A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS

S IN CANADA

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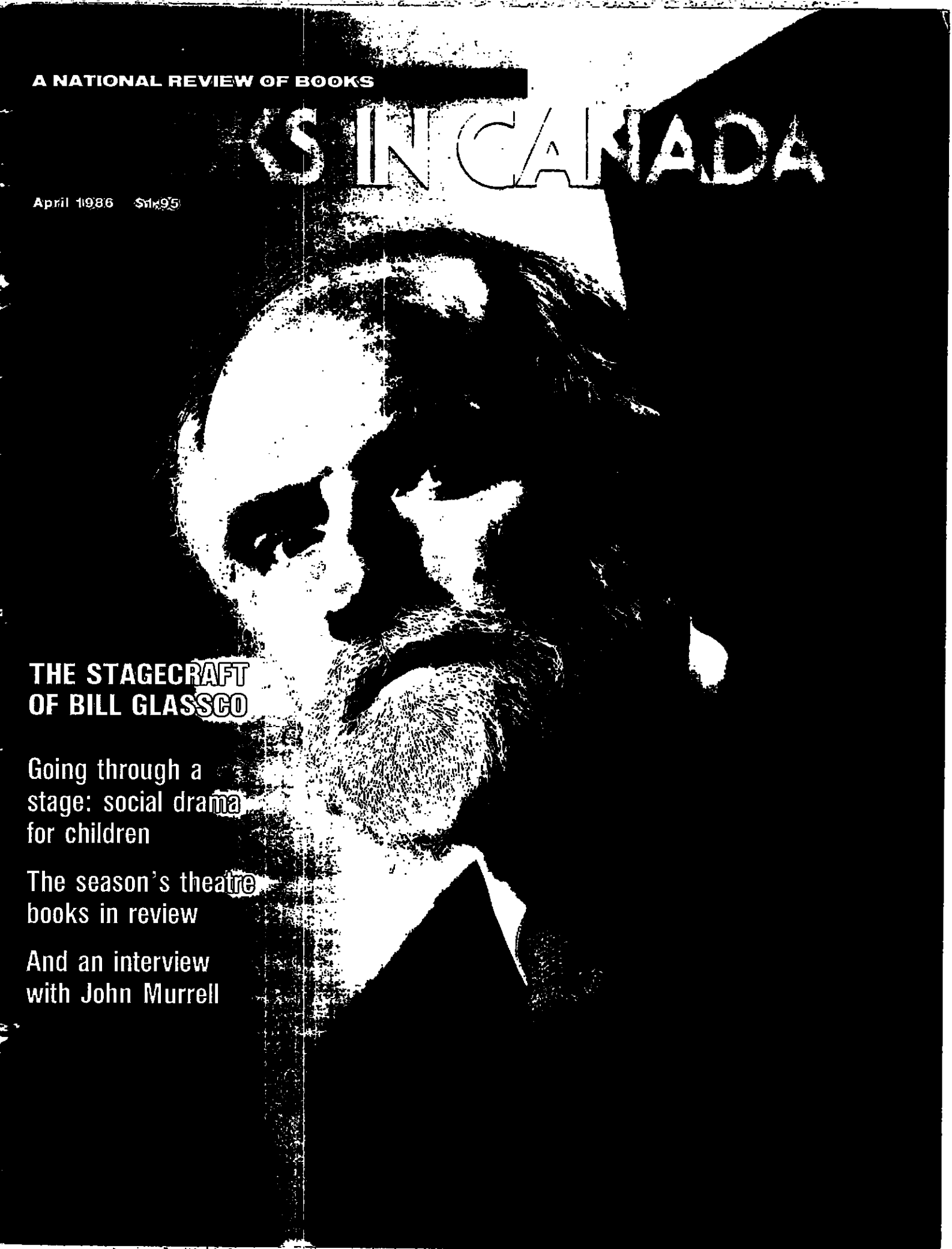

THE STAGECRAFT OF BILL GLASSCO

Going through a stage: social drama for children

The season's theatre books in review

And an interview with John Murrell

CONTENTS

BOOKS IN CANADA

Volume 15 Number 3

FEATURES

REVIEWS

DEPARTMENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Kevin Barker is a writer and publicist in Vancouver. **Brian Bartlett** is a Montreal poet. **Matthew Behrens**, who has written for *The Nation*, recently returned to Toronto after 10 years in Los Angeles. **Mordechai Ben-Dat** Is special assistant to the Ontario minister of labour. **Julia Bennett**, formerly with the Canadian Book Information Centre, is a researcher at *Maclean's*. **Bob Blackburn** is the proprietor of On-Line Editing. **Laurel Boone** is a freelance writer in Fredericton. **Varda Burstyn** edited *Women Against Censorship* (Douglas & McIntyre). **Candace Carman** is the author of Songs *of Bathsheba* (Fiddlehead Poetry Books). **Mary** Frances **Coady**, who writes for the *Catholic* New *Times*, is at work on a biography of **Jocelyn Lovell**. **Sharon Drache** writes fiction in Ottawa. Caq **Fagan** operates Shaw Street Press. **Brian Fawcett's** *The Secret Journal of Alexander Mackenzie* was published recently by Talonbooks. **Alan Filewod** has frequently commented on theatre for CGC Stereo. **Gideon Forman** is a Toronto critic. Douglas Glow's most recent book is *Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon* (Talonbooks). **John Greenwood** has written for *Influence* and *Radio Guide*. **David** Jordan recently transplanted himself from Vancouver to Toronto Lucille King-Edwards sells used books and writes new poetry Is Montreal. P. **Scott Lawrence's** Around *the Mulberry Tree* (Exile Editions) was reviewed in our November issue. Myron **Love** ts a freelance writer In Winnipeg. **James** C. **MacDonald** chairs the department of English at Humber College. **Barbara MacKay** is a Toronto freelance writer and women's studies specialist. **Douglas Malcolm** is a film librarian and freelance critic. **Patricia Morley**, author of several books, will publish a biography of William Kurelek this fall. **Boyd Neil** has written for *Performing Arts* is Canada and been theatre critic for Avenue. **John Newlove's** next collection of poetry will be published by ECW Press. **Paul Oranstein** is spending his spring is New York and Europa. **John Oughton** is a Toronto post. film-maker. and reviewer. I.M. **Owen** Is a freelance reviewer and editor. **Maureen Paxton**, whose art appears throughout these pages, did the cover for *Given Names*, reviewed on page 15. **Anneli Pekkonen** writes for the *Atkinsonian*. **Richard Plant** is on sabbatical from Queen's University. **Sherie Posesorski** is a freelance writer in Toronto. **Jason Sherman** works for Toronto Free Theatre. **Cathy Simpson** is a freelance writer In Lewisport, Nfld. Guy **Stanley** is a New York-based energy consultant M.G. **Vassanji** is editor of the *Toronto South Asian Review* and **Robert Wallace** editor of *Canadian Theatre* Review. Janet **Windeler** writes fiction and teaches piano. **Andrew Wreggit**, a recent first-prizewinner for poetry In the CBC Litenq Competition, writes for *The Beachcombers*. **Rachel Wyatt** is adapting for radio her recent novel *Time in the Air* (House of Anansi).

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PAUL ORENSTEIN

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DNC

Fleeing things

There's nothlng like an evening of avant-garde theatre to remind *you* of places you would rather be

AS THE SMOKE swirls around me, my mind drifts back in time to other evenings — and other, similar performances I've walked out of. There was that production of Beckett's work years before, at the University of Manitoba's Black Hole Theatre, featuring a couple *of* people climbing in and out of boxes, followed by three talking heads shouting out a story at the audience, each performer in turn pickíng up where the last one left off. After the second repetition, I dug myself out of the dark pit, careful not to step 0" any toes, and left.

Then there was that national contemporary dance festival at the Playhouse Theatre in Winnipeg. I waltzed Out in the middle of a "dance" in which a rather plump woman, dressed in a black and white polka-dot outfit, and a thin woman, dressed in a black and white striped outfit, just seemed to be running aimlessly back and forth across the stage.

In London one evening, I probably would have hurried to the nearest tube station except that, with only 12 people in the audience for a play over a pub, my departure would have been too conspicuous. 1 like the London underground system, too, but to watch a play whose main character's hobby — nay, his consuming passion — is tiding the Underground?

I've always been drawn to performances off the beaten path and experiments in theatre. They are cheap, so that, if the show is not my cup of capuccino, I'm not out much. The setting is usually small-scale and cozy. Often. the performances. whether music or a play or a reading, can be charming.

Which leads me back to the present and the smoke-filled bar. The avant-garde is alive and well out here in the middle of the country and its name is Shared Stage. Now well into its sixth season, Shared Stage gives artists of various stripes an opportunity to mad their plays, perform their music, recite their poetry, show their films, or all of the above, in front of a live audience once every month or two during the fall and winter season.

My first brush with Shared Stage came on a wintry Sunday evening two years ago while it was still staging its performances in a little art gallery off Winnipeg's trendy Osborne Village. The audience numbered about 20 and the evening was delightful. *After a couple* of forgettable shod films, a red-haired singer-guitarist sang songs of the Isles and a poet bearing a vague resemblance to a medieval minstrel (I believe he called himself Thor), with bracelets and arm- and head-bands,, recited selections from his *works.* The *pièce de résistance was* a reading, supplemented by slides, by one of Winnipeg's premier Irish story-tellers — Brian Richardson — from his then-new hook on *life* in Osborne Viiage.

Shared Stage is in a new home these days. With the closing of the art gallery, the stage moved downtown to the Royal Albert-Arms. The hotel itself is an experiment. Once just another downtown bar for down-and-outem, it was taken over a *few years* ago by owners whose goal was to broaden its appeal. They first featured folk-singers, then jazz.

In any case, I took my seat at a little round table while trying to figure out which way was the stage. Discordant music floated in the background while the audience waited for something to happen. The turnout looked good, but most of the patrons didn't seem to be aware of anti-smoking campaigns. The audience seemed to be composed mainly of baby boomers. Do they really look like avant-garde types or am I tonight feeling a little out of place? Is them an avant-garde look?

After an introduction by Shared Stage coordinator Grant Guy, the program begins. First a 1941 short — *Musical Posters Number One — by Len* Lye who, we are told, is or was a pioneer film-maker, pre-dating Norman MacLaren. After several different colour patterns have flashed by, the film warns us that the enemy is watching and that we shouldn't tell him anything.

Next up is a short by Grant Guy himself. His *Instant Notion is* as exciting *as watching* paint dry — I try to avoid clichés, but this film simply seems to have captured vertical streaks of paint on canvas.

The feature attraction of the evening is also its lowlight. It was advertised as C *to the Third Power, a music* performance created for Shared Stage by Alex Poruchnyk. The scene: musicians on one side on synthesizer, violin, bass violin, and guitar. with the violinists occasionally beating on their instruments with sticks. On the other side of the stage are microphones for voice. In the middle a video screen and open space *for* movement.

To the sounds of the sounds around them, a man and a woman first move around in dance-like form behind a large white sheet. Then two men bring in a large box-shaped skeleton frame and hold it aloft while a woman with a video camera and a man with an Instamatic move furtively under and around them taking pictures and a couple of people at the microphones give repeated countdowns. *We* are also treated to a bleached video showing parked cars. The 20-minute performance is ended with the audience encouraged to join in humming the tune to A *Man and a Woman.*

I'm not yet discouraged from trying other experiments in this and other forms of theatre, but tonight I leave, thinking to myself that for tbls I missed *Seeing Things.* —MYRON LOVE

A way with words

WHEN LINDA ZWICKER quit as administrative director of Toronto's St. Lawrence CentreStage, in 1979, she had grown frustrated at her isolation — which sometimes inevitably led to conflict — from the theatre's artists. Though by then she had worked more than a decade as an arts administrator (first with the Ontario Arts Council, from 1968 to 1975), now she wanted to be an artist herself.

She had an idea for a TV drama, wrote a script, and gave it to a CBC producer. He didn't think it suitable for television production, but was sufficiently impressed to tell her about a workshop being conducted for professional writers by CBC Radio Drama. There was no application form, so she presented ha qualifications in the form of a radio script, "The Incredible Talking Application of Linda Zwicker."

Not only did her script gain her admis-

sion into the workshop. but Zwicker's first workshop project, *The Eighth Wonder* (about the famous 19th-century Siamese twins, Chang and Eng Bunker), was produced by the CBC and nominated for an ACTRA award for the best radio drama of 1982. Since then she has become one of the CBC's leading radio dramatists, winning an ACTRA award in 1983 for *The Panther and the Jaguar, about the* affair between H.G. Wells and Rebecca West, and praise for *Grey Pearls,* which portrayed the last months in the life of the composer Robert Schumann, *Five Part Invention: A Day* in *the Life qf Sebastian Bach,* and The *Mosquito* Room, a portrait of Margaret Mead.

"I can't tell you what a surprise it was," says Zwicker, now at work on ha first commissioned stage play — one night's events in a distress centre — for the Alberta Theatre Centre. "I'm still surprised. I've never been happier or more comfortable doing anything. Ever."

Although Zwicker's first drama was an hour long, most have been 15-minute serial instalments on *Morningside. The Panther and the Jaguar kicked off* an *experiment by* CBC Radio Drama to take drama out of its traditional ghetto, *Sunday Matinee* and *Stereo Theatre,* and introduce it to a mainstream program. Susan Rubes, then head of Radio Drama, had pushed for years to establish a daily presence for drama on CBC radio. The *Morningside serials* are heard by more than one million listeners a week.

Zwicker's plays are founded on sharp, witty. intelligent dialogue, a fascination with history and music (born in Prince Albert, Sask., Zwicker studied piano performance at the University of Alberta and music history at the University of Texas). and an examination of relations between well-matched. adversarial couples — Wells and West, Robert and Clara Schumann. Mead and her three husbands. "Relationships intrigue me. *I'm always* wanting to *know* how two people come together to form a unique culture, with its own rituals, values, and language. Most of us search Longingly for that two-person culture."

An appearance by 88-year-old Rebecca West on Dick Cavett's television interview show was the germ of *The Panther and the Jaguar.* "Cavett asked West an innocuous question about Wells — and 40 years after their affair, West flared up with anger. I began to wonder what had occurred between them that was so powerful. After reading biographies and letters, the conclusion that I came to. and dramatized. was that each created an image of the other that they fell in love with. Eventually, West found she could no longer sustain the imagery, whereas Wells couldn't let it go."

Zwicker's portrait of Margaret Mead, The *Mosquito Room, was* another exploration of couples as cultures. "It was no surprise to me that each of Mead's three husbands coincided with her anthropological cultural studies — her first marriage ended after her Samoan studies, and her tbii marriage was linked with her Polynesian studies. *The Mosquito Room* portrays her restless, intense personal search and the laying down of the science of anthropology."

In *Grey Pearls,* Zwicker has Schumann describe the process of music composition and performance as an "adventure and journey in time. You don't present an adventure to the listener. You find it together as companions and explorers." One might say the same about her radio plays. "Good drama," she says, "invites, seduces, and. traps listeners into its world. In many ways, the experience of listening to radio drama is analogous to the experience of reading fiction. After all, radio drama is fundamentally story-telling in its original form." —SHERIE POSESORSKI

Passion plays

SIX RADIO PLAYS. Six almost-hours. Six voices. **The** scene shifts **from** a farm **in** Saskatchewan to Toronto's **Yonge** Street **strip** to **an** island off the B.C. coast to **Greenham** Common in **England. The characters are** as varied as the scenery. We hear **children** uttering **Freudspeak** as if they had taken it in with their mother's **milk and women worritting** about their lives in **age-old ways and others murmuring sadly about the state** of things.

John **Juliani,** a CBC-Radio producer in Vancouver, asked six women playwrights to **write dramas on** themes they felt passionate about. Each has chosen a theme of her own and presented it la a unique way **in** "Sextet," the series **first** heard **Jan.** 12 through Feb. 16 on Sunday ***Matinee,*** and rebroadcast **on *Stereo Theatre* March** 16 through **April** 20.

Anne Cameron's play, From ***the Belly of Old Woman, is*** about the **age-old** dilemma of the battered woman: to tell or not to tell. If she tells, will it be the **worse** for **her? Primitive** man **no** doubt used the same club **to** beat **his** wife as he used **to kill their** source of food. If **she** tells, will ***he*** have to **go** to jail?

Using a fmc, clear **blend** of myth and reality, Cameron lets **the women** of the age speak for-themselves. **The message** that **comes** across **distinctly** is that **the** story must be told. And now at least, **in** most places, there is somebody **listening.**

It **would** not have **been** surprising if **there** had been six plays **on** wife and **child** abuse. It's a problem that cannot be **brought** to attention **too often.** But there are **other** subjects for passionate **discovery.**

In her play, On ***the Immediate Level*** of ***Events Occurring in Meadows.*** Audrey **Thomas** deals with animal **rights.** She uses **hummingbirds** and a love **story to** draw us into the argument; **should** animals be used in experiments when those **experiments** are **useful in research?** can we torture **gorillas in** order to discover a cancer cure? There is no **easy answer,** and she offers **none. There** is, **in** the ***play. a, smart*** **child who** speaks up for the environment and who watches **ironically** as **the** adults **perform their slow ritual of courtship. The** story. **set** on a beautiful island, **unwinds** a **little** too gently for radii, perhaps. But it is **haunting and remains** in **the** mind.

The **public** attitude **in England** toward the women of **Greenham** Common was **brought** home to me when I was there **last** year. I was **in** a **train,** sitting quietly **in** my comer, reading a **Greenham** news-**sheet** put **out** by **a friend** of mine. The man sitting opposite me **caught sight** of it and then looked at me. His look **labelled me** at **once** as hysteric, loony, communist, ingrate, and, perhaps worst of all, **woman!**

Margaret Hollingsworth has chosen to write about the **Greenham** women in ***Woman on the Wire. These women are a*** phenomenon of our age. Theirs is the **true** kind of **courage** that leads them to step out of **their own lives** and live **in** utter discomfort **around** the perimeter of the **missile** base. They **are** a reproach to those of **us** who sleep comfortably **in our** beds at night.

The play is **full** of the atmosphere of night as we listen to **Kate,' the** naive interloper fmm Canada, and **the** soldier on the other **side** of **the wire fence.** As Kate discovers what it is like to be "on the **wire"** and **examines** her own **reactions** to the experience, we hear some of the others, the old-timers. I would **like** to hear mom from those women even though their **accents were** at **times** not quite **true.** Them is **still** a lot of this tale to be told **and, unfortunately, we** may **never** know the end of it.

A train journey, that parallel to life with **its stops along the way.** its random **fellow-passengers, is** the setting for Hunting ***the Lion,*** by **Beverley** Rosa **(Simons).** The lion appears variously as a **young** man with a golden mane, a **kind** of mythii **being somewhere** out there, and the **protagonist's own** wild self.

The **woman in crisis, Ann** Parrish, sets out with her **Saluki** dog **on** a **train** journey through the Rockies. **(The** dog does not like it.) What she **discovers** in **seeking** the answer **to** ha problem is, I **think, that** she has to **climb** out of the current **reality** and into the new by building a ladder of fantasy. She also **discovers** that awful **truth known to** writers everywhere: if you are writing while **travelling,** tall your fellow-passengers that you are making **detailed** shopping lists, that you are **penning** a letter to Mum, but **do** not. **on any account,** tell them you are a **writer.**

Carol Bolt's ***Unconscious*** brings **us in**to the **world** of vidw arcades, punk music, tragic children. It is a duel be **tween** the **13-year-old** Jack and his father. That **ordinary** phrase. "My **Dad'll** kill me," **becomes sinister** when we hear the **same** Dad thinking, **"My** son wants **to kill me."** It is the sad set-up of non-communication. And **the** psychiatrist is no match for tbe street-**wise** Jack, whose friends are into **drugs** and **booze** and sex.

Bolt **has** said that **this** play **contains** black **humour,** and so it does. Them is **irony** in any situation **when neither side can hear the other although both are talking; and both may be saying true things.** But it was **the** tragedy that **impressed** itself on me. **This** play should be

required listening for parents everywhere.

It was refreshing to hear farm voices. Not for reassurance — for all is not well back at the ranch — but because Barbara Sapergia's *Roundup* took me away from tbe frantic life of the city and back to the roots of things. Out there in Saskatchewan, people are still struggling to make a go of it in appallingly difficult circumstances. Farmers still have to fight the government as well as the elements in order to survive. And Verna, the mother, wanting a better life than tbis for her daughter, loses the fght. It's a sad story of courage and love. It has the "simplicity and life" that are produced by passion rather than thought, according to William Butler Yeats.

It was no easy task that these playwrights were given. Mood and impressionistic sound pictures are easily created on radio with music, effects, the tight words. But passion? Feelings? Deep thought? The actor cannot be seen standing there in a dejected pose, every bone in her body denoting misery, to show that she has just lost her job, her man, her friend, ha dog. Too much sighing is bad on radio, and the pregnant pause is death.

To produce passion on radio, the characters must be clearly shown. their problems rapidly outlined, so that we can identify with them. And an hour on radio, even though it may be only 55 minutes long, gives plenty of space to develop both plot and people. A good radio writer knows how to fill that unforgiving minute with words and effects to move the story along.

These six plays, produced with an ear, for detail, succeed in giving us a patchwork of what women are thinking of now. All the concerns of women could not be covered in six short hours but listening to these voices speaking with varying degrees of passion. one senses a connection not merely with other places but with different times. It would be rewarding now to move eastward from Toronto and seek some works of passion from that part of the country.

— RACHEL WYATT

ENGLISH, OUR ENGLISH

Off target

If a near miss Is a miss that Is almost a hit, then what exactly is a near collision?

By Bob Blackburn

HERE'S A TIP of the hat to the intrepid Globe *and Mail* critic Jag Scott for daring to go against the editorial policy of his employer. Some weeks ago, a lead editorial contained a flagrant misuse of *beg the question,* so I assume that such misuse is a matter of policy. Not long after that, Scott wrote this paragraph:

> The notion that "sincerity" is what's missing fmm American politics, the notion that The People can be trusted to respond to a man who's honest about his innards, elaborately begs the question; Hitler, after all, was undeniably sincere, and he bad no trouble expressing his feelings.

Although one may stumble frequently over some ignorant abuse of this term, this, insofar as I am aware, is the first incidence of its correct use by a journalist in the second half of this century. I hope it has not placed Mr. Scott's job in jeopardy.

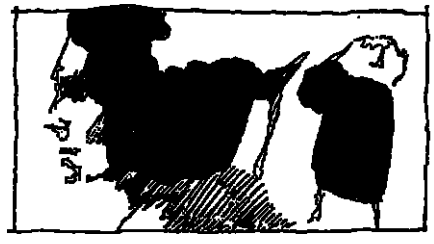
Lest anyone fmd this too encouraging, the same newspaper contained a classified advertisement informing us, in large type, "the Haldimand Board of Education Required Immediately I FULL TIME OCASSIONAL TEACHER With Library qualifications . . . ."

SOMEONE GAVE ME a copy of Robert Hahn's book, *None* of the *Roads Were Paved.* I left it lying around for several days, to remind me to take a look inside when I found time, but finally had to flip it over so I could no longer see the title, which was grating on my nerves.

I was distressed to read in James J. Kilpatrick's recent and generally excellent book, *The* Writer's *Art,* that he has backed away just a bit from his former conviction that the pronoun *none* required a singular verb. Tbe awkward constructions that adherence to that precept sometimes leads to are avoidable, and to become week about it is to encourage the spread of chaos. (Kudos is due the editor responsible for this one: "None was injuried [sic]." I rather like the idea of injury as a verb.)

I think Kilpatrick's book is one of the best of its genre. He is not as slack (or quite as amusing) as William Safire; neither is he as pedantic as John Simon. Ho-, he is, not surprisingly, conservative. I liked bis illustration of the importance of learning the rules before you break them. He refers to the IS years Picasso spent mastering representational painting. and suggests that we all should learn to draw people with two eyes and one nose before we try giving them one eye and two noses.

SOMEONE HAS questioned the logic of the way the common expression *near miss* is used (or misused) in the news media these days. He mentions news stories about two airplanes that almost collided. one newspaper called this a near mllision; another called it a near miss.



I don't care for either of those expressions, and I would suggest, to keep things simple, that everyone shun such uses of *near.* Although Fowler says a *near miss* is a miss that is almost a hit, I don't think I could quickly distinguish between a near miss and a near hit the way the phrases are commonly used. To me, *a* near *miss* connotes the proximity of an unattached young woman. A *near collision* is a collision that happens outside my house, which is on a busy street. Inserting a hyphen after *near* in such contexts only increases the confusion. Like so many journalistic attempts at terseness. tbis use is counter-productive.

Here are two more journalistic gems: "Many are blaming Marcos with manipulating the votes," and "Debris reined down from the sky, similar to what happened with Challenger." There is no hope for these sentences.

I would appreciate some help with *maven,* a current pet of yuppie journalists. I looked for it for some time before finding it first in Arthur Naiman's *Every Goy's Guide to Common Jewish Expressions* and later in a couple of quite recent and rather inadequate U.S. dictionaries. AU I found was that it means expert, and I wonder if we really need another word for that. Does it have some further connotation that I don't know about9 □

PROFILE

The wright stuff

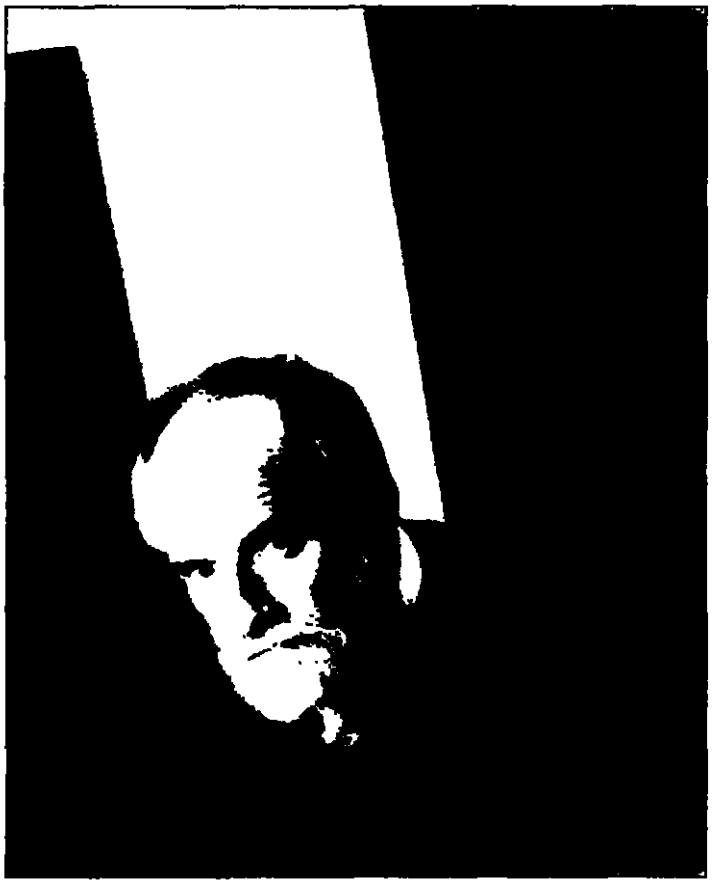
Though he calls himself an 'actor's director,' Bill Glassoo's greatest contribution to Canadlan theatre has been hls encouragement of Its playwrights

By **Boyd Neil**

WARNING. THOSE who feel uncomfortable with appreciative monographs, who feel that a critic isn't deserving of the name if he doesn't find fault, those people will be unhappy with what, follows. *This* is about a remarkable man, someone whose professional faults are not worth dwelling on, someone who has made a mark on Canadian play-writing without being a playwright and has been insufficiently praised for doing so.

Under other circumstances, he might have become the kind of English professor who pops up in contemporary American short stories — the introspective, tweedy genius who gently wins the hot-headed young woman over to Shakespeare, and much to bis surprise and discomfort (this is fiction we're talking about. after all) achieves a measure of fame with a short study on Thomas Otway.

Bill Glassco



PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL ORENSTEIN

But the late 1960s were the best and worst of times as he became disgusted with himself, his students. and colleagues for "reading volumes and volumes of criticism" while ignoring the actual works of the poets, novelists, and playwrights they were ostensibly studying. The tall, thin, quiet 30-year-old professor chucked five years of full-time teaching and degrees from Princeton, Oxford, and the University of Toronto to study directing at New York University.

Canadian theatre has been all the better for it since Bill Glassco turned his love of English literature into groundbreaking theatrical eloquence nearly 20 years ago. And it may be the very appreciation for literature that sent Glassco into exile fmm academia that has at the same time made hi stand out among his fraternity.

Glassco founded Toronto's Taragon Theatre, and is currently artistic director of the CentreStage Company at the St. Lawrence Centre. Although Tarragon under Glassco had its ups and downs — ups being 1974, when it featured productions of Michel Tremblay's *Hosanna* and David Freeman's You're *Gonna* Be *Alright, Jamie Boy*; downs probably the season in 1976, which began with Joanna Glass's *Artichoke* — *the* theatre was (and still is) tbe preeminent Canadian small theatre.

At least half-a-dozen Canadian playwrights. among them David French, David Freeman, Tom Walmsley, and James Reaney, owe a part — indeed a large part — of their reputations to Glassco's having championed their work at his theatre. Michel Tremblay also owes some of his international reputation to Glassco's insistence that his works should be translated by him and John Van Burek into English.

If most playwrights were honest with themselves, and could have their way, they would direct their own plays. Witb Glassco, it's been different; the playwrights are still few in Canada who would not happily surrender their work to him, even though he insists he is an "actor's director." I suspect they primarily trust bis professed "love of language and character" (as opposed to story or theme), qualities he looks for first in a new play.

To tbe pleasure of many writers — and tbe displeasure of his critics — Glassco also believes that regionality, not some vague lurch toward universality, gives Canadian plays their strength. Glassco has said that "We find our strongest sense of identity in regional plays. It would be smatter to tour *Balconville* [by Montreal writer David Fennario], or any play that is a strong regional celebration of life, than for the CBC to put on stuff like *The Beachcombers* [which is so homogenized]."

Playwright David French once remarked that if Glassco were not a theatre director he would "be an editor of a publishing house. I don't know how he is with other writers, but he is very good with me. He has a knack of putting bis finger on what's wrong in a scene. He doesn't know how to fix it, but he might say to me, 'This is not working-you better go home and think about it.' He's also got a good ear. We'll fight about the rhythms of a speech. Sometimes he wins,

sometimes I win. Basically, I trust his judgement."

That trust has been well-earned. By virtue first of his non-polemical but utterly unshakeable confidence in Canadian writers, and then of his own sensitive and meticulous stage render&s of their plays, Glassco forced a fundamental change lo our perception that: Canadian play-writing was *either madly self-indulgent, too* stolid. or limp.

In doing so, he was unfairly saddled with a reputation *for* being over-fond *of naturalism in the* theatre. *As Globe and Mail* theatre *critic Ray* Conlogue rightly pointed out when Glassco turned Tarragon over to its present artistic director, Urjo Kareda: "For all the homeliness of his background, and

By virtue of his utterly unshakeable confidence in Canadian writers and his meticulous stage renderings of their plays, Glassco changed the perception that Canadian play-writing was either madly self-indulgent, too stolid, or limp

despite Tarragon's image as a producer of conventional new plays, his old warehouse across from the ornamental onyx works has produced perhaps the strongest statement of style in Canadian theatre.

"The stark white, off-perspective walls in *Lulu*; the human stagecoaches of *The Donnelly* ***Trilogy***; the golden *smoke* pouring around the writhing body of Frank Moore in ***Damnée Manon***; Brenda Donohue's fringed cowgirl outfit in ***St. Carmen of the Main***; actors on antique bicycles racing around the set of ***Spokesong***. Glassco opened up the territory of the imagination at a time when, in the words of his successor. ..., 'aspiring playwrights didn't know what a Canadian play would look like.' "

Glassco has been far less linear la his direction than he is sometimes given credit for. Since 1978, he has steadily become even more of an actor's director, at no sacrifice to his zeal for the appropriate phrase or the daring character. His current season at CentreStage continues his attempt to fmd roles for favoured actors, including reviving David French's *Jitters* with its original stars — Charmion King and George Sperdakos — and casting Clare Coulter opposite Douglas Rain in Ruth and Augustus Goetz's *The* ***Heiress***.

Even *more* daring is his decision to direct George F. Walker's *Better Living,* which opens May 15. For years Walker's bizarre and perplexing plays have been seen es tbe antithesis of Tarragon Theatre naturalism, the quintessential non-commercial work. Glassco admits to never having wanted to direct Walker's plays before, because "I never felt his plays were right for me to direct." Bat with typical candour Glassco explains that since Walker has started writing about Toronto's east end, where the playwright grew up, he feels more comfortable with his work (es do Toronto audiences). "I chose George's play because he has now developed to the point where his work should be seen on a big stage for a larger audience."

Other directors have done almost es much es Glassco for actors and playwrights. Bill Lane, for one, gave a great deal of encouragement to Toronto Free Theatre's stable of writers only to have slipped from view lo the last few years. Paul' Thompson of Theatre Passe Muraille gave credibility to the concept of collective creation. *Ken* Gass and Bob White made Factory Theatre's experimental playwrights legitimate, although it took 15 years to do so.

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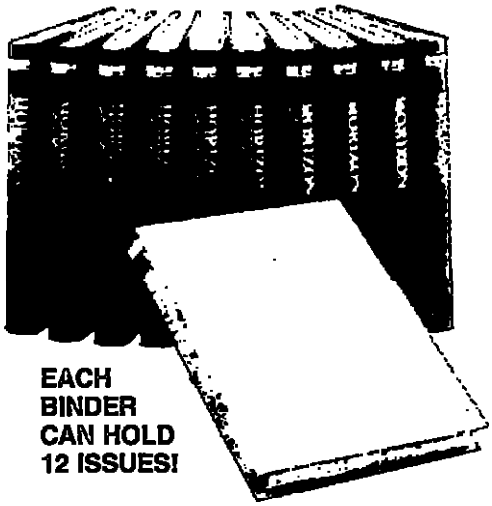

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But none embraced fine writing so unequivocally as Glassco. And none brought as much dignity to the art and practice of theatre as Glassco still does today. Even more remarkable, in a world of theatre that is as fraught with cheap melodrama and arrogance as TV's *Dynasty*, his contemporaries would without doubt not begrudge him the [illegible]ment. What, besides the strength of great talent, makes someone so respected? With Glassco, it is as simple &it is obvious. He has integrity and honesty as an artist and a person.

[illegible] ago, I reviewed his production of Joanna Glass's *Artichoke* for the University of Toronto undergraduate newspaper, *The Varsity*. It was the first Tarragon production after a year's sabbatical for Glassco. and in the review 1 not only questioned the merit of the play but doubted the value of Glassco's year off, if all that came of it was this boring, naturalistic drivel.

None embraced fine writing so unequivocally as Glassco, and none brought as much dignity to the art and practice of theatre as Glassco still does today. What makes him so respected? He has integrity and honesty as an artist and a person

Glassco wrote me a letter in which he explained why he had started the season with Glass's play (a different selection had fallen through). He then went on to say that he bad enjoyed my scathing review, and that Canada needed reviewers like me who knew the theatre and loved it enough to inform even nasty reviews with that knowledge.

Of more importance as a director is the frankness with which he approaches his own weaknesses. He doesn't avoid talking about Ids two big failures — a stillborn production of *The* Merchant *0f Venice at the Stratford Festival,* which he accepts as partly the fault of his inexperience, and a rough ride with directing David French's *Jitters on its way to* Broadway. (It never made it, although it would turn up in Glassco's first season at CentreStage with Miles Porter directing.)

While in Ottawa, where he was directing Betty Lambert's *Jenny's Story* for the National Arts Centre, Glassco admitted to still not understanding what was wrong with David French's *The Riddle of the World,* which he directed at Tarragon in 1981. And he once turned over to me Allan Stratton's play Joggers (I was being considered for the post of dramaturge at Tarragon) with the comment that he knew there were weaknesses in It but he couldn't find them. Indeed, Glassco says that "My real talent is not as *a judge* of new scripts. It's only when I start directing a play that I know what's wrong."

I have had reservations about many plays Glassco has produced, including Jenny's *Story.* I've questioned his confidence in actors like Clare Coulter and Jennifer Phipps. And I wonder now about his interest in directing Better *Living* — George Walker is a playwright who in my opinion is more bluster than substance.

Bat I don't doubt that Glassco was the but choice to succeed Richard Ouzounian as artistic diitor of CentreStage. If the audience that has haunted this bourgeois den in the past is scared off by Canadian playwrights or the daring classics Glassco plans to produce there, I strongly suspect the audience he built over his 10 years at Tarragon will be there to step into the breech. □

REPORT

Going through a stage

'Kids are short people with no rights,' says Dennis Foon, whose Green Thumb Theatre has replaced fairy-tale fluff with social drama for children

By Kevin Barker

LIKE A FRESH stick of chewing gum, Green Thumb Theatre for Young People is still appealing to kids, even though the Vancouver-based company is now as old as the median age of its audiences: 10 years.

A 10th anniversary for most theatre companies heralds an age of reason — a point where there is something to be lost by taking chances — but that hasn't altered the destiny of Green Thumb. Perhaps because of its subject matter, perhaps because the playwrights who toil in this twilight zone of theatre are wilfully labouring in their own genre, Green Thumb persists in its search *for* provocative themes for its plays.

Sexual abuse, nuclear war, dyslexia, broken homes, and multiculturalism are just a few of the social issue.5 it has dragged Into the light. and tbe rewards have been considerable. Green Thumb's plays. written by a coterie *of* playwrights, have been published by Playwrights Canada, Talonbooks, Pulp Press, and Canadian Theatre Review, among others. Many of these, including a play about immigrant children called New Kid (in Canada called *New Canadian Kid*), are *in* translation world-wide. To date, the company has performed for one million kids in the United States, Germany, England, Sweden, Australia, and Singapore. It has towed Europe, Canada, and the Pacific Rim, and this year will perform a double bill at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. followed by a tour of the U.S. eastern seaboard.

Add to this that Green Thumb operates with a zero deficit and a booming box office that pays 52 per cent of its overhead, and you've got all the elements for a Canadian success but one.

That acid test, of course, is how famous one is abroad. But there too. Green Thumb has it made. When New *Kid* opened at the Arts Theatre in London's West End in February, 1985, the reviewers raved. "The best work to have been staged for some time," said the London *Times.* And if that wasn't enough, artistic director Dennis Foon recently won the British Theatre Association award for *Invisible Kids, a* play he wrote about immigrant youth in Britain that double-billed with *Kid.*

The theme of New *Kid* — the immigrant experience seen through a child's eyes — was intrinsic to much of Green Thumb's early work too. Formed in 1975 by the Detroit-born Foon, the company developed out of a need for serious plays for children that went beyond the pantomimes and fairy-tale fluff that had prevailed. While attending the University of British Colombia on a writing fellowship in the mid-1980s, Foon found some like-minded writers who offered to collaborate. After writing what Foon recalls as "some terrible plays," the young company had a hit with *Hilary's Birthday,* which dealt with the effects of divorce on a young girl. It was written by Joe Weisenfeld and developed at the Banff Centre For the Arts in 1979.

"We learned a lot." Foon says of those early plays. "We discovered it was a new genre, and that excited us. Most children's theatre was derived from the British pantomime and adaptations of silly fantasies, and the idea of doing kids' stuff that wasn't fluff appealed *to* us. And the rest came because I bad maintained that the company had to have a base *of* writers and new Canadian plays.

"It's the kids' version of [Toronto's] Tarragon Theatre," he says. "It's where a writer can write a serious play for kids and get a good production, and that immediately led us into doing some very interesting scripts."

Several milestones followed. *Windigo — one* of the first — dealt realistically with cannibalism among the Ojibway. Camp bell Smith's *Juve* (1979) used real teenagers instead *of* professional actors, and involved material gleaned from 300 interviews with kids.

Feeling Yes, Feeling No was different again. Inspired by the discovery that many of Vancouver's juvenile prostitutes bad a

history of sexual abuse, the play became an abuse-prevention project that toured B.C. schools in the fall of 1984. In it, the actors used dramatic scenes to teach children the differences between honest affection and sexual assault. An affectionate hug felt "good," a grope felt "bad." By 1985, the company had a National Film Board crew in tow, producing a film version that became a tool for educators.

Learning disabilities became another Green Thumb issue with *Not* So *Dumb,* by John Lazurus, which dealt with the alienation of dyslexic (and bright) children. *Bittersweet Kid* by Peggy Thompson dii the same for diabetics.

One *Thousand Cranes* was a *play* that drew parallels between the tragic *story* of Sasako, a Japanese girl who died of radiation-induced leukemia in the 1950s, and Buddy, a contemporary Canadian kid with a brooding fear of nuclear war. Though the overtones were political (one school board in the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby threatened to boycott it), the play won a Chalmers Award for best children's play of 1984.

But respect for kids' theatre — like respect for kids — comes hard. "Rids are short people with no rights," says Foon. "And as long as children don't have power and are undervalued in a society, artists who work for children are going to be held in low esteem:"

It's a stigma that Foon has gotten used to. Even critical praise is usually qualified by the fact that the plays are only for kids. A British reviewer Hugh David of the London Times remarked, "If [Foon] wrote for and about adults, his work would be playing the Royal Court."

In a sense. that's what the award-winning *Invisible Kids* was about: how kids and their concerns — in this case an English girl who can't go on a school trip to France because she hasn't a British passport — eludes the attention of adults. Foon's eye for these disparities renders up much of his material. *New Kid,* for example, grew out of the realization that "50 per cent of people in Canada speak a different language."

"It's an amazing disparity," says Foon. "At one school there can be 40 language groups. And we do virtually nothing to reflect that disparity." Recently he received a letter from 10 Australian kids who saw the company perform during its Pacific Rim tour. "We really enjoyed your play," it begins. "We are going through the same problems as Nick. We also felt strange when we first arrived. People still call us names like 'wogs' . . . ."

Not everyone agrees with that issue-oriented approach. Says founding member John Carroll: "Green Thumb grew out of a philosophy that kids' theatre should be as relevant as adult theatre. But that can be balanced with the pure. fantastical quality you can have in theatre. I think you can have depth, relationships. *and* pure silliness."

In fact, there is considerable fun in Green Thumb's plays. The endearing feature of New *Kid,* for example:is its gibberish. To reverse the immigrant experience, Foon has the main character — an immigrant named Nick — speak English while the other kids speak nonsense. It's a gimmick that gets the point across and tickles the funny bone, too. *"Una fido musta pooped"* is how a bad smell is described; *"Sgak" is a* slang word for immigrant, and so on.

"The idea is to entertain and give the kids a rewarding experience *so* they'll become good future audiences," says Foon. "Our kids will learn high standards in theatre and expect it to say something to them — about the issues that affect them. I don't think much adult theatre does that any more."

Next on the Green Thumb agenda of social issues is racism. Though New *Kid* deals with the problems of immigrants, Foon has gone one step further with *Skin,* about the experiences of different coloured children, which is slated to tour the eastern U.S. this spring.

If it succeeds without raising the hackles of too many adults. Green Thumb might make the Royal Court yet. □

FEATURE REVIEW

Stage-struck

A massive new history fails to explore Stratford's paradoxical role as both our national theatre and a small-town tourist attraction

By Alan *Filewod*

Stratford: The First Thirty Years, by John **Pettigrew and** Jamie **Portman, Macmillan,** illustrated, 2 volumes, 512 **pages,** $60.00 cloth **(ISBN 0** 7715 **9809 2).**

THROUGHOUT THIS sadly dull account of a very lively history we are **reminded** that the Stratford Festival is one of the great classical **theatres** of the **English-speaking world.** But underneath the protestations of greatness this history **evinces** a telling insecurity. The authors loudly trumpet the festival's **genius,** but **they** sidestep **the kind *of* critical inquiry that might examine the** festival's contribution to **the** overall development of theatre and drama **in** Canada. For the past 33 **years** the Stratford Festival has been the **centrepiece** of our performing arts; why then do **the authors shrink from a serious discussion of its cultural impact?**

As one of tbe "fractious,, **nationalists that emerge as the villains of this history, I have my own answer to that question. The Stratford** Festival has had **an** enormous influence as a training **ground** for actors, designers, and **more** recently **directors,** but its influence on the **growth *of* theatrical** culture as a whole in Canada has been **more problematic.** A blessing it may have been, but it has not been unmixed. **The** styles and techniques **that artists learn there are not always appropriate to other theatres; it is a long way from Stratford to theatres like Rising** Tide In St. John's, or even Passe **Muraille** in Toronto. **And** ii can be **argued that Stratford has benefited as** much from the small **theatres** as **they** have from it; the traffic in influence **goes** both ways.

On a more serious **level,** Stratford's **influence** has **been** notably sterile — despite **its** undeniable brilliance — because the festival is **almost entirely** divorced from the **main currents** of Canadian play-writing. John **Pettigrew,** who **began this history** in the **mid-1970s, and** Jamie **Portman,** who completed it after **Pettigrew's death** in' **1977,** argue that the **festival** has **long** had a commitment to Canadian drama, **and** they repeatedly **point out** that Canadian plays have typically done poorly at the box office. I am not so sure **about tbe commitment. although things did improve under Robin** -Phillips-(with **an assist** from **Urjo Kareda).**

Nevertheless,. despite efforts **both** sincere **and** half-hearted, Stratford has **consistently** fallen short of the goals that any major theatre must achieve if it is to he the true **centre** of a theatrical **culture.** It has **not** produced a **single** playwright of **note;** it has not brought **into being** .a new way of approaching dramatic literature., both **classical** and modem, **and** although it has become the physical model for **new theatres in Britain and the United** States, **it** has not become the cauldron **of experimentation** that inspires new generations. Reading the **pages** of this history, I was **struck** by the parade of dusty performances, **brilliant in** their day but now remembered as **nostalgic glories** without legacy.

It may seem **unfair** to blame the festival for **failing** to become **something it never intended to** be. After all, it began as a remarkable story ***of civic*** pride **and initiative, and despite its plodding prose., this history manages to capture the heroism of Tom Patterson's original undertaking. Because** Stratford was catapulted by **Tyrone Guthrie** and **Michael Langham into** a "world-class,,

company with its innovative tbmst stage and ensemble performances, the **company** soon came **to be** perceived (and to **perceive itself)** as **our *de* facto national theatre.** And as **much** as we — and it — protest that it is no such **thing,** it really is. As **our oldest** and **biggest theatre,** the" **stage to which our actors, diitors, and** designers aspire, it is **the** theatre by which we are **known** to **the** world.

This **anomaly** of a **national theatre** isolated from the **centres** of theatrical **innovation,** a national **theatre** that because it is dependent **on** the tourist trade can afford to take few risks (especially with **new** plays), is part **of the Stratford** paradox. The **city** of Stratford **is** both tbe reason for its remarkable **success** and **the** brake that has prevented it **from** following that success to its logical **and** perhaps **necessary** conclusion. If the ***Stratford*** **Festival** has produced a **substantial** body of **brilliant** performances, it **has** in the end been denied **genius by those who have tried to keep it as an opulent summer stock company on the Avon. It is fascinating to read of the recurring dreams of successive artistic directors to establish** a drama **school, a media studio to record productions, and most important, a foothold in Tomato — dreams aborted time and again by** cautious boards of **governors** and barely **controllable deficits.**

Now tbat the festival has entered its fourth decade we are just beginning to get a critical fix on Its history and to evaluate its development in the context of Canadian theatre as whole. From a two-show dream under a teat to a multimillion-dollar civic industry, tbc Stratford Festival has been **the paradigm** by **which our theatre has been measured.** Its **history** has **been ironic and fitful in turns: beginning as an expression of Canadian** cultural maturity it became **in** the 1970s the unhappy symbol of cultural colonialism. especially during **the** famous **controversies** that greeted the **hiring** of **Robin Phillips** in 1974 and the notorious **sacking** of the "Gang of Four" **in** 1980 (a **scandal from which the festival has not yet fully recovered).**

There are two main themes implicit in this chronological account of Stratford's history. The first has to do with the evolution of its board of governors from a group of enthusiastic, self-sacrificing boosters, who wrought an administrative miracle in 1953, to the bloody-minded and conservative corporate executives who shamed themselves and their profession in the 1980 debacle.. (Portman's account of

that controversy is by far the most engaging and insightful part of the book). We are left with the impression of a board dominated by small-town businessmen. afraid of too much success but unable to see past the problems of tbe day to plan for the future.

Perhaps the most revealing indication of this change and what it has done to the festival's vision is that when Robin Phillips finally forced tbe board to accept his resignation, tbey drew up a list of criteria for a replacement that not even Phillips himself would have satisfied when he was first hired. In its nervous attempt to guarantee genius and "world-class" reputation, the executive of the board lost all sight of what art means.

The second recurring theme is that of the nationalist critique of Stratford's policies and their place in the Canadian tbeatre. John Pettigrew's portion of tbe history especially, which covers the years up to 1974, rebukes nationalists- and naysayers without mercy. Pettigrew is particularly hard on Nathan Cohen. In his first chapter, which describes the opening night of the festival's inaugural production of *Richard III*. Pettigrew dismisses Cohen's comment that the festival was "the worst thing that ever happened" to Canadian tbeatre (because, Cohen felt, it deflected the theatre from its true course) as a "vitriolic attack." But as the 1970s and '80s would reveal, Cohen's premonition had validity; be may not have been right, but he raised an important issue. Pettigrew's denial of its validity reveals a fiercely defensive and partisan bias to his material.

These themes may be implicit in the history, but they are not recognized as important by tbe authors. It is difficult to say whether they in fact saw any shape to Stratford's history at all. The shortcomings of this history must be ascribed to Pettigrew, because Portman, whose arts reporting for Southam Press has long showed an acute eye, has had to follow both his style and his methodology. In both of these tbe history disappoints. The style is that of an annual report, a dry. remote narrative: the methodology consists merely of a blow-by-blow account of each major production and noteworthy event.

Each production is allotted its several paragraphs, with quotations from major reviews. As history, this approach suffers from a lack of analysis. Them is no organized discussion of the factors that have shaped Stratford's development. Nor is there any discussion of the theatre's aesthetic growth, other than occasional comments on the various alterations to the stage architecture.

These may seem like minor cavils; after all, this is an institutional rather than a critical history. But the authors frequently cross tbe line into criticism. Their subjective opinions intrude in their summations of the plays. When Pettigrew tells us that this or that production was "static" or "the best of the season," or tbat Peter Coe's 1974 Macbeth was "an insult to the theatre, the audience, and Shakespeare," we hear the voice of the critic, not the historian. Because the critical values tbat inform these judgements are never articulated, opinion is presented as historical fact.

Even more frustrating to those who turn to this book as a reference guide is its complete lack of scholarly matter. The appendix (taken from readily-available Stratford sources) lists all of the productions and company members, but does not lit casts by parts played. Nor does it contain any portfolios of designs, despite its heavy price. The many black-and-white pictures are production stills rather than design shots, and are of limited usefulness to the student. Perhaps even worse for the student is the complete absence of attributions and notes for the frequently cited reviews and interviews.

We are left in the end with a handsomely produced showpiece that will look good in the Stratford Festival's gift shop. The scholar will fmd it empty; the theatre buff will find it tedious. Who's left? Maybe it will make an ideal gift for the tourists who arrive by the busloads for their cultural fix, tbe ones who gush loudly about the costumes during tbe interval. □

REVIEW

Portrait of a sleuth

By **Patricia** Morley

The **Life** end **Times of Miss Jane Marple,** by **Anne** Hart, Dodd, Mead **(McClelland & Stewart), 161** pages, **$19.95** cloth (ISBN 0 3% 08748 **5).**

A BIOGRAPHY OF a fictional character is a novel idea that **librarian Anne Hart** of Memorial University **has carried** out brilliantly. ***The Life and Times of Miss Jane Marple*** IS **an engaging** work **with much of** the fascination of an Agatha **Christie** mystery **and** a **charm** of its own.

A remarkable sleuth, Miss **Marple** has solved (ii **Hart's whimsical** summary) "dozens of murders, **not to mention any** number of burglaries, blackmails, embezzlements. and other assorted nastiness." With **care** and affection and the eye for detail common to detectives **and biographers,** Hart pursues her quarry through the 12 books **and** 20 short stories in **which Miss Marple has starred.**

The result is a triple **portrait:** of Miss Jane **Marple, of** her **biographer,** and of St. Mary Mead, the rural hamlet south **of** London that **is** the home of Miss Marple and the site of an **intriguing** subculture, **which accounts** for much of the **book's** interest. Like Margaret Laurence's **Manawaka,** St. **Mary** Mead becomes a character in its own **right.**

Miss **Marple's** nose for villainy comes **from an insatiable curiosity** and **an** unrelenting belief in tbe **depravity** of **human nature. Her** helpers, officers of the law who think **that the** relationship goes **the** other way round, fmd ha a very sharp old lady **indeed.** Miss **Marple characteristically** brushes off **such compliments** with a disclaimer: "Really I'm not at all clever **— just, perhaps, a *slight*** knowledge of **human nature — living,** you know, **in** a ***village."*** ***Although*** she professes surprise at **finding** herself **in** the midst of **crimes** and "peculiar **happenings," nothing** restores her health **and** spirits so **much** as a good murder.

Hart traces **the 40-odd years of** Miss **Marple's** career from her genesis **in** the **1930s** as a **65-year-old** spinster in black lace mittens **and cap** to a tweedy but **still** vigorous **woman** in **her** 80s. (Obviously allowance must be made For the freedom of fictional time.) Her genteel **background** as **the daughter** of a **cleric (Christie** calls her **"a pink** and **white English girl** from a Cathedral Close") allows **her** to **mingle with** a broad **cross-**section of local classes. Hart even denotes a chapter to her **maids:** "Little Maids All in a Row."

The personality engaged **in revealing** Miss **Marple** and her world is warm, attractive, **and witty,** simultaneously sympathetic yet **aloof.** Irony and a **Canadian perspective** distance **the** narrative **voice, which** is as utterly **comtemporary** as **Miss Marple's** is not. **Hart's view comes across in** her adverbs ("smugly," **"un-**Fortunately") **and her analogies.** Asking **Miss Marple** if **she** had any **connection with the investigation of crime** was **"rather** like **asking Jacques** Cousteau if be **was** familiar with **life under** the sea or **Yehudi Menuhin** if he understood tbe **violin."** A spinster's quiet alarm over the **difficulty** of **obtaining** housebold help in **the** 1930s is termed **"a little** bat squeak." A frequent **and** understated **note** of **humour** is part of the **charm** of Hart's style. A **maid** who has stolen. **jewellery from** her employer and cut tbe lace fmm her underwear is described as **"entrepreneurial,"** "a **traitor** to the code."

St. Mary Mead is **the "suitable** soil",

that nurtures Miss Marple's talents. The two go together like ham and eggs or kippers and tea. Miss Marple herself credits much of her success in solving crimes to the fact that she lives in a village where "very nasty things" go on, and where one has the opportunity of studying human nature as one would never have in town.

When her favourite nephew discounts St. Mary Mead as a stagnant pool, Mlss Marple corrects him with the reminder that nothing "is so full of life under the microscope as a drop of water from a stagnant pod." Many of the clues that regale Christie's readers are the parallels Miss Marple draws between current happenings and similar ones she has experienced in village life. Hart's analysis of Christie's writing reminds us that literature affords a sociology all its own, and is certainly far more readable.

Hart's biography is as shrewd as the character it celebrates. It will interest not only mystery buffs but students of human nature and village ways. Bibliographies of the Marple stories, films, television movies, and of books about Agatha Christie and her writing are included. □

REVIEW

Bursting rockets and blind fish

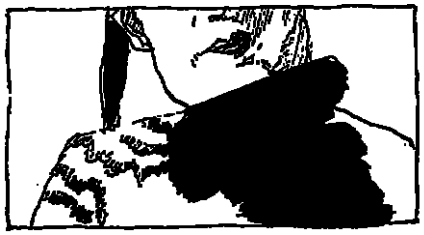
By Lucille King-Edwards

Given Names: New and Selected Poems, 1972-1985, by Judith Fitzgerald, Black Moss Press, 127 pages, 89.95 paper (ISBN 0 88753 136 9).

The Garden Going on Without Us, by Lorna Crozier, McCelland & Stewart, 143 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 2475 4).

PASSION AND LINGUISTIC virtuosity are the first words that come to mind while reading the poetry in Given *Names.* This is an unlikely combination, for all too often in this world of the post-modern playing with words and syntax leads to play in poetry, leaving the mind titillated but the emotions untouched. Fitzgerald has surmounted this obstacle by keeping her emotions, and thus the reader's, fully engaged, particularly in ha most successful pieces in the last two sections, "Split/Levels" and "Given Names."

Because this is a "new and selected" volume. one can follow the development of Fitzgerald's poetry from a conventional lyric pattern to a mixture of forms that move from journal-entry prose to the syntactically disjointed but emotionally integrated language of such work as "Given Names." Another rare occurrence recommends this book, for we are treated to an excellent introduction that clarifies and enhances the poetry. Frank Davey is to be commended. If there is anything negative to be



mentioned, it would be the placement of the dedications directly bet&en the title and the poem. I found this distracting in the extreme.

Words. and their juxtaposition and interrelation. syntax, are reborn as Fitzgerald works them into saying what comes deeply fmm the heart. As she sets us up in "Colours":

Things caressing
the verb
to be.

"Colours" is the jumping-off point for the book. Fitzgerald uses her poems to carry the burden of escape from an overly harsh childhood and a not much better early adulthood:

There is no escape
except in the refuge
of this poem.
("Energy")

The subject of the abandoned child, fatherless and eventually motherless, dominates much of the poetry. Yet charged though they are with emotional shock after emotional shock, the poems avoid sentimentality through rigorous technical discipline. The person of the poems, a persona, a grammatical term, is made to take on flesh and blood. Fitzgerald explores the idea of "person" in "First Persona Regular" as well as in a series that runs from "first persona" through "first persona the bizillionth," ending with "future progressive." She moves from the necessity of hiding in words. and often being victimized, to making words body her forth — or should one say "hers" forth? The search for a viable "I" is bound up with the search for a father. It moves through family mythology, which explodes in the encounter with the father:

"I know you, and I know
why *you're here, but I'm not*
your father

You've got the wrong man."
. . .

The stars shine, shine silence
until we wake and gaze, discover
stellar distance. How difficult:
to reach out and disintegrate.
A slight angular displacement
due to the earth's motion,
due to the earth's,
due to the ear.

What I refuse to hear.
. . .

My body gulps.
For space and my heart
opens out across the plains
of this moment.
("In the Name Of")

One can't adequately portray in this short review the quality and variety of Fitzgerald's poetry. It is moving; it is scintillating; it is pyrotechnic as it explodes both language and emotion. The spaces pulse with the bursting rackets she sets off for our admiring senses.

In contrast to the urgent passion and innovation of Fitzgerald's poetry, The Garden *Going* on *Without Us* is a collection of lyrics that speak in voices of quiet tenderness or raucous laughter tinged with anger. Through it all, one envisions a level-headed persona who takes pleasure in the quotidian, the small manifestations of a stove in morning tight, or stepping stones across a prairie creek. One fine short elegy, "Stillborn," rises above the rest.

As a minimalist Crozier writes of bird's feathers. fish scales and hooks, a mouse's nest, a patchwork quilt with one square

...the skin from the back of a hand
with the soft tattoo
of a bee's back.

On the voluptuous side we find humour manifest in such poems as "The Fat Lady's Dance," a Saint Phallian romp, or the series "The Sex Life of Vegetables." But for the most part her world is that of "the small ... the

Delightin flesh
that does not turn to
word. . . .

As with all lyrics there are many poems about the loved one. These too are largely quiet even when tension is contained within them. There is a sense of balance that wavers from time to time, but doesn't go out of control. Any anger or tension usually fmds vent in second-person poems or surrealism such as "The Magician." The finest poem in the volume, well worth looking for, is "Deep Well," in which the persona's body is made to form a drill:

Let my fingers touch the way down
through fossils
through the final soggy layers
to the underground lake
Let me splash through cold dead waters
Let me be a blind fish
belly up
bumping my nose on other creatures of
the dark □

FEATURE REVIEW

The plots thicken

Though founded on realism, four recently published plays reach into the realm of myth and abstraction

By Richard Plant

Salt-Water Moon, by **David** French, Playwrights **Canada,** 77 **pages, $4.95 paper (ISBN** 0 **88754** 436 3).

Criminals la Love, by **George F.** Walker, **Playwrights Canada, 120** pages, $5.45 **paper (ISBN** 0 **88754** 430 **4),**

Gone the Burning Sun. **by Ken Mitchell,** Playwrights **Canada, 48** pages, **$4.95** paper **(ISBN** 0 88754 434 7).

Smoke Damage, by **Banuta Rubess, Playwrights** Canada. **95 pages, $5.45** paper **(ISBN** 0 88754 391 **X).**

A **PLUMBER'S VAN** passed by the other day with a **sign advertising** his **business** as **"FOUNDED IN 1985."** The 1980s move so fast **that** by **those** standards the Playwrights **Union** of **Canada,** *formed* **in** 1971 as Playwrights co-op, **is paleo**lithii. To be sore, the **union** has made its **own** bit of **history in 15 years** of **promoting and** publishing **Canadian drama;** Its **current catalogue** describes **nearly** 600 plays available **through** PUC **eitber from** its **own** press **(Playwrights Canada)** or **from** other **publishing houses.** As part of its **contribution over** the years, PUC has **added** · **anywhere from 20** to 40 **new scripts annually. Among those** printed last year **were** the **four reviewed** here, **which** include the **winners** of a Dora award (David French's ***Salt-Water*** Moon), a Chalmers award (George **F.** Walker's ***Criminals in Love*)**, **and the Canadian Authors** Association award **(Ken** Mitchell's Gone *the Burning* ***Sun*)**.

One thought that occurred to me **as** I read **these** plays concerned the willing**ness, or** lack of it, **Canadian playwrights have shown** to move beyond simple realism. The debate over the **virtues and failings of realism on the stage is as old** as the **theatre** itself. Aristophanes criticized Euripides for his graphic **realism,** yet Plato was troubled by the **lies** of poetic **fiction. And** we all **know** Hamlet's **oft-quoted** advice. Notably, Hamlet's **mousetrap** was a play without words. **In** what mode **did** it bold the **mirror** up to nature? **In** fact, history shows that the **richest** plays **— including** those of Ibsen, **often seen** (rightly or **wrongly)** as the **father** of modem **realism — have been ones that** extended the **imitation** of *life into the* **interpretation** of life: the **realistic into the** abstract.

On the **other** hand, **there** is **evidence that** plays **in** a **realistic** mode **generally appeal to a much larger public than do non-realistic** ones. The **neo-naturalistic** dramas of tbe 1970s **earned audiences in** part because **their realistic manner** was accessible: **theatre-goers** were **said** to be **responding** with a "That's **us!" indicating** recognition of **themselves in art.** so what do playwrights. **theatres, and publishers** do who **want to increase their audiences** at the **same** time that they **write, produce,** or publish works **conceived in more imaginative** modes **than superficial realism?**

Laden with realistic **detail,** ***Salt-Water*** Moon takes us back to a moonlit **night in *August.*** 1926, when Jacob **Mercer returns** to **Coley's Point,** NM., to **court** Mary Snow, a **feisty, 17-year-old** beauty. Only a few **months older,** Jacob is **handsome and** has **an innate flair** for **figurative** expression. Bat as the title **indicates, theirs** is a salt-water moon. The tendons **underlying their** reunion are enormous. **Despite his beguiling** cockiness, Jacob is deeply **unsure** of **himself** because a year **earlier,** after **the** two lovers **spent an idyllic night** under a more **benign moon,** he **ran** off to the mainland **without saying** goodbye.

lo **the intervening year,** deeply hurt by

Jacob's **leaving, determined** to **free** her **younger** sister from **the cruelty** *of* a foster **home and** herself **from** a **life** of housework for local *families,* **Mary has accepted Jerome McKenzie's marriage proposal. He's the schoolteacher son (a fund** of **useless knowledge, as** Jacob sees **him)** of a wealthy ship-owner whose economic control over sea-going New**foundlanders** enabled **the** complete **humiliation** of Jacob's father **— indeed,** of the whole family.

Mary's background holds a **similar** humiliation. She and her sister were or**phaned in** every **sense** bat name, **and** placed **in** the bands of **an** abusive **society when the** shock of their father's **death** left their mother **incapable** of **caring** for, **them.** Their father **died in** the **First World** War after **joining** the **army,** as **many Newfoundlanders** did, to **help** the **family** escape the **blighted fate offered** by poverty on the island.

That's **essentially** the story. Simple **realism and** the **hand** of a lesser playwright **(the** two often go **together)** might **turn** these **elements** toward a **harangue** about man's **inhumanity** to **man** or a **banal** melodrama about **whether** boy gets girl. But **there** is no **harangue** in ***Salt-Water Moon*. Instead, French's extraordinary** psychological **perceptiveness** gives us a full **view** of the **inner forces driving** Jacob **and** Mary's actions **and** of the Newfoundland society that has **shaped** those **inner** selves. **From** that **point of** view, **French** has **formed the "shout** against social **injustice"** he **said** he was after. From **another perspective, however,** the **"courtship** play" he was **writing is** interested in more **than** the outcome of boy meets **girl. Hints within** the play, and the **presence** of Jamb **and** Mary **in *Leaving Home* and Of *the Fields, Lately, two* of** French's **1970s successes,** tell **an** audience how that aspect of the play **ends long before** the **curtain.**

If you **recognized** Mary **and** Jacob, you may also have **recognized** the **predominant lyrical** mode of ***Salt-Water*** **Moon as a greatly enhanced** quality **present** but muted **in** the **psychological realism** of the earlier **Mercer plays. The abundant lyricism,** which is **found in** the **lighting,** set **design, and music.** as well as **language** *of* ***Salt- Water*** *Moon, is* **an** attempt to evoke **in transcendent poetic** images the **tension** between the **exuberant** sensual joy the adolescent lovers **find in** each **other's company and** the **rage and** hurt **sitting under** the *surface. By the* **end** of **the** play, we **experience** a

flush of triumph as the lovers *surmount the obstacles in their immediate* way. However, we *have* also felt the sting of the salt-water of the moon. We have grown conscious at every turn — in the play's careful shifting from joy to pain, from assurance to fear — that the love so recently reaffirmed will shortly be tested again by the undercurrent of uncertainty.

The images of joy and rage may be in equilibrium, but the tension between them will new be resolved — as the other Mercer plays show. On one level, this is a realistic play that reveals the psychological make-up of the two characters; on another, it indicts an insensitive society; on yet another, it reaches to embody the inexpressible joy and pain of love as only a poem could.

George F. Walker's *Criminals in Love* appears on the surface to paint a realistic picture of life among the working-class urban poor. They include an old wino, a pair of teenage lovers — Gail, unemployed; Junior, a low-paid labourer — and a third teenager who is trying her talent at prostitution. Matters are bad. Junior's filial responsibility draws them all into crime when his Aunt Wineva threatens to kill Junior's imprisoned father unless they join hers and Uncle Ritchie's scheme. But the audience responding at this level sees a happy ending when, despite the certainty they are about to be captured by the police, Junior and Gall climb into bed to celebrate their love. Thii audience feels sure that the truth about Wineva and Uncle Ritchie will out, and that the court will be lenient with the teenagers and old wino. Sounds like a B-movie, eh?

And in fact it is. But in characteristic fashion, Walker sends up this representation of reality. The old wino, a brilliant creation, offers Walkeresque epigrams with a B-movie's pseudo-philosophical pithiness. The teenage prostitute explains she is only trying the game out in case someday she is forced into it by financial emergency. Uncle Ritchie's great plan (Wineva claims he reads five words an hour) to rob the Salvation Army is laughable in its incongruity. And Wineva is shown to be able to quell all opposition by a vigorous. powerful kiss. Even when we find her growing more bizarre as the play mlls along, we don't have to take her seriously. Her strident claims of heading a revolution to overthrow the world ("When I call the army, it comes") are hilarious delusions. The result is a scintillating parody as only Walker can write one.

But another point of view is available to his audience. At this level we see the dark side of deeper comic truth. As Walker says, "It's a play about two kids in love who have a dilemma, which becomes a crime, then a revolution." But thoughtful comedy invokes an underlying seriousness. What happens to the kiis — and we must note that Junior gets his face smashed in by his father and later is shot in the leg — is damaging and beyond their control. This parody presents a disturbing picture of what is humorously referred to in the play as the line between legacy and destiny: "If you put all the things of life along a ruler . . . legacy is at one end and destiny is at the other."

A laughable truism from weak-minded Junior? Yes, but it's also a statement of how the choices in these people's lives are determined by the nature of their environment — whii then casts them into action that snowballs further out of their control. It's a typical structure for farce, but only in the darkest of farces does anyone get hurt. On that level, this play is dark and thoughtful.

As the play opens, Junior has hi head under Gail's sweater. We laugh at her admonishment: "God, Junior, it's time to move on . . . try some other part of my body. Sex does not begin and end at my chest." When the play ends with her holding out her sweater and Junior putting his head back in, we laugh again — but with the knowledge that Junior has not "moved on." Nor has she. They can't.

Audiences seeing Gone *the Burning Sun* are *no* doubt taken by the realism of Ken Mitchell's portrait of Norman Bethune. One reviewer wrote of the Guelph Spring Festival's production: "Mitchell's obvious concern for accuracy and factuality — even where poetic licence could be taken — is a tribute to his professionalism." Tribute or not, the play's chronological arrangement of Bethune's last 12 years gives a realistic shape to the Incidents.

The frank detail with which Bethune's medical triumphs and personal failings are revealed — his hard drinking and whoring, his obsessiveness and damaging Intensity, his deep-seated fears and courtship of death — claims this as realism. And the fact that the character often speaks Bethune's own words adds to the impact. At this level, audiences are responding to a documentary celebrating the courageous "lumberjack" of a doctor who became a Chinese hem.

These same audiences might marvel that Gone *the Burning Sun* is a one-man show, and that Bethune's conversations, which seem so real, take place with images conjured up by the language itsdf. One wonders whether they notice the

contrived circularity of the action. whiih begins with an imitation of death and resurrection. Bethune, covered by a sheet, is on an operating table as he comes out of anaesthetic after TB treatment: "Back from the deed" are his words. It ends with Bethune on an operating table, physically and spiritually "Naked as Lazarus," trying to cover his body with his shabby cost. He has opened the play with a call to his wife Frances, and that is how he closes it. She is absent in both cases, although es the play ends his ambiguous "Ah — you — darling. In thy — arms at — last" is meant to draw Frances and Death together.

From this perspective, the play's effect is achieved not through its realism alone, but also through allegory and symbol. It seems aimed at creating a flesh-and-blood Bethune whose larger-than-life stature moves him into the realm of myth. Bethune's calling his life a "journey through the valley of death" evokes a mythical hem's search for truth and beauty, salvation in other words, through a kind of hell. At the end of such journeys, a rebirth or resurrection occurs.

Often, as in this play, the search is an internal one for truth about oneself; beauty is personified in a woman. If that is the case, the hero we see at the end of Mitchell's play has lived through an anguished journey, fighting both physical illness and morel, spiritual sickness. However, he has not reached the truth and beauty he sought, despite his enormous achievements toward saving mankind. He died with a troubled spirit comforted by an illusion.

The play leaves me unsatisfied. On a realistic level, it is closer to a biographical narrative that gains strength from its rhetorical presentation; it is not compelling drama. On the mythical level, the symbolism and allegory are not fully developed; they tend toward cliché. Finally, there seems a cop-out of sorts in the lack of integrity between the portrait of Bethune and whet he himself says: "The artist's function is to disturb. ... To shake the pillars of the world." This play is a commemoration of Bethune as a historical figure. but it does not disturb.

Smoke Damage presents *many eon*trasts *to the* other plays. It has not won any awards, and had only a short stage run after being developed from a less-successful production, *Burning Times.* Not the work of an individual playwright, Smoke *Damage* is by a women's collective (Banuta Rubess is the main writer) known only to a limited public. Unlike the other plays, it is sure to alienate et least one sector of any general audience — those with anti-feminist feelings. That's a small point, though, because this is a fascinating play that engages end entertains on several levels.

Just as the collective approach has become a convention in Canadian theatre, the documentary form and a chronological, episodic structure have become conventions in collectively created plays. *Smoke Damage* is conventional in those respects. At-its core is a plot that traces the experiences of four women tourists and their guide as they visit places in Europe where witches have been persecuted over the centuries.

Documentary reality enters in two ways. Carefully interwoven with the tourist episodes are passages of a Renaissance handbook on witches. As one reviewer said, these excerpts would be simple, ironic comedy were it not for the holocaust the handbook inspired under Papal sanction. There is documentary also in the case histories of various persecuted women, accused of witchcraft, that are dramatically recreated and integrated into the play's fabric.

Convention becomes invention when' the different time frames begin to interpenetrate es the tourists learn of their personal connections with the historic figures. One women, for instance, is a blood relative and wants to know why her ancestor burned; another appears to be a modem-day incarnation of the character of a woman persecuted ages ago. The closer the time frames get, the more radical the tourists become, to the point of terrorism: they hijack their plane and decide to hold the Pope accountable for the holocaust against women.

The play is at the same time wildly comic and a searing indictment. But for me, its most engaging aspect lies in another direction: the archetypal patterns concerning the beauty/grotesquery of mankind, in thii case es see" in womanhood. Mythically we have seen it represented i" figures such es Medea, Helen of Troy, the Gorgons, and Gorgo-Medusa. In *Smoke Damage*, as the present-day women gain an awareness of their ancestral heritage, they liberate powers latent within them for action to change the world. We come to realize that in the pest women with this special awareness were persecuted because of the fear they engendered in the ignorant around them, particularly among male authority figures in a patriarchal society. The play's fascination is produced by the gradual transformation of everyday, unenlightened 20th-century women into counterparts of centuries-old so-celled "witches." It asks us to consider how we shell respond to "witches" in our midst.

This Is not the same type of play that came out of collective companies in the early 1970s — an indication of the increased sophistication of current dramatists. These plays appeal to a broad audience on different levels. Based in a recognizable realism, they move into the intellectual and emotional challenges of abstractions of that realitv. In essence, our best playwrights are having their cake and eating it. If only that were literally true. Too many of our playwrights can't afford cake. □

REVIEW

Heroes today, goons tomorrow

By Brian *Fawcett*

Hockey: The Illustrated History, by Charles Wilkins, edited by Dan Diamood, Doubleday, 191 pages, 324.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 23329 9).

Off Side: Hockey from the Inside, by Stan Fischler, Methuen, 260 pager, $19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 438 99690 4).

Heroes: Stars of Hockey's Golden Era, by Frank Pagnucco, Prentice-Hell, 224 pages, $12.95 paper (ISBN 0 13 387119 3).

THESE THREE BOOKS offer pretty much the same things modem professional hockey offers: public relations flack that isn't quite sure of where its market is located, some startlingly nasty and unatu-active violence, and a shot of charm that isn't exactly big-league but is purely and disarmingly North American.

The fleck comes straight from the National Hockey League offices, in the form of *Hockey: The Illustrated History. As a* measure of how the league views itself, it is a revealing glimpse into a sport that is currently and deservedly in trouble. Fifteen years ego, hockey was being touted es the sport made for the Global Village — fast, visually kinetic, a combination of grace, geometry, and violence that would catch the imagination of a generation that experiences the world mainly through television. But for a variety of reasons hockey has made the least impact of all the major team sports on the lucrative U.S. network television market.

Perhaps the most obvious reason for hockey's failure is the schizophrenic way the NHL has marketed its product — as part ice ballet and part streetfighting in a snowbank. Hockey management, aside from being among the most inconsistent in professional sport, suffers from its own special schizophrenia. It can't seem to choose between looking for ways to return to the standards of its golden age the decade or so preceding the expan-

sion fmm six to 12 teams in 1968 — or whether to become a wholly profit-oriented cut-throat sport true to the spirit of the 1980s. It has tried to become the latter, but it has flip-flopped brutally both on how to accomplish this and on whether or not it really wants to.

This latest coffee-table item from headquarters typically goes in all those directions at once. Not surprisingly, it reaches none of them. Unless the skills of contemporary photographers have sadly declined, the evidence is that head office lost its heart in the Gordie Howe/ Jean Beliveau/Tim Horton days. The best photographs, by far. are from that era. And fii, this is a pictorial history. The text. despite quotes from a number of retired hockey greats, is unorganized, sentimental where it should be statistical, and throughout, curiously half-hearted.

The nastiness and violence comes from Stan Fischler, the Rasputin of modem hockey journalism. A 35-year veteran of hockey reporting and broadcast@, Fischler is the author of a large "umber of hockey books over the years, among them a biography of Dave Schultz, and an ill-conceived analysis of hockey's all-time 100 greets. *Off Side* is really Fischler's autobiography, and the main message in it is that pretty well everyone connected with the sport is a jerk, an incompetent, or an ingrate. Except, of course, those people who have been nice to Stan Fischler.

The various chapters are full of macho homilies and half-baked opinions. One particularly self-aggrandizing chapter, "How the Refs are Ruining Hockey," could be used as a training text to teach journalists how to disguise unsubstantiated opinions as objective fact. The entire book makes the reader long for the days when hockey reporting confined itself to which team won the game and which players scored. That this man has been around the game with his mouth open as loo8 as he was without having a hockey stick buried to the hilt in it indicates that perhaps the violent natures of hockey players are overrated.

The gem among this threesome of books is Frank Pagnucco's chronicle of pre-expansion heroes. Pagnucco has recorded the hockey and post-hockey careers of every player who played at least 210 games between 1952 and 1967 — some 173 individuals. Clearly a labour of love, the biographies are incredibly well researched and spiced with fascinating quotes from marginal players that Pagnucco has evidently tracked down after years of obscurity. As an antidote to Fischler, *Heroes:* Stars of *Hockey's Golden Era* is wonderfully refreshing and unassuming. More important, the cumulative effect of the short biographies offers a sense that the mea depicted are first and finally human beings, and red beyond the hype and hysteria of today's profit-addled game.

On the surface, this is the sort of book that would initially attract only dedicated and nostalgic fans. But as one recognizes the integrity of Pagnucco's method, one begins to read it with aver-increasing care. It is a book about life in the deepest sense, and one becomes grateful to Pagnucco for writing it, because it is an unpretentious and accurate sociological record of a different kind of world than the one we live in — or maybe it isn't such a different world. Whatever the case, one suspects that if there were more people like Pagnucco in the NHL's offices, their publications would be belter organized and much more interesting, and that sport might not be in the trouble it is in. □

REVIEW

Impaired vision

By Andrew Wreggitt

Closed Circuits: The Sellout of Canadian Television, by Herschel Hardin, Douglas & McIntyre, 339 pages, $24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88894 446 2).

HERSCHEL HARDIN is an angry, bitter man. For years he's been demanding that the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission do its job. That job, clearly spelled out in legislation, is to ensure that broadcasting in Canada be "predominantly Canadian in character and ownership." Instead, Hardin claims the CRTC has presided over the nearly total Americanization of Canadian television. *Closed Circuits* is an outpouring of frustration over what has become, for Hardin a lost cause:

> Have you assumed that the historical function Of the CRTC was to achieve Canadian broadcasting objectives? That would be a cardinal mistake. The historical purpose of the CRTC was to allow the Liberal government to avoid facing up to the situation and taking necessary action.

This cynical, shrewd, and sometimes funny account of the CRTC's history is not an objective analysis, it is a rant. Hardin accuses the CRTC of creating a U.S.-dominated broadcasting industry in Canada, not just failing to regulate it. He argues that from the beginning the CRTC lacked the political will to enforce its own Canadian-content regulations. Applicants promised anything that would get them a licence, knowing the commission would not force them to deliver. Hardin believes the licensing of Global Communications in 1972 marked the beginning of the end. "It was one of the most destructive acts in Canadian broadcasting history."

One by one, Hardia chews up the CRTC chairmen — Pierre Juneau, *Harry* Boyle, Pierre Camu, John Meisel — chronicling the cumulative effects of what he believes were disastrous decisions. He claims the CRTC renewed the licences of even the most wildly delinquent broadcasters for political reasons, not because their performance was expected to improve.

Hardin points to two CRTC positions that he feels were at the heart of the pm-blem. (1) The commission believed that if broadcasters were allowed to make large profits from importing U.S. programs, they would be in a position to turn that money into Canadian programming — "Canadianization through Americanization." But with the CRTC unwilling to enforce its Canadian-content regulations, virtually no Canadian programming arose out of the growing bog of U.S. television. (2) The CRTC was convinced that commercial support of television was the only way to finance a broadcasting system without resorting to direct government funding. According to Hardin, there were — and are — alternatives.

Hardin was a frequent intervenor at many CRTC hearings as president of the Association for Public Broadcasting in British Columbia. The APBBC, a consumer lobby group that has battered the CRTC since 1972. contends that cheap, commercial-free, Canadian television can be financed by a universal cable scheme. It believes that public television is cheaper and more efficient than commercial television. This position is at the heart of Hardin's feud with the CRTC and, finally, at the heart of this book.

Even the CBC doesn't get Hardin's approval. He claims the country's one public *network* is too underfunded and politically paralyzed to fulfill its mandata. Hardin suggests that the CBC's only hope. was a second, specialized, commercial-free network, as proposed by former CBC president Al Johnson in 1981. But at the same time the CRTC was handing out "licences to print money" to cable companies. Parliament was turning down CBC 2.

The problem with a rant is that it is one-sided. Even though Hardia cleverly enlists his readers' sympathies with hi well-shaped arguments and righteous indignation, you get the feeling there is another side to this story. The book makes no attempt to look closely at the CRTC's make-up, its chain of com-

mand, its responsibility to Parliament. The beleaguered CRTC chairmen, especially Pierre Juneau and Harry Boyle, take a" awful thrashing without a close examination of the pressures that must have influenced their decisions. The central-Canadian political/economic conspiracy is Hardin's catch-all answer. Although it may be true, the idea of Bay Street bad gays conspiring against Canadian content seems a little too simplistic. It is likely tbat Juneau and Boyle, bad they bee" asked, would have been able to shed some light on what Hardin portrays as rather mysterious CRTC decisions.

Closed *Circuits* is still a remarkable book. It is sincere, passionate, and finally quite sad. The 39 short, punchy chapters comprise a long. unhappy list of what's wrong with broadcasting in Canada.

Although the events described in Closed *Circuits are sometimes* complex and detailed. the story is simple. Canadians had a chance to create-their own made-in-Canada television broadcasting system. In 1968, the CRTC was created to make sure it happened. Eighteen years later. Canada has a broadcasting system that is dominated by U.S. programming and run by companies who have demonstrated total disregard for the ideals of the Broadcast Act.

Maybe as Canadians we're all to blame for not taking an interest, as Hardin obviously has, for "ot demanding access to our own airwaves. Maybe we got what we deserved. □

REVIEW

Men in love

By Sharon Drache

Helmet of Flesh, by Scott Symons, McClelland & Stewart, 376 pages, $24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 8379 3).

COULD THIS novel, volume one of a trilogy Symons has been working at since 1972, be Canada's definitive literary commentary on homosexuality7 Only in pmt. Certainly Symons makes a strong statement about the lives of male lovers — strong because of the persistent, startling combination of puritanical romanticism vying with a sublimely developed vision of eros. As if this were not enough, he also throws in what really seems to haunt hbn, his Wasp upbringing in Toronto the Good, where coming of age in the girdled 1950s suddenly gave way to the libertine '60s.

Like many determined, sensitive '60s souls, Symons's fictional protagonist, York Mackenzie (Symons deliberately mythologizes: York of Yorkville), finds out in tbe '70s that "otbii lasts forever. Initially, he gets away with being a free spirit. Although married and father to an only son, he manages to avoid the staid Toronto suburbs in order to pursue

the life he perceives his due as serious author and journalist.

Having taken to frequenting the coffee houses of Yorkville, York meets John, a homosexual writer, who falls in love with him. Eve" at the end of the novel we are not sure if John's love is fully reciprocated. What we *are* sure of is that York is sexually attracted to Job". But sex has a wide meaning for Symons, whose views recall D.H. Lawrence's. Sexuality is worshipped along with nature as the ultimate power ma" can achieve to uplift himself from human foible. In order to accomplish the freedom required for ultimate power York most abandon his heterosexuality, a price he is willing — if not eager — to pay.

A sado-masochistic relationship reminiscent of the struggles York had loathed in his marriage develops be tween York and John, making their affair perilous at best. Further, John's parents refuse to accept their son's homosexuality. "They had warned John they would have York beaten impotent." York and John have "o choice but to leave Toronto. A short trip to Mexico allows them to make the necessary break.

York returns to Toronto to find his wife Christine has filed for divorce. In a deeply moving scene. the two must control their cruelty toward each other for the sake of their seven-year-old son happily skipping nearby. The reader is painfully aware that a" attraction still exists between York and Christine. but also that their individual needs are much stronger than tbe ones that bind them.

After tbe divorce John and York move from Toronto to settle permanently in Osprey Cove, Nfld. The coastal village provides the natural, peaceful surroundings both writers crave. The warm simplicity of the people is idealized by Symons. who even makes their accents sound exotic. His portrayal of Osprey Cove is crucial. Symons refuses to take any person, place, or convention at face value. Like Lawrence, he proves that art can be more real than life, if what drives it are what he considers to be the world's primal forces: sex and nature.

York leaves Osprey Cove for a licentious journey to *Morocco — in his words,* an "orgasm odyssey," his "zeb" (Arabic for penis) acting as his oracle. He has heard that visitors arc sometimes kidnapped and sold to caravans heading for the Sahara and the Atlas Mountains, a" experience that. for a while, he thinks he might enjoy.

The Moroccan adventure centres on four incidents. First we are introduced to a bright, lush landscape where young men strut about. York views the tower of the mosque, the 1,000-year-old Koutoubia, as a helmet of flesh, the phallic image embedded in the religious. He meets his first Moroccan, Kebir, who proudly introduces himself, "I'm Kebir. I am Marrakshi!" (York replies: "I'm York. York of Osprey Cove.") Kebir is "maybe twenty: tall and slim torso. His face as open as his eyes and carnal in a way York could not grasp."

At this time York is 36, IO pounds flabby, $15,000 dollars in debt, and exhausted from writing what he regards as another bad book. He realizes he won't assume his usual master role with Kebir, his occidental baggage. degrees, and books are meaningless on Kebir's turf.

York meets two eccentric Englishmen, James and Tony, whom he describes as characters out of a Kipling novel. They disappoint hi as alter egos and York finds himself abandoned in a bizarre *hôtel des amis* peopled by international artistic drop-outs from society, many of them homosexual. The scenes at-the hotel are deliberately embellished to show a sharp, materialistic, contrast to the natural Moroccan landscape and sexuality.

Neat we meet Karim, a Berber carpet dealer, who gives York sugared mint tea. While he tries to sell York a rug he displays a huge erection. But he wants only to tantalize York, not have him.

Symons crowns York's sexual odyssey with a visit to a sheikh's kasbah. At a" elaborate tea ceremony, floral water is sprinkled over York's hands while the sheikh asks, "You believe a man "ailed to a tree can live? Ply to heaven?" The question brings to York's mind tbe Anglican Book of Common Prayer: "This is my body given for you . . . this is my blood." York decides to return to Osprey Cove to tell John what *he* has learned in Morocco: that "Communion is central to their love."

Symon's first instalment of his trilogy is as convincing as it is sensuous. Like Lawrence, who preached puritanical paganism, Symons insists our true understanding of our place in the cosmos depends on our abiity to enjoy nature and sexuality to tbe fullest. □

CRITICAL NOTICES

ARTS & CRAFTS

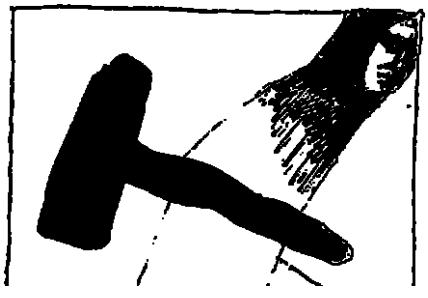
The Diaries of Edmund **Montague Morris: Western Journeys 1907-1910,** edited by Mary **Fitz-Gibbon,** Royal Ontario Museum, illustrated, 179 pages, **$24.95 paper (ISBN 0 88854 259 3).**

By **Patricia Morley**

THE DIFFICULT handwriting *of* **Edmund Morris has** kept **his record** of tbe **Plains Indians inaccessible to all** but **a** few **dedicated researchers for three-quarters of a century. In a labour of love that took eight years, Mary Fitz-Gibbon** baa **deciphered the hieroglyphics, which tbe museum's ethnologist calls** "little more **than chicken** scratches."

Edmund was the so" of lawyer **Alexander Morris, the chief commissioner for the negotiation of land** treaties **with the Indians in the 1870s. Edmund accompanied a treaty expedition to Northern Ontario in 1906, then spent four summers visiting Indian reserves in the West. The diaries portray his experiences there in simple and direct language,** with a wealth of detail and the sympathetic **interest that marks his portraits.**

Certainly the portraits of Indian chieftains (pastel on paper) constitute the



book's major attraction. **There** are 16 **pages** in **colour,** and **many** mom black-**and-white photographs.** Photos of some of bis subjects **allow** the reader to see the **accuracy** of tbe sketches and **finished work. As** B.S. **Rogers observes, in a fine eight-page** introduction, other contemporary **artists were painting Indian life,** but **their** scenes **are often** contrived and **romanticized,** the faces **small,** the settings **unnatural: "Morris** seems to stand **alone in his** generation **in portraying** North **American Indian** subjects **in** their own environment and in whatever **clothes** they were **wearing when** they **came** to **him."**

Diaries and portraits **alike ratify to** the rapport that Morris achieved witb the Indian **leaders.** Out *of this* mutual respect, and **an** exceptional **talent** for portraiture, **comes this unique** witness to **a** vanished **way** of **life** and **a tragic people. *The Diaries*** **include** a bibliography **and index.** □

NOTE

Particularly positive *critical notices* ***are*** *marked* ***at*** *the end with* ***a*** *star.* ☆

BELLES LETTRES

The Creating Word, edited by Patricia Demers, University of Alberta Press. 215 **pages,** 324.95 **cloth (ISBN 0 88864 092 7).**

By ***M.G. Vassanji***

IN THE LAST few years even the casual browser Inside **any** respectable book **store could not have failed** to catch the **whiff of battle from the shelves of the literary criticism section. Loud claims, counter-claims, and mediating voices have brought an air of controversy and excitement that other discipliner may well envy.**

The Creating Word. while **aware** of these trends and **not** unmarked by **their** polemics, **emphasizes** the **pedagogical** aspects *of the* **subject; as such it is an interesting collection of articles that touch on a number of important** questions **regarding** tbe **teaching and learning** of **English.** The **articles** range **from** considerations **of some of the main literary theoretical approaches, through** the **teaching** of **language,** writing, and **appreciation,** to school **curricula.** one cannot **dispute the concerns expressed therein.**

But the collection is uneven in its treatment of the different subjects. Tbe critique of deconstruction theory, for example, is analytic and in depth. the article on computers and literacy is rather **mild, and** the one on Canadian Literature in the secondary curriculum is **descriptive. The** scope of the **collection** is unclear. It cannot be "teaching **English" in Canada,** since the U.S. **contributors** draw mostly **from American experiences. That five of the contributors are fmm one university makes a rather weighted distribution. The papers are selected from an "international conference"; one wonders then about the teaching of English in Trinidad, for example, or South** Africa. I suspect "international" hem is used in the same sense as "world" **in** World **Series.** □

In the Feminine: Women and **Words/les femmes** et **les mots conference pro**feedings **1983,** edited by Ann **Dybokowski, Victoria Freeman, Daphne Marlatt, Barbara Pulling, and Betsy Warland, Longspoon Press,** 235 **pages, $9.50 paper (ISBN** 0 919285 30 **9).**

By **Barbara *MacKay***

WOMEN ARE 42 **pa cent of Canadian freelance writers and 80** per **cent** of the **people who buy books, yet women writers have received only 20 per cent of the G-or General's Awards and 20 per cent of review space in Canadian newspapers. These** footnoted statistics,' summarizing tbe political and **cultural** context of women's writing, appear **in** the **early** pages of **this book. The** writings **that follow, selections that are** divided into **six** thematic chapters, present **a myriad** of **distinct voices from the** community of Canadian **literary** women, voices **"in** tbe feminine" that speak out of **this** reality.

Tbe conference **participants** represent diverse aspects of **literary activity in** Canada **—** book and **magazine publishers,** bookstores, **fiction** and **nonfiction** writers. **translators,** and **linguistic and literary theorists.** Not **all** of the conference **proceedings have** been gathered **between these pages, but the editors chose to print not only papers presented at the conference but also transcriptions of panel and group discussions. The range of ideas and perspectives is enormous —** black women writers, writing and motherhood, women's language.. **The** book **provides an excellent** overview of both the **diversity** and unity **of** women Involved i" **literary** activity **in** Canada. □

Mirrors of War: Literature and Revolution in El Salvador, edited by Gabriela Yanes, Manuel Sorto, Horacio Castellanos Moya, and **Lyn Sorto, translated from** the Spanish by **Keith Ellis, Between the** Lines, 151 pages, 318.95 **cloth (ISBN 0** 919946 56 **9)** and 38.95 **paper QSBN 0 919946 57 7).**

By Matthew *Behrens*

IN LATIN AMERICA, culture is subversive. Among the first arrested, tortured. **and murdered during states of siege are** the **artists,** who **speak** for tbe voiceless and **illiterate.** Nowhere is **this** better **illustrated** than **in El** Salvador, where **a** U.S.-backed regime is **conducting** the **largest air war against civilians since Cambodia.**

Keith **Ellis,** a University of **Toronto**

Spanish professor, has translated a fair cross-section of Salvadorean writing here in an edition not intended to be all-inclusive. Rather, the works reflect the impact of the past six years of brutal civil war on a generation of writers, most of them in exile, some with the guerrillas, and a few disappeared.

What emerges in these poems and prose extracts, graced with a well-written political/literary introduction that places the unfamiliar reader In a comfortable context, is a compelling anthology of poets and novelists seeking their cultural identity, the nature of artistic commitment, and their role in a war-torn society.

Essential reading for those who wish to know the roots of Third World turmoil, these works of about 40 writers are a plea to understand their struggle, a fiercely nationalistic battle based on a vision of a kinder society. Above all, as poet Claribel Alegría tits, are the reasons people want peace: because they are fired upon with napalm and their relatives disappear, they must keep on fighting. Because there are liberated zones where people are fed. taught to read, and cared for when sick, they must keep on fighting.

With thoughts such as these, literature definitely becomes part of the revolutionary process In El Salvador. □

Susanna Moodie: Letters of a **Lifetime,** edited by Carl **Ballstadt, Elizabeth** Hopkins, and Michael **Peterman, University** of Toronto Press, illustrated, 390 **pages, $29.95** cloth **(ISBN** 0 8020 **2580** 3).

By Laurel Boone

SUSANNA MOODIE'S ***Roughing It*** ***in the Bush*** is sometimes **regarded as** the **whine** of a displaced bluestocking. ***Letters of a Lifetime*** **corrects** ***this*** **view,** partly by **exposing** the long Canadian tradition of belittling ***Roughing It*** because of its candour while **overlooking** the comic and narrative qualities that made it a bit **in England** and the United States. **Moodie has also seemed a martyr to an ineffectual** husband, and ***Letters of a Lifetime lays that*** myth to rest, **too,** as it **unfolds** the hardships she and John W. **Dunbar Moodie** shared.

Readers who **find Moodie's** religious **effusions** and ha concentration on sickness **and** death maudlin should **recall that** she knew nothing about **germs —** antiseptics and anaesthetics were **discoveries** of her **times.** Any **illness** ***was*** **life-threatening,** and without **her fervent** faith **in God,** she could scarcely have borne her knowledge of death's **constant presence.**

Letters of a Lifetime **catches Moodie's grit and perseverance as she struggles in** the midst of desperate family **crises** to become a popular **novelist.** By the late **1850s,** she **discovered —** and she was perhaps the **first** of Canada's English **writers to do so — that her vision suited** the North American market better than the British.

The text of ***Letters of a Lifetime*** **is** ***clear, although*** it would be **more** pleasant if the **notes were all** at the end of the book. To deflect blame for the abridge meats, the editors should have pointed out in the preface that ellipses are **transcribed** from the sources **of the letters;** they also should have made it **clear** whether this is **a** collected **or** selected edition. The introductions to the book's five sections are **informative,** if somewhat awkwardly **written.** The **hand** of an inexperienced research assistant may **perhaps** be seen here, as well as in **the** footnotes, which tend **to** be repetitive. But these are **small** cavils. This is a crucially important **book** in Canadian literary history. It is also good reading. □

CITIES

Saint John: **The Making of a Colonial Urban Community,** by T.W. **Acheson,** University of **Toronto** Press, illustrated, 314 pages, $29.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 **8020 2586** 2).

By Laurel ***Boone***

ACHESON EXPLORES the rapid **transition** of the **town of** Saint John into the major city of the Bay of **Fundy watershed,** a transition **that** saw the population quadruple between 1824 and 1861. Saint John's **population** grew **so** quickly main-**4** because of the lumber **industry and** Irish immigration. Immigration **especial-4** sharpened **the** divisions already **present in that** class-based **colonial** society, for until **the** 1840s Irish Protestants outnumbered Irish **Catholics,** and these **Protestants** aggravated frictions **in** the Loyalist Episcopalian and **Scottish Presbyterian churches. Acheson** analyses the efforts each section of the community made to o-me economic. **ethnic, class. partv. and religious differences in order to create a functioning** city.

Saint John **will** of **course** be welcome to those with a special interest **in the** history of **the Maritimes,** but two **features** give it a wider scope. First, **Acheson relates** his work **to** studies of other cities in Canada, **England,** and the united states. **This** is especially important **with** regard to **Loyalist/Irish** and Protestant/Catholic conflicts in Upper Canada. Second, the tables and their **sources will** lend themselves to research in related topics.

Because this book is organized **topically, it presents no complete view of the community at any** one **time. Analysis** far outweighs **synthesis,** and clouds of numbers often obscure the **author's argument. However,** the material for a citing **stories** and clear pictures is here, and no doubt tbii comprehensive and enlightening **book** will be **thoroughly** mined by future historians. □

FICTION

Barbarossa Red, by **Dennis** Jones, **Stoddart,** 366 pages, $19.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 7737 **2054** 5).

By Douglas ***Malcom***

PRIOR TO THE First World **War, British** alarm **over** German **sabre-rattling** gave rise **to** the **so-called invasion** novel, **books such as** Wells's ***The War in the Air*** that foretold the nature of **the** approaching **conflict.** The present tension between **East** and West has inspired a new **brand** of **invasion** novel **—** the geopolitical **thriller —** that **counts down the** seconds **to nuclear** warfare. Jones, author of the best-selling ***Rubicon One,*** **proves** he is a capable practitioner of the genre in his **newest** work.

Barbarossa Red **opens with the United** States and **the Soviet** Union agreeing to remove **their** nuclear warheads from Europe. **But** instead of initialing **an era** of peace, the disarmament pact edges the world closer to war. West German Chancellor Ernst **Rudel** seizes the **opportunity to** rearm **his** nation and to foster hopes ***of*** **reunification** with **East Germany.** The Russians foresee the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and decide to invade. The world is thus plunged **into** a nightmare, **and only** U.S. agent Paul Brand has any hope of **averting** a nuclear Armageddon.

Jones's formidable knowledge of **military** hardware lends ***Barbarossa Red*** **an** ***air*** of **authenticity that** compensates for its **rather** superficial **characters — the** naive U.S. president, the **cunning** Russian premier. The novel employs a standard **jump-cut** narrative that **manufactures** the necessary excitement and almost obscures the fact that **two** chapters **(pages 186-196)** have been jumbled together. **Jones might want to** have a quiet **chat** with hi publishers about their duties. □

Daughters of Earth and Other Stories. by **Judith Merril. McClelland &** Stewart; 383 **pages, $4.95** paper **(ISBN** 0 7110 58313).

By ***Candace Carman***

AFTER *READING* **THIS collection,** ***I*** would like to say **that** I loved **the cover** painting. **Unfortunately, you cannot** judge **any** book by its **cover,** including **this collection** of seven short stories, three

novellas, and one essay from the respected speculative fiction writer.

Contrary to appearances, tbis is not a haphazard collection. As Merril states in her opening notes, she sees her specialty as "future fiction" and herself as a prophet. With that in mind, it is not too surprising that the connective tissue for this body of work is prophecy and woman expressed against a backdrop of environmental pollution, nuclear testing, psychic development, and interpersonal problems beyond our present time-space perspective.

Adding mytho-historical allusions does not a character make, nor is one of its consequences that of providing depth to pre-existing weak characterization. In "Wish Upon-a Star" and especially in "Daughters of Barth," the names of certain individuals — Martha, Leah, Ariadne, Sarah — are emphasized. But the author's attempts to use biblical and Greek allusions misfire for lack of foundation and illuminating context.

Merril manipulates an emotional ac-

celerator pedal driving the reader to reflex action, passive receptivity, blind sentimentality, and emotional toxicity rather than to thought and/or enjoy-meat. "That Only a Mother" has the traditional figures of babbling infant and effusive, proud mother as focus until the final scene when the father sees his genetically deformed child for the first time: "His head shook and his muscles contracted in a bitter spasm of hysteria. His fingers tightened on bis child — Oh God, she didn't know."

Resurrected from a well-deserved oblivion, having first appeared in s-f magazines circa 1948-1979, the stories are stodgy, manipulative, limited, and most important, limiting to the reader's imagination. Merril gives us mere outlines of complex characters and conceptually interesting plots. Far too frequently she proceeds to resolve all complexities within the last page or even the last line. A well-accomplished story resolves its conflicts inherently as reader and story progress together. Merril's concoction seems brewed primarily to illustrate a philosophical/ideological view. ❑

High Stand, by Hammond Innes, Collins, 336 pages, $19.95 cloth QSBN 0 00 222971 4).

By John Greenwood

THE MOST INSPIRED part of this British writer's 26th novel is the travelogue. Set on the British Colombia coast, the narrative of this rather tame adventure story is well padded with detailed descriptions of the scenery, and as the characters pursue one another from one town to the next Innes even touches on the subject of respectable accommodation.

But in contrast to the setting, the story is conventional and slow-paced. At the center is Tom Halliday, a financially troubled English heir to a valuable stand of B.C. timber, who suddenly disappears. Whm Philip Redfern, his young solicitor, discovers his client hiii in the Yukon wilds, it turns out that Halliday is trying to escape from a Mafia lumber company bent on acquiring his timber rights. To complicate matters, Halliday's father, who planted the trees. has laid a curse on anyone who allows them to be cut. And when the company thugs kidnap Halliday's wife, Miriam, the entire West Coast become5 the scene of a long and violent chase.

The complicated plot might have worked but for the unconvincing characters. Though Halliday is well conceived, the solicitor Redfern's presence in Canada is never properly explained beyond some vague yearnings for hi client's wife. And Miriam herself is a problem. At times fickle and adulterous and at others — notably after a gruesome chainsaw murder — forceful and loyal, she is not credible.

But perhaps this is paying too much attention to detail. In *High Stand* Innes goes out of his way to put his readers at ease, and as with many of his hooks he does this by packaging an exotic setting in a very traditional story. Like staying at the Vancouver Holiday Inn, you're unlikely to come across any surprises in this novel, but you may well glimpse some nice scenery. ❑

The Lonely Sea, by Alistair MacLean, Collins, 222 pages. $19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 00 222951 X).

By David Jordan

FROM THE AUTHOR of *The Guns of Navarone* and *Ice* Station *Zebra comes this* collection of 14 tales of adventure on the high seas. At best, MacLean provides an accurate account of naval battles by an obviously knowledgeable reporter; however, without a Gregory Peck or a Rock Hudson to personify the "incredibly gallant men" of "indomitable courage" described in these yams, we are left with a string of clichés which, try as the author might to revive them with overblown rhetoric, lie dead on the page.

The bulk of these stories were written during the Second World War. a time when a naval destroyer could capture the hearts and imaginations of a nation, when the mighty Hood, "thrusting the puny waves contemptuously aside," could symbolize "all that was permanent. a synonym for all that was invincible, held in awe, even veneration." To the handful of warship enthusiasts left today, these stories will have some appeal, but to the rest of us they are an anachronism, just as MacLean's plodding realism harkens back to a literary style long gone.

There are some notable exceptions to the hem-going-down-with-the-ship formula in this collection. For example, "McCrimmon and the Blue Moonstones" is a humorous account of a dockworker who attempts to smuggle gemstones out of Alexandria. Here again, however, MacLean's inflated verbiage stifles any chance of dramatic tension. Take for example the description of an Arab bodyguard, "chosen with a complete lack of the aesthetic viewpoint," to whom "the higher forms of etiquette were a closed book." AU this to say he was an ugly brute.

In all fairness to the author, one must point out that MacLean has no pretensions of literary greatness. "Some day I might get around to writing a good book," the author tells us in a brief afterword to this edition. One can always keep hoping. 0

The Quarter-Pie Window, by Marianne Brandis, Porcupine's Quill, 199 pages, $8.95 paper QSBN 0 88984 085 7).

By ***Anneli Pekkonen***

THIS SEQUEL TO *The Tinder-Box* follows the fortunes of 14-year-old Emma Anderson after the destruction of her family farm. With her brother John, she is taken to York and put to work in her Aunt's hotel. It is a grim life, different from the bush but full of its own sort of harshness. The novel is concerned with Emma's coming to terms with her grief and ha new circumstances. The quarter-pie window in her room becomes the talisman of Emma's new life: offering a unique view of the world that belongs to her alone.

The fine research and authentic flavour that characterized *The Tinder-*

Box are present in this work as well. me *Quarter-Pie Window is* a fair picture of what life in York was like *circa 1830. This* element, combined with an appealing heroine, ensures that the book is a palatable lesson in Canadian history and should therefore become a fixture on school reading lists. What might have been a minor classic, however, falls short. Ambiguity and lack of development mar the book's two central conflicts.

Mrs. MacPhail, Emma's aunt, is one of the problems. She gives her niece the filthiest jobs to do, treats her like a servant, and is less than honest in her sale of Emma's and John's property. Yet Brandis tries to temper her portrait of this woman by emphasizing her intelligence and basic decency. MacPhail is simply not strong enough to sustain the plot that Is built upon her character. The result is a vacuum at the dramatic core of the work.

The same sort of muddle exists, on a smaller scale, with Emma's attempts to fmd out more about her parents. Family skeletons are only hinted at. The writing isn't focused enough for dramatic effect and there is none of the seamless integration that sends someone back to a book time after time.

The Quarter-Pie Window is a good book. but there is an inescapable sense that it could have been a better one. □

Queen of the Headaches, by **Sharon Butala, Coteau** Books. 184 **pages, $4.95 paper (ISBN 0 919926** 48 **7).**

By John *Greenwood*

YOU KNOW FROM these *14 stories* that Sharon Butala is intimately familiar with the austere prairie landscape and the people who live on it. In a clipped, methodical prose she manages at times to evoke their very texture.

Most of the pieces here are about women trying to cope with life on the prairie, with the isolation and harsh winters, and with husbands who are often just as difficult. "Belle in Winter," in which a farm wife living in quiet desperation dreams of having an affair, is typical. Butala gives the story a concrete quality. engaging her character in daily chores such as watering animals and unloading trucks. And despite a melodramatic ending (the handsome neighbour hastily retreats when the main character bares her breasts), the piece works.

One problem the collection does have is its theme of entrapment. Most of the stories deal with characters imprisoned by oppressive marriages or the severe environment, and Butala is inclined to be heavy-handed here. For Instance, in 'Breaking Horses" a hired man seduces the main character while he breaks in her husband's horses. And in the title story a woman who feels miserably inferior to her husband offers debilitating headaches that prevent her from accomplishing anything. Roth of these are rather blunt.

The best stories are those that get away from such didactic plots, such as "The Mission." A string of recollections, it depicts a woman who discovers a kind of freedom on an isolated farm. A curious, gentle piece, it doesn't present any lessons, but it does suggest that Butala is capable of some very good things. □

The West Coasters, by David **Corcoran, Macmillan,** 352 **pages, $24.95** cloth **(ISBN** 0 7715 9683 **9).**

By David Jordan

WITH B.C.'S HAIDA battling corporate lumber giants over one of the province's few remaining parcels of virgin forest, now is an excellent time to take a detailed look at the days when B.C.'s settlers were overwhelmed by the seemingly endless reserves of timber and the fortunes it could bring.

Corcoran takes on the challenge in this, his first novel, and succeeds in painting a gripping picture of the hectic years between 1855 and 1886 when Vancouver grew from a simple Indian village to a thriving city of 10,000, complete with hotels, theatres, shops and, of course, bars and brothels.

Woven among the historical facts, an array of fictional characters fills out the narrative, including Sitka, the Indian woman who witnesses the death of ha nation, and Jonas Cains, an exiled British nobleman bent on founding a multinational lumber empire. In between, we find Mei-Fu, calculating founder of the prosperous Palace

Royale bar and brothel; Abby, who arrives as cargo in a boatload of prostitutes and ends up running the province's largest sawmill; and a host of Indian, Chinese. British. and American pioneers.

The West Coasters is a remarkable achievement for a new novelist. It is neither a plodding, didactic history nor a self-aggrandizing testament to a young author's own importance. Corcoran patiently lays down detail upon detail, slowly bringing the diverse characters to life, then picking up the pace as these characters interact — falling 'in love, murdering. and even buying and selling one another — and building to a frenzied climax.

It is his eye for detail that distinguishes this author. His symbolism and imagery bespeak a first-rate imagination, from his description of the blood-red reflection of the setting sun on the giant saw blade arriving at Vancouver's first sawmill to the image of Sitka paddling her canoe across Burrard Inlet — dwarfed by a three-masted Chinese barque.

The conspicuous fault in the novel lies with the publishers, not the author. Broken type, missing words, and even an entire passage set in the wrong type size binder smooth reading, and an amateurish overabundance of colons and semicolons compounds the problem. one hopes that in the future Corcoran will get the attention he deserves. ☆

FOLKWAYS

Dream Tracks: the **Railroad** and **the American Indian 1890-1930,** by **Teri** C. **McLuhan,** Prentice-Hall, **208** pages, **illustrated, $55.00 cloth (ISBN** 0 8109 0835 2).

By John *Oughton*

THIS UNUSUAL collection of hand-coloured photographs celebrates both the Pueblo Indian culture of the turn of the century and the bii of a tourist industry that gradually deformed that culture. McLuhan has selected photographs, lantern slides, posters, and other images used by the Sante Fe Railroad to promote visits to Indian villages in the U.S. Southwest between 1890 and 1930.

Those who chose this train mute (augmented by limousine side-trips) were termed "detourists," and had a chance to see some of the dances and other rituals that fascinated more discerning visitors such as D.H. Lawrence. Many of these pictures have not been seen for decades. Particularly interesting to students of native culture will be images of the Corn Dance and the Hopi Snake Dance, in which participants handled poisonous snakes, rarely suffering bites.

McLuhan writes perceptively about the sociological aspects of the railway's promotions, and about how the Sante Fe style of advertising rhetoric helped to shape U.S. perceptions of native life. Wisely, she lets the photographs tell their own story on the whole, only adding information that Is not readily visible

or that helps put the image into context. Although expensive. this Is an unusual and handsome gift book with some real value as a cultural artifact.*

FOOD & DRINK

The Anne of Green Gables Cookbook, by Kate Macdonald, Oxford. illustrated, 48 pages, $9.95 cloth (ISBN 0 19 540496 3).

By Laurel Boone

THIS COOKBOOK FOR girls *was* scientifically tested by two enthusiastic but inexperienced 11-year-olds and one jaded mother. The test recipe was "Maritime Gingersnaps."

Each recipe contains a list of equipment needed; "Maritime Gingersnaps" leaves out the rubber scraper. Suzy asked. "Should we grease the cookie sheets?" and we had to consult *Joy* of *Cooking* to learn that we should. Sarah wondered how to roll the dough into balls the size of a quarter. The direction to flatten the dough balls with the bottom of a glass proved unspecific: Suzy peeled a lot of dough off the bottom of her glass as her penalty for not dipping the glass in flour first. and because the girls underestimated the desired flatness, their gingersnaps didn't snap. The 12-year-old on whom Macdonald tested *her* book must have had a keener coach than my research assistants had.

Kate Macdonald, a "food stylist," Is Lucy Maud Montgomery's granddaughter, a selling point made on the book's back cover. Her mundane recipes "either explain basic cooking nor tell how to create childish delicacies. And I haven't met a single little paragon who would voluntarily make lettuce and spinach salad and thousand island dressing, even with the example of Diana Barry shining before her eyes.

Scientific opinion on the book is divided: children, yea; mother, nay. Both girls would like to try other recipes, but Sarah would rather receive a storybook as a gift. Suzy admirer the *Anne of* Green *Gables* connection, *Sarah* is indifferent, mother finds it spurious and opportunistic. The girls like the illustrations; mother fmds than too cute. □

ON STAGE

My Orchestras and Other Adventures: The Memoirs of **Boyd Neel,** edited by J. **David Finch,** University of Toronto Press, 230 pages, $24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 5674 1).

By ***Janet Windeler***

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED I" part in Neel's first book, i-he *Story* of *an Orchestra* (Vox Mundi, 1950), the memoirs of the British-raised surgeon-turned-conductor were left incomplete as a result of the failing eyesight that troubled him before his death in Toronto in 1981. Nonetheless, this volume, edited on Ned's request by a friend, is an engaging and energetic grab-bag of socio-musical history: Neel's personal reminiscences; his often outspoken opinions on performers, composers, and compositions; a good amount of descriptive travelogue; a discography spanning 45 years; and some marvellous gossip.

I" letters reprinted here that originally appeared in the Times in 1914. Ravel and Diaghilev are drive" to the brink of warfare over the participation of the chorus in lhe London première of Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloë,* which *had* been commissioned by Diaghilev and the Ballet Russe. In another letter, Puccini protests to a friend about the upcoming London première of his opera *Trittico* because, he writes, "I don't want that pig of a Toscanini to conduct." And Toscanini, sitting in the audience behind Neel during a Bayreuth performance of Parsifal, spends the entire evening making hissing noises at Karl Muck's conducting. But Neel also recalls, with child-like wonder, the sheer transforming power of his first visit to the theatre at the age of live, when he watched, awestruck, as Pavlova danced her famous solo, "The Dying Swan," to Saint-Saëns' *Carnival* of *the Animals.*

With the geniality and lightness of spirit that sets the lone for most of these memoirs, Ned recounts the formation and often entertaining, sometimes macabre adventures of his London-based string chamber group, the Boyd Neel Orchestra, and the baroque revival the orchestra triggered. He originally combined careers in medicine and music, but after the Second World War was drawn into his music full-time, and formed associations with Respighi, Honegger, and, most important. Benjamin Britten, conducting the premières of many of Britten's works with tremendous critical success.

The book falls somewhat flat, when Neel describes the 18 years he spent as dean of Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, a position he was persuaded to take up in 1953 in an attempt to rescue that still troubled institution from mllapse. He established the Hart House Orchestra, with which he made a number of recordings, and performed a successful series of concerts at Stratford.

The most valuable part of the book is a short, thoughtful section devoted to examining the mystery of Mozart's genius — that perfect. inscrutible blending of joy and pain, playfulness and pmfundity, and the music's essential, yet ultimately elusive subjectivity. □

Music fmm Within: A Biography of the Composer SC. Eckhardt-Gramatté, by Ferdinand Eckhardt, University of Manitoba Press, illustrated, 207 pages, $20.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88755 136 X).

By ***Janet Windeler***

THE COMPOSING STYLE of Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté is earthy, emotionally intense, and aggressive. (The critic Max Graf referred to her second piano concerto as "this cast-iron concerto" with 'an "amazon-like furor".) The music is notoriously difficult to play. texturally dense. and often swept up in a surging rhythmic drive that leaves little space for breathing. But, however clearly definable her musical persona, Eckhardt-Gramatté — who died in 1974, and spent the last 21 years of ha life as Winnipeg's foremost composer and music educator — was a woman whose complex psychological makeup was filled with contradictions.

Single-minded and arguably arrogant in her tireless self-promoting missions to prominent conductors and performers (she pursued violinist Ruggiero Ricci mercilessly for years, to no wail),, she still retained an exceedingly delicate, inquiring nature.. Throughout her life, Sonia, as she was called, continued to write touching, surprisingly child-like letters to the spirit of ha first husband, Walter Gramatté, the Berlin expressionist painter. She was shattered by, and "ever fully recovered from, Gramatté's early death in 1929. and shortly after abandoned a promising career as both violin and piano virtuoso to devote herself lo serious composing. She "ever gave up promoting Gramatté's work, and always kept his name.

Her second husband, Ferdinand Eckhardt, Austrian-bum art critic and director of the Winnipeg Art Gallery for 21 years, has assembled his wife's letters, notebooks, and photographs into this readable, handsomely produced. though sloppily proof-read biography, which he has shortened and translated from the earlier German edition. And it is Eckhardt's voice, and his humane, life-embracing vision that dominate the book.

Born in Moscow in 1899 to a musically gifted mother, who taught piano to the children of Leo Tolstoy, and a father whose identity remains a mystery (Eckhardt believes it was Tolstoy), Sonia spent her earliest years in an English commune, studied at the Paris Conservatoire under d'Indy and Fauré, and after losing a violin competition there. left for Berlin. where *she met* and married Gramatté.

Sonia's composing and Gramatté's art were branded degenerate and repressed

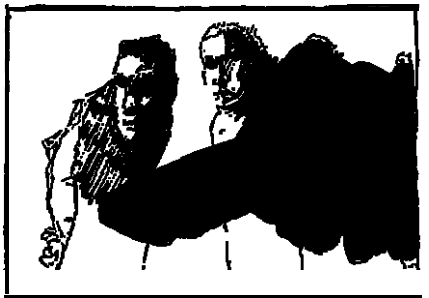
during the Nazi regime, but she enjoyed considerable success during the early years of her marriage to Eckhardt. The home Eckhardt and Eckhardt-Gramatté shared in Winnipeg became the ideal creative environment for the prolific composer, who has produced numerous solo works for piano and violin, a generous body of chamber music, a few songs, and a large orchestral output, in-&ding an assortment of concertos and two full-scale symphonies.

In 1976, the first Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition for the performance of Canadian contemporary music took place — an annual eve"' that has become an invaluable platform for Canadian composers and performers and a monument to an artist who practised art as a religion as well as a profession. □

New Canadian Drama 3: Alberta Dramatists, edited by Denis Salter, Borealis Press, 180 pages, $29.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88887 878 8) and 514.95 paper (ISBN 0 88887 880 X).

By Jason Sherman

WHEN THE GHETTOIZATION of writers has more to do with specialist editors than with stated, shared concerns of the authors involved, the inevitable leap to thematic criticism overlooks stylistic problems of the texts too large to ignore. In overlooking the obvious dramaturgical problems of two of the three plays in this collection of Albertan playwrights, editor Dads Slater does a disservice to his readers and writers. Neither Frank Moher's *Down for the Weekend* nor Kelly-Jean Rebar's *Checkin' Out* stands up to the importance and large implications of Salter's introduction. The two plays are largely Informed by U.S. culture in the form of television shows, fast foods, and myths



of buried treasures, greener pastures. They are influences that determine not only a good deal of the dialogue, but unfortunately make for characters of the depth and familiarity seen in shows like *Petticoat Junction* and *Beverly Hillbillies.*

Rebar bad me going for a while with the easy flow of conversation between two check-out girls, whose colloquial speech was believable, evocative, and suggestive of a writer who sincerely loved her characters. Where Rebar lost me was with the introduction of men, neither of whom are credible figures. The young Danny, for example.. is given to be a wit, but his attempts at sophisticated humour are embarrassing to read/listen to because the syntax is off, the wit laboured. This would be fine if it were the point, but the lines read as though they were meant to be funny.

Both plays have been extensively rewritten and performed — there seems little point in reworking either. But both start out strong and end in fizzles of familiar storylines and dialogue. Much better. and far more courageous in its attempt to try something different, is Gordon Pengilly's *Swipe.* Again there is an affection for the characters from the writer, but one tempered with a distance that allows Pengilly to see clear to an overview of his material. *Swipe* Is tightly constructed. It sets a tone in the opening sequence that never falters, an innocence that belies the situation — a gang of thieves who live in a swamp await the spiritual return of a long-dead compatriot — while cleverly fulfilling the group's need: transcendence. The language Pengilly creates for them lets them rise above the muck of the swamp. □

THE PAST

The Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk 1799-1809, edited by J.M. Bumstead, Manitoba Record Society, 372 pages, $40.00 cloth (ISBN 0 9692101 6).

By John Newlove

THOMAS DOUGLAS, *the fifth* Earl of Selkirk. is known in Canada chiefly as the founder of the Scottish Red River Colony in Manitoba. Prince Edward Islanders may remember him for the settlement in 1803, eight years before the western project, of 800 Highlanders in that province.

Born in 1771, Thomas was the youngest so" in a large family, but the deaths of successive older brothers eventually brought him the title on his father's demise in 1799. The new Bad had attended university in Edinburgh, though "There is little evidence he took many of [his classes] seriously," says J.M. Bumstead in a lo"8 and useful introduction to the role of the Selkirk family in the affairs, both Scottish and British, of their time. Bumstead notes "the growing gulf between the Selkirk clan and their order in Scotland." The editor finds it possible, in fact, to write of "the radical ardour of hi family," and Thomas himself bad visited Paris in 1791 and '1792. had dined with Thomas Paine, and had come to believe that intellectuals could also he men of action.

The larger portion of this book, reprinting Selkirk's speculative and (in the larger sense) political writings, covers a period of his life when Thomas very gradually turned away from the radicalism of his family and, by 1809, with the publication of his pamphlet, "A Letter to John Cartwright . . . ," had succeeded in making his reputation 'and his career. But the earlier interest in agricultural practices and in Scottish emigration — "more tractable than the Irish" — as well as his involvement with the Hudson's Bay Company, continued, and will be .detailed in the 10 further volumes *planned.*

This is a useful project (though the proof-reading needs more care), and perhaps it and similar ventures may partially make up for the loss to Canadian studies caused by the HBC's attempt to save a little money from the petty cash drawer by the axing of the Hudson's Bay Record Society. □

POETRY

The Clarity of Voices: Selected Poems 1974-1981, by Philippe Haeck, translated fmm the French by Antonio D'Alfonso, Guernica Editions, 116 pages, $20.00 cloth (ISBN 0 919349 57 9) and S9.95 paper (ISBN 0 919349 56 0).

By Gideon Forman

NO MATTER HOW *correct* its politics, political poetry cannot be forgiven the error of sounding like propaganda. Haeck's left-wing beliefs are ones to which I am partial, yet I fault his work for its mouthing of slogans — "The struggle continues" — for its lack of concreteness.

Broadly speaking. me poet concerns himself with love and revolution, not singly but together-the condition of the world shapes Haeck's private life: "How can we make love or sing if most of us are terrified, if we keep repeating the thoughts rulers "se to frighten us with." Gazing at his newborn son be muses, "He too is ready for the revolution."

Poetry itself is a radical force and Haeck spends much time exploring it: "To change the world we must first clean our ears — writing poetry is washing away the institutional filth gathered in our pores." But despite its significant subject, much of the work proves unsuccessful. Vagueness is the chief problem.

Haeck alludes frequently to a new social order, yet be rarely fleshes out his vision. The work does not make us see and feel enough: "I am dreaming of a world where each new victory will make

children, workers, women, men, hap pier." On at least one occasion this tendency becomes monstrous: "... bodies torn to pieces, unending wars, genocides." Thoughtlessly listed, these horrors are made trivial.

The collection is not without merit. The poet works in a bold language and offers some useful reflections. Discussing the deleterious effects of technology, he warns, "Compare the nervous feet on car-pedals to feet on solid ground." Unfortunately, these few strengths are not sufficient to carry the book.

The poet tells us at one point, "I tinker with literature so we can taste the future world." Perhaps he needs to tinker further. For the flavour of what's to come is not manifest here. □

Singing Against the Wind, by **Rienzi Crusz,** Porcupine's **Quill, 75 pages,** $7.95 paper **(ISBN** 0 88984 **6).**

By *Brian Bartlett*

IN HIS LATEST collection. **Rienzi Crusz** challenges **himself:** "And what's SD new/about this immigrant theme/that tattoos hls work like a **woodpecker?"** At **their** best, the poems themselves suggest an answer: themes needn't be **new,** if **vision** and language are particular and acute enough.

Crusz often calls bis poetic self "Sunman," or opposes deadening North **American** culture to a symbolic sun — **which** seems **Ceylonese,** part of **his** homeland, even when it hangs above his house in Ontario. Yet **elsewhere** he **contrasts** laughter **in** the snow with "the, white skull/for the **flies/in** Ceylon's deadly sun." Such variations catch **his** complex, fluctuating moods. **True, the** poems often lack adept **craft,** rhythmical force, or surprising language. **(Lines like** "someone is waiting/for the last mushroom cloud" only make the apocalypse banal.) Even the **thinner** poems, **however,** add **to** the book's restless dialogue.

Crusz can be nostalgic, with **or without qualification.** or **sardonic, giving his surburban** Sun-man a **rebellious** dream of **his** lawn growing wild **"like** the **hair** of **his** dog Bona"." Or gentle, **lamenting** that his **son** has no **history, no** "genetic dream." Or ironic, **mimicking** an awkward union between past and present **with** a **functional,** comic rhyme: **"I wear** the turban of urban **pride."** Or **— in** one of the **finest** poems — **sonorous, vowing to** transcend "the cruel geography of East and West" and **carve** out **his own** psychic space in tbc world.

In **this book,** such transcendence is rarely reached except **through humour, family** love, sunlight **and** seascapes, and the power of poetry. The collection **begins** and ends **with** poems about poetry. "'Dark with excessive **bright,'"** concluding the book, is unusually taut and evocative.. A man dying in Ceylon tells the **poet to** become-among other things — **"an** archangel's trumpet/call**ing** the dead to **life." In *Singing Against the Wind.*** **certain lines** and stanzas. **sometimes** whole poems, have that power to trumpet. the **reader** awake. 0

Paper Roses, by Rachel **Korn,** translated from the **Yiddish** by Seymour **Levitan,** Aya Press, **115 pages, $9.00** paper **(ISBN** 0 920544 39 **8).**

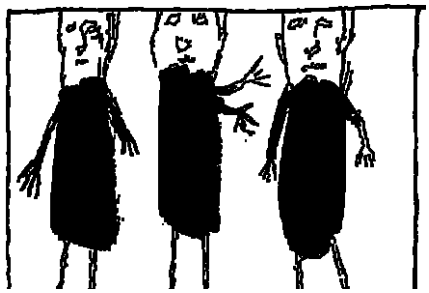
By *Cary Fagan*

KORN'S DECISION to write in Yiddish and her death **in** 1982 make it **likely** that **this book will** be overlooked. That would be a **great** shame, for **Korn** was an **extraordinary wet of lyric grief** and ***Paper Roses*** *contains* **an amazing number** of fme **poems.**

The **two major influences** of Kom's **life** and work **were, first,** the **landscape** of **her** native East **Galicia in** Poland and second, **the** death of **her mother in** a **Nazi concentration** camp. Although she eventually settled **in** Montreal, ha tone of **quiet, personal anguish** dii not **change.**

A few **early poems** have the quality of **folk-tales,** such as **"Crazi Levi"** who wasn't allowed **to marry the cousin** he **loved** and **carries** his heart around "like a **cat in** a sack." The postwar poems **are** suffused **with** an emotion **that** makes them **almost** difficult to read, but at the **same time** they **are surprisingly controlled. Heartache** did not cloud **Korn's** ability to make **touching images** (the angel who **"hides** his face, and **sits** on the old stone") or leave **something unsaid.**

In the longest poem, "Job," **Korn** has tbe now-rewarded Job tell God that



nothing can heal the wounds of **his** suffer& The poem **weakens** as it con**tinues, confirming** Kom's greater **skill with the** short **lyric.** "On the **Other** Side of **the** Poem," **"Last** Niit I Felt a Poem **on** My **Lips,"** and "Sleep" are all superb poems of mourning and reveal poetry as a dubious recompense, as the **healer that cannot heal:**

On the other side of the poem my mother may appear
and stand in the doorway for a while
lost in thought
and then call me home as she used to
call me home long ago:
You've played enough, Rachel. Don't
you see? It's night.

Seymour Levitan's introduction is useful, and **his translations** faultless. Aya Press has **generously** published the Yiddish poems facing their English **versions.** Unfortunately, almost everything about the **design** of tbls **book is a** mistake, **from** the oversized **pages** and small typeface to the hideous **illustrations.** But ***Paper Roses*** *is a* valuable **book, an** unbeliever's **prayer** to a God who **has** hidden His face "behind a hem of **extinguished** stars." ☆

POLITICS

Crisis of **Clarity:** the New **Democratic** Party sad the **Quest** for the Holy **Grail,** by Michael Bradley, **Summerhill (Collier Macmillan),** 224 **pages,** $19.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 **920197 20** 5).

By *Mordechai Ben-Dat*

THE THESIS OF this book **is** that the close **alliance between** the NDP and the trade union movement is unnatural and inconsistent **with** the intended philosophy of the NDP and its political progenitor, the CCP. **The** author argues. moreover. that this inconsistency is the only impediment to the party's political success: "Canadians **will** never flock to the NDP as long as it is **officially** affiliated with trade unions." According to Bradley, a simple **correction** of this anomaly **will bring** the party to its rightful **political** place.

To prove **his** point. the author **traces** the evolution of the modem NDP **focusing** particularly upon **the** contributions of two of the party's **founding** fathers, Tommy Douglas and David **Lewis.** Although perhaps there is a point **to** be made **regarding** the **political utility** of the NDP-trade **union affiliation,** the book does not make it. The tone **and** method are inappropriate and, at times, **disconcerting.** The **author** is swept along by sheer rhetoric, by the **undisciplined** extent of **his partisan** disdain.

His **disdain,** though, is not **restricted** to **competing** political parties. He ap **plies** it primarily to **his two main** pro**taganists.** Thus, he presents a highly per**sonalized** disparagement of David **Lewis** as **villain** and, **in contrast, an apotheotic reverence** of Tommy Douglas as hem. The main effect of **this** approach is to have the central part of his theory collapse by the **sheer** weight of its overwhelming lack of **objectivity.**

In addition, Bradley **tends** to resort to

concepts or theories in simplistic, often misleading fashion. For example, he continually refers to Lewis as a Marxist. But the Marxism attributed to Lewis is not Marxism in any true, scholarly sense. This is simply incorrect, a sloppy use of the term.

The book is also flawed by repeated "brief digressions" into subjects of questionable relevance and accuracy. Bradley devotes many pages to an explanation of the Masons and the De Molay Society, the history of Eastern European Jewry during the Middle Ages, "parlour psychology," sociobiology, and religion, to name a few.

The landscape of good Canadian political history, or commentary, is not so rich or eye-catching that it cannot benefit by an imaginative, stimulating work. But *Crisis of Clarity* adds nothing to our understanding of our political traditions. It is merely a bitterly written polemic. Under the circumstances, the book's title is quite apt. □

SACRED & SECULAR

Treasures of a People: the Synagogues of Canada, by Sheldon Levitt, Lynn Milstone, and Sidney T. Tanenbaum, Lester & Orpen Dennys, illustrated, 150 pages, $40.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88619 069 0).

By *Candace* **Carman**

AN IMPORTANT COLLECTION of archival material, *Treasures of a People* aptly uses design, layout, and calligraphy to complement this collection of more than 150 colour and black-and-white prints. It is a handsome. book, though not without faults.

Co-authored by three former architectural students, this is not a guide to Judaic-Canadian architecture, though it cannot help but be a chronological chart of architectural evolution. The authors' purpose is "to inspire others to augment our work with further photographs of synagogues — present and future — so that none are lost to history. . . For it is our history that is lost . . . ." A synagogue is not an architectural form but an assembly of Jews drawn together for the purpose of worship and religious study, creating the focal point of the Jewish community. Its sanctity is produced by the acts and attitudes of the worshippers; the "treasures" are not qualities inherent in the architecture.

Treasures of a People is a necessary record of the spirit of Jews in Canada. The vessels used by and within a community alter with the passage and pressures of time; the sanctity of the Covenant is timeless. This pictographic essay illustrated what uses many of these vessels now are put to through simple abandonment, rental, or sale — bingo halls, community centres, churches and the like.

The photography has moderate but uneven merit. The succinct, often poetic notes more often than not are meant to compensate for nuances lost in the photography. Even so, many of these works touch both the heart and the intellect. One especially poignant photograph shows a beautifully decorated synagogue currently being used as a storage room for thousands of mufflers. □

With God Nothing Is Impossible, by Murray Drydm. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, illustrated, 160 pages, $19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88902 544 4) and 814.95 paper (ISBN 0 88902 541 X).

By Mary **Frances** *Coady*

MURRAY DRYDEN MODESTLY calls hi short autobiography "A Canadian Life." It's an appropriate subtitle. What life can be more ideally Canadian than that of a man who experienced the Depression, knew the hardship of interrupting career and family *life* by serving overseas in the Second World War, helped coach his young sons' hockey team — and then saw both boys, Km and Dave, mature into National Hockey League professionals?

A life-long entrepreneur, Dryden began his career in Winnipeg during the late 1920s, selling silk stockings from door to door. He eventually settled in the construction business and grew Christmas trees on the side. He also developed a hobby of photographing sleeping children and, in 1969. was on the point of pushing his entrepreneurial *talents* further by publishing a collection of his photographs. Suddenly, a realization struck him — while he was photographing comfortable, middle-class children in their beds, many children in developing countries bad no beds at all.

This insight spawned a new venture for Drydm — a charitable organization called "Sleeping Children Across the World," to which be has since devoted his life. The organization raises funds by soliciting donations for "bed kits," which are distributed to children through a network of third world agencies. A $28 donation provides a sleeping mat. sheets, and a blanket for a child.

Dryden considers his work as the natural outgrowth of a Christian faith nurtured in the United Church. He realizes his effort is a patchwork approach — "plugging the holes," he calls it — but he does not apologize. He quotes instead from the 25th chapter of Matthew: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my children, ye have done it unto me." One unfortunate gesture of paternalism does emerge — when a child receives a kit, a photograph is taken of the child asleep on the bed. Propped up on the sheets is a sign with the name of the kit's donor; the child remains nameless.

On the whole, the pieces making up Dryden's life fit together to reveal a fine and decent human-being, someone who is doing what he can to make the world better. He writes in the folksy manner reminiscent of books written in 1967 by many Canadian families and communities to mark Canada's centennial. ("I tell you, my brother and I were so tickled to think we bad finally beaten the pants off Uncle Hill!") Because of its chatty style, the book can be forgiven its occasional grammatical lapses.

Dryden writes, "Some of the finest people I have met both here and abroad are those who listen *to the pain of the world* — and *do something* about it." From what one reads of his life. Dryden himself is one of there people.. □

SOCIETY

Child Care:' Options for Working Parents. bv Janet Rosenstock and Eva M. Rosenstock, Methuen, 191 pages, 814.95 paper (ISBN 0 458099 650 5).

By Cathy *Simpson*

THE ONLY QUIBBLE I have with this book concerns the subtitle. as it gives no hint that the information and, yes, wisdom packed into this compendium are of interest and value to *all* parents, not only to those who work.

The authors' focus is the key role of parents in demanding and ensuring quality care for children, and their purpose is to equip parents for this role. After giving detailed instructions for preparing a child of any age for outside care, they describe and carefully differentiate all types of child care from babysitting to full-time nursery school. Extensive checklists are included for evaluating staffs and programs and for detecting problems such as sexual abuse. The chapter on how to prepare a child to stay alone is a goldmine of common sense., while other chapters discuss the day-care laws of each province, costs and tax deductions, and special issues such as universal and northern day-care. Tips on how to choose the right child care for any situation abound.

All this, with meaty appendices. is presented in a warm. engaging style peppered with pointed anecdotes, gently sardonic comments ("If pressed, most educators can use everyday language. . ."), and no-nonsense advice on handling a child's swearing, excessive

TV watching, and hyperactivity. The tone occasionally rises to thoughtful urgency: "As a society we will not value child caregivers until we stop undervaluing the mother who remains in the home."

This is a solidly researched, all-handbook that should be required reading for anyone involved with children under 10. ☆

No Safe Place: Violence Against Women and Children, edited by Connie Guberman and Margie Wolfe, Women's Press, 165 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 *58961098* 3).

By Barbara ***MacKay***

THE TITLE OF this collection of articles draws together its common theme. that for women and children there is no refuge from violence, particularly not in the home. The six chapters of the book each address a different manifestation of violence — child battery, wife assault, rape, child sexual assault, sexual harassment, and pornography. Bach article is written fmm a feminist perspective, one that understands patriarchy as a system of power in which violence is an accepted method of controlling others, and is used as a mean to demonstrate power and self-worth. As the editors state: "Violence against women and children reflects typical. not rare, behaviour that is consistent with general attitudes. It is far too encompassing to be treated merely as an aberration . . ."

The articles are well-written and researched, combining thoughtful analysis with factual material, and each provides lists of further reading. The authors also discuss solutions, distinguishing between short- and long-term remedies, and the role of the state. For example, the need for hostels for battered women is an essential service but not a solution to wife assault.

Of special note arc Susan G. Cole's examination of the dynamics of power in child batterv and Mariana Valverde's discussion of pornography as violence regardless of its "hypothetical influence on male behaviour." □

Every Woman's Guide to the Law, by Linda Silver Dranoff, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 203 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88902 645 9).

By ***Julia Bennett***

THAT DRANOFF'S VALIANT guide through the dusty antique shop of Canadian civil, criminal, and family law is largely a collection of pieces published in *Chatelaine* and the *Globe and Mail* does not diminish its usefulness. AU facts have been updated and fresh material added to produce a concise, undaunting reader for the lay person.

Dranoff succeeds in tracking the puzzling discrepancies between provincial, territorial, and federal legal rights, and between the law as it is written for men and for women. There are some fascinating relics: in the Maritimes, the Northwest Territories, and Alberta, a husband can still sue his wife's lover — only in Alberta, however, may a wife sue her husband's mistress. And there are sad realities, such as existing laws that prevent mothers from giving a child their own surname. The author seems to cover it all, from marriage contracts to parental abduction to the use of video display terminals.

But two obvious gaps point up the hook's origins in the white, middle-class lap of *Chatelaine:* nowhere is the schizophrenic status of native women discussed, nor is there a list of organizations to which Canadian women who need further, or much more basic, information can turn. The high point, however, is a lively new section on the weaknesses of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Although some facts in this guide will have a limited shelf life, most women would do well to read it fmm cover to cover. Between the lines, Dranoff is sendig out an important message. With all the progress made in law and social reform, there is still a period of considerable change ahead for women in this country, and it is crucial for us to be aware of our status, both as individuals and as the separate "class" that traditional law has made us. □

REVIEW

The beginning of the end

By *I.M. Owen*

Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered, by Bruce G. Trigger, McGill-Queen's University Press, 444 pages, $35.00 cloth (ISBN 0 7735 0594 6).

IT WAS IN the 1660s that the first phase of European settlement in North America came to an cod. Viii, Maryland, and New England were established and thriving, while New Netherland and New France were stagnating under the inef-

fectual system of company rule. The" a series of events over six years determined what the character of the second phase would he: in 1663 New France became a royal province; in 1664 New Netherland surrendered to an English fleet and became New York; in 1665 the disaffected fur-traders Radisso" and Groseilliers went to London, and three years later, as a result, the fist English ship arrived to winter in James Bay. The pieces were in place for the endgame.

The period ending in 1663. then, appears now as the prologue to our own history. It was also an epilogue-to the story, which can "ever now be fully known, of the native peoples before they came under European influence. That is the subject of Bruce Trigger's book. To be more exact, he deals essentially with the relations between the French and the various Algonkian and Iroquoian nations that were living in the St. Lawrence and Great Lska basin at the time.

Professionally, Trigger is an anthropologist. not a historian, but he writes a fairly competent history, considerably enriched in the early part by his complete command of the current state of archeological knowledge; in fact his presentation of this material is rich to the point of being indigestible. To someone with an amateur's interest in the field, like me, it conveys some information; anyone with no previous knowledge of, for instance, the distinctio" between Algonkian and Iroquoian cultures would, I should think, be completely baffled by it. But the fact is that Trigger is writing for specialists, not for you and me — a point I'll return to later.

His chapter on "The Approach of the Europeans" contains matters of great interest. One is a discussion of what happened to the people met by Cartier in 1534-S at Stadacona and Hochelaga. They were clearly Imquoian, but they were *not* Iroquois, as historians sometimes carelessly allege. Cartier wrote down a sufficient vocabulary of their language to show that it was related to, but was not one of, the languages of the Five Nations — or of the Hurons or other known Iroquoian peoples. (Trigger doesn't mention this fact — again, he assumes that hi readers know it.)

When Champlain arrived in the St. Lawrence valley in 1608, the people encountered by Cartier had disappeared. Various explanations have been advanced; Trigger weighs them and concludes that the most probable one is that they were destroyed by the Iroquois. The survivors would have been absorbed into their conquerors; it was usual for these nations to replace their fallen warriors with prisoners, who took on their names, families, and offices. (It was only the most distinguished prisoners who were accorded the honour of death by slow torture in order to give the final proof of their virtue — a virtue that was then gratefully ingested by their captors. This seems to me to compare favourably with the contemporary European due process of law, which included obtaining evidence by torture, and execution by hanging, drawing, and quartering.)

The other important point brought out in this chapter is that the archeological evidence seems to show that during the 16th century European artifacts (iron axes and knives, glass beads. brass ornaments) were finding their way inland at least as far as Lake Ontario. We're accustomed to think of Cartier's three visits and Roberval's abortive settlement as the only European appearances in what is now Canada during the century, but it looks as if there was frequent chaffering 0" the shores of the St. Lawrence in the summers, and that the goods so acquired were traded into the interior. Europe had thus begun to affect societies still unknown to Europeans — much as, later, the first explorers of the prairies found there a society already based o" that peculiarly Eurasian animal, the horse.

It was not until the 17th century, of course, that Europeans came to stay; and the French came to the St. Lawrence with three, sometimes conflicting, objects — settlement, fur-trading, and the winning of souls for Christ. The pursuit of the second and third of these objects soon became concentrated particularly 0" a nation living far inland: the Wendat, to whom the French gave the condescending name "les Hurons" — "the unkempt." Their position near the edge of the Canadian Shield and their established relations with the Shield-dwelling people called the Ottawas (the Trader Nation) made them the ideal middlemen for the fur trade. But the Hurons' formidable cousins, the Iroquois Confederacy of the Five Nations, made friends with the Dutch who came on the scene in 1624, and sought to divert this trade from New France to New Netherland by taking over the middleman role. The rest, as they say, is history.

The trouble with a religion that claims to embody universal truth is that is imposes on believers a duty to convert others. It doesn't detract at all from the heroism of the. Jesuit missionaries to recognize that their efforts were disastrous to the Huron nation. Their training made it impossible for them to take the Hurons' religion seriously, and they never understood how fundamental it was to their intricate social organiza-

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tion. Such success as they had in making converts — by such means as allowing firearms only to baptized Hurons — simply undermined the fabric of society, and made its collapse inevitable.

Trigger feels that historians have given too big a share of the credit for the establishment of New France to the officials and the missionaries, and not enough to the fur-traders, who lived among the native peoples and understood them. I don't think that's quite true; surely we have all been taught that the fur trade was basic to the beginning of Canada. It's true. though, that the doings of Champlain and his colleagues, of Brébeuf and his brethren. are better documented and therefore take up more space in the books — including this one.

With scholarly austerity, Trigger draws only on contemporary documents and archeological evidence. This prevents him from giving a clear picture of, for instance, the nature of the Iroquois confederacy, since the documents available are 18th-century accounts by Europeans or 19th-century transcriptions of Iroquois oral tradition. "While oral traditions may provide a valuable record of former beliefs and values." he says, "caution is needed in interpreting that sort of information historically." By all means; but we need a history of the Iroquois that — with suitable caution — will include their own traditions as part of the evidence. Our traditions about the Five Nations show them as the formidable warriors that they undoubtedly were; but it would be salutary to record also the facts that the Confederacy is to this day called by the Iroquois the Great Peace, and that in their account it was originally intended to include all humanity and thus to abolish war — to "bury the hatchet," to use a phrase we learned fmm them.

I'm not saying that this is certainly so, but merely that the opinion of the Iroquois themselves is part of the evidence, and should be weighed with the rest. Also, Cadwallader Colden's 18th-century book *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada* deals almost entirely with the period after 1663, but his record of numerous speeches made by Iroquois leaders at conferences with both the English and the French are more expressive than anything else I know of the quality of these people — grave yet witty, and painstakingly reasonable. But all this is already known to Trigger's real audience, and so. needn't be mentioned in this book — which, as I have said before, isn't really intended for you and me.

During the years I spent in the service of a university press, I came to have grave doubts about the purely scholarly book — the one that is essentially an interim report from the author to his colleagues. With modem techniques of information storage and retrieval, is it really necessary that such works should go through all the elaborate and expensive processes of design, typesetting, printing, binding, and jacketing? Wouldn't the capital and skill of publishers, including university presses, be better used for the propagation of the kind of scholarly work that is fully accessible to the ordinary informed reader? In the field of history all the really great books are of this kind, from Hume and Gibbon to Runciman and Morison. □

REVIEW

The lost and the loved

By James C. MacDonald

The Lost sad **Found Stories** of Morley **Callaghan,** Lester **& Orpen Dennys/ Exile Editions, 252** pages, $16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88619 079 4).

ACCORDING TO his introduction. Barry Callaghan found these stories in old cardboard boxes piled in an unused linen closet. Except -for one unpublished manuscript, "A Couple of Million Dollars," all the other stories have been printed before in magazines such as *The New Yorker, Harper's Bazaar, Scribner's Magazine, John O'London's Weekly, and Esquire. None* was included in Morley *Callaghan's Stories* (Macmillan, 1959). Although it is certainly refreshing to read a major collection by Callaghan, I find it disturbing to think that these stories were "lost." A quick look, for instance, in David Latham's "A Callaghan Log" in the spring, 1980, issue of *The Journal of Canadian Studies weals* the origins of 22 of the *26* titles. This minor gripe aside, most readers can take pleasure in writing that is compact, lucid, humane. and still provocative.

Many analysts of Callaghan's fiction, when they are not debating his place in modem literature, focus on the Procrustean act of forcing his art to conform to their critical beds. Each theory has some truth, but all comprehensive theories are ultimately unsatisfying. Any attempt to define the writing according to Christian humanism, rhetorical structures, the historical setting of the Depression, or the influence of Darwin, Marx, and Freud is defeated by the complexities of human action that make Callaghan unique. In the context of the stories. a more fruitful approach may be to look at how his concerns inform his work.

In "A Boy Grows Older." an out-of-work father, Mr. Sloane, lends his son money. Mrs. Sloane suspects that her husband is afraid of their son, Jim, but wants to stop the payments, which they cannot afford. After receiving the money again, Jim realizes how weak his father really is, but he also understands that they all want to have faith in each other, which circumstance inhibits. Through the testing imposed by external forces they cannot control, an awareness grows of the fragility of familial relationships, and although still tenuous, a new bond is formed to help them face the reality of their situation. The story ends with the parents in bed. The father says:

> "He's getting older. He was a little bit different. Didn't you notice it? It made me feel we hadn't been wrong helping him this far."
>
> As she lay down beside him and reached to turn out the light, her hand trembled. She lay very still. Then she turned and put her arm around him, and they lay there together in the dark.

Themes of loss, of fear, of poverty, and the possibility of betrayal govern this intimate story, but the understated feeling of a precious common humanity prevails. In a similar vein, "A Little Beaded Bag," "The Chiseller," "This Man, My Father," and "The Piddler on Twenty-Third Street" explore intricate family dependencies and the need to be truly aware, not only of oneself but also of those who one most values.

Although some stories ("The New Kid," "Loppy Phelan's Double Shoot," "An Enemy of the People." "Big Jules," and "Lady in a Green Dress") dwell on the slight but persistent theme of the nature of memory, and some ("Just Like Ha Mother" and "The Thing That Happened to uncle Adolphe") introduce an intriguing situation following the death of a parent, the majority of stories examine how individuals perversely desire others to conform to their own reality.

The title "The Consuming Fire" appropriately defines Julia Watson, who imposes herself on her husband even after he has left her. Thinking that she is doing it for his own good, Julia gets him a job worthy of his talent, He rejects it because it gives him a chance to say no to her excessive care and love. For the first time, she sees what she has done to people who liked her: "She was terrified because she-saw she consumed them. She put her trembling hands over her face." Julia recognizes that she has lived through others, and the fear that overwhelms her is the fear of emptiness.

Similarly, Jack Malone in "The Sentimentalists" believes that his insight into human behaviour is superior, and feels

betrayed when a young girl's actions do not conform to his perceptions. In two of the stories, "The Lucky Lady" and "All Right Flatfoot," the victims of possessive persons are persuaded by experiencing acts of insensitivity and brutality to escape their physical and spiritual constraints. The bitterness of the encounter itself is overcome by the understanding, however incomplete, that something better exists.

For Callaghan, the point of a story is the revelation of a significant moment of self-awareness. The difficulty of its discovery ties in acknowledging the danger inherent in seemingly inconsequential events and having the courage and honesty to transcend them. These stories brilliantly show the variety of ways human beings can respond to the challenge. □

REVIEW

Remembrance of things past

By P. Scott Lawrence

Noman's Land, by Gwendolyn MacEwen, Coach House Press, 138 pages, 58.95 paper (ISBN 0 8894 IO 312 7).

Spectral Evidence, by Eugene McNamara, Black Moss Press, 125 pages, $12.95 paper **(ISBN 0 88753 I33 4).**

AS MOST READERS of Canadian literature should know by now, we are an inherently insecure bunch, given over to the valiant if dubious pursuit of some sort of identity. Uncovering our personal and/or collective histories is central to this quest, and in these two works of fiction. the crucial role memory plays in chasing down and reclaiming these ghosts of the part is a common theme.

Through much of her career, Gwendolyn MacEwen has persistently and successfully constructed myths, and the same myth-making impulse informs this work of prose fiction. But I must confess that this book made me uneasy from the start. "Once again, to all the strangers in Kanada," MacEwen writes in the dedication, and I can't help but feel that the spelling of "Kanada," recalling as it does the Yippies and their "Amerika," is a dated and facile convention.

In *Noman's Land* MacEwen documents the progress of her title character as he struggles to remember and piece together the shards of hi past. In the book's opening tale, he is discovered outside the gates of Kingsmere &la&en-& King's residence) by a woman (aptly) named Kali. Naked, cold, and a victim of amnesia, he serves as an archetypal stranger in this Kanadian landscape. MacEwen makes her narrative intentions explicit:

> "Is there anything you can tell me about this country? ... It doesn't seem quite real to me:
>
> "Nor to anyone!" she [Kali] laughed. "Nor will it ever, until we look inside of what's real to discover what's *real*. ... And it won't settle into time, into history, until we know it well enough to make fiction of it. to play with it. Until we take it so seriously we can stop talag it seriously. There is another country, you know, and it's inside this one."

By turns Adamic and Christ-like, Noman's obsessive searching for the country "inside this one" is largely motivated by the hope that. in so doing, he'll also discover his own soul, his identity. In an odd but fascinating way. this quest involves hunting down the ghost of Mackenzie King, who ultimately offers Noman a key with which to unlock the door to this other Kanada.

These interrelated tales are written with a clarity, simplicity, and whimsy that put me in mind of the Quebecois *conte*, and there is an abundance of precisely rendered detail throughout the book. Yet none of it ever seems to amount to much: the observations and experiences remain undifferentiated, and the knitting together of the mundane and mythical is not quite seamless.

Half-way through the book, one of the characters, talking about bees, says: "You have to watch all those little golden buggers swarming over your sleeves — then something snaps inside of you and it's like a moment of truth." MacEwen's words and images swarm upon the page., hut that moment of truth "ever crystallizes.

Eugene McNamara's scope in *Spectral Evidence* is narrower. but the work is no less. substantial. The characters in his stories are similarly tenacious in their efforts to make sense of their lives, but the phantoms they pursue are private and personal. They exist on the periphery of their worlds, looking for the centre; intensely self-absorbed, to them reality is often surreal. Faced with these conditions. the characters seek meaning, order, and sometimes solace, in their pasts. In "Skunk Summer," a story about loss and missed connections, the world is seen as "topsy-turvey," and the central figure, Nelson, wishes that he could "change the channel, find a comfortable old movie. Maybe *It's a Wonderful Life*."

The characters in there 11 stories are often solitary and ghost-like, even to themselves. In "Entropy," one character confesses: "I am a character in a cartoon ... I always have been. Only now I accept my cartoonhood." In "Midwinter," the newly-single Ethan, while vacationing in some southern island, Feels displaced and invisible; the people around him inexplicably seem to look through hi. He ends up buying a gaudy ring because it gleams on his finger and reflects off store windows like a proof of identity, of being.

Divorced men, a daughter looking for her missing father, a parent seeking a lost child — all of McNamara's people are caught up in a paradoxical situation in which they are. at once, searching for an internal peace but desperate to avoid stasis. Grand revelations or epiphanic moments are rarely accorded them; the beat they can hope for is to *muster enough* hopefulness and dignity to enable them to continue the fight to endure.

This is not to say that McNamara's work is relentlessly glum. He's as quick to pick out his characters' foibles as he is to detail their disappointments, and the freshness of his perception makes the sometimes bleak material engaging.

And McNamara's way with an opening sentence makes his work difficult to resist. "Perhaps for Greg and Sally it began with their daughter, Erin, who left school to live with a long haired boy

who wore high heeled blue shoes with white stars on them," one story begins, and the narrative eye that notices not only the high-heeled shoes but the white stars on them immediately elicit.5 our confidence. The originality of McNamara's voice is everywhere apparent: "When Maude was eleven her brother Ralph tried to cut off his penis," another story opens, and the interest that first sentence generates is not allowed to waver.

A couple of the stories are less successful: the formal experimentation in a story like "Entropy," for instance, creates a distance that obscures McNamara's considerable narrative skills. Overall, however, Spectral *Evidence* is an *impressive* collection; McNamara's finely wrought prose makes the mundane lyrical, and resonates far beyond the printed page. ❑

REVIEW

Primal screen

By *Varda Burstyn*

Jump Cub Hollywood, Politics and Counter-Cinema. edited by Peter Steven, Between the Lines, 400 pages, $29.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919946 54 2) and $14.95 paper (ISBN 0 919946 55 0).

THE EXISTENCE of the National Film Board has sensitized Canadians somewhat more than Americans to tbe fact that the terms "film" and "Hollywood" are not necessarily synonymous. Still, most people's experience with film is based almost exclusively on a diet of Hollywood movies on weekend nights at first-run theatres (supplemented in a minority of cases by the odd European flick), and film commentary by critics in the daily press whose own experience, with a few honourable exceptions, comprises more of the same. The unhappy result is that most people don't know about the amazing parallel universe of non-Hollywood film that has come into being. Its concerns range fmm the roost detached, formal investigation of itself as a form of communication to the most committed engagement with aspects of life end society that are, es a rule, distorted in or mysteriously absent from Hollywood film.

Jump Cut is an extremely valuable collection of articles written by people involved in this universe over the lest 15 years. Peter Steven. who has a Ph.D. in film studies from Northwestern University. is a coordinator of film purchasing and distribution et the Development Education Centre in Toronto. He is also associated with the film journal *Jump Cut, an* important generating point for theory, criticism, and practical discussion associated with counter-cinema, in whose pages these essays first appeared. One nice thing about Jump *Cut* is that though it originates in tbe U.S. it has published the work of Canadians over the years, end several such pieces (Tom Waugh on the dean of radical political documentary Joris Ivens's impact on the Cuban cinema and on gays and film, Sara Halprin on A *Wives' Tale)* are included in the present volume.

Steven has grouped materiel in five categories. In the tint he provides articles on "Hollywood: The Dominant Cinema." Those by Charles Eckert, Jane Feuer, Chuck Kleinhans. and Claire Whitaker are rigorous and accessible, making them wonderful teaching aids. Though it is quite a contest, my favourite in the section is Dan Rubey's "Star Wars: Not So Far Away. Not So Long Ago" — a *tour de force* of criticism, digging deep into the cultural soil of heroic myths end medieval romance while speaking in the most acute terms about contemporary technology and armed power. A fabulous article.

"Independent Filmmaking in North America" provides good pieces on the history of American-not Canadian — counter-cinema. But Sam Halprin's interviews and her discussion of A *Wives' Tale,* (Sophie Bissonette and Joyce Rock's film about the wives' committee in the lest Inco strike in Sudbury) forcefully include elements of the important Canadian experience and show some of its strengths. "Decolonizing the Image: New U.S. Black Cinema" is the best of a good lot in this section. The films it covers are scarcely ever screened in Canada, but clearly they are among the most dynamic, innovative; and engaged work to come out *of* American counter-cinema.

Section three deals with debates and dilemmas raised by the feminist critique of film, a fertile field that-via several journals in Britain and the U.S. throughout the '70s end '80s — has been a germinal influence in film criticism. The fourth section illuminates the problems that confront all film-makers in the treatment of identifiable social groups. especially homosexual men and women. Together with the articles on women *per se,* they give a good treatment of most of the key, issues to emerge in the critical discussion of gender.

The lest section takes us to Cuba, Africa, and Central America and to the films that have been coming from the Third World. Clyde Taylor's article on Third World cinema emphasizes what this section illustrates: that its forms and concerns are linked by their commitment to a cultural autonomy that has produced a heterogeneous end rich body of work. This principle animates Third World film from within so that it leans toward and often embraces movements for change, rather than the *status* quo. Julienne Burton's history of the vital, innovative post-revolutionary Cuban cinema will be valuable for teachers trying to help their students to visualize using film in ways different from Hollywood. Teshombe *H.* Gabriel's "Xala: A Cinema of Wax and Gold," on Ousman Sembene's films, explains tbe cultural forms through which the African director manages to evoke the magic of his extraordinary films.

Steven's commentaries put the debates and films into a hdpful context. All the articles are good. Some are spectacular. Virtually all are accessible to people new to film criticism, providing they are willing to think in new cultural as well es technical terms. All are good for teaching. There are arguments end disappointments I have with different points, but they're very small compared to the strengths sod pleasures of the book. ❑

REVIEW

The way of the world

By Guy Stanley

Persuaders: Influence Peddling, Lobbying and Political Corruption in Canada by Paul Malvern, Methuen, 350 pages, $24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 458 99500 2).

IN THIS LIVELY account of Canadian power and influence, Paul Malvern argues that money, connections, and pressure groups determine who gets what, when, and how from our political system. The deals are cut backstage by professional power brokers, freezing out MPs and ordinary Canadians, and whet passes for politics in press and Parliament are mere orchestrations of images designed essentially to mislead and pacify the public.

Attacking the myth of good Canadian government, Malvern suggests that Canada has a spoils system that rivals even that of the Jacksonian U.S., with one exception: the system works for elites instead of ordinary Canadians. So-called political elites have had it their own way since the days of tbe fur trade, he argues.

He obviously feels it's time to cdl a

halt. Among remedies he prescribes are:

- Tougher enforcement of existing conflict-of-interest legislation;
- Curbs on the government propaganda mills, including advocacy ad budgets (now the nation's highest);
- A register of lobbyists. (Rules along these lines are currently before Parliament.)

If you take your polities seriously, and especially if you approve strongly (as the pollsters' questionnaires say) of the Liberals' social programs, you may feel that bis is not the- whole story. The author's debunking surveys of federal-provincial relations, women's issues, bilingualism, and multiculturalism ignore the fact that these issues did draw votes.

Also, the line of argument achieves some of its iconoclasm by treating all issues as morally equivalent. Malvern ignores or trivializes the real sense of injustice many Canadians felt before the Trudeau period (although, ironically, be recognizes similar concerns about post-Trudeau Canada).

Beneath the fashionably cynical packaging, Malvern's treatment of the. political game nevertheless has an authentic ring in places and contains some useful instruction besides. The chapter "Teaching Yourself Influence Peddling" hides a lot of good advice behind its outrageous title. Sample: Give the press a good story; design events with photos in mind; "se radio and TV; treat reporters "as if they were human beings." This is not influence-peddling as most people think of it — just good public relations.

The main flaw in tbii book is Malvern's one-note, devil's dictionary approach to political analysis. Marring what might otherwise have been a helpful guide to cleaning up excesses, his all-embracing definition of government corruption obscures the subject it claims to examine. Corruption means something — the perversion of integrity — beyond mere political flim-flam. Instead of exposing corrupt dealing, Malvern offers a sweeping attack on interest-group politics in all its forms. In so doing, he skates over many important problems.

Arguably, for example, Western societies (and Japan) have been more successful economically than societies else-

where because of institutions that encouraged entrepreneurship. This was accomplished by the politics of interests — kings and barons, farmers and manufacturers, management and labour — until our own day. To business and critics of business alike it still appears that "special interests" -by definition, the other guy — "are running the government." What's new is not that some interests appear to reap more rewards than others. On the contrary, now, for the first time, the consent of the governed is constantly needed for those interests to have their way.

Perhaps it is true, as Shaw warned decades ago, that when ordinary people find out how the world actually works, they won't stand for it. Some of the practical remedies Malvern calls for are under government consideration. Necessary though they may be, whether they will be sufficient to restore public confidence in public institutions is unclear.

A more helpful contribution than Malvern's would stress the need for clear *thinking* in the area of political ethics. It would also provide one or two examples of some practical standards. The old guideline, "If you can eat it or drink it at one sitting, it isn't a bribe," is no longer comprehensive enough to provide much help.

Malvern's all-embracing indictments are no better. There is little in this book to illuminate the extent or cause.5 of real abuses. Instead we have another lament about the alleged evils of interest-group politics — albeit one shorn of academic jargon and with a strident cry of moral outrage to encourage the reader through its catalogue of government humbug. ❑

FIRST NOVELS

Bad breeding

Four new novels, all hybrids of style and genre, seem to have inherited the weaknesses of each of their various parents

By *Douglas* Glower

CLARK BLAISE once told a graduate fiction class I attended at the University of Iowa that you have to kill the dragon at the heart of your story or the dragon will end up turning on you. This gnomic piece of advice seems singularly applicable to David Carpenter's first novel, Jewels (Porcupine's Quill, 157 pager, $8.95 paper), about the loneliness of a middle-aged homosexual librarian living in Saskatoon. That's the dragon Carpenter has to kill, yet he has invented a plot that allows hi to avoid his subject except on the most frivolous and superficial level.

Julian "Jewel" Fairfax (most of the names in this book are doggedly British: Adrian Milton, Douglas Sloane. Desmond Oglethorpe, Claire Piper), 54, a closet homosexual, recently resigned to chastity after the break-up of his affair with Trevor "the Brat," is mysteriously *summoned to* Victoria by his unlikely friend Brenda Lumm, a lesbian meatpacker.

Julian flies to B.C. with his Siamese cat Chagall, and becomes involved in a madcap- plot to secrete away large amounts of jewellery that have found their way into the incinerator of an apartment building inhabited mostly by older women. (This plot turns on the reader being expected to swallow the rather questionable premise that most of these women, afflicted by some infectious paranoid idiocy, are hiding their jewels in wastepaper baskets and packets of frozen peas to foil possible burglers.)

Jewels is a cross between a thriller and an Evelyn Waugh farce, a hybrid comprising the weaknesses of both parents. As a thriller it fails for several reasons. besides the improbable premise. Carpenter is infuriatingly coy in places (Brenda Lumm just refuses to say what is going on) and in places jumps his characters ahead with unwarranted hunches and conclusions. Then in the middle of his book. he flies Julian back to Saskatoon for an interlude with his friends and colleagues, which completely stops the suspense.

And this is the oddest thing: that irrelevant interlude is the bat part of *Jewels.* We see Julian in his world, the deception-and self-deception of closetry, the painful loneliness of his existence. In a wonderful sequence of scenes, a jealous husband barges into Julian's apartment suspecting Julian of having an affair with his wife; Julia" rushes away, leaving his homosexual friends and the jealous husband to sort put their sexual misunderstandings; he walks by the river in winter (the heart of Saskatoon), *and enters* the darkened library to find the wife *in flagrante.*

This is good stuff. serious stuff (told with a sad, light touch), almost Chekhovian stuff. This is killing the dragon with a vengeance. It shows that Carpenter. at his bat, is able to construct complex ironic situations full of pity and hurt and humour. But it has little to do with the novel that he chose to write.

FIRST NOVEL AWARD

NEXT MONTH marks not only the 15th anniversary of *Books in Canada* but also our 10th annual award for first novels, *which* this *year* has been increased to $3,000 for the best first novel published in English in Canada during the calendar year 1985. The increase in prize money (in previous years it was $1.000) is made possible through a generous contribution by the W.H. Smith chain of book stores, which will co-sponsor the award with *Books in Canada.* It will be known from here on as the W.H. Smith/ Books in Canada First Novel Award.

Five books have been selected for this year's short list by Douglas Glover, who regularly contributes a column about first novels to *Books in Canada.* They *are: A Nest of Singing Birds,* by Susan Charlotte Haley (NeWest Press); A *Certain Mr. Takahashi, by Ann* Ireland (McClelland & Stewart); *The Story of Bobby O'Malley,* by Wayne Johnston (Oberon Press); *Master and Maid,* by *Frank* Jones (Irwin Publishing); and *Wales' Work, by* Robert Walshe (Stoddart).

Judges for the award are: Nii Berrisford, book marketing manager for W.H. Smith; novelist Douglas Hill, paperback columnist for the *Globe and Mail; journalist* and author Heather Robertson, who won the 1983 Books in Canada award for *Willie: A Romance* (James Lorimer); and novelist and short-story writer W.D. Valgardson, who won the 1980 award for *Gentle Sinners* (Oberon Press). Their verdict and comments will be announced next month. ❑

Alastair Macdonald's Flavian's Fortunes (Harry Cuff Publications, 1% pages, $9.95 paper) is a farcical thriller -offspring, this time, of a forced marriage between Miss Marple and the coyote-and-roadrunner cartoons you see

on Saturday-morning TV. (Well, *I* see them.) Flavian Fortesque (sounds like a character out of Carpenter's novel), a misanthropic, snobbish professor at an English red-brick university, plots to murder his rich but (to hi) insufferable wife. He tries and fails three times with disastrous (for him) results. 'His last attempt is foiled by an Oxford philosophy professor/mystery writer named Wiinie Walker, who has somewhat improbably guessed what he is up to.

Technically, this is a broken-backed novel. Macdonald starts off with a false document (Flavian's journal — though it's not really a journal since that implies daily entries, which these are not) and an unreliable narrator (Flavian's egocentric Edwardian world-view). Then, half-way through, when the reader is more or less comfortably established in the narrative premises and rhythms, the story suddenly shifts to Winnie Walker's account of her detection. This is aggravating, especially since the detection is superfluous — the reader already knows Flavian is trying to kill his wife. (Obviously the fun of reading Agatha Christie is in trying to solve the puzzle before her detective does.)

None of the characters in *Flavian's* Fortunes is particularly attractive or rounded. Flavian himself is self-deluded and obnoxious and soon grows tire some. (Perhaps Macdonald realizes this, hence tbe shift to Wiie Walker.) The setting. the people, the attitudes expressed are all out-of-date — caricatures of *Masterpiece Theatre* settings, people., attitudes. (Both Macdonald and Carpenter — though much less so in carpenter's case — evince an odd Anglophile yearning for an imperial Britishness that seems out of place in contemporary Canada.) This is not a terrible book — Macdonald shows us here that he can write scenes and dialogue and construct some mildly amusing situations. But it lacks a coherent structure, concision, originality, and vividness.

If *Jewels* and *Flavian's Fortunes* are hybrid novels, Aubrey Diem's First Rains of Autumn (106 pages. $7.95 paper) is a veritable mongrel of styles genres.has a f a c t u a l - h i s t o r i c a l an at least partly fictional epilogue. It has maps and drawings by the author's wife, which illustrate the fictional narrative. and Second-World-War photographs t h bear a photo-graphcaptioned "Cow _ .Nus" i s masterstroke of *unintentional humour.)*

Best of all it has a 30-page glossary of amazing condescension and pedantry. Entries include: "Bagel. A leavened doughnut shaped crusty roll made from flour and water that was [*sic*] *eaten* by Jewish immigrants to North America .... Export. A type of ale brewed by Molson's of Montreal.... Quebec. A predominantly French speaking province of Canada, that is over twice as large as Prance: (I know all tbis sounds vaguely like some witty deconstructionist experiment but, in fact, Diem seems serious.)

'The story of *First Rains* runs like this: in October, 1944, Andy, an American pilot, parachutes from his crippled plane into the Valle d'Aosta, breaks his leg and is rescued by partisans who hide him in a hotel high in the mountains. The hotel's owner, Angela, stays to care for bim even after winter snows have cut them off from the world below. They fall in love, make love and,finally, when his leg is better, she helps him escape to Switzerland. Angela and Andy never meet again. (Though she's pregnant, she doesn't seem interested in trying to catch up witb him after the war.)

a geography professor at the University of isskilfulenor an imaginative writer. (This book was self-published — a not dishonourable option chosen by many great writers. As Diem says, "Other aspiring authors could *do* it the same way — it gives you total control over the work." This means, I guess, that he is totally responsible for the errors of grammar and punctuation — especially, for example, the confusing and irritating misuse of quotation marks in dialogue.) He doesn't know how to create suspense. (Andy sees only one German, a friendly one at that, in the whole book.) His characters are thin. their sudden emotions unprepared for in

the narrative. He interrupts his narrative from time to time with long monologues and Andy's memory of a skiing trip to Quebec and a newspaper article quoted in full. And when he waxes philosophical, he's liable to say something like, "But fondue without white wine was like a beautiful woman without a lover."

T.P. Millar's Who's Afraid of Sigmund Freud? (Palmer Press, 204 pages, $19.95 cloth) is a comic, though unsubtle, attack on Freud's intellectual legacy and the people who practise psychoanalysis. It's the story of bow analyst Dr. Miles Waring cures his patient Sandra Bennet by throwing Freud out the window and learning to call countertransference by its true name — love. The Freud Dr. Waring throws out the window is not just the dogma and methodology of ego, libido, and Oedipus but a bust *of the* great man himself. temporarily inhabited by Freud's spirit come back to earth to earn its way out of limbo.

Who's Afraid of Sigmund Freud? is a fluffy. somewhat simplistic concoction of fantasy, reactionary diatribe, and romance. Millar blamer Freud for teaching "three generations of criminals to excuse their crimes by reference to their unhappy childhoods," turning "sensible judges into bleeding heart social workers," turning "classrooms into zoos." reducing "femininity to penis envy." and attributing "the Mona Lisa to latent homosexuality in the artist, thereby constipating the creativity of generations of painters."

Freud's chief spokesman (the mm himself caves in awfully quickly before a celestial tribunal that consists of Judges Roy Bean and Robespierre) is Miles Waring's personal analyst, Dr. Moses Jungmeister. Jungmeister is more paper tiger than spokesman, a stereotyped caricature of an analyst, more concerned with manipulating his colleagues over the colour of an office carpet than in caring for patients.

Susan Bennet, the client who falls in love with ha analyst, is a reasonably perky character with the disconcerting habit of shouting out biblical quotations during orgasm. And the problem she poses to Miles Waring-how a psychoanalyst might distinguish between love and transference — is *of some* intellectual interest. But cm the whole the book is too tendentious to be more than fitfully funny and too one-sided to betoken seriously as an argument. □

INTERVIEW

John Murrell

'My plays are always absolutely naturalistic In my head. How they happen on the stage is the problem for the director or designer'

By *Robert* Wallace

SO FAR, 1986 has been a good year for Calgary playwright John Murrell. Best known for two plays he wrote in the mid-1970s, Memoir and *Waiting for the Parade*, his most recent works, *Farther West* and New *World*, not only received productions in January and February — the latter died by the playwright himself at Alberta Theatre Projects — but also were published by Coach House Press in a collection that includes photographs of their original productions and an introduction by Urjo Kareda, artistic director of Toronto's Tarragon Theatre, where the recent remount of *Farther West* was *a* critical and commercial unit. No stranger to success -*Memoir.* about the life of Sarah Bernhardt, has been translated into more than 15 languages and performed in 25 countries — the 41-year-old Murrell was recently honoured when the city of Calgary declared "John Murrell Day" to acknowledge his continuing contribution to its cultural life. Currently writing two more plays, Murrell was interviewed in Toronto by Robert Wallace:

John Murrell

Books In Canada: Power in the Blood, *your first play, won the Clifford E. Lee Playwriting Competition in 1975. Based loosely on the character of Amy Semple McPherson, it presented the first of many portraits of strong women that we find* in your *plays. Would you talk about this preponderance of women in your work?*

John Murrell: I think that women, both in conversation with other v/omen and in conversation with men, reveal themselves a little more easily, more smoothly, and a little more interestingly than men generally do. And since most of my plays are plays of conversation, at least in my mind, it makes them more interesting to use women converse-, tionalists. Also I think that women, as actors, are more interesting than most men. They have readier access to their emotions and fewer hangups about sharing them. The stage seems to be a more natural element for women than for men.

BiC: You *appear lo write two types of plays: "research" plays, which focus on a historical character. and a second type. which is purely an imaginative construct — a play like New* World. *Do you prefer one* to *the other?*

Murrell: *I* don't think so. One of two plays I'm working on, *October,* is a "research" play, because it concerns the life and career of the Italian actress Eleanora Duse and her lover and the great Italian poet Gabriel D'Annunzio. The other play, *The Woman from the Tower, is also* about a remarkable woman, but is drawn more directly from me and from people I know. It's based very loosely on a little snip I took out of a tabloid newspaper about a woman in Italy who was locked away on the family estate because her family said they recognized signs of incipient insanity. She was locked away for 40 years, from just before the beginning of the Second world War until the mid-1970s.

Although that might seem like a "research" play, 1 think ii's even less so than *Farther West.* Although she's based on an actual prairie prostitute, May Buchanan in *Farther West didn't* fit into the voyage of self-discovery that

I was on while writing that play; I changed her voyage to be in lime with mine. May Buchanan was not a significant historical figure; she was someone I read about, like this woman locked in the tower in Italy, whom I identified with. *Farther West* finally concerns a *woman's* sexual *struggle.*

BiC: *Farther* West *and the more obviously researched plays we not historical dramas in any conventional sense. nor are they documentary dramas. Although a lot of the scenes work naturalistically, the plays mow well beyond naturalism. How do you structure your plays7*

Murrell: *Structure only works* when it grows out of the content; I think only bad writers impose structure on content. My plays are always absolutely naturalistic in my head. Even a play that departs as much fmm the way most people feel they live their lives as *New World,* for example, to me is naturalistic. It feels like I'm writing about the real world — which is why, I guess. I'm a rather frustrating collaborator for directors. actors, and especially designers. In *Farther West* a boat gets pushed out into English Bay lo Vancouver and gradually bobs its way out across the waves into the Pacific. Designers will ask me, "How did you think that could be done on stage, John?" And my answer to this is that I never picture any of my plays happening on the stage. How they happen on the stage is the problem for the director or designer.

BiC: *Probably your best-known m l-laborator is Robin Phillips, with whom you worked at the Stratford Festival and ot Theatre Calgary. How did that collaboration serve you?*

Murrell: When Robin and I first started working together, I was a student. I'm sure Robin would never think of himself as a teacher, but I learned a lot from watching the way he directed really great plays, and from watching the remarkably similar way in which he was willing to work with my material. I simply can't stress too strongly what a debt I owe to that man. He taught me how astonishing simplicity can be in the theatre. I had always coaxed myself into writing by overwriting, by using far more words and scenes and characters and actions than were necessary to tell the story. Robin helped me pare it down. He also taught me not to be afraid to overwrite, because he felt that was part of my gift, and that the refining of it was part of what should happen with actors.

BiC: *Although you are a man of words, and words are very important in your plays, you are also writing for the theatre, which is action. How consciously are you aware of thot when you're hearing and seeing those pictures in your mind?*

Murrell: *AU the* images — and I mean sound, visual, and tactile images — come to me sensually: the language is just one part of the sensual picture that I try to transcribe onto the page as directly and honestly, and in as uncluttered a way, as possible. Of course I love writing words, and I feel language is undervalued in the theatre today. But the action that I imagine happening on China Beach in New *World or* on the muddy streets of Calgary in *Farther West or in any* of my plays comes to me in a single signal along with the other sounds that surround them, the music that I think people sometimes suspect I inject into my plays because I am a music lover.

BiC: How *did writing the translations of works by Chekhov. Machiavelli, and others affect your own plays?*

Murrell: *Power in the Blood, Memoir,* and *Waiting for the Parade* came in a lump together, although they weren't necessarily produced in that order. Then there's an almost seven-year hiatus between them and *Farther West.* I think what the translations did was to get me through a period of titer's block. I had had enough success with those early plays to not really know what I wanted to do next and to be terrified of doing anything again. The translations came along at a time when I think I would have written nothing had I not been writing them.

BiC: *For me, there's a strongly Chekhovian quality to both the characterizations and the feeling of* New World. *Were you conscious of this as you were writing it7*

Murrell: I think I was conscious of it. It is a debt to be paid, in a sense. Just as for me, *Farther West is a* debt that I owed to John Webster, John Ford, and a lot of the great Jacobean writers of blood-and-thunder melodrama. Whenever anyone asks me, "Why did you write such and such," or "Why did you write it this way," I always say, "Because I couldn't stop myself." That must have been Chekhov's reason. Once I was writing it. those characters knew what they wanted to do, so at *that* point any conscious thoughts of Chekhov certainly went out the door.

But there was one thing I quite consciously intended to do as a kind of homage of insight to Chekhov. I have always felt that there is an enormous difference in Chekhov's plays between the way people behave and talk when they're in an interior setting; as a result, I consciously wrote two scenes of New *World* in exterior settings and two in interior settings. The interior scenes are a conscious attempt to write domestic farce, and I think that's Chekhovian.'

BiC: *You've been rumoured to be doing a film adaptation of John Glassco's Memoirs* of Montparnasse. Is *this true7*

Murrell: At this point I'm not sure what the future of the project is. I've written an outline, attempting to show the producers what interested me in the original material. I have had responses from them that seem to indicate they're still interested in having me write it, but only with a considerable number of changes. What I'm wrestling with right now is whether they really might be better off with another writer. As far as film goes, what I think I would best be suited to is either adapting one of my own plays or perhaps just coming up with an original idea and writing the script full out.

BiC: *How closely were you involved with the film adaptation of* Waiting for the Parade*?*

Murrell: very closely. I wrote the script that Robin Phillips and the five acresses used for a stage presentation at the Grand Theatre in London in the one season that he was there. They were already well into rehearsals for the stage presentation when I started writing the adaptation. The characterizations already were wonderful, so when they got my adaptation they took out some things that they had discovered they didn't really need in rehearsing the play for over a month — a real luxury, you know, in film — and they put in a few things that I hadn't put in my adaptation that they still wanted. I had cut the script down considerably in terms of dialogue, and some of the dialogue they had rehearsed for the stage they wanted to include in the film, so they put it back in. If the film credits were really to reflect who did the work. the credit for writing should go to Robin, the five actresses, and me, probably in that order.

BiC: *Martha Henry was one of those actresses, and she has acted in a* number *of your plays. You have dedicated the recent publication of* Farther West *lo her. What is it about her that you feel able to write for. and what &it* about *your work that she obvious@ likes to act?*

Murrell: She once told me. "Every time I have done one of your plays, particularly both *Further West* and New *World, it* has changed my life in some huge way. I mean. my personal biography has been joggled and upset and changed by doing this." I guess that's both a reason for a great actor like Martha to do the plays and also a reason that she might hesitate before doing them. In almost every case, when Martha has been offered something in one of my plays, she has at first hesitated. then tackled it all-out. I'm sure that total commitment to digging right into the guts of a role is one of the many reasons I like to write for Martha. Martha is an

extraordinary combination of the mysterious and the earthy. I would like to think that when I'm writing my very best, my characters have that combination, too. I think anybody who has seen Martha in film or on the stage would agree that she's very sexy yet, finally, enormously unavailable to the rest of the human race. It's a terribly exciting combination that has fascinated writers throughout history. □

LETTERS

Lesbian images

ANTHONY BUKOSKI'S review of Jane Rule's *Inland Passage* (December) is interesting in the light it sheds on the critic rather than this collection of short stories. Bukoski seems relieved to find neither the strident nor the pushy in Rule's lesbian characters and the author "reasonable and politic" in concluding "happiness does not necessarily repose in another woman's arms." Most we yet again suffer the critic's weary hunt for the Amazonian lesbian and the wimpy male in Rule's fiction?

Even more tiresome is Bukoski's reliance on Thomas Hardy for his critique: "A story must be exceptional enough to justify its telling." I find so much of our behaviour, mirrored in our fiction, perpetuates our insatiable appetite for the extraordinary. leaving us longing for intimacy, fearful of change, and unsure of who we are. I would recommend Rule's *Inland Passage* for its gentle celebration of the ordinary, the small acts of kindness among strangers, the quiet cycled of life, and the wise reckoning with ageing and death. Rule, as always, writes about the ordinary extraordinarily well.

Helen Corbett
Canmore, Alta.

Anthony Bukoski replies: To help readers decide whether to boy *Inland Passage,* I mentioned tbe proportion of stories concerning lesbians. I would do so for any book whose characters depart from the main, whether spiritually, psychologically, politically, economically, geographically, even, yes, sexually. Part of the critic's obligation is to apprise readers of what to expect of a book, which I hope I did. By no means was I discouraging others from buying Role's book simply because of her characters' emotional and sexual makeup. In fact, I complimented Rule's self-possession, for ha women remain open-minded and human when faced with male chauvinist husbands and lovers. I'm unsure what "light" this sheds on me, though Helen Corbett seems certain that I've betrayed some bias.

I found loo many unexceptional stories in Rule's book. The family that appears in five successive stories is so

CANWIT NO. 110

HE: Where have you been lately7
SHE: To the Prairies.
HE: Very flat, prairies.
SHE: And to Banff.
HE: Very steep, Banff.
SHE: And you?
HE: Oh, here and there. you know. Toronto.
SHE: Did you see the CN Tower? They say it's . . . very exciting by moonlight.
HE: Rather disappointing. I found. . . .
SHE: Oh, Pierre! Where did we go wrong?

CULTURAL NATIONALISTS frequently complain that movies made in Canada are routinely laundered of Canadian content so that they will appeal to the profitable U.S. market. We wonder what would happen if the department of communications were to force playwrights and film-makers to insert Canadian material into their scripts. Aspiring dramatists are invited to rewrite brief excerpts fmm well-known plays (such as the lines from Noël Coward's *Private Lives,* quoted above) to emphasize our national identity. The prize is $25. Deadline: May 1. Address: CanWit No. 110, *Books in Canada, 366* Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3x9.

Results of CanWit No. 108

OH DEAR, oh dear! Our request for higgledy-piggledies on famous Canadians produced not the flood of entries we expected but rather a flood of letters and phone calls to inform us that our sample (ulp!) *did not scan! Cm* it be that the rest of the world does not pronounce our prime minister's name *Mul-ruin-ey?* well, occasionally even CanWit nods. The winner is Donald Winkler of Mootreal, whose submissions include:

Higgledy-piggledy
Izzy Lazarovitch
Yearns for a name that a
Poet can use —

Something unnerving and
Mephistophelian:
Let it be Layton. and
Satan, his muse!

Higgledy-piggledy
Lucy Montgomery
Sit on your island and
Gaze at the sea —

Far in the future your
Anne treats her elders to
Polysyllabical
Cheek on TV.

Higgledy-piggledy
CBC Radio
Once, in the morning, you
Captured our hearts.

Now. though you're beamed to us
Stereophonically,
Parlous and sorry's the
State of the Arts.

Higgledy-piggledy
Mister Prime Minister
Power's a passion that
Never abates —

Power's narcotic and
Aphrodisiacal,
Power's a habit that
Kicks you — just wait.

Honourable mentions:

Canada, *Canada*
Dorothy Livesay
titled her volume The
Unquiet Bed,

much of it splendidly
hypertempestuous,
some of it bringing the
blood to the head.

Canada, Canada
William Valgardson,
fictively fishing and
raising his rod,

darkly denies that his
inquisatorial
highly provoking in-
spector is Ood.
— Robin Skelton, Victoria

Higgledy-piggledy
Rodgers and Hammerstein
Aren't Canadians,
Yet I submit

Arguments urging their
Eligibility,
As they have names that just
Happen to fit.
— D.G. Bullock, Vancouver

Higgledy-piggledy,
Dear Books in Canada:
In Double Dactyls, the
NAMES HAVE TO SCAN.

Changing the rules is a
Provinciality —
Leads to results that are
Less "Wit" than "Can"
— Linda Grossman, Chicago

ordinary as to be dull. Nothing ever happens to them, and Rule offers so little physical description that in time Harry, Anna, Joey, and Sally begin to blur. I had to *tell* myself that Anna likes ham-thatgensChristmas Eve Sally precocious things like "Children rights,andwell, Harry, never Harry has been insi mobile home. He calls them "giant Kleenex boxes on wheels." Need I say more?

SO THERE!
TO MY CRITICS January-

fun.

AlPurdy
Micco,Florida

CLASSIFIED

Classified rates: 95 per line (40 characters to the line). **Deadline:** first of the month for issue dated following month. **Address:** Books in Canada Classified, 398 Adelaide Street East. Toronto M5A 3X9. Phone: (416) 363-5426.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA invites applications for the following sessional position: Scriptwriter, to teach in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C., from September 1, 1986 to April 30, 1997. The applicant should ba able to teach introductory and advanced scriptwriting for stage and should have some experience in screenwriting. The ability to teach other genres would be an asset. This is a position for an active scriptwriter who is looking for a chance to work in a small, innovative department with enthusiastic apprentice writers. Teaching experience at the post-secondary level a" asset. Salary subject to negotiation. This position will be filled subject to availability of funds.

Canadian immigration regulations require the University to assess applications from Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada before assessing applications from other persons.

The University of Victoria offers equal employment opportunities to qualified male and female applicants. Applications should be sent to: Prof. W.D. Valgardson, Chairman, Creative Writing Department, University of Victoria, P.O. Box 1700, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2.

RECOMMENDED

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

FICTION

Canadian Short Stories, Fourth Series, edited by Robert Weaver, Oxford. Dominated by such familiar names as Alice Munro, Norman Levine, and Mavis Gallant (though it also includes such younger writers as Guy Vanderhaeghe and Neil Bissoondath), this is an excellent, if unventuresome, anthology of recent mainstream fiction.

NON-FICTION

Maple Leaf Route: Scheldt, by Terry Copp and Robert Vogel, Maple Leaf Route. A military (not a war) history, in which — through their passion for documentary detail — the authors pull no punches in assessing the accuracy of the current wealth of war memoirs, tall tales, and myths.

POETRY

The Glass Air: Selected Poems. by P.K. Page. Oxford. A generous, optimistic, important book that spans all aspects of Page's art — the much-anthologized early poems of tbe 1940s and '50s, 32 new poems, nine drawings, and two disarming, sprightly essays about craft and the progress of the poet.

RECEIVED

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

The Adventures of Roberta, by Munro Ferguson, Press Porcépic.
Am I the Only One?, by Dennis Foon and Brenda Knight, Douglas & McIntyre.
An Appetite for Life, by Charles Ritchie, Macmillan.
Aurores boréales 2, ed. Daniel Sernine, Editions Le Préambule.
Battered Women, by Micheline Beaudry, Black Rose Press.
The Bay Boy, by Daniel Petrie, Pottersfield Press.
Beginnings, by Robert Burt, Creative Publishers.
Beyond Those Mountains, by Dick Thiessen, Kindred Press.
Blind Painting, by Robert Melancon, translated by Philip Stratford, Signal Editions.
Book of Mercy, by Leonard Cohen, M & S.
Books About Us: The City, Annick Press.
Books About Us: Shopping, Annick Press.
Books About Us: The Weekend, Annick Press.
Books About Us: What We Do, Annick Press.
Brupp on the Other Side, by Deirdre Kessler, Ragweed Press.
Canadian Cars, 1946-1984, by R. Perry Zavitz, Bookman Publishing.
Conventional Emotions, by Lesley Choyce, Creative Publishers.
Convincing Americans, by Jim Smith, Proper Tales Press.
Daddy-Care, by Allen Morgan, illustrated by John Richmond, Annick Press.

Digging Up the Mountains, by Neil Bissoondath, Macmillan.
Distances, by Robin Skelton, Porcupine's Quill.
Doors, Words and Silence, by R.A.D. Ford, Mosaic Press.
Durrell in Russia, by Gerald and Lee Durrell, Collins.
A Few Rustic Huts: Ranger Cabins & Logging Camp Buildings of Algonquin Park, by S.R. Cage, Mosaic.
50 Below Zero, by Robert Munsch, illustrated by Michael Martchenko, Annick Press.
"For Better or Worse": Attitudes Towards Marriage in Literature, edited by Evelyn J. Hinz, Mosaic.
Getting the Job, by John Nixon and Karen Kokoski, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
The Green Tomato Years, by Gloria Kupchenko Frolick, Williams-Wallace.
Guide to Making Money: How to Do It Yourself, Canadian Money Saver.
A Hard Act to Follow, by V.K. Gilbert *et al.*, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
Homage to Victor Jara, by Patrick White, translated by Juan O'Neill, Steel Rail.
Hunting Humans, by Elliott Leyton, M & S.
Immune to Gravity, by Mary Di Michele, M & S.
In Loco Parentis: A Teacher's Guide to Educational Administration, by V.K. Gilbert, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
In Transit, by Michael Harris, Signal Editions.
Indian Education in Canada, Volume I: The Legacy, edited by Jean Barman *et al.*, UBC Press.
Just Enough Fog to Keep It Cool, by Robert Ashe, Four East Publications.
The Land of Lost Content: A History of CUSO, by Ian Smillie, Deneau.
The Last Blewointment Anthology, Volume I, edited by bill bissett, Nightwood Editions.
Lesnun Builds a Genie Trap, by Hazel J. Hutchins, illustrated by Catharine O'Neill, Annick Press.
Lemon-Aid New Car Guide 1986, by Phil Edmonston, Stoddart.
Lemon-Aid Used Car Guide 1986, by Phil Edmonston, Stoddart.
Letters to Marcia: A Teacher's Guide to Anti-Racist Education, by Enid Lee, Cross Cultural Communication Centre.
Lion Dance, by Simon Johnston, Williams-Wallace.
Making It, by Micki Moore, Dell.
Man Descending, by Guy Vanderhaeghe, Macmillan.
Managerial Moxie, by Lance K. Secretan, Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
The Money Burn, by Tony Foster, Dell.
The Montreal Story Tellers: Memoirs, Photographs, Critical Essays, edited by J.R. Struthers, Vehicule Press.
More Fun with Dick and Jane, by Marc Gregory Gallant, Penguin.
The Music of Canada, by Timothy J. McGee, Norton.
My Dear Susan Ann: Letters of Joseph Howe to his Wife, 1829-1836, edited by M.G. Parks, Jesperson Press.
Nicholas Tickle Us, by Sol Mandlsohn, illustrated by Peter Kovalik, PMA.
Our Lady of the Snows, by Morley Callaghan, Macmillan.
The Peter Pyramid, by Dr. Laurence J. Peter, William Morrow & Company (Macmillan).
The Plains of Caroni, by Samuel Selvon, Williams-Wallace.
Poets Who Don't Dance, by Shaunt Basmajian, Unfinished Monument Press.
The Political Career of Louis-Alexandre Taschereau, by Bernard L. Vigod, McGill-Queen's.
Population and Canada, by Michael Barrett, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
The RCAF as Seen from the Ground, Book One: The War Years 1939-1945, by Alexander Velleman, Canada's Wings.
Rhubarb Smart and Other Stories of Saskatchewan, by Gordon M. Smart, Gordon M. Smart Publications.
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