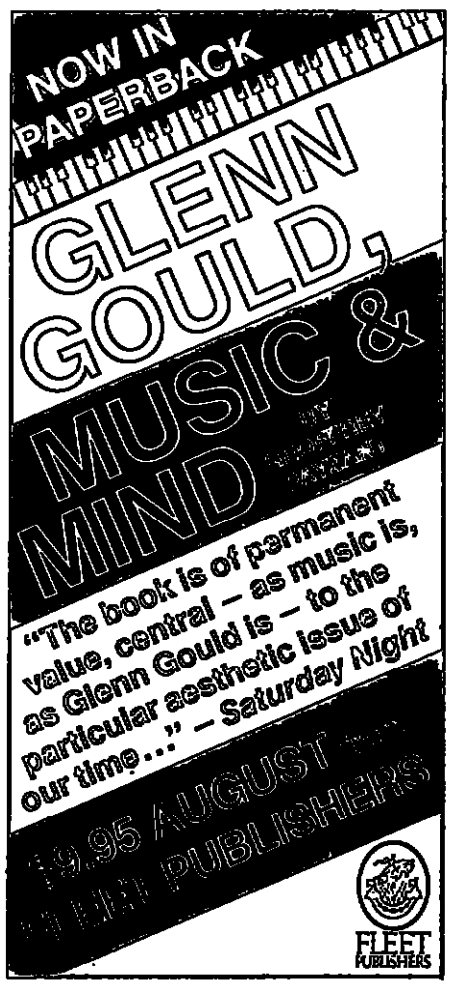
I once described Napoleon's symptoms to Agatha Christie, who remarked that they argued a cautionary tale about the use of purgatives. I had written to her after reading Forshufvud's first book, trying to get her interested in doing a radio program about Napoleon's death. As it happened, neither she nor the CBC was interested. Later, in Napoleon's bicentennial year, I managed to get interviews recorded with most of the principals including Dr. Forshufvud and Dr. Smith. The recordings Judith Walle sent me from Europe were distorted by some recent criticism levelled at the Napoleon sleuths. Instead of telling the story, they defended themselves. I did manage to get a good item from the material, but it wasn't the breakthrough I'd hoped for. Indeed they failed to embody their own excitement in the story.

Judging by the first two Napoleon books, Forshufvud and Weider needed the writing skill finally provided by co-author Hapgood. In *The Murder of Napoleon* the cast of characters, which is huge, never gets out of hand. Here we have a blow-by-blow account of the Emperor's life after he met his Waterloo until his first burial. Interlaced are chapters dealing with the progress of Dr. Forshufvud's detective work. Sometimes you feel led by the hand through the rooms at Longwood, the Emperor's last home; sometimes the book feels padded, as though the number of relevant known facts could be written on the back of an envelope; sometimes the technique of beginning a chapter by jumping into the middle and then retreating to the start makes you want to reach for the tartar emetic, but in the main the writing serves the intention well enough. It is an exciting read, and very cathartic as the revealed killer is such a nasty piece of work.

The authors' relentless construction does admit some surprises along the way, to say nothing of red herrings. For instance, Napoleon himself thought that he was being poisoned and insisted upon an autopsy. But he suspected the English governor of the island, Sir Hudson Lowe, one of the dimmer bulbs in the British colonial service in an age not distinguished for high wattages. Napoleon's last campaigns were fought against this suspicious tyrant, who fretted over delivering a gift marked with the imperial monogram, because he had been instructed that his prisoner was to be addressed simply as General Buonaparte. Whenever Napoleon complained about his stomach or kidneys, the governor saw red, because such trouble could be traced to the unhealthy climate. His illnesses were considered "diplomatic." When two naval doctors suggested that his complaints were well-founded, they were dismissed from the service.

Forshufvud first approached the French historians in the early 1960s and was welcomed enthusiastically. But when they had time to reflect that the killer might prove to be a Frenchman, they set up a barrier to any further help from that quarter.

Another curious thing: one night Napolebn found the wife of one of his officers deeply immersed in a biography of that famous poisoner Marie Madeleine de Brinvilliers. Strange that



that book should have found its way to Longwood. Perhaps it was a gift from the Count d'Artois, the brother of beheaded Louis XVI and the reigning Louis XVIII, to the murderer.

In a book about the assassination of Lincoln, the president hardly appears as a character. His greatness aside, he is a tall inert figure carried from the theatre across the street where he dies without regaining consciousness. In the murder of Napoleon, the Emperor is never far from the centre of the action. He is involved in his death and even beyond it, since it was at his own insistence that a detailed post-mortem was conducted. It is interesting to compare the figure in the Abel Gance film with the imprisoned and doomed personage on view here. He dominates his people with a barrage of questions whenever there is a scrap of news or gossip. He sees through the petty squabbles of his staff and pinches the ears of his associates playfully. He banters and plays practical jokes on Betsy Balcombe, the lively teenager cast up on the same inhospitable shore, and shares with her his store of licorice. The eagle with his wings clipped was still self-deluding both about his wife, Marie-Louise, and about his future. But you get the feeling that in captivity he regained something of the common touch that may have got lost in the endless corridors at the Tuileries. It is not without some justice that the British commanders feared that their own troops might be won over by this charismatic Corsican.

There is out there somewhere an audience ready to believe that Bacon wrote Shakespeare, that Marlowe wrote Bacon, that Richard III was a saint with a bad press, that Joan of Arc was a man, that Sherlock Holmes's Watson was a woman, that Zapata is in the hills, that Jesus is a mushroom, that Gretzky is twins, and that Napoleon was murdered. Well, it now appears that he *was* murdered. Shall we have another look at the tomb in Stratford-on-Avon? □

FEATURE REVIEW

Armageddon and beyond

Roderick Haig-Brown's posthumous essays make illuminating reading, if only because they fall outside the realm of the books he wrote during his life

By GEORGE WOODCOCK

Writings and Reflections, by Roderick Haig-Brown, edited by Valerie Haig-Brown, McClelland & Stewart, 222 pages, $16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 3766 X).

THE UNPUBLISHED or uncollected remnants of a writer's work are almost as much a problem to his posthumous editors as his juvenilia. If he has been successful in his lifetime, the chances are that some at least of his remains — perhaps most of them — will be items about which he himself has harboured doubts. And here arises a conflict between the scholarly desire for completeness and the aesthetic desire for excellence. If the writer is important, the warts-and-all approach is probably necessary; the penalty is that the volumes of remains are likely to be less interesting and less inspiring than the books over whose publication the writer presided in his lifetime.

Writings and Reflections is the last volume of a trilogy, collectively entitled *From the World of Roderick Haig-Brown*, which gathers together the uncollected and sometimes unpublished works of the British Columbian naturalist and writer; like the other volumes, it is edited by his daughter, Valerie. In the case of Haig-Brown the situation is complicated by the fact that in the last years of his life, from the publication of *Fisherman's Fall* in 1964 until his death in 1976, he wrote and published very little and tended to concentrate on the other and more public aspects of his many-sided life. It was almost as if he believed he had said everything that needed to be said in writing.

Yet a mass of uncollected essays and speeches and other fragments remained at his death, and now in these three volumes they are offered to the many readers who saw Haig-Brown as one of the best Canadian prose writers. I admit to disappointment at the first two volumes of the trilogy: *Woods and River Tales* and *The Master and His Fish*. They covered roughly the same area of experience and observation as his notable earlier books like *Measure of the Year* and *Fisherman's Spring*, and in many cases it was clear that these were the weaker pieces that occur in every writer's career, works that Haig-Brown either did not intend to collect or could not fit into any volume he published. I put the books down with the feeling that the only thing they really told me about Haig-Brown was that like all of us he had moments when the muse was sleepy; but that, as a fellow writer, I already knew must be the case.

Writings and Reflections is a different and much more interesting book, for it contains good occasional essays that were uncollected mainly because their subjects fell outside the areas of the books Haig-Brown published in his life. In some of them he discusses specific writers, and these essays are interesting because Haig-Brown has chosen subjects close to his heart, and in writing about Isaak Walton and Thomas Hardy (who came from his family's county of Dorset) and his author father Alan Roderick Haig-Brown, he reveals a good deal about his own origins in the English countryside and the way those early experiences opened his perceptions so that he became in the end so excellent an observer of western Canadian landscapes and their wild inhabitants.

In other essays, Haig-Brown talked in more general terms about the writer and his problems. For one — "The Writer in Isolation" — I have a special affection, since Rod wrote it for me to publish in the first number of *Canadian Literature*

in 1959. In it he talked of himself as an example of "the writer who, by accident or design, has placed himself and done his work largely beyond the reach of intellectual groups or associations." That, of course, is the situation of many writers in a country so large and so regionalized as Canada, but, as Haig-Brown points out, the idea that such writers are isolated is largely illusory, since they are linked by past encounters, by reading, by common strains of thought, with the broader world of literature. Moreover, as he also suggests, once a writer has formed his style and has decided on his general direction, there are positive perils to too close an involvement in literary circles.

> I am fearful of too much close analysis of style and purpose, because I fear it may destroy both. And I believe too much talk before audiences, however small and select, wastes a writer's substance.

To that, having long refused to take part in Canada Council-sponsored reading and talking tours, I would say a loud Amen! Haig-Brown knew that so far as the creative side of his life was concerned, a writer's role is to write and nothing else.

This of course did not mean that Haig-Brown lived in any kind of ivory tower. So far as his community and his beloved region of Pacific Canada were concerned, he was the reverse of the reclusive writer. He went off willingly to the Second World War in 1939, and eloquently gave his reasons in an essay written at the time, "If Armageddon's On." He was for many years the lay magistrate of the small Vancouver Island town of Campbell River, and his experience became the subject of an interesting piece on "The Lay Mind in Law." He had much to say about integrated education; there are three pieces on the subject in this collection. And from 1969 to 1972 he served as chancellor of the University of Victoria. Another group of five pieces — among the best in the volume — cluster around the conservation of natural resources. It was a result of his conservationism that Haig-Brown worked on the International Pacific Salmon Commission from 1970 to his death.

Haig-Brown felt deeply the need to serve his fellows. This made him a good Canadian but also a passionate regionalist and an internationalist, a combination of attitudes that precluded any kind of narrow nationalism. Indeed, there was nothing narrow in any way about Haig-Brown. His Christian convictions are evident, but he never talks obsessively about them. He regarded it as his privilege to criticize all political parties as they manifested their beliefs in practice, and in one of his essays ("An Outsider Looks at Education," 1950) there emerges a highly radical statement that ironically reminds me of one of our conversations long ago:

> It is my conviction that all government is evil. It may be a necessary evil, or the evil may be materially limited, but government remains evil because it is the delegation or assumption of powers over individual citizens by a group, however small. It can be benevolent, even constructive or creative, but the inherent evil still remains. It is a reduction of the individual for the sake of the mass.

Now that strikes me as a fair definition of the attitude generally known as philosophic anarchism, but Rod would never have actually called himself an anarchist, for a reason he made clear to me at a dramatic moment in my own life. In 1956 Rod was a member of the committee searching for an editor to prepare the anthology celebrating the centenary of British Columbia in 1958. Rod wanted me to be the editor, since he felt I had the wide literary experience combined with regional interests that seemed to him necessary. But I had just been denied a visa to teach in the United States because of my anarchist past; this got to the ears of the search committee, and the more timid members felt it would create a scandal in those Cold War days if I were selected; so Rod was overruled and a safe, dull academic was chosen in my place. "Why did you ever give yourself a label?" Rod said to me afterwards. "Philosophically I agree with almost everything you stand for, but because I never identify myself with a movement, I am free to say what I like without the kind of troubles you bring on yourself by carrying a tag." And he was right from his own viewpoint as a writer, but not necessarily from mine, since I have always operated within a philosophical perimeter that needs definition.

Certainly, if there is a common strain to the essays on so many subjects gathered in *Writings and Reflections*, it is that of a mind freely operating. Sometimes what Haig-Brown says is obvious; sometimes it has that bland sententiousness to which all essayists are occasionally tempted; but it is always honest, and in character, and usually illuminating. □

REVIEW

True Norse

By W.D. VALGARDSON

Icelandic Settlers in America, by Elva Simundsson, illustrated by Nelson Gerrard, Queenston House, 168 pages, $10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919866 55 7) and $6.95 paper (ISBN 0 919866 56 5).

The Vikings and Their Predecessors, by Kate Gordon and Robert McGhee, National Museums of Canada, illustrated, 68 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 660 10751 1).

The Icelanders, edited by David Arnason and Michael Olito, Turnstone Press, illustrated, 129 pages, $14.95 paper (ISBN 0 88810 050 8).

WILL KRISTJANSON in his book *The Icelandic People in Manitoba* says that the Icelandic immigrants to Canada were

> a people unfamiliar with grain-farming, industrial life, mining, and lumbering. They were not accustomed to machinery, for their haying implements were a scythe and a hand-rake. They were unused to war, and military life, for there was not a soldier in the land; unused to regimentation of any kind, for as late as the final decade of the twentieth century there was only one policeman in the country.

Add to this that these immigrants were poverty-stricken, driven out of Iceland by political repression, earthquakes, and volcanic eruption and you have a recipe for disaster. That any survived is commendable; that any prospered is a miracle.

As desperate as these people were, they were different from most other immigrant groups in their widespread literacy. Although they were without money — and that meant travelling on boats previously used for cattle, without proper food or sanitation — they carried books across the ocean, then overland from Nova Scotia to Ontario, then to Lake Winnipeg. In the face of scurvy, smallpox, and endless deaths, they refused to give up their personal libraries. During their first winter in New Iceland, they circulated a handwritten paper. In 1876 there was a dreadful smallpox epidemic, but even then plans were made for the establishment of a publishing firm. Shares were sold to the colonists and the first issue of the paper *Framfari* was published in 1877. So great was the interest in writing and reading that eventually they produced 41 volumes of poetry — including Stephan G. Stephansson's *Andvokur (Night Watches)* in six volumes — 22 volumes of fiction, and a seemingly endless stream of non-fiction.

Icelandic Settlers in America follows in this prose tradition. It is a summary account of various stages and important events in the history of the Western Icelanders. Like its predecessors, it emphasizes events, and where it does refer directly to people, it deals with them in an objective third person. The unfortunate result is that these individuals never come alive. Many of the incidents described are quite dramatic, but they are robbed of their drama by being rendered impersonal. For example, the following information is visually staggering but it is recorded with the same intensity as a list of dates of immigration:

> Early in August the expedition started off. There were thirty children in the group, and those who were big enough had to walk. . . . Children around age five or six tired easily, but if they lagged behind they were driven with a whip.

If *Icelandic Settlers in America* suffers from trying to cover far too much, *The Vikings and Their Predecessors* succeeds admirably in meeting its narrow goal. It is not really a book but a catalogue for a museum show of the same name. Yet, even if one has not had the chance to see the show, the catalogue is worth reading.

It provides a quick history, then places the age of the Vikings within that context. The major part of the narrative is taken up with descriptions of Viking life. Emphasis is placed on craft, art, and culture. The purpose of the exhibition was to counteract the dreadful distortions of Viking life created by the popular press and Hollywood. (Vikings did not wear helmets adorned with cow's horns, damn it.) With a clear text and excellent illustration, the book makes clear the Viking contribution to a whole array of the arts including *cloisonné*, filigree, and gilding. Unfortunately, neither the exhibit nor this catalogue is going to have much luck in overcoming the effects of late-night reruns with Kirk Douglas running about in fake furs.

The Icelanders, a tape recorder, archival picture book with commentary by David Arnason, has any number of limitations, but it does a particular task

so well that they are of little importance. Arnason clearly recognizes these limitations in the preface when he states, "This is not a history. It is a journey into memory and myth, a collage of photos, remembrances, poems, statements and fragments."

The Icelanders falls completely outside the written tradition in the Icelandic-Canadian community. The tradition is that pain and suffering, no matter how great, should not be mentioned. A hero would be, for example, someone who not only walks on it, but who, when the boil bursts, does not flinch nor hesitate. (And you thought the Chinese were inscrutable. If the Icelanders had only known Kung Fu, they too would have a TV series in which they carried around red-hot hibachis to brand their arms.)

This tradition has its roots in a country where instead of Santa Claus coming at Christmas, elves arrive, not to bring gifts, but to steal. In Canada, when the tiny community found itself isolated in an impossibly large land, where, in Kinmount, every child under the age of two died, and where nothing could be done to prevent the ongoing tragedy, there could not help but be pain, fear, and anger. With those feelings widespread, virtue became the ability to keep going and, since any breakdown by one member was likely to paralyze the community by releasing pent-up emotion, there was an unspoken conspiracy to remain silent. The reward for this silence was survival. The cost was a denial of each individual's humanity. It led, eventually, when carried forward even though times had changed, to a creative aridity. Poetry became form without content. Fiction dealt with surface. Nonfiction concentrated on facts. There was a denial of the powerfully dramatic material that infused the daily lives of the people.

The Icelanders is a first attempt at acknowledging the dignity and heroism of ordinary people within the Icelandic community; it makes that attempt in the face of a long and stern tradition. The first-person anecdotes may not be history but they are human, and without humanity history is meaningless. One woman recounts:

> Most bitter of all, for me, it was to see my little Gudrun suffering intensely and to be unable to ease her suffering. She kept nothing down. There was little milk to be had and what there was, was not good. . . . She died at ten o'clock [*this was after nine days*] in the evening of Saturday, the eighteenth of October. Jon Ivarson made the coffin.

The Icelanders would be a better book for having a deeper and wider range of anecdotes — enough, at least, for the author to have been able to eliminate the poetry and the comments written specifically for the book. Neither has the power of judiciously chosen first-person accounts.

In a larger sense, *The Icelanders* and other books like it have an important part to play in Canadian society. Ethnic groups outside the Wasp-French tradition have been denied a place in Canadian history. Their accomplishment, their triumphs and tragedies, have been ignored. All three of these books will help to rectify that. □

REVIEW

The perils of Pauline

By GAIL PEARCE

Pauline: A Biography of Pauline Johnson, by Betty Keller, Douglas & McIntyre, illustrated, 317 pages, $19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88894 322 9).

IN 1861 THE YOUNGEST of Emily and George Johnson's four children was born and christened Emily after her mother, Pauline after the sister of the Emperor Napoleon. This was success at last for George, who had tried in vain to name his oldest children Napoleon Bonaparte and Josephine. The exploits of Pauline's ebullient, improbable father, Mohawk chief and devoted Christian, anglophile, and adulator of Napoleon, provide some of the brightest moments in an otherwise dull and disappointing book.

Betty Keller rapidly lays to rest the myth of Tekahionwake, virtuous and innocent Indian princess and poetess. Pauline Johnson was only partly Indian, and borrowed her great-grandfather's name. She was assertive, manipulative, and charming, and spent more of her time giving public recitals of her poems than writing them. Today her poetry is deservedly ignored.

Emily Johnson was an English Quaker. George, who had some white blood, was government interpreter on the Grand River Reserve in Ontario. The family lived at Chiefswood, an elegant two-storey house on the reserve but separated from its life by the river and by Emily's obsession with "aristocratic" behaviour. Pauline's health was poor and her childhood restricted: displays of emotion and intimacy were discouraged and topics of conversation strictly censored. However, she started composing poems before she could write, read widely, and paddled the canoe that figures so prominently in her peotry.

After George Johnson's death in 1884 Emily and her two daughters moved to Brantford. Pauline began to publish poetry in magazines, and in 1892 she was invited to recite at a literary evening in Toronto. As a schoolgirl she had discovered a talent for acting, but her family regarded actors as dissolute. Public recitals provided a more acceptable outlet for her abilities, and her Toronto performance marked the beginning of an extraordinarily successful 17-year career that took her to England, the States, and across Canada again and again. She was billed as an Indian and delighted her audiences with war whoops and Indian dress; for the poems that weren't about Indian subjects she put on evening dress and drawing-room charm. In 1909 she retired to Vancouver and wrote short stories and magazine articles, mostly based on West Coast Indian legends. She died of breast cancer in 1913.

Most of these key facts can be learned from the jacket blurb, which promises the story of an unusual, intriguing woman. Pauline undoubtedly was intriguing and unusual, but anyone who is not a devotee should have second thoughts about reading on. To be fair, it is not the author's fault that the personal papers that could have given insight into Pauline's character were destroyed by her sister Eva after her death, or that a life so interesting in outline turns out to be so boring in detail. It is rather like

meeting a man who says he has spent all his life travelling, and then hearing about a life of commuting on the Montreal-Toronto train. The stopping train.

Betty Keller has reconstructed Pauline's itineraries in painstaking detail. It's a good piece of detective work, but the result is a catalogue — of railway stops, hotels, recital programs,

who Pauline met where and who she might have met. No amount of padding can hide the repetition and monotony of 17 years travelling the same circuits, and there aren't even any "human-interest" stories to leaven the dough. Pauline's puritanical upbringing inhibited her relationships with men. There are hints of one real love affair, but they have been deduced from suspicious silences rather than from fact. Eva, determined to protect the myth, destroyed the records of a year with particular thoroughness.

The book includes too much information about insignificant people and not enough about the artists, writers, and actors Pauline met on her travels. Instead of a pointless anecdote about the child of a friend, it would have been nice to find more than a passing mention of Burne-Jones, Jerome K. Jerome, or Beerbohm Tree. Trivia are exaggerated. Did Pauline wear her famous Indian costume for her first recital, or grey silk, or white silk? We are held in suspense for a long paragraph, only to learn that nobody knows.

Given the limitations of the material, what more could have been done with this biography? There are some interesting insights into the gruelling routine of professional recitalists: the hick towns, the seedy hotels, trains delayed for days by blizzards and washed-out bridges, struggles to be heard against mobs of cat-calling boys. However, there could usefully have been a more thorough analysis of theatre and entertainment in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. It would be easier to appreciate Pauline's amazing popularity if one knew more about the full range of entertainment available, both light and serious, and its position in social and cultural life.

More social history would also have been helpful in relation to Pauline's mixed heritage. One of the most interesting aspects of her character is the conflict she herself described: "There are those who think they pay me a compliment in saying that I am just like a white woman. My aim, my joy, my pride is to sing the glories of my own people." However, she seems to have had little to do with her own people during her childhood. How well could she in fact have communicated with the Indians of the Grand River Reserve? What kind of lives did they lead? Did they ever really accept her flamboyantly dressed, anglicized father? How did they react to her determinedly Indian public performances? All these questions are left unexplored.

The only really favourable thing that can be said about *Pauline* is that it sets the record straight on the facts of Pauline Johnson's life. It might have been better to leave us with the myth. □

REVIEW

Faith, hope, and clarity

By ALBERT MORITZ

Miramichi Lightning: Collected Poems, by Alfred Bailey, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 187 pages, $7.00 paper (ISBN 0 86492 006 7).

The Way Home, by Elizabeth Brewster, Oberon Press, 104 pages, $15.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 427 2) and $7.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 428 0).

ALFRED BAILEY'S *Miramichi Lightning* reveals him afresh as one of Canada's most accomplished and rewarding poets. Exceptionally varied in form and tone, Bailey's poems range from graceful lyrics to difficult meditations, to flights of brilliant fancy and word play. Every page shows the rare and wonderful combination of meticulous workmanship with unfailing invention. Each poem is different, perfectly adapted to its function, whether this is hard intellectual work or biting satire.

Bailey is the master of a style and rhythm — or rather, several styles and several rhythms — all his own. He impresses sometimes by a strenuous honesty that knots his lines, and sometimes by the generous but always accurate drive of the verse that bears his fine images:

Blue is my sky peter
and white my frayed gull.
We had begun to sail
into the milky magma,
the gull's cry
and the moon's tail
beyond the glassy ports and the
squeaking cordage
where the long waves leap
and the crests of the wind reform their
ragged continents.

Such a passage is invigorating in the way it moves deftly out of harbour into the rolling level of Bailey's sky-sea, where the waves *leap* just as the next last line leaps. It is exhilarating in its serious fancy, a Shelleyan space journey in an enchanted boat to the regions of humanity's deepest fear and hope, the sea beyond death where, "armed with no measure of the fathom's track,/we sink and die/and rise again unknown . . . ."

This poem, "The Unreturning," is one of Bailey's classics, and shows his

ability to move effortlessly and fittingly from bewitching rhythms to prosaic explication, from brilliant imagery to dense abstraction. His word choice, too, is "feat" and "mete," to use two of his favourites. Bailey is one of those poets (such as Hopkins and Crane) whose poetry seems able to accept *any* word; there is no concept of proper diction filtering the language here. In the passage above, magma and peter (meaning a Peterborough boat but with a pun likely intended) are words not found in typical poetry books. Elsewhere Bailey makes surprising, apposite, delightful use of words such as bogan, trull, eshaton, tide-rip, swale basalt, hominid, sachem, judder, and intervale.

But there is more to Bailey than the ability to express himself with precision and verve. His work attains the intensity and depth of major poetry owing to the persistence with which he probes a few central questions, fully uniting his formally varied poems.

The most urgent of these questions is that of faith, broadly seen as an inner sense of meaning and worth that can give human beings a creative, end-directed life. Commenting on Bailey's *Border River* in 1952, Northrop Frye noted "a religious feeling in which the central virtue is hope rather than faith." But it is a hope that seeks faith and defends the possibility of faith. It expresses itself in the skepticism with which Bailey, the man of science, rejects prideful human claims that life's essential nature can definitively be pronounced material and absurd. It expresses itself in the love with which the poet treasures up all the controverted hints of purpose that he finds in nature and in human striving.

Directed by a conditional vision
we gain a momentary credence,
fading then like a crow's flight
into an antidote of non-being,
our landscape a midden of cast-off
universes,
product of makeshift indentures,
obsolescence miraculously, and without
end,
spawing forth, in unpremeditated
seasons,
the water of life to mend a wasted arc.

Here Bailey reproduces the process by which faiths wither to artificial "antidotes" to human dread, and — because we cannot embrace beliefs no longer felt merely because they are still needed — are cast on the midden. And he goes beyond, to the mystery by which from dead faith springs a new faith in the form of a new vitality. Bailey's final two and a half lines gush forth from the constricted rhythms and abstractions of the passage with the freedom of living water.

The full richness of Bailey's poetic world cannot be described: it must be experienced. It is interesting that *Miramichi Lightning* was nominated for the Governor General's Award this year but lost to F.R. Scott's collected poems. Given Scott's place in Canadian literary history, the choice was perhaps inevitable. But Scott cannot be compared as a poet to the author of "The Unreturning," "The Isosceles Lighthouse," "Regression of the Pelasgians," "Skull on Scarp," "Angel Gabriel," and "Observations After Kant."

With Elizabeth Brewster's verse we enter another, though somewhat parallel world. It is a world Bailey helped foster: Brewster's first poems appeared in *The Fiddlehead*, which Bailey was instrumental in founding in 1940. The poems in *The Way Home* have the Brewster qualities often noted before: simple and direct language, frank emotion that can become maudlin and flat, an atmosphere humid with nostalgia. The general lack of tension is due to the fact that Brewster's celebration of life does not seriously test itself against life's problems.

Deep down, at a level her poetry sometimes skirts, she is anguished over time's passing and the impossibility of permanently hugging to herself all times, all peoples, all sights and sounds of the earth. The centre of the book can be found in two poems, "Ghost in Quispamsis" and "Sunday Morning on the River Bank, Saskatoon." The first rescues itself from a prosaic, irrelevant opening to become a pained imagining of afterlife:

Oh, the sorrow of being reduced
to a wind in a passageway,
an explosion of energy beating
against walls
inarticulate fists of anger . . . .

This dying into the non-human, becoming mere energy, a bit of the world-stuff — this is the ultimate terror and defeat for the extremely human love Brewster champions. Yet her resolution is only to say, "Ghost, if I come back too,/I hope I have a voice . . . ." And then in the following poem, "Sunday Morning," she gives way to a hymn — a lovely one — in praise of time passing through a park. It is as if the questions of the ghostly night were a bad dream that blew away.

But the poet has not sought and earned any sensual or materialist resolution; she has simply rolled away from her difficulty, and in fact she has shirked the responsibility her love entails. Perhaps the finest poem in the volume, "The Hoop," follows a similar pattern. It movingly recalls Brewster's childhood realization of what her love implied: the need to know and cherish the whole human race back to Adam, the whole world back to creation and beyond. By the end, she recalls having wanted "the end of time/when Alpha and Omega meet." However, this want remains merely a wish, expressed here in brilliant rhetoric, but in essence only a version of the feeble wish spoken to the ghost at Quispamsis.

Brewster cannot bear to face those apparent limits of our condition that are curtly indicated by Bailey in a single dry question:

Is it reasonable to expect posterity to go on reliving the suffering of others forever?

Her excellent poem "Raising the Dead" touches on these matters in an oblique way, repudiating naive desires to see the dead just as they were, but preserving a somewhat ambiguous hope of "a new

creature." Outside of these four poems, Brewster's book offers her sunny enjoyment of nature and people, her sanity and good humour, her wry observation and knack with an anecdote: estimable gifts that result in pleasant writing. But this work certainly does not indicate the way home. □

INTERVIEW

Once you leave your homeland, says Rachel Wyatt, you never lose the sense of dislodgement — a feeling of unreality that pervades her novels

By WAYNE GRADY

RACHEL WYATT was born in Yorkshire, England, and wrote for *The Guardian* and *Punch* before coming to Canada in 1957. She began writing radio plays for both the CBC and BBC, and her first novel, *The String Box* (1970), is a satirical insider's look at a national broadcasting network. Her second novel, *The Rosedale Hoax* (1977), is also satirical: a devastating portrayal of the absurdities of life in a wealthy urban enclave. Her most recent novel, *Foreign Bodies* (reviewed on page 13), has been adapted by Wyatt into a two-part play to be aired this fall on CBC-Radio. She is currently at work on a fourth novel, *The Winning Side*; a stage play called *Geometry*, scheduled for Toronto's Tarragon Theatre in April; and a television script for Jim Henson's new Muppet series, *Fraggle Rock*, now being taped in Canada. She spoke with Wayne Grady in her Toronto home, where she lives with her husband Allen, about one of the principal themes in her work: the sense of unreality experienced by those who have exiled themselves from their country:

Books in Canada: *There are several differences between your new novel,* Foreign Bodies, *and the first two. The obvious one is that this time your central character is a woman.*

Rachel Wyatt: Yes, I did realize that I'd been writing about men. I'd ask editors and critics, "Does he seem like a man? Does he think like a man?" And they would say, "Oh yes, that's fine." And then I began to wonder why I was doing that. I don't really have an answer, except that at some deep level I suppose I felt that men were more interesting to read about. I don't think that anymore.

BiC: *Perhaps the situation you were satirizing — the Rosedale syndrome — affects men more than women.*

Wyatt: Yes, it had to be a man in *The Rosedale Hoax,* because he was leaving all those things — his wife, his job, his home, his children. And she had to be what she was so that he could work out his life.

BiC: *In* The String Box, *though, at the very end Mary finally becomes a real person. John's been working at becoming a real person all through the novel, but you don't realize that Mary has too, until the very last page. Is Ernesta in* Foreign Bodies *a development of Mary?*

Wyatt: Yes, she's a sort of up-to-date Mary. And I think there is something personal in that.

BiC: *When you first came to Canada did you feel "dislodged," as Ernesta does?*

Wyatt: Oh yes. I don't think I realized how severe it was for some time, but it was there. We had a small family, and of course with a small family you just get

PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH KAPLAN

Rachel Wyatt

on with doing things every day. In many ways things were easier here, domestic things like machines and so on. When we lived in a flat in Portsmouth, I had to wash the children's clothes in the bath, and was at the same time at the mercy of one of those geysers that, if it's in the right mood, allows you to have hot water a drop at a time. Those things are really a small part of life but then seemed quite important, and they were better here. But there *was* a mental dislodgement. *I had just begun to write* when I came here, and I found the markets were quite different. Nobody knew me. In England I'd done some newspaper pieces — short, funny things that one can write when one is doing six other things at the same time. I found no market for those here. The CBC was willing to let me do talks from time to time, and then I started doing radio plays. But the dislodgement from your own country, from the place where you've been brought up, is something I don't think you can ever get over.

BiC: *What's wrong with Ernesta? She's older than Mary, and she seems to be going through a textbook case of menopausal depression. Is it that? Or is it more her sense of dislodgement, of being suddenly deracinated?*

Wyatt: She has a lot happening to her. Being away from home, certainly being attracted to Monroe, and to that strange poet. She feels she has to go back home to find out what it is all about. I think deracinated is right; and her anger. Not so much anger at her husband Ned, but anger at herself, at allowing herself to be conned by Ned once again, at being talked into giving up her job and her life in England to follow him here.

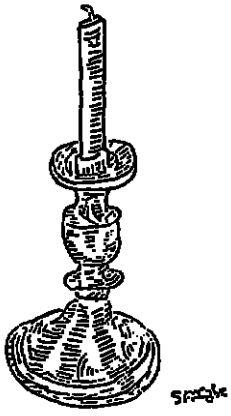
BiC: *The other difference between this novel and the others is that the first two were almost pure satire, the characters were more like caricatures, the situations were highly absurd. But* Foreign Bodies *is a more traditional novel, more serious.*

Wyatt: Yes, serious in the sense that I wanted it to be a whole novel. When you're doing something satirical there's an element of fear, I suppose, of not wanting to let yourself get in there. I thought that I couldn't keep messing around like that, that I had to do the real thing this time. I'm becoming more autobiographical now.

BiC: *And now you're working on a very autobiographical novel called* The Winning Side, *part of which takes place in Yorkshire during the war.*

Wyatt: Everybody else seems to be writing about the Second World War, so I thought I'd dig out my memories too. Growing up in a besieged and attacked country — and there was a period early on when we daily expected invasion — must have had some effect. I've been trying to work out what it was. We used to look at nuns with great suspicion, and always checked to see whether or not they were wearing boots. It was a simple

disguise, you see, for spies who'd been parachuted into the country. The thing was to trick them into talking. We were told to keep an eye on suspicious strangers. My friend and I — we were



about 12 at the time — kept a close watch on a man who moved onto the golf course and lived there in a trailer. We wrote down his comings and goings in a notebook, and even got into the trailer once and stole a fork, which we just knew was part of his secret radio. What else! I think he was the new golf pro. In *The Winning Side* I have written about the early lives of two similar characters during the war, and then taken a leap of about 30 years to see what became of them.

BiC: *I found your voice in all three novels to be very reminiscent of Anthony Burgess's voice. Was he an influence on your work?*

Wyatt: Oh, I'm very pleased to hear you say that, because I admire his work very much. I came late to Burgess. I heard him reading from *A Clockwork Orange* on the radio a short while ago, and then I read the Malayan trilogy after I had written *Foreign Bodies*. And I found one scene in it, I think it was in the first one, *Time for a Tiger*, when the woman is talking to one of the men in Malaya, that was very much like Ernesta talking to Monroe, and I thought, "I've written that scene too."

BiC: *I was especially reminded of* Honey for the Bears, *Burgess's novel about being a tourist in Russia and getting into all kinds of trouble. Apart from the visitor-exile theme, which is in your books, it is also very funny.*

Wyatt: I haven't read that, but I do have an unpublished novel called *The Man from Dimnitzvoi*, in which the main character invents a country because he wanted to sell a travel book. So he invents Dimnitzvoi and writes a book about it, which is lapped up by all because the place is so remote and the people are so peculiar, and then he starts getting phone calls and letters from a man from Dimnitzvoi who is trying to find him. He runs away and they never quite meet. In a way I suppose it's about an author who can never quite get away from his own characters. As in *The String Box*, when John Smith is followed around by his radio characters, The Drifters.

BiC: *And in* Foreign Bodies, *in which Ned is writing a book about Pakistani immigrants and turns up in Canada to find a Pakistani immigrant living in his new house. About Ned's book, though: he's been working on it for 14 years, but when he finishes it he seems to fall apart. In all your books the goal is important as a goal, but once it is achieved it's seen to be nothing, dust. Is that how you feel, that the rainbow is more important than the pot of gold?*

Wyatt: I can't say that I believe in pots of gold at all. Perhaps it goes back to wartime insecurity, the feeling that nothing is for long, that nothing is real but the search. I suppose the main things are human relationships.

BiC: *But they aren't terrific either. I don't think there is one really satisfactory human relationship in any of the three novels. Not one fully consummated sex act, for example. Sandra presumably gets pregnant in the ordinary way, but that must take place offstage somewhere. Even extramarital affairs end up disastrously.*

Wyatt: Yes, that's a bit depressing, isn't it. I'll have to think about that.

BiC: *So if we can't have satisfactorily achieved goals, and we can't have satisfactory human relationships, what are we left with? Are these negative examples of what you would like to see? Are they possible?*

Wyatt: Yes, I think they are possible. And I think that what I've been doing up until now is perhaps not intended to be quite so negative. What I admire in human beings is their courage, that in spite of all the terrible things that happen to them they want to go on. If one goal turns to dust they'll find another. That to me is the great and admirable thing. It certainly keeps *me* going. Perhaps what I've done so far is write one half of that. Now I have to go on to write the other half. □

FIRST NOVELS

Grave matters: the undersurfaces of life in the Alberta badlands and a lifeless assassination plot in Austria

By DOUGLAS HILL

IN **Forever 33** (McClelland & Stewart, 175 pages, $16.95 cloth) Jacques Byfield gives an intelligent, well-crafted version of a familiar story: mysterious visitor comes to small town, affects and alters lives, disappears. Byfield's community is Brerry, in the Alberta badlands, the time is the end of the 1930s, the catalyst in the tale is John Evans, who turns up one day and becomes the local gravedigger.

Besides a limp and a taste for whisky, Evans has the gift of understanding and the good luck to be always in the right place to observe the undersurfaces of life in Brerry. Nothing too unusual goes on — lust, infidelity, child abuse, and murder — and in the end the lives of all, even the dead, seem to have been improved by the gravedigger's wise meddling.

Byfield moves his story well; he intertwines the several strands of his plot adeptly. The prose is spiky, at times quite effective, at others seeming only careless, as if the author hadn't listened to what he was saying. Example: "The ever-present thought dwelling in the back of his mind surged to the fore, and he left the store on foot seeing only Melody in his mind." There are awkward repetitions, of sound and word, and an ungainly image in that sentence; there are many similar sentences in the novel.

But Byfield can tell a story, even if it's not a terribly original or complex one. In its easy economy of narration and its ability to deliver insight and character, *Forever 33* suggests, more than most first novels, a career to follow.

Rosegarden, by Kurt Palka (McClelland & Stewart, 318 pages, $16.95 cloth), is a carefully planned, complicated thriller that labours strenuously to achieve lifelessness. There are good intentions written all over the book, but everything is heavy, heavy.

The novel opens with the assassination, in 1966, of a justice of the Austrian

Supreme Court, apparently by terrorists. At the centre of efforts to solve the crime is a beat-out American journalist trying to discover what made his wife kill herself and her son 20 years before. The answers come, eventually, from history and geography; sections of the book focus on Austria before and during the First World War, on the rise of Hitler, on emigrant life in Canada. It all sorts itself out, though in places it's hard to keep the dates and names and generations straight.

The decay of a country and a city (Vienna), the disintegration of a family — this seems to be where Palka's heart is, and he's able to evoke the past and the decline of grandeur quite competently. He's not so good with love and sex, and too often he flattens his hoped-for mood with descriptive language like: "The fishbone stays of her *chemisette* pushed her breasts up into a lovely rounded form which was further emphasized by the very shapely cut of the dress itself."

Rosegarden certainly displays a wealth of detail and incident, and is worth reading for that alone. As a novel, it's just not novelistic enough. Thrilling it ain't.

Return Fare, by John Lane (Turnstone Press, 111 pages, $6.95 paper), has the feel of a novel written for teenagers about teenagers by a teenager. The results of all this adolescence are mixed.

The story — of a young runaway from B.C., Jamey Starett, who ends up (it's 1955) in a hellish California prison for undesirable aliens and is brutalized there — is strong and vivid stuff, and holds a reader's interest fairly well. On the level of simple plot and action there's enough material here to frame any number of insights.

Trouble is, nothing happens but those events and the most rudimentary emotions to go with them. The rest is non-existent or nonsense. Characters are stereotypes: redneck cops, evil Mexican perverts, a rough-hewn war vet with a heart of gold, a girlfriend's hysterical mother. The psychology — the level of understanding — is reductive at best. And there's a trite and silly ending besides.

The novel is seriously overwritten. It features a breathless hypertensive style that quickly exhausts a reader's attention: "With acute clarity a panorama of colours and objects evolved from his blurred vision as scrabbling up and behind him he found and struggled his glasses on. . . ." That sort of thing. Even a bare hundred pages of it is too much.

Lane is not without talent; perhaps having got clear of this (admittedly) autobiographical obstruction to his late-starting career, he will apply his gifts to a less limiting mode. □

IN TRANSLATION

Foreign affairs: from national turmoil in Brazil to the unreal world of 'official' Czech literature

By PAUL STUEWE

THE ARTIFICIAL artifacts of "pop" or "mass" culture don't usually translate well into the more rarefied language of highbrow literary discourse, and a recent Canadian book seems to exemplify some of the relevant problems. Patrice Desbiens's **L'homme Invisible/The Invisible Man** (Editions Prise de Parole/Penumbra Press, $7.95 paper) is a French/English language novella that attempts to flesh out a rather high-flying conceit — the "invisible man" of the title — with some decidedly commonplace pop-culture material, and it doesn't come close to succeeding. The English and French versions of the text aren't quite the same, the major difference being the use of those cultural reference points appropriate to each language, but neither supplies the kind of intriguing specificity that would help to interest us in their mysterious protagonist.

This is exacerbated by a dubious way with English idioms, which often suggests that the author isn't entirely in control of this half of his chosen medium:

> Once, in a dream, the invisible man saw his mother drowning in an ocean of Coca-Cola.
>
> He saw his father drive the station wagon into the Coca-Cola in an attempt to save her.
>
> But the station wagon was torpedoed

and sank instantly.

His mother was still out there, yelling for help.

It was Coke on the rocks.

The final line is presumably supposed to be a refreshing conclusion, but since you'd probably have to search 1950s "B" films for its last appearance in a mass-culture production, it rings flat and doesn't provide an effective climax for the preceding set of surrealistic images. As an exercise in amateur editorial improvement, try substituting "scotch" for "Coca-Cola" in this passage: since "scotch on the rocks" is still in general use, it does offer a chuckle without bringing the reader to a puzzled stop. Verbal infelicities of this kind are a constant feature of *L'homme invisible/The Invisible Man*, although perhaps one shouldn't be surprised when its title provokes immediate and most unflattering comparison with books by H.G. Wells and Ralph Ellison.

An object lesson in the judicious use of mass-culture phenomena is provided by Ivan Angelo's **Celebration** (translated by Thomas Colchie, Avon Books, $2.95 paper), a novel set in contemporary Brazil that uses political tracts, advertising slogans, and book reviewers' chat to excellent effect in portraying a nation in turmoil. There is a plot and a recurring central character, but these are clearly secondary to the author's social and political concerns. He is attempting to prepare the ground for revolution by dramatizing the injustices inherent in a rigidly stratified society, and he does it with such accomplished technique that the book is entertaining fiction as well as effective propaganda. Where *L'homme invisible/The Invisible Man* fails to articulate a personality with its handful of banal references, *Celebration* gives us a strong sense of an unfamiliar community by presenting some of its characteristic aspects at length and in a supporting context, and it's a very powerful piece of literary sociology.

The idea that writers should be the social conscience of society has in the West generally been associated with leftist or Marxist movements, and by one of history's stranger ironies it is the so-called Marxist countries that have made it almost impossible for writers to function in this manner. Anyone interested in experiencing some very depressing evidence for this view need only sample a bit of **Panorama of Czech Literature** (Slavickova 5, 160 00 Prague 6, Czechoslovakia), an English-language periodical available free of charge but probably not worth the expenditure of even one-way postage. The fiction and poetry contained in the first two numbers relies heavily upon children, fairies, gypsies, and quaintly simple peasants for its equally simple subjects and themes, and its consistent evasion of anything resembling a mature encounter with reality is amazing. And you won't find a mention of, let alone a contribution from, such notable emigré writers as Josef Skvorecky, Pavel Kohout, and Milan Kundera, which in the circumstances is just as it should be.

There are occasional — if usually very short-lived — "thaws" permitted by the literary commissars of the communist states, and at these times books such as Rolf Schneider's **November** (translated by Michael Bullock, Van Nostrand Reinhold, $31.95 cloth) enjoy a brief flowering. This novel of an East German writer's growing awareness of her estrangement from society is acutely observed and psychologically convincing, and also presents the political arguments for and against its protagonist's position with laudable objectivity. The book occasionally seems too clinical in its emphasis upon the intellectual considerations involved in decisions about conforming or rebelling, but by presenting them as the typical responses of a literary intellectual it largely succeeds in integrating them with its subject's emotional life. It's a very good novel, given additional interest by the frankness of its political exchanges, although its similarities to the work published in mid-1960s Czechoslovakia remind us that it risks punishments more severe than bad reviews and poor sales.

On the other side of the Berlin Wall, capitalism proceeds on its merry way with such typical products as Hasso G. Stachow's **If This Be Glory** (translated by Maxwell Brownjohn, Doubleday, $19.50 cloth). This saga of total disquiet on Germany's Second World War eastern front has more than enough action, suspense, and sex to be made into a dramatic film, and as it happens it already has been: Sam Peckinpah's 1977 *Cross of Iron*, based on a novel by German writer Willi Heinrich, set new highs in graphic brutality and new lows in sticky sentimentalism, and Stachow's book amasses only a moderate score in each category. As a fairly diverting war novel it isn't bad, however, with the home-front interludes long enough to provide breathing space and short enough to disguise the author's over-reliance upon familiar stereotypes. It also makes the point that while we capitalist swine may be thoroughly decadent, we're in no danger of boring anyone to death with endless recitals of our collective virtues: we can be very interesting folk indeed, if you'll only let us entertain you. □

PAPERBACKS

Small mercies: Canadian paperback publishers may not be as product-oriented as the U.S. industry, but the results are a mixed blessing

By ANNE COLLINS

THERE ARE THINGS to be grateful for in this life: one of them is that the Canadian paperback industry is small enough that it can't be as successfully product-oriented as the U.S. industry it tries to imitate. Therefore, it cannot inundate me with things like *Pre-Menstrual Tension* ("the bestseller every woman must read") or *The Video Master's Guide to Donkey Kong* or *Og Mandino's the Greatest Success in the World*, a mock-Christian inspirationalist guide to money-grubbing featuring the "Ten Commandments of Success" (Number Nine: "Thou Must Never Forget That It Is Always Later Than Ye Think"). All of which have been squeezed through the skinny mailslot in my door, courtesy of Bantam U.S.

When the Canadian industry does try its hand at "product," mixed blessings result. Formula does not seem to be able to rule, no matter how hard it tries. Take Gary Ross's **Always Tip the Dealer** (Seal, $2.95). Las Vegas, gamblers, whores, the inevitable Mafia, and superstars approaching black-hole status, are not the stuff of fresh new fic-

tion. Only in Canada would a writer as obviously talented as Ross (unprotected by even a pseudonym) try to harvest such a trampled field, tempted by the only big money available to most Canadian fiction-writers: the $50,000 Seal First Novel Award. Ross didn't win, but he did manage to cram between the clichés of his setting and theme some perceptive renderings of character. And, in a format where the reader's expectations almost demand violence, he managed to kill off only one obsessive gambler (and one house pet). Thus, we get a kind of idiosyncratic commercial fiction that substitutes other qualities for some of the ordinary buzz of conventional entertainments.

Both **First Lady, Last Lady**, by Sondra Gotlieb (Seal, $2.95), and **Rough Layout**, by Doris Anderson (Seal, $2.95), fit this pattern. Gotlieb, first lady of the Canadian embassy in Washington, where her husband Allan was recently posted, has mined her insider's knowledge of the diplomatic world to write an unconventional murder mystery starring Nini Pike, prime minister's wife. Gotlieb's subtext is that it is OK for a woman to subordinate her energy and talent to push her husband — the diplomatic spouse as ultimate housewife. But somehow this isn't too convincing when Nini has to be rescued from the consequences of her wifely ambitions by her friend and doctor, Eleanor, a definitely unwifely sort of woman. What is convincing is Gotlieb's wit on the attack, revealing hidden layers of impropriety and obvious levels of silliness in diplomatic life. That diplomacy has been Gotlieb's life adds an undeniable edge.

Jude Pemberton, heroine of *Rough Layout*, is also a creature out of her creator's life. This is so obvious that the promo blurb above the book's title is like a little girl dressing in her mother's rhinestones: "In the glamorous world of magazine publishing, she was tempted by love and seduced by power." (Maybe someone who doesn't know the magazine business can write that one.)

Anderson, attempting to write unheavy commercial fiction, is anti-formula from start to finish. Jude Pemberton is good-looking, but by no means beautiful. The magazine world is by no means glamorous, just a wear-you-down argument between business and principles in which the product is often an *ad hoc* compromise. Pemberton, who holds up the end of her alcoholic boss as managing editor of a women's magazine called *Young Living*, wants the title "editor" not because she has been "seduced" by power but because fair is fair — she deserves it. Meritocracy is the byword of the new female executive. As for love, Jude is rarely tempted, being more concerned with her job and her relationship with her mother. She and her husband do break, over her quest for self-fulfilment (typical), but come together (untypical) at the end: "Like two strangers on a lonely plain, uncertain, watchful, they moved towards one another."

Anderson's book is as "inside" as Gotlieb's but can never sincerely laugh at itself. No insider's jokes here. Perhaps this is because Anderson was actually a player in the game, whereas Gotlieb is an outside insider: a wife.

Sunday's Child, a murder mystery by Edward Phillips (Seal, $2.95), also twists conventions. The hero, Geoffry Chadwick, is not a detective but a 50-year-old discreetly homosexual Montreal establishment lawyer who manages to murder a brute of a young street hustler after giving way to temptation on a foul New Year's Eve. The successfully gotten-away-with murder serves as a point of crisis that shakes Chadwick up and makes new priorities clear. Murder as mid-life crisis. And he is, simply, a better man for it. Somehow Phillips pulls this off, a skewing of conventional

morality which seems suited to his major character's alienation.

THEN THERE ARE exceptions that prove the rule. *The Marmalade Man*, by Charlotte Vale Allen, has undergone a suitably hearts-and-flowers name change for its unveiling as a paperback. It is now called Destinies (Seal, $3.50). Competent, well-crafted and unsurprising, it features deeply wounded women and screwed-up men, some of whom achieve happy endings in a well-observed contemporary Toronto setting. The Lady's Maid, by Nella Benson (Seal, $2.50), is an original paperback "Regency Romance" in which the dirty doings of members of Upper Canada's own Family Compact serve as background to the love story of a former servant and her one-time master. Competent and well-crafted are again the adjectives that come to mind.

Another original paperback from Seal, The Hercules Trust, by Clark Wallace ($2.95), once again reaches the conclusion that the Nazis are the root of all modern evil in a thriller about international art theft. Wallace, a journalist, makes sure we know there is a documentary basis to his story by quoting a story from *Life* on the subject as an epigraph. Wallace is a decent writer and his book passable entertainment, but despite scene-changing (the Laurentians, New York, Colorado, Europe), and competent plot twists, nothing much stands out: it blurs like a movie made for TV.

The last two are original paperbacks, fully realized in their respective genres, with no buts or ifs (on my part) about them. The Watcher, by J. Robert Janes (PaperJacks, $3.95), is horror. Horror is not my cup of tea (I get haunted too easily), but this one is not as gruesome as most. Young Collin McPhee comes "home" to a small lakeside resort town determined to find out whether his father, a gamekeeper for the local rich family, and the rich man's wife really drowned together the long-ago summer he was 10, or whether they were murdered. Though someone wanders through the pages wearing a balaclava and wielding a vicious length of pipe, the real horror is the complicity of family and village over mutually incriminating secrets, soon to be scarily laid bare both by shifting sands on the beach and the slow return of memory to the rich man's daughter, the young mad heiress (yes), locked in a 10-year-old's mind since she saw her mother die. Janes makes it all plausible and haunting: in this town every family has an idiot child locked in the attic, a skeleton in the closet, and commits incest behind closed doors. Very good for those of us with suspicious minds.

Eyas, a science-fiction fantasy by Crawford Kilian (Seal, $2.50) is positively wholesome by comparison, even though it deals with a war between good life-enhancing humans and bad death-enhancing ones sometime in the far distant future of the earth. Kilian is more than equal to the demands on his imagination of creating a future-world. Eyas is a foundling child suckled by a whale-goddess and delivered into the care of West-Coast fisher folk called the People. With the whale's milk he imbibes destiny: he must marshal the remnants of the People, the colonized Deltans and enslaved Riverines, The ruffian Bands, centaurs, wind-walkers (who live on islands floating in the sky), slim furry lotors with the night vision of owls — all the earth's creatures that a warlike people egotistically called the Suns feels it is their manifest destiny to exploit. The Suns are imperialistic and capitalistic, with a technological edge on the rest: Kilian imagines these qualities as the evidence of a death-cult and Eyas as warring against the living dead.

Again, science fiction is not one of my favourite entertainments, but I enjoyed being trapped into the job of reading *Eyas*. There is something I can only describe as neat about giants, centaurs, and walking trees turned loose in the universe. In Kilian's hands, even ultimate war between life forces and death isn't depressing. □

THE BROWSER

Annals of the Barrelman: a reader's guide to Newfoundland from A to E, with stops at 51 abattoirs and downtown Cuckhold's Cove

By MORRIS WOLFE

FOR SEVEN YEARS, beginning in 1937, Joey Smallwood was "The Barrelman" on Newfoundland radio. The purpose of his six-night-a-week, 15-minute monologues was to make the life and history of Newfoundland better known to Newfoundlanders (to say nothing of making one Joey Smallwood better known). Since those days, Smallwood has been promising (threatening?) to bring together all his Newfoundland lore in a more "enduring" form. The result is the **Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume I**, edited by Joseph R. Smallwood (Newfoundland Book Publishers, 914 pages, $39.00 cloth), the first in what we're told will be a three- or four-volume series.

It's difficult to know what to make of Smallwood's encyclopedia — especially since one is only dealing here with the letters A to E. The book isn't well designed. Its paper and typeface are hard on the eyes. Its photographs are frequently so small or so grey that they have little value. And the 114 pages of ads at the back of the volume make it feel more like a high-school yearbook than an encyclopedia. Would you believe a full-page ad showing a glum-looking Joey Smallwood and one Frank Sobey at the opening of Sobey's first supermarket in Newfoundland? Another ad celebrates the fact that Newfoundland fishermen "supply the highest quality sealskins in the world."

Furthermore, a number of curious editorial decisions have been taken. Many important entries refer us to future volumes. The entry on "Bilingualism," for example, says "See Schools." (Surely the question of bilingualism is at least as much a political question as an educational one.) The entry on "Censorship" says "See Theatre." Research on other subjects is, to say the least, thin. The entry on "Art" is a scissors-and-paste job that brings together snippets from others' articles — a *Saturday Night* piece by Sandra Gwyn, for instance — but fails to offer a clear view of its own. Other entries provide information we could do without — for example, that in 1979 there were 51 abattoirs in Newfoundland. The entry for "Elections" goes on for 70 pages and provides the results of *every* candidate in *every* provincial and federal election from 1932 to the present. Do we really need that much electoral information?

Having said that, I must add that there's a lot that's fun in Smallwood's encyclopedia. There are all the wonderful place names — Blow Me Down, Cuckhold's Cove, Cul de Sac East, Cul de Sac West, Dildo, Eastern Tickle, and so on. We learn of the "Bow-Wow Par-

liament" of 1833. We're reminded that Newfoundland joined Canada at a moment *before* midnight on March 31, 1949 (although the fiscal year didn't start until April 1) so Confederation would not begin on April Fools' Day.

And there *are* some excellent articles. At the conclusion of a first-rate essay on Newfoundland dialects, Harold Paddock speculates on their future. "Even if Newfoundland speech," he writes, "becomes homogenized with General Canadian, Newfoundlanders will still have the dialect evidence fossilized in place names and surnames. But I do not believe that these dialects will ever be reduced to such relics. They will have to be soaked for centuries in the fresh water of General Canadian before 'ivery las' bidda salt laves 'um.'" I was unfamiliar with the story of Newfoundland's "Bank Crash" of 1894; it makes for fascinating reading. So does the story of the destruction of the Newfoundland Regiment at the Battle of the Somme on July 1, 1916. Of 778 men who took part in the battle, only 68 answered roll call later that day.

My conclusion? Schools and libraries in Newfoundland will certainly want to have this volume of Smallwood's encyclopedia on their shelves. But librarians elsewhere might do well to wait for the other volumes to appear. It's too soon to know just how useful this encyclopedia is going to be for the general reader. But all of us, I'm sure, will want to take a peek at the "S" Volume when it comes out and the entry on one "Smallwood, Joseph R."

ONE THING a reader's guide should be is readable. Unfortunately, in **A Reader's Guide to the Canadian Novel**, by John Moss (McClelland & Stewart, 399 pages, $12.95 paper), Moss's prose frequently gets in the way of what he's telling us. "The incentive to create this book," he says, "came from the literature itself and from the apprehended need for such a work." (Shades of the War Measures Act!) There isn't a paragraph in the book without flaws. How can one trust the literary judgements of someone who writes as badly as Moss does? ("Metcalf is a master of the short-story idiom, that especially intense and lucid prose found in the very best short fiction that so often seems empty or superficial in the larger context of the novel.") And the book itself is shoddily made — the spine of my copy broke in three places. Shame.

I WAS SO impressed a few years ago by the intelligence of Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* that I rushed out to buy **On Learning to Read: The Child's Fascination With Meaning**, by Bruno Bettelheim and Karen Zelan (Knopf, 306 pages, $17.95 cloth). Unfortunately, *On Learning to Read* is little more than a kind of padded footnote to the earlier work. Its message: the sanitized primers "written" by committees of pedagogues and used to teach children to read, are mind-numbing. Empty texts result in bored children. Fair enough. But my fear is that our schools wouldn't be nearly as successful at producing bored semi-literates if that weren't, in fact, part of our educational system's unacknowledged intent. The fact is, we really don't want too many critical readers and thinkers around. They ask too many embarrassing questions.

BROADCAST NEWS LTD., the television headline service cable subscribers receive, always includes an item that informs viewers of events that have taken place on "this day in history." Broadcast News Ltd. is clearly a democratic organization; for it, all facts are equal. A fact is a fact is a fact. That results in delightful juxtapositions such as the following: "210 years ago today in 1772, slavery was abolished in Britain. And 61 years ago, in 1921, actress Jane Russell was born." (June 22) □

Words and music: from crayon on the wallpaper to a mischievous leering miniature who takes a bath in the breadbox

By MARY AINSLIE SMITH

WHEN AUTUMN evenings lengthen and the bedtime story regains its important place in family routine, some new Canadian books for pre-schoolers and beginning readers deserve attention. Heading the list is Robert Munsch's **The Boy in the Drawer** (Annick, 24 pages, $10.95 cloth, $4.95 paper). In this story, Munsch's fifth for pre-schoolers, Shelley, a resourceful little girl in pony-tails, finds a very small, very unpleasant boy in her dresser sock drawer. He stays around all day creating messes and problems for Shelley and growing larger and more obnoxious with each nasty deed. Before Shelley finds a way to deal with him he has planted tomatoes in her bed, painted the living-room window black, and taken a bath in the breadbox.

As in two previous Munsch books, Michael Martchenko's illustrations complement the text perfectly. The expressions on the boy's face, especially as he leers at Shelley from his bathtub, are worth the price of the book. Perhaps the story contains a moral about the best way to control undesirable behaviour in children, but it is also a lot of fun, and I think that's more important by far.

The lesson is much more direct in Frank Etherington's **Those Words**, illustrated by Gina Calleja (Annick, 28 pages, $10.95 cloth, $4.95 paper). Young Jeopy embarrasses his whole family by going through his repertoire of bad words. He is reasoned with and reprimanded, and glories in all the attention. At last his father works out a perfect solution, but in a predictable final twist discovers that adults don't always practise what they preach. Adult readers may find all this a bit heavy-handed, but children enjoy the story, especially references to "those words," which sound like "pitty pithead," "bam," and "grugger off." Some, however, may wonder what happened to those *other* words, the ones that really get parents excited.

Kids Can Press has designed a series for beginning readers called Kids Can Read. Its aim is to present interesting stories using sentences and vocabulary simple enough to be easily understood, but varied enough to be entertaining. The first two were written by Allen Morgan, a former primary teacher. In **Christopher and the Elevator Closet**, illustrated by Franklin Hammond (48 pages, $9.95 cloth, $3.95 paper), Christopher discovers that his closet is an elevator that takes him to visit a community of giants living in the clouds. Morgan's closet is not exactly on a par with C.S. Lewis's wardrobe, but Christopher's adventure holds young children's attention. Morgan's description of rain being caused by giants watering cloud gardens and thunder and lightning being created when full-grown clouds are blasted free from these gardens seemed to me to be both awkward and silly. The four- and seven-year-olds I consulted thought it was just fine.

Morgan's second book, **Molly and Mr. Maloney**, illustrated by Maryann Kovalski (47 pages, $9.95 cloth, $3.95 paper), presents three episodes in the life of young Molly, her elderly chum, and his pet raccoon. The raccoon may really exist or he may just be a convenient scapegoat when Molly eats too much between meals or takes a messy bath. The relationship between Maggie Muggins and Mr. McGarrity was infinitely complex compared with Molly and Mr. Maloney's friendship, but children will find the story pleasant and mildly amusing.

The Kids Can series does achieve its aim of being readable. The vocabulary is

appropriate for the target age group, the print is large, the lines are well-spaced, and the text is generously, if rather drably, illustrated. However, the publisher's claim that these are the first "all Canadian, read-alone books" could be challenged. James Lorimer's Kids of Canada series has similar aims and an only slightly more sophisticated vocabulary. The books in that series, including Margaret Laurence's *Six Darn Cows* and Margaret Atwood and Joyce Barkhouse's *Anna's Pet*, have been on the market for several years.

For somewhat older readers Annick also has an "easy-to-read" series. Its first title is **No Clothes**, by Daniel Wood, illustrated by Carlos Freire (40 pages, $5.95 cloth, $3.95 paper). Simon is skinny-dipping by himself at the beach when his clothes go out with the tide. He must make it home stark naked past many embarrassing obstacles. The story has an amusing premise but it isn't particularly easy to read. The flashback in the first few pages explaining Simon's predicament could be confusing, as could the constantly shifting points of view. The pursuit of Simon is funny but piles incident upon incident so abruptly that hesitant readers could become completely lost.

Briefly noted:

Mr. Dressup's Book of Things to Make and Do, by Ernie Coombs and Shelley Tanaka, illustrated by Heather Brown, CBC Enterprises, 64 pages, $7.50 paper. This book explains and illustrates 50 play activities for pre-schoolers, a sample of projects from the popular CBC-TV series *Mr. Dressup* and all likely to be a great deal of fun. The projects require children and adults to work together to make such things as a giant spider web, drizzle glue, a robot costume, and a maraca. Throughout, the authors emphasize the importance of allowing the children as much freedom as possible to be creative. There are also helpful hints for adults — how to remove crayon from wallpaper, for example.

The Raffi Singable Songbook, Chappell, 106 pages, $11.95 paper. This collection of songs from Raffi's first three children's albums will provide more fun for children and the adults in their lives. Piano arrangements, guitar chords, words, and accompanying illustrations — some by professional Joyce Yamamoto, others by child fans — are included for all those Raffi favourites from "Aikendrum" right through the alphabet to "Les Zombis et Les Loups-Garous."

The Owl Fun Book for Spring, Summer and Fall, edited by Laima Dingwall and Annabel Slaight, Greey de Pencier, 128 pages, $8.95 paper. A companion to *The Winter Fun Book* published two years ago, this provides a collection of stories, games, riddles, puzzles, science, and nature-related activities for children in the eight-to-12 range. Topics include

bicycle care, snorkelling, paper wasps, cloud identification, and hiking hints. Unfortunately, there are a few annoying lapses — part of a puzzle on beach objects is omitted, for example. Also, some of the black-and-white illustrations, on my copy at least, are so dark as to be almost indistinguishable. That's too bad, because the contents are of the same high quality that we automatically expect from *Owl*.

Coming up November 13 to 20 is the sixth annual Children's Book Festival, sponsored by the Children's Book Centre. There will be special events, displays and readings by children's authors in libraries, schools, and book stores across Canada. Watch for them and join in. □

MAGAZINES

Poles apart: two scholarly journals take radically different approaches to the enduring puzzle of nationalism in Canadian writing

By JOYCE WAYNE

ALTHOUGH IT HAS been 15 years since the wave of ardent nationalism broke upon the quiet shore of Canadian literature, its impact doesn't seem to be diminishing. Nowhere is its force more evident than in the country's little magazines and scholarly journals, where literary opinion tends to line up according to which side of the debate the editor represents. Taking sides couldn't be more evident than in recent issues of two scholarly journals, *Mosaic* (Spring, 1981) and *Essays on Canadian Writing* (Summer, 1981). Both issues are entirely devoted to the enduring puzzle of nationalism in Canadian literature, but other than the synchronicity of the subject, the approach is radically different.

Essentially, *Mosaic* argues that Canadian literature is bigger and better than the quest for national identity, while *ECW* suggests that the search for identity, especially when in conflict with U.S. values, strengthens and enhances the literature. *Mosaic* entitles its issue "Beyond Nationalism: the Canadian Literary Scene in Global Perspective," and the contributors, eschewing nationalist or thematic criticism, explore Canadian writing by using a post-modernist critical framework. Post-modern critics consider the text as a unique literary construct and rarely look to social, political, or historical references for clues to a writer's intentions.

This post-modernist framework allows the scholars in *Mosaic* to compare Robert Kroetsch to Thomas Pynchon, W.O. Mitchell to Willa Cather, and Stephen Leacock to Robert Benchley without ever resorting to special pleading on behalf of their countrymen. Each text is pitted against the other in the battle for literary merit. Unlike comparisons of this sort attempted 15 years ago, when Canadian writing was described as either hopelessly parochial or boldly unique in a pioneering sort of way, in *Mosaic* writers are tested according to the rules of formalist criticism, and ultimately the Canadians stand up extraordinarily well to this rigorous method.

Yet by depending on formal critical comparisons, the results are, at times, predictable. When one critic says that Leacock's humour is more sophisticated, patrician, and urbane than Benchley's common-man style of American humour, she avoids *Mosaic's* stated purpose: to see Canadian literature in a global perspective. We ask, how does Leacock's humour transcend national boundaries, and what is it in his writing that appeals to readers in literally dozens of languages? Comparison studies tend to tell us what is distinctive about Canadian writing and not what is global about it. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that no mention is made of the recent surge of interest in Canadian literature among international writers and scholars. After all, Scandinavian, German, Italian, and Dutch publishers are scrambling to buy rights for Canadian books at international book fairs at Frankfurt, Bologna, and London.

In *Essays on Canadian Writing* guest editor Ildikó de Papp Carrington, a U.S.-based academic, says that the purpose of the issue, entitled "Canadian-American Literary Relations" is to answer the following questions: What do American authors and critics think of Canadian literature? Do American and Canadian writers influence or fertilize each other? What are some of the major parallels or differences between American and Canadian literature?

The central critical problem for many of the *ECW* scholars, unlike their counterparts in *Mosaic*, remains the quest for national identity in Canadian literature. For instance, Valerie Broege's article, "Margaret Atwood's Americans and Canadians," discusses the influence of nationalism on Atwood's writing and demonstrates the ambivalence of the author to Americans, her fascination with the dynamic persona of the American hero, and her resistance to the engulfing force of American culture. When Atwood says in her novel *Surfacing*, "If you look like them and talk like them and think like them then you are them," the complexity of the Canadian response to the U.S. is revealed. The critic shows that Atwood's response not only encompasses a search for national identity but is an ironic device to create a particular literary consciousness that is uniquely Canadian. The character in *Surfacing* learns that the supposed Americans she ridicules and fears are actually Canadians.

What *ECW* succeeds in doing is to continue the debate about national awareness in our literature, not simply by comparing Canadian writers to American writers, but by concluding that the awareness of the Canadian-American border becomes the source of much that is most vibrant and original in Canadian literature. Rather than moving beyond nationalism, a strong sense of identity opens up new possibilities in Canadian writing and, in the end, makes it more respected internationally. □

LETTERS

The Smart set

Sir:

Rarely, it seems nowadays, am I moved to comment on anything I read in magazines or newspapers. I do believe though that John Goddard's profile of Elizabeth Smart in your June/July issue is one of the best pieces by anyone about anyone that I have ever read.

No doubt the subject matter helped him in his task, since Elizabeth Smart must eminently qualify as one of the great Canadian literary "characters," despite her 40-year absence from this country. The University of Alberta will

be fortunate to be able to share in her experience and perspective.

I have been moved to purchase and read her books. Thank you for prompting me to do so.

B.W. Roxburgh
Ottawa

o

Sir:
Several years ago, after hearing for ages about Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*, I finally took it out of the library. What I found was a work of such prolix, self-indulgent, purple prose as to be almost unreadable; the title was the only good thing about it. Maybe I just don't have the personality for it but I certainly could not easily be persuaded to read anything else of hers.

And surely her unoriginal aphorism on the beginning of wisdom should be reworded; not "the price of pain is love" but rather "the price of love is pain."

Jane W. Hill
Toronto

o

Sir:
I think whenever a journalist hears someone trying to score a point for someone by putting down somebody else, he or she should start coming on like Sgt. Friday. Had John Goddard done so he would have found Jay Landesman to be talking nonsense. *By Grand Central Station* does not gain in stature by being labelled a "forerunner of Kerouac's *On The Road*," which it most definitely is not. They are simply two books describing, in opposed styles, a way of life that, class distinctions aside, appears to have similarities. "Kerouac and those guys" says Landesman, "broke it [the 'standards of morality'] down in the 1950s when it was easier. Elizabeth and George did it in wartime, that's the exciting thing." Besides the fact that *On The Road* describes events that happened in the late 1940s, the statement is ridiculous. "That kind of living" and the writing about it was been going on in America since before Whitman, and in England forever. Furthermore, *Neurotica* was published in the early, not the late, '50s.

Jim Christy
Vancouver

Different strokes

Sir:
I was disgusted to read the offensive and disturbing comments in Douglas Hill's review of Aviva Layton's *Nobody's Daughter* (June/July). Hill says that the book "moves like a hurdler. It whips the reader past some scorching glimpses of Jewish girlhood in Australia (incest, infantile sex, mutilation, freakishness, sadism all go zooming by) through the heroine's adolescence and devirgination to her tumultuous affair and marriage, part adoration, part masochism. . . . It's fun, I'll grant it that."

I don't know how anyone could think that incest, infantile sex, mutilation, freakishness, sadism, and masochism are "fun," and I'm heartily sickened and disappointed that you would print such an opinion.

Nancy Prudden
Thorold, Ont.

Overview overlooked

Sir:
Your browserperson, Morris Wolfe, was wrong when he wrote in your May issue that H.G. Wells was the last English-language writer to attempt an overview of history for the general reader. Wolfe has obviously forgotten — or worse still, is unfamiliar with — *The Rise of the West*, by the American historian W.H. McNeill.

Mavis Volpe
Malignant Cove, N.S.

CANWIT NO. 75

A REFERENCE the other day to the Ontario Ministry of Housing's internal publication, *Chez News*, set us pondering appropriate titles for other house organs. What, for instance, might Canada Post call its employees' newsletter? *The Latest*, perhaps? Contestants are invited to suggest titles for the publications of any Canadian institutions. The prize is $25, and an additional $25 goes to Marvin Goody of Toronto for the idea. The deadline is October 1. Address: CanWit No. 75, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9.

Results of CanWit No. 73

RESPONSES TO our request for book titles that didn't quite make it have raised McClarkan & Newspider's fall list to new heights of mediocrity. The winner is Anne Erickson of Toronto for a list that includes:

- ☐ *Anne of Medicine Hat*, by L. M. Montgomery
- ☐ *Sockless Joe*, by W.P. Kinsella
- ☐ *The Last Season's Coat*, by Margaret Laurence
- ☐ *Where Nests the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*, by Gabrielle Roy
- ☐ *Three Solitudes*, by Hugh MacLennan
- ☐ *Colombo's Canadian Remarks Overheard in the Bus Station*, by John Robert Colombo
- ☐ *Confusions*, by Barbara Amiel
- ☐ *Ugly Winners*, by Leonard Cohen

Honourable mentions:

- ☐ *I Have Tasted My Perspiration*, by Milton Acorn
- ☐ *The Sweet Second of Kitty Malone*, by Matt Cohen

— Ed Prato, Vancouver

* * *

- ☐ *Where Nests Gallinula Chloropus Cachinnans*, by Gabrielle Roy

— Linda Jeays, Nepean, Ont.

* * *

- ☐ *The Philosophical Options of Big Bear*, by Rudy Wiebe
- ☐ *One of God's Little Jokes*, by Margaret Laurence

— Ron Miles, Kamloops, B.C.

* * *

- ☐ *The Learning Experience of Duddy Kravitz*, by Mordecai Richler

— Barry Baldwin, Calgary

* * *

- ☐ *Bodily Odour*, by Margaret Atwood

— Miriam Flam, Winnipeg

* * *

- ☐ *Roger Slowly*, by Thomas H. Raddall

— Richard Parker, Liverpool, N.S.

* * *

- ☐ *Spherolds*, by Richard Rohmer

— Joan McGrath, Toronto

* * *

- ☐ *Spinachtown*, by Hugh Garner

— Albin J. Cofone, Selden, New York

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

Shoeless Joe, by W.P. Kinsella, Thomas Allen & Son. The spirit of Shoeless Joe Jackson, like Peter Pan, exists only for those who have the innocence to believe — visionaries like the narrator, an Iowa farmer who builds a baseball diamond in his cornfield and lures the 1919 Chicago Black Sox and J.D. Salinger, among others, into his sweetly evocative dream.

NON-FICTION

The Great Code: The Bible and Literature, by Northrop Frye, Academic Press. Not only his most important, but also his most personal work, Frye's exhaustive study of the Bible proceeds beyond literature to address questions of psychology, philosophy, and

history, not to mention theology and myth.

POETRY

I might not tell everybody this, by Alden Nowlan, Clarke Irwin. Nowlan deftly portrays the darker side of the human psyche in poems rich in emotion and sincerity of tone, and with an irony that can only come from the experience of betrayal.

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 Administrative State in Canada, edited by O.P. Dwivedi, U of T Press.
Alberta Rhythm: The Later Work of A.Y. Jackson, by Dennis Reid, Art Gallery of Ontario.
Amaze, by aaron steele, blewointment press (1931).
Anatomie de L'Ecriture, Les Presses de l'Université de Montreal.
An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English, Volume I, edited by Russell Brown and Donna Bennett, Oxford.
The Army's Mister Brown, edited by Harcourt Brown, published by the editor.
The Arrivals, by Robert Clayton Casto, The Studio Press.
Art in Architecture, by Jeanne Parkin, edited by William J.S. Boyle, Visual Arts Ontario.
Before You Die, by Leonard Koll, Personal Library.
Billy Bishop Goes to War, by John Gray with Eric Peterson, Talonbooks.
Black Orchid, by A.F. Moritz, Dreadnaught.
Black Powder: Estevan 1931, by Rex Deverell and Geoffrey Ursell, Coteau Books.
Building the Rideau Canal: A Pictorial History, by Robert W. Passfield, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
Bursting Into Song: An Al Purdy Omnibus, Black Moss Press.
Canada and the Constitution 1979-1982, by Edward McWhinney, U of T Press.
Canada Coast to Coast, Oxford University Press.
Canada in an Uncertain World Economic Environment, by Donald J. Day, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.
Canada With Love, by Lorraine Monk, M & S.
Canadian Farm Law, by Donald John Purich, Western Producer Prairie Books.
Canadian Library Handbook 1931, Micromedia.
The Canadian Woman's Guide to Money, by Monica Townson and Frederick Stapenhurst, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Cantos North, by Henry Beissel and Friedhelm Lach, Editions Ayorama.
Capitalistic Affection!, by Frank Davey, Coach House.
Cattle Ranch, by Nina G. Woolliams, Douglas & McIntyre.
Collected Poems of Raymond Souster, Volume III: 1952-74, Oberon.
A Collection of Articles Based on Institute Research Published in 1981, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.
Continuity With Change, edited by Mark Fram and John Weller, Historical Planning and Research Branch, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation (1981).
Controlling Interest, by David Crane, M & S.
Cottage Gothic, by Martin Avery, Oberon.
Course Countdown 1973-1930, by Delores Broten *et al.*, Canlit (1981).
The Court and the Constitution, by Peter Russell *et al.*, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University.
The Darkling, by David Kesterton, Arkham House (U.S.)
Directory of Associations in Canada 1932, Micromedia.
Discover China, by Sophia M.R. Leung, Hancock House.
Divisions on a Ground, by Northrop Frye, Anansi.
A Due Sense of Differences, by Wilfred Cude, University Press of America (1980).
The Eaton Drive, by Eileen Sufrin, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
The Embroidered Tent: Five Gentlewomen in Early Canada, by Marian Fowler, Anansi.
The Emigrant Experience, by Margaret MacDonell, U of T Press.
Encore: The Leftovers Cookbook, by Betty Jane Wylie, M & S.
The Executive Firing Line, by Brian A. Grosman, Carswell/Methuen.
Executive Guide to Fitness, by Brian Budd with Val Clery, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
Exiled the Myth Needles Deeper, by Stavros Tsimicalis, Porcupine's Quill.
A Fable for Vegetarian Children, by Roma Dehr, illustrated by Nola Johnston, Namchi United Enterprises.
The Fair Land, by Betty Bell, Sono Nis Press.
Fallen Empires: The Lost Theatres of Edmonton, by John Orrell, NeWest Press (1981).
The Favorite, by L.R. Wright, Doubleday.
Financing the Future, by Arthur W. Donner, James Lorimer.
Fire in the Church, by Ted S. Rendall, G.R. Welch
The First White Woman in the West, translated by Lise Perrault, published by the translator.
A Flannel Shirt and Liberty, edited by Susan Jackel, UBC Press.
The Flare of a Match, by Jim Young, Breakwater (1981).
Frommer's Dollarwise Guide to Canada, by John Goodwin *et al.*, Musson.
The Future of the Atlantic Fisheries, by E.P. Weeks and Anne Sommerville, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.
Gophers Don't Pay Taxes, by Mervyn J. Huston, Tree Frog Press (1981).
Gradations of Grandeur, by Ralph Gustafson, Sono Nis Press.
The Green Plain, by John Newlove, Oolichan Books.
Hang in there, Sid, by Sid H. Britton, Pen Power Press.
Harold Greenhouse to the Rescue, by Mike Wilkins, Scholastic-TAB.
The Hathaway Decision, by Bryan W. Pritchard, Nyron Publishing.
In a White Shirt, by Bill Howell, Black Moss Press.
Indian Healing, by Wolfgang G. Jilek, Hancock Press.
Initiatives Toward a Bibliographic Communications Network for Canada, by Cynthia J. Durance, National Library of Canada.
Jake and the Kid, by W.O. Mitchell, Seal.
The Lady's Maid, by Nella Benson, Seal.
Laird of the West, by John W. Chalmers, Detselig Enterprises (1981).
Laughing War, by Martyn Burke, Playboy Paperbacks (Van Nostrand Reinhold).
The Law of Your Land, by J. Stuart Langford, Canadian Broadcasting Corp.
Lemon-Aid Used Car Guide 1932, by Phil Edmonston, Musson.
Let Me in the Kitchen, by Susan Mendelson, Douglas & McIntyre.
Letters from a Lady Rancher, by Monica Hopkins, Glenbow Museum (1981).
Letters from a Young Emigrant in Manitoba, by Ronald A. Wells, University of Manitoba Press.
Life: Still, by Gay Allison, Williams-Wallace.
Little Jack an' de Tax-Man, by Antoinette Gallant, Ragweed Press.
The Liveable City, by Leon Whiteson, photography by S.R. Gage, Mosaic Press.
Locatives, by Allan Brown, Nebula Press.
love is a firecracker, by christopher lantz, blewointment press (1981).
The Making of a Socialist: The Recollections of T.C. Douglas, edited by Lewis H. Thomas, University of Alberta Press.
The Male Homosexual in Literature: A Bibliography (2nd edition), by Ian Young, Scarecrow Press (U.S.)
Marriagehood, by Anne Olson, Rabol Press.
Martha's Clinic, by Albert Collignon, Nongilloc Books.
Media Law Handbook, by Stuart M. Robertson, Self-Counsel Press.
Michel Tremblay, by Renate Usmiani, Douglas & McIntyre.
The Muskoka Book of Lists, by Tom Finlay, Venture Press.
New Poems, by Henry Moscovitch, Mosaic Press/Valley Editions.
News and Weather, edited by August Kleinzahler, Brick Books.
On the Line, by Robert Lecker, ECW Press.
Once Removed, by Wendie Redmond and Sherry Sleightholm, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
101 Proof, by Alexander C. Carsley, Ross Erickson (U.S.)
One Man's War, by Stuart Waters, Potlatch (1981).
1005: Political Life in a Union Local, by Bill Freeman, James Lorimer.
Osiia: Aspects of Roman City Life, by Gustav Hermansen, University of Alberta Press.
The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins 1935-1957, by J.L. Granatstein, Oxford University Press.
Pieces of Plaid, by Norline Rendall, G.R. Welch.
Population and Canada, by Michael Barrett, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
A Primer of Fly-Fishing, by Roderick Haig-Brown, Douglas & McIntyre.
Printed Matter, by Colin Morton, Sidereal Press.
Profiles 2, edited by Irma McDonough, Canadian Library Association.
The RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968, edited by James A. Boutilier, UBC.
Reading Critically, by Robbie Case, OISE (1981).
Regional Development and the European Community, by Ian McAllister, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.
Regional Disparities, by Paul Phillips, James Lorimer.
Returning Officer, by Gordon Aiken, R.O. Publication.
Riffs, by Douglas MacLaurin, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Rodeo Cowboys: The Last Heroes, by Ted Barris, photography by Robert Semeniuk, Executive Sport Publications.
sa n his crystal ball, by bill bissett, blewointment press (1981).
A Sad Device, by Roo Borson, Quadrant (1981).
Saskatoon: The First Half-Century, by Don Kerr and Stan Hanson, NeWest Press.
The Schizophrenic Child, by Sheila Cantor, Eden Press.
Sea Kayaking Canada's West Coast, by John Ince and Hedi Kottner, Rocas Books.
Sea Songs and Ballads from Nineteenth Century Nova Scotia, edited by Edith Fowke, Folklorica (U.S.).
The Second Trap, by Douglas Hill, Breakwater.
Secrets of Baitfishing, by D.W. Bennett, Hancock House.
Secrets of Bluefishing, by D.W. Bennett, Hancock House.
Secrets of Bottomfishing, by Lou Garibaldi, Hancock House.
Secrets of Potfishing, by Ed Ricciuti, Hancock House.
Sir Henry Pellatt: The King of Casa Loma, by Carlie Oreskovich, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Six Subjects of Reformation Art, by William H. Halewood, U of T Press.
Skiamachia, by Virgil Burnett, The Porcupine's Quill.
The Smaller Infinity, by Patricia Monk, U of T Press.
Small Craft Piloting and Coastal Navigation, by A.E. Saunders, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
Southwestern Ontario, by John de Visser, Oxford University Press.
The Spirit of Solitude, by Jay Macpherson, Yale University Press (U.S.)
The Sporting Scots of Nineteenth-Century Canada, by Gerald Redmond, Associated University Presses (U.S.).
A Stratford Tempest, by Martin Knelman, M & S.
Summer at Lonely Beach and Other Stories, by Miriam Waddington, Mosaic Press.
Squid Inc. 1932, Squid Inc.
Sweet Madness, by Robert Lalonde, translated by David Homel, Stoddart.
Sybil Andrews, by Peter White, Gleabow Museum.
Talking, by Phyllis Webb, Quadrant.
Tax-Based Incomes Policies, by Jack Carr *et al.*, The Fraser Institute.
The T.E. Lawrence Poems, by Gwendolyn MacEwen, Mosaic Press/Valley Editions.
These encampments!, by Ken Lewis, Quarry Press.
Ties That Bind, edited by Robert Clarke and Richard Swift, Between The Lines.
Tracings, by Mac Hill Brown, Oolichan Books.
unacknowledged legislator, by chris faiers, blewointment press.
Vanilla Road, by W.K. Nelson, PaperJacks.
A Way With Words, by George Bowering, Oberon.
Western Indian Basketry, by Joan Megan Jones, Hancock House.
When Evils Were Most Free, by George Gabori, PaperJacks.
Who Has Seen the Wind, by W.O. Mitchell, Seal.
Why Kill a Priest!, by Harvey Steele, Crown Publications.
The Winds Softly Sigh, by R.F. Sparkes, Breakwater.
Winging It, by Keith Spicer, Doubleday.
Winter Apples, by Don Summerhayes, The Studio Press.
Years of Light, by John Robert Colombo, Hounslow Press.
Yellowfish, by John Keeble, Seal.
Your Child Can Win, by Joan Noyes and Norma MacNeill, Macmillan.

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