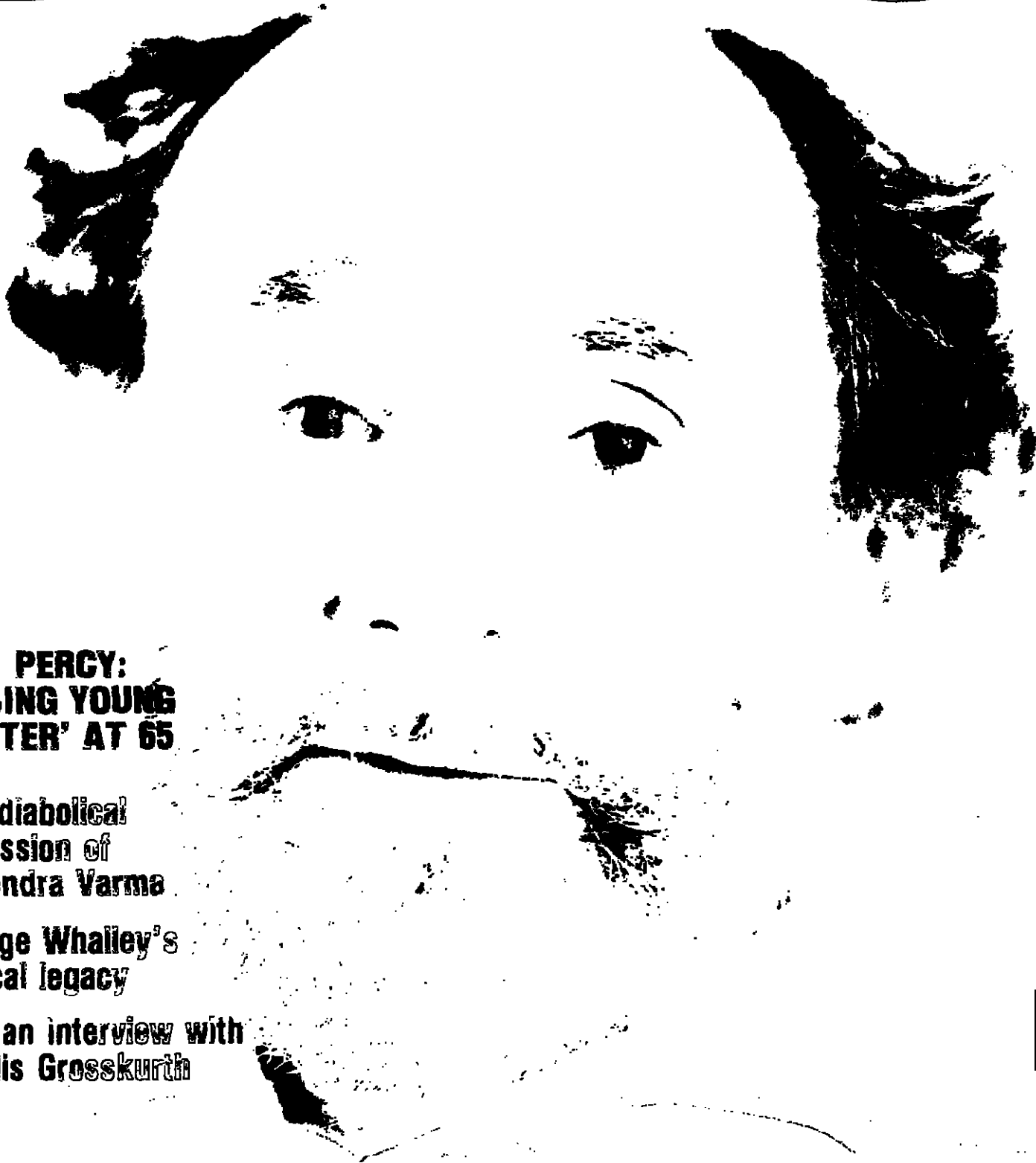


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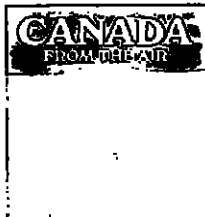
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBIN KOBRYN

Dr. Varma and Mr. Hyde

From his Halifax lair, one of the world's leading authorities on Gothic romance sets out to resurrect lost tales of horror

THERE WAS NO howling on the moors when I arrived at the home of Canada's most renowned gothicist, Dr. Devendra P. Varma. No tempest swept the dull midwinter clouds across the face of a spectral moon, no Atlantic breakers hurled themselves with a maddened fury against the placid shoreline of the Northwest Arm as I stepped from my taxi into the shelter of the carport. As befits the residence of one of the world's leading authorities on vampire lore, Varma's house has a somewhat fortified aspect, but it is hardly Gothii. A series of interlocking octagons built in 1969, it is modern to a fault. The absence of right angles reflects the eccentricity, if not the diabolical content, of Varma's literary interests.

I thought Varma in the flesh might inspire the same ghastly foreboding as the subject of his study. One expects a man who has spent a night in Castle Dracula to carry with him a whiff of the tomb, but it is difficult to conjure a Gothic frisson from a man who drives an Oldsmobile and who offers you a Ten-Penny ale as he expounds on the undead. He avers, indeed, that he is tired of being asked about vampires — although words such as "Dracula" and "necromancer" mll grandly off his tongue.

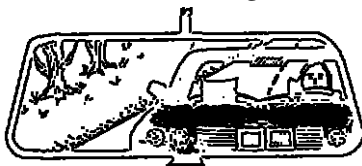
This theatricality recalls a younger Varma who staged Shakespeare in Katmandu and Damascus. A distinguished man of 61, with an intense gaze and a well-fed belly, Varma speaks with the elaborate phrasings and precise enunciation of a scholar educated in British India and London. He was born in the northeast state of Bihar, in Darbhanga, a Himalayan village with a view of Everest, nestled in a valley on the border with Nepal. While head of the English department at Ranchi University, Varma was selected under the Colombo Plan to help establish Tribhuvana University in Katmandu, following the 1950 Nepalese revolution. When British personnel quit the United Arab Republic during the 1956 Sues crisis, he was transferred to Damascus and thence to Cairo. The last move, he says, resulted from the intercession of President Nasser, who had witnessed Varma's Shakespearean pro-

ductions in Syria. "Despite all his political dislikes for England," says Varma, "Nasser loved Shakespeare."

Varma's time in the Middle East "was a greet experience for me, but it was not academically satisfying." He was looking for a position in the United States when he heard of an opening at Dalhousie University in Halifax. He arrived in 1963, intending to stay for a couple of years. That he has remained here since, he attributes in part to the support of former Dalhousie president Henry Hicks. The Arno Press collection of Gothic romances in the Dalhousie library bears an inscription from Varma to Hicks, "whose kind patronage enabled me to light a taper at the long-neglected 'gothic' shrine."

Since he was a student, Varma's love has been to till the "unploughed field" of Gothic romances, those sensational fictions that predominated between 1760 and 1820, when some 800 of them were published. Priced beyond the means of middle-class readers, as much as \$5 apiece, these fantasies were rented from circulating libraries for a penny a day and eagerly read by young ladies, the "leisured fair." Late 18th-century moralists fulminated against their corrupting influence. "Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year!" blustered Sir Anthony Absolute in Sheridan's comedy, *The Rivals*. "And depend on it . . . that they who are so fond of handling the leaves will long for the fruit at last."

Varma borrowed Sheridan's phrase for the title of his 1972 study of circulating libraries, *The Evergreen Tree of*



Diabolical Knowledge. Alas for scholars, few examples of the Gothic genre have survived. "Because the books circulated very fast, from hand to hand," notes Varma, "they were reduced to pieces, just like the papabacks of today." Varma's major accomplishment has been the "resurrection" of lost

Gothic romances, such as the "seven horrid novels" referred to in *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen's pastiche of the genre. So utterly had these novels vanished that scholars doubted they had ever existed. Varma found his first solid evidence while researching *The Evergreen Tree*, when he discovered a review of Francis Lathom's *The Midnight Bell*. Over a period of 13 years, working through the network of antiquarian booksellers and collectors, continuing work begun by Michael Sadleir and Montague Summers, he assembled all seven novels, which were published as a set by Folio Press in 1968.

The rarity of Gothic romances partly accounts for their scholarly neglect. "Everybody reads Walter Scott. Jane Austen, Fielding, and Richardson," says Varma, "but not Ann Radcliffe or Horace Walpole. They bypass these names. 'Oh, she wrote *Mysteries of Udolpho* and he wrote *Castle of Otranto*.' Nobody reads those novels because they are not available." As a Ph.D. student in England, Varma met Prof. Bonamy Dobrée, who "introduced me to the delights of the Gothic romance."

"My researches are archival," says Varma, who likens his work to reconstructing a broken urn. "You'll find 40 pages in one treasure room, another 50 with a collector, the title page somewhere else." Once the text has been reassembled, the next challenge is to find out something about the author. "There is not a single line written anywhere in the history of English Literature about Francis Lathom," outside of one reference in the letter from Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra. Varma hired a British lawyer to search the birth and death records in England's Somerset House, through hundreds of Francis Lathoms, for the novelist. This led Varma to a small village near Doncaster, where he found Lathom's tomb and an obituary notice listing all of his books. Such labours lie behind each of the more than 200 Gothic romances he has resurrected.

Varma's publications include *The Complete Works of Sheridan LeFanu*, in 52 volumes from Arno Press (1977); 36 volumes of *Gothic Dissertations*; and an essay, "The Genesis of Dracula," in Peter Underwood's *Vampire's Bedside*

Companion. *The Gothic Flame* is a textbook history first published in 1957 and now going into its fourth edition. Varma's Dalhousie course on the literature of horror and terror is unique in Canada, one of only two in North America. There are, he says, "only three people living in the world who know about this spectrum of literature."

He now is working on what he intends to be his final project before retiring, *The Gothic Galaxy*, a study of the minor Gothic writers. The finished work will be more than 600 pages. "They were not all great writers," he notes. "Posterity has not condescended to call any one of them great, but the colour of life was reflected on them by their readers."

Leaving aside academic accomplishments, much of Varma's notoriety derives from his enthusiastic pursuit of the arcane. "Books are not only tomes of learning," he says. "they are also toys to fill an idle hour." Gothic romances are "the literature of the night," intriguing "not only in themselves, but in the peculiarly graphic way they relate to the development and dispersal of sexual and social inhibitions." Varma has served as a consultant to producers of horror films, a genre he sees as the heir of the Gothic tradition. His own achievements often have a cinematic flair. In March he hosted a Transylvanian Weekend at Dalhousie, a similar extravaganza to one organized in 1973.

As well as the literature, Varma explores the physical landscapes of Gothic fantasy. He has conducted vigils at such sites as Castle Frankenstein, and Lauenstein castle in Thuringia, frequented by the spectre of the Bleeding Nun. "What are the folklores, the sagas, in the countryside, how have the authors utilized these for their novels? The sociological, anthropological elements, that is a part of my research."

And the purpose of such vigils? "The value is that it is not all fiction: you think that there was a person who tried to manufacture a monster; there was a prince who was as bloodthirsty as Dracula; there is still a castle that is haunted by the phantom of the Bleeding Nun. What is the reality behind it? It is not a fable or a fairy tale: this is what I want to establish."

In the living room of Castle Varma are statuettes and images from Hindu, Egyptian and European mythology. A reading lamp takes the form of an Egyptian funerary *ushabti*. Surrounded, as in a tomb, by the kitsch of death, one senses not an oppressive morbidity but a faith in the continuity of life. "Death is not the end of life," affirms Varma. "It is the opening, a gateway to a new life: a" ecstatic experience. Nothing is lost."

— ROBIN METCALFE

Words and work

THAT WRITERS WORK hard few would deny — least of all the writers themselves. But can they be classed with stevedores, bricklayers, and lumberjacks? Tom Wayman thinks so. Wayman, a poet and teacher, is the best-known member of the Vancouver Industrial Writers' Union (VIWU), a loose-knit group that meets once a month to discuss what he calls "work writing."

"At one time," says Wayman, author of *Inside Job: Essays on the New Work Writing* (Harbour Publishing) and editor of the poetry anthology *A Government Job at Last* (MacLeod Books), "it was sex in literature that was taboo. But a detailed examination of daily work and its effect on people has up to the present been omitted from most of our imaginative writing."

Most of today's writing, Wayman says, is escapist — aimed at diverting readers away from the affairs of everyday life and into another world. "A literature that attempts to dull our perceptions so that we can get through the day should lead one to ask, why do we want to escape?" For example, an assignment he gave sociology students at the University of Windsor a couple of years ago — to interview workers doing the same sort of jobs they expected to have after graduating — produced staggering results. Some students changed courses, while others dropped out once they discovered the realities of their chosen field.

Such scrutiny of the working world is central to Wayman's poetry, reflected most recently in his collection *The Face of Jack Munro* (Harbour Publishing), which savages the president of the International Woodworkers Association, who has been accused of selling short British Columbia's workers during the public employees' strike of 1983. Wayman is all for solidarity. This summer the VIWU and Kootenay School of Writing will jointly sponsor the Split Shift Colloquium (to be held in Vancouver, August 21-24), to which Wayman has invited 18 writers from Canada and the United States — among them poets Leona Gom and Erin Mouré, U.S. film-maker John Sayles, and Robert Carson of the San Francisco Waterfront Writers Association.

Wayman contends that a reader's attitude to the main subjects of imaginative writing in English — love, death, and nature — is largely shaped by the kind of daily work he does (or doesn't do). The amount of money, energy, and time available for a person to pursue romance or appreciate nature is a direct result of

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his working conditions. By contrast, academic criticism reaches back to a ecclesiastical tradition that looked for wisdom in sources other than the secular world. The further a concern was from everyday experience, the more it seemed to speak from the divine font of knowledge.

Still, most of today's "work writers" do have university degrees. Indeed, some critics suggest that such writers are merely slumming. It is an argument that annoys Wayman, but one that he only partially answers. For one thing, he says, work writing is not limited to blue-collar workers and, anyway, many of today's blue-collar jobs are taken by university

graduates. But if most of the writers are university-trained, don't they represent an elite and separate group among their fellow employees?

Whatever the case, Wayman believes that the new cultural taste-makers will emerge from the work-writing movement. An example, he says, is Andy Suknaski, whose poems, which document the settlement of the Prairies, are very popular in the Ukrainian community. A university professor applying to Suknaski the same critical techniques that he would apply to Margaret Atwood would find his poems sloppy, simplistic, and unliterary. However, if Atwood's poems were shown to the

Ukrainians, they might find them boring, dry, and overly cerebral.

"Do we have work writers that are good writers?" Wayman asks. "This is something that the women's movement and the black movement wrestled with. To a white person the black writer's work may appear clumsy. But the black writer says, 'No, no, you are applying all the wrong criteria.'" Put simply, any anthology that ignores work writing is ignoring a central fact of our existence. "If you have literature that doesn't mention work," says Wayman, "it is a literature with a enormous hole in the middle of it."

— GRANT DAVID SHILLING

ENGLISH, OUR ENGLISH

That empty feeling

Surrounded on all sides by ungrammatical medias, a language maven is vaulted into deciding whether to stand or evacuate himself

By Bob Blackburn

THE NEWS MEDIA are reporting an ever-increasing incidence of natural and unnatural events that make it desirable to evacuate the residents of a place.

I consider this an illogical use of evacuate, which means, simply, to make empty, but I can find no authoritative support for that opinion. The earliest (16th century) findings listed in the OED have to do chiefly with bodily functions. Early in the 17th century, we find places being evacuated of inmates, but, at about the same time, we find inmates being evacuated, i.e., removed. This makes no sense to me; evacuating a person is a job for the taxidermist. It simply indicates that writers of the 20th century have "O corner O" illogicality, and that Sir Henry Wotton, author of the first sighting of this "se. had he lived another three-and-a-half centuries, would feel at home in a Canadian news-room today, debilitating good words with the rest of them.

Both the OED and Webster's Second put this use well down on the list, but neither suggests that there is anything improper about it. My faithful old Webster's College, however, recognizes only the uses I deem acceptable. One can never have too many dictionaries.

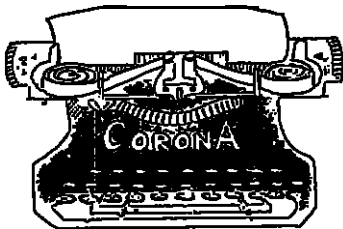
I had a happier time seeking and failing to find support for the all-too-frequent modern "se of vault as a transitive verb meaning to elevate suddenly the position of someone, as in "... three birdies and an eagle on the back nine today vaulted him into third

place. ..." That is a use that Sir Henry wotted not of. "He vaulted into third place with ..." would both correct the error and give the sentence more power.

SOME INPUT from readers:

Marcia Tannenbaum of Ottawa has sent me a welcome response to my asking if we really need maven — which I understood to mean expert — in the language. She writes: "A maven is not simply an expert, one who knows a lot about a particular area of knowledge, but also, more importantly, one who understands. . . . The word comes from the Hebrew verb 'to understand,' l'haveen . . . I trust that this is sufficient information to persuade you that the language is indeed enriched by [the use of the] word, maven."

I guess that provides some justification. I have always felt that expert bore some connotation of understanding,



and, in fact, understanding, in one of its senses, means expert. However, understanding has a broader meaning, and, from what Ms Tannenbaum says, I am willing to concede that there is value in having a noun such as maven in English. It certainly beats understander.

(If the truth be told, all this might have been cleared up more simply were it not for my aversion to dictionaries published since mid-century. The only two references I have been able to find simply define maven as meaning expert, and I was inclined to dismiss it as a buzzword. I do not hate neologisms, I simply suspect them, and I distrust all dictionaries under 30.)

A careful reader of the Toronto Star reports that he is used to seeing it's for its, and recently saw her's for hers in that paper. He encloses a clipping in which their's appears in large type, and concludes: "I'm waiting for hi's!"

Another sharp eye noticed that one edition of the Globe and Mail contained both "surrounded on both sides" and "surrounded on all sides." A TV viewer quotes an announcer as saying someone was "getting it from all sides of the coin." (I presume this would include the inside and outside, in addition to the obverse and reverse, but it remains a ridiculous figure.)

DURING MOST OF my life, media was the plural of medium. In the television age, it became more and more misused, through ignorance, as a singular noun. More recently, it has been used consistently and wilfully by an increasing number of respected (although not necessarily by me) writers, and I was becoming resigned to it. However, I was not prepared to hear what I heard only last night from the mouth of a U.S. network TV broadcaster: "[Television is] the most influential of the medias." □

Late bloomer

At 65, after half a lifetime polishing his craft, H.R. (Bill) Percy is one of the country's 'rising young novelists'

By Harold Horwood

IN A LOVELY old house on the estuary of the Annapolis River in Nova Scotia lives a former naval man who is known among tourists as a friendly innkeeper and among his neighbours as one of the many who have chosen to spend their retirement in this most pleasant corner of the Maritimes. Nothing unusual about Bill Percy. He even looks the part, his trim beard setting off a face lined and tanned from gazing at far horizons, a wiry, athletic man in his 60s who likes to play tennis and paddle a canoe and tend his fruit trees.

There's just one odd thing about him. He happens to be one of Canada's "rising young novelists," a fiction writer who impresses both critics and readers more and more with each book he publishes. His second collection of short

stories, *A Model Lover (Stoddart)*, has recently appeared. His third novel, *Tranter's Tree*, is to be published next year by Lester & Orpen Dennys. His fourth novel is rapidly nearing completion. And in addition to publishing fiction, he has found time to write short biographies of Joseph Howe and Thomas Chandler Haliburton (both published by Fitzhenry & Whiteside). All this since the mid-1970s, when he announced his career was "just beginning."

Flotsam, published by Breakwater Books in 1978, won the Nova Scotia First Novel Award for H.R. Percy (as he's known on his dust-jackets; if you twist his arm he'll admit that the H.R. stands for Herbert Roland). An episodic saga, *Flotsam* was based in part on his experiences in the Royal Navy during the Second World War, and showed the effects of his long familiarity with the short story: the book practically breaks down into a series of rather long short stories.

Before he wrote his first novel Bill Percy had been writing stories for about 30 years, had been published in many Canadian journals and anthologies, had appeared twice in *Vanity Fair* and three times in *Short Story International*, and had published a collection, *The Timeless Island*, published by Ryerson in 1960. He was regarded in Canadian literary circles as a hobbyist, doing the occasional short story superbly well, but hardly a full-time writer.

Flotsam was barely on the press, however, when Percy had another novel ready. This one — *Painted Ladies* — reflected nothing of his own career, but a great deal of one of his private interests: Percy is an amateur painter in oils. A far more complex book than *Flotsam*, it begins with a dying artist, then proceeds to explore the many elements that went into the building of his career.

Impatient with delays at Breakwater, Percy took the book to Toronto agent Bella Pomer. She promptly placed it with Lester & Orpen Dennys, who published it in 1983 to enthusiastic reviews. It was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award and republished by General as a New Press Canadian Classic. Long before it appeared, Percy was working on his third novel and preparing his second short-story collection. He has recently returned from Ecuador, where he went to collect background material for his fourth novel.

Percy works at his writing full-time during the winter in a cottage that he owns at Barefoot Bay, Florida. From May to December he lives at The Moorings, in Granville Ferry, N.S. The Moorings, known as a "bed and breakfast" in the tourist trade, is not only one of the handsomest Victorian houses in the region but is furnished with period furniture that Bill's wife Vina (short for Davina — she's Welsh) has made a hobby of collecting. Vina is the real innkeeper; she loves the job, loves the house, loves its surroundings, and dreads the thought of retirement. Bill, whose main contribution is keeping the place in repair, regards the job with some impatience, and is usually to be found in his private office, up the back stairs, pounding away at his typewriter.

THOUGH BILL PERCY'S headlong career in fiction didn't begin until middle age, he always regarded himself as a writer. Born

H.R. Per



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBBI KOBRIYI

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBBI KOBRIYI

Aug. 6, 1920 at **Burham**, Kent, he grew up in a house full of books among a family of avid readers. His paternal grandfather was known locally as "the poet," but nothing he wrote has survived. Bill can't remember when he started reading, or when he first wanted to write. He recalls reading Dickens's *Bleak House* before the age of 10, and his mother taking it away because she thought it "too adult."

"I never did get back to it," Percy recalls. "In fact, the only Dickens I ever got to read was what I read as a child." Joseph Conrad's novels and short stories became the great love of his youth. ("I believe I devoured everything he ever wrote.") He also read Henry James and Thomas Hardy at an early age, and many of the European classics in translation: Balzac, Dostoyevsky, Maupassant. His periodical reading was mostly *Argosy*, a magazine devoted entirely to short fiction. He first published in a school magazine at age 11, and was "enormously peeved by the school principal," who demanded to know whether he really had written it himself. At school he also produced a magazine on a machine called a hectograph.

Naval careers were a tradition in the Percy family, and Bill went straight from school into naval apprenticeship. He was still an apprentice when the Second World War began, and graduated to his first posting during the Battle of Britain in 1940. Drafted to HMS *Enterprise*, a destroyer, he was on his way to join her at Gibraltar when the troop transport on which he was travelling was torpedoed and sunk in the Bay of Biscay. Rescued and returned to Britain, he was subsequently drafted to the battleship *King George V*, stationed in mid-Atlantic, and was present at the great chase and running battle in which the Royal Navy sank the world's most powerful ship, the *Bismarck*. During the Battle of the Atlantic he got into Halifax once, and decided immediately that Canada was where he wanted to live.

He married Mary Davina James while on leave in Plymouth

in 1942, but was then sent to the Far East on HMS *Hawkins* to join in the war against Japan. His son Jonathan was 14 months old when Percy saw him for the first time. Subsequently there were two other children, Roger and Pauline. Percy and his wife now have three grandchildren;

After taking part in the D-Day landings in Normandy, Percy's ship was sent back to the Far East, and he was stationed at Hong Kong until his 12-year tour ended. During the war he had one play produced on shipboard by Arthur Lane, later a famous producer in London, and published an article on Conrad in a naval magazine — but that was about all.

Before he could leave Hong Kong the Korean War started, the navy refused his discharge, and he served another 18 months in the Pacific. Then he applied for a post in the Royal Canadian Navy, which just the "I" was advertising for Royal Navy engineers. He got the job, and he and his family landed at Halifax July 1, 1952. From Halifax he was posted to HMCS *Cornwallis*, a naval base within sight of his eventual home at Granville Ferry, and was then transferred to the desk navy in Ottawa.

At the end of the war Percy had joined a group known as the Forces Writers Circle, later The Twentieth Century Writers Club. Manuscripts circulated among members, and one of them liked his story "The Captain's Lady" so much that he submitted it to the famous literary journal *Vanity Fair*, without consulting Percy. "Out of the blue," says Percy, "came a letter of acceptance offering 15 guineas." That, at the time, would have been an excellent week's wages. The editor, A. Y. MacPeake, suggested the plot of another story, "The Timeless Island," which he subsequently bought for 30 guineas. Bill's illustrator at *Vanity Fair* was Ronald Searle, later famous as author of *The Belles of St. Trinian's*.

At Halifax, Percy met a group of well-known Nova Scotia writers: Will Bird, Helen Creighton, Thomas Raddall, who introduced him to the Canadian Authors' Association. Through the CAA Percy became editor of the *Canadian Author and Bookman* and got to know most of the well-known Canadian writers of the time — Louis Dudek, Gwendolyn MacEwen, Al Purdy — and occasionally a famous visitor. Dudek arranged a dinner in Montreal for Henry Miia, and introduced this American *enfant terrible* to Percy and his other Canadian friends. But Percy's favourite anecdote from his years at the magazine is a simple one-liner: "I had Peter Newman writing book reviews for me, for free."

While working for the Canadian navy Percy entered an essay contest: "What I Like About Canada" won 5100, which bought a new sewing-machine for Vina, and Bill was invited to lunch by the minister of national defence. ("Lunching with a minister of the Crown — in Britain that would be almost in a class with an invitation to Buckingham Palace!")

In 1972, the year after his retirement from the navy, Percy went searching for a house in Nova Scotia. Friends in Annapolis Royal mentioned The Moorings. He took a look at it, and immediately wired an offer to the owner, who was living in New Jersey. Vina Percy didn't even see it until the day they moved in, but the house and the location, immediately across the river from Annapolis Royal, have been her first love ever since. Her success as an innkeeper financed their second home in Florida.

DURING HIS YEARS in Ottawa Bill arrived at a new writing method. Instead of starting with a plot, a theme, a background, he'd begin writing from a mere germ of an idea and let the story grow on the page. The plot would then arise out of the necessities created by the characters as they grew and developed. It was a method familiar to D.H. Lawrence, who never knew what a novel was about until it was half written.

The structure, Percy says, arises from the necessities of the story. "You write yourself into a box, and the 'you' have to

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write yourself out again." There's a certain penalty for this kind of writing. The narrative becomes convoluted, folded backwards and forwards in time, creating difficulties for the reader. Fortunately Vina Percy is a reader, not a critic, but able to tell Bill when the thread of his narrative has disappeared and had better be fetched out again.

"I don't usually rewrite," Percy says. "I revise as I go, chapter by chapter. But in the case of *Tranter's Tree* Vina convinced me that the middle part of the book was obscure, so I rewrote it. I can no longer write a simple chronological sequence. I often start near the end of a story, and then have to go back time and again to explain how things got to be the way they are." The method shows up very strongly in *Painted Ladies*, where the flashbacks happen quite naturally, because they are required to explain what is happening in the present. As a result, no artificial device is required to introduce them — smells that evoke the past, snapshots in an album, or the like.

Tranter's Tree follows this structure to an even greater degree. It is set in present-day Nova Scotia, and is concerned with such issues as protection of the environment and the quality of life (issues Percy has been fighting about with the Nova Scotia government for many years), but it covers two centuries, and includes a lot of history in the present. In Granville Ferry and Annapolis Royal history is the present.

"Writing a lot of short stories does something to your fiction in general," Percy says. "For one thing, it creates a habit of compression. You get used to defining your characters in a few swift strokes. You get used to bringing information in obliquely. But I find every major book a departure and a challenge. The character grows on the page. And what you demand of the character in the story will dictate what his past has been. So you have to invent and define his past. It's a fascinating process to watch, and when I'm forced to be away from the writing for a period I can't wait to get back to it to find out what's going to happen next."

Percy is something of a purist. When he writes in his own voice he doesn't dangle participles. He has escaped the morass of floating adverbs that has happened most of his contemporaries. If he splits an infinitive he does it intentionally. His prose is not only correct, but colourful, imagistic, and fresh. He admits to "a passionate love affair with language," and believes that "the way a thought is expressed not only defines the thought but helps to shape it."


This may sound like heresy in a period when the language one picks up on the street is supposed to be good enough for the most Olympian poet, but Bill Percy spent half a lifetime learning to use the language, and only then began to do his major work in fiction. "Young writers all too often discover that they have nothing to say, but with me, in some mysterious way, the 'something to say' grew out of the ability to say it."

That "something" can come from anywhere. He looked at an ancient tree on the road that runs past his door; he began writing about it, and a whole novel grew up around it. Two men he saw working on a roof became the powerful psychological story "Tearing Her Down." A man sitting in a window with a pair of field glasses turned into a horrifying study of rape, "Falling for Mavis."

It's magic — and Percy calls it that, unblushingly. It is magic drawn from the ordinary affairs of life, but it is far more than ordinary. You do not achieve magic by portraying the surface of life — only when you "illuminate its depths."

From the day he published his first short story Bill Percy has had as fine a prose style as any fiction writer in Canada, but in other respects his writing has grown with each book. Those who have read *Tranter's Tree* in manuscript say it is even better than his earlier novels. His fiction has become more subtle, more complex, his art more finely tuned with each publication. His admirers will continue to find new strengths in this developing writer. □

GESTURES



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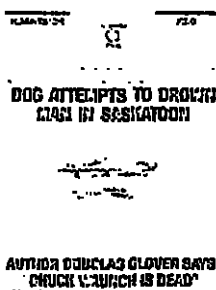
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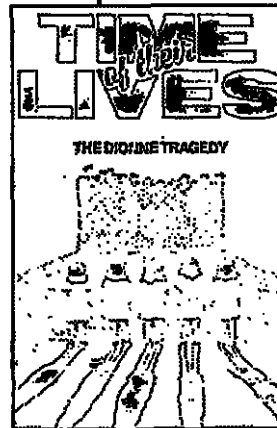


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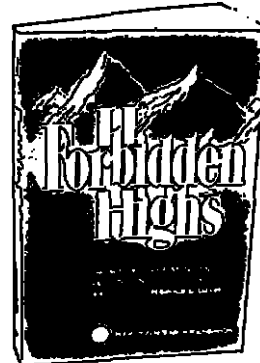
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Footprints of a giant

Though overshadowed by the catchier teachings of McLuhan and Frye, George Whalley may yet emerge as Canada's most enduring critical theorist

By Robert L. MacDougall

Studies in Literature and the Humanities, by George Whalley, edited by Brian Crick and John Ferns, McGill-Queen's University Press, 270 pages. \$27.50 cloth (ISBN 0 7735 0535 0).

GEORGE WHALLEY, poet and scholar, died in 1983 at the age of 68. For his work on Coleridge, meticulous and perceptive and sustained over most of his working life, he was recognized internationally as being quite simply the best. For his other major concerns, which had to do chiefly with the pro- of the literary imagination and the civilizing agencies of humane studies, he was less widely known; and the fact that he had few ardent followers is not after a surprising since it is clear that the idea of anything like a literary cult was foreign to the master's beliefs about the true nature of critical inquiry.

Studies in Literature and the Humanities brings together the fruits of these other concerns, which until now have been scattered in periodicals and journals. The results are impressive. Although perhaps overshadowed in his lifetime by the catchier teachings of Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye, George Whalley may yet emerge as Canada's most persuasive and enduring critical theorist of the 20th century.

Brian Crick of Brock University and John Ferns of McMaster seem to have begun their work on this volume at about the time of Whalley's final illness. Some correspondence and a few meetings were all they managed, but these were enough to add affection to respect for the clear and civil spirit pre-figured in the writings. In an admirably restrained introduction they accept the view central to Whalley's rendering of Aristotle's Poetics (which is one of the included papers) that the work they are approaching is "acroamatic," meaning "something to be listened to," hence the less tampered with the better in its dynamic unfolding. After the brief introduction, nearly half of it made up of key passages quoted from Whalley himself, they therefore withdraw. Apart from source identifications, the only notes, full of learning and marvellous to

read, are Whalley's own ruminations on his texts.

There are 11 pieces here, and with only two exceptions they belong to the last decade or so of Whalley's life. Although all of them were to find places in magazines or collections, most of them had their origins in oral presentations, which is to say lectures, addresses, and papers, and the stamp of their origins remains: in their restricted length (uniformly 20-23 pages, which is an hour's delivery time and about tight for most audiences) and in their structures and rhythms (which show a classical scholar's awareness of the devices of Ciceronian rhetoric). This is no loss. Whalley was a fluent and compelling speaker (he is the only man I have known who could speak extempore in perfect paragraphs), and the person-to-person voice retained in these pieces highlights both the sinuous flow of their arguments and the cardinal principle of his aesthetic that words do not mean but persons do.

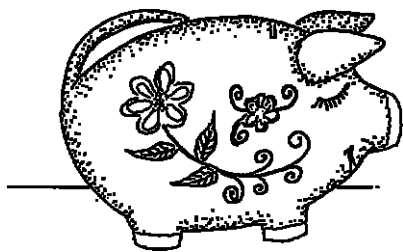
Four of the 11 pieces are specifically targeted and might be called "practical criticism," although Whalley would dislike the association of the phrase with I.A. Richards, whom he saw as a less than benign influence on the development of contemporary criticism: one on Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," one (a review) on Frye's

(a poem or a novel. for example, being not a thing of metres and rhymes or plots and characters but a kind of mindset to be discovered by the writer and rediscovered by the critic). I must add that they are also hortatory since most of their persuasive energy is directed toward diverting wandering and wasteful notions about the nature of scholarship and research, the teaching of literature, and the role of the humanities into the straight and true channels that a proper understanding of language as a human and humanizing instrument provides.

Consistent, compact, and immovable. the basic tenets of Whalley's aesthetic support all of these theoretical discourses and are of course the underpinnings of the targeted pieces too. There is bound to be some repetition, but the continued play of wit and intelligence keeps boredom at bay. The important thing is that the essential Whalley is here. and there is no mistaking it. It is so simple, as Whalley once said slyly of one of Aristotle's propositions. as to be almost indescribable.

I like this essential Whalley, as I loved the man. Here, all that lives is holy. Dead things, indeed all things that dehumanize literature and the use of language, get short shrift. In criticism, this means dissection, manipulation, categorization, pigeon-holing, even Frye getting high on anatomy. I civil life, it means jargon, gobbledegook, and blind faith to technology.

Although I see no evidence of a doctrinal framework for Whalley's aesthetic, the mood enjoined for it is religious: language is a sacred trust and one approached the sanctuary, which is literature, with prayer and much fast@. The starting point is "innocence of intent"; the proper feelings are "delight, wonder, respect; quietness." The works of literature we examine being "things in the making, coming into being, finding themselves." the proper mode for the critic is heuristic. "We sadly need a philosophy of heuristics," Whalley says, "a study of the ways we hunt for and find things when we aren't certain what we are looking for."



Anatomy of Criticism, one on Jane Austen, and one on E.J. Pratt.

The rest are theoretical, or largely so, operating within a large field to which the term "poetic" is used to describe a verbal process rather than a product, whether to poetry or in fiction or, by extension, in the modes of intellectual inquiry appropriate to literary criticism

A friendly Aristotle is at our side, for his *Poetics* is "a paradigm for all those critical procedures that seriously seek to discover the nature of what they are examining, that seek to release with accurate definition the energy contained within what precise shaping limits." Coleridge is there, too, with his thoughts about "esemplastic powers." Amen, I say, though some may not.

Whalley's world is elitist, and there are penalties for that. He may sometimes seem judgemental, intolerant, and coldly intellectual. His ghost has struck more than a flicker of fear in me as I write this review. Then there is the question of the study of Canadian literature. Whalley's dictum that it is "more profitable to study the works of giants than of dwarfs" is in keeping with his aesthetic and is difficult to refute. But with such easy dismissal he does not address the problem of a colonial or emergent literature — as E.K. Brown did, for example, and with some success.

George Johnston, who sometimes turns his hand to writing wonderfully sympathetic portraits of his friends, has an acrostic poem on Whalley that goes in part like this:

*Whether gifts or not, they are not given
free;
hard work they cost, neglect,
uncertainty,
anguish of worshipping Perfection's
face
lo, in her unattainable far place,
lovely, alluring, and beyond embrace.
Elegance be her surrogate the while:
yearn as we do, make elegant our style.*

I think George Whalley may have paid a price for setting before us the best he knew. □

REVIEW

The art of compromise

By Douglas Glover

Gestures, by H.S. Bhabra, Irwin Publishing, 288 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7725 1561 1).

A DARK SUBTEXT of the resurgence of Occupied Europe after the Second World War was the presence, often hidden and unacknowledged, of hundreds and thousands of Nazi collaborators, profiteers, anti-Semites, men and women who served against the Allies during the war or participated in German atrocities. Revelations following the capture of Klaus Barbie have shown how the Allies were willing to cooperate with and conceal known war criminals

who might prove useful against the Soviet Union. And nowadays you can buy food processors made by Krupp, a company once famous for its armaments.

One can't talk or read about this without feeling unclean — the world of collaboration and espionage, the weighing up of punishment for atrocity against economic or political gain, ethics against power, is an icon of the complexity of the question of human goodness and evil, of the obliteration of human values by political utility, of the corruption of the age. But this is the theme H.S. Bhabra has chosen for this stylish and authoritative novel.

Gestures is the fictional memoir of Jeremy Burnham, a minor British diplomat, a consul, "an ordinary, honourable Englishman." (By the end of the novel this innocent-sounding phrase has become freighted with irony.) It begins with his assignment as a young man to the consulate in Venice in 1923 just as Mussolini comes to power. Burnham's first serious official business is to cover up the brutal murder of an Englishwoman by her Fascist lover in order not to offend the new government in Rome and, incidentally, to save the life of a Jewish friend whom the local police threaten to frame for the crime. This is Burnham's initiation into the rites of power, the oddly monastic discipline of compromise and trade-off.

In the second half of the novel Burnham finds himself in post-liberation Amsterdam in 1945, helping with the economic reconstruction of the Netherlands. Through the intervention of the Jew he raved in Venice, he discovers a British plot to cover up the participation of Holland's wealthiest industrialist in forced wartime deportation of slave labour to factories in Eastern Europe. Out of loyalty to his country, he goes along with the plan, finishes out his career with a knighthood, and retires to write his memoirs at 83.

This is absolutely the bare bona of a lush and complex plot. I've left out any reference to the density of detail, the romance, the intriguing characters with which Bhabra fills his pages. Burnham himself is quite an invention; a marginal person on the edge of power, he resembles John Le Carré's Smiley in his bureaucratic wisdom and his loyalty to the state he happens to serve. He is a "realist," as he keeps telling us in so many different ways (Bhabra does go on a bit too much about Burnham's philosophy of life and politics), which means he can countenance all sorts of injustice and dishonourable behaviour for what appears to be the greater good of the polity. He's a behind-the-scenes man who yet feels, falls in love, marries, sees

his wife die, loses a son in the war, and dies a little himself with each trade-off he makes.

Bhabra's theme, life in the dead zone of real politics, is not a new one. Edmund Blunden, Le Carré, and Frederick Forsyth have all dealt with somewhat similar material. And, actually the unravelling of the industrialist-war criminal's identity seems a little old hat. (This is a problem with every thriller I've ever read.) The fun of *Gestures* is getting there, the world Bhabra creates around his narrator. And this he makes all his own, writing in a curiously quaint, perhaps Edwardian style (quite properly, of course — these are Burnham's memoirs) that reminds me a little of the novels of Charles Morgan — say, *The Fountain*.

This is a fine book from a novelist who promises to be prolific and attain international stature (his books are coming out in England and the United States as well as Canada). □

REVIEW

Thinking small

By Joel Yanofsky

A Model Lover, by H.R. Percy, Stoddart, 192 pages, \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 77315052 5).

Conventional Emotions, by Lesley Choyce, Creative Publishers, 188 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 920021 27 1).

Goodbye Harold, Good Luck, by Audrey Thomas, Penguin, 222 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 870 81058 4).

UNLIKE NOVELS OR poetry, the short story does not lend itself to being separated and pulled apart for critical analysis. It is self-contained — defined by its smallness. "The whole story is the meaning," as Flannery O'Connor said, "because it is an experience, not an abstraction." Regrettably, it is an experience many publishers and readers today have chosen to forgo. But if the market and the audience for short fiction has diminished, it isn't because of a lack of material. To their credit, Canadian writers in particular refuse to give up on the form.

Even H.R. Percy's *A Model Lover*, the most uneven and inaccessible of these three new collections, demonstrates the challenges as well as the limitations of the short story. Among the 18 stories are all manner of tales: from the conventional ("The Rendezvous") to the supernatural ("The

Timeless Land") to the experimental ("Shadows"). Although the styles vary, the atmosphere of the book is consistently bleak, probably a result of the grim assortment of losers, low-lives, and physical and emotional cripples who populate Percy's fictional world. It's not that the characters are treated unsympathetically; it's just that they are relentlessly unpleasant.

Percy writes like a man whose mission is to make his prose as intense and richly textured as the narrow margins of the page will allow. Sometimes, though, there is a fine line between richness and thickness:

The chair rocks to a standstill behind him with diisbii arcs of sound. Its familiar pressures are still upon his bones, built now into a painful edifice, precarious and tall. All his being is focused in its reluctant verticality.

Percy tends to overwrite and push too hard. His style is dense to the point of being self-conscious, even pretentious. The best stories stand out awkwardly — exceptions that prove the rule. For example, "Called Away," about an old fisherman's guilty secret, is relaxed and vernacular, written with an easy, straightforward charm that showcases Percy's talent for evoking the spirit and landscape of his Nova Scotia home. On the other hand, self-indulgent pieces like "Shadows" and "Reflections" haven't a trace of plot, character, or wit and are virtually unreadable.

An insight into Percy's literary ambition is provided by one of his characters: "Art . . . has no right to be perfect; only unique. Perfection comes of aiming too low, making the safe leap. Art must attempt the impossible." Clearly, "safe leaps" are not for Percy either. Instead, he takes risks, aims high, and in the process seriously tests the patience of his readers. Percy certainly succeeds in making his stories "unique," but the effort proves to be self-defeating.

Originally from New Jersey, Lesley Choyce now lives in Nova Scotia and sets most of his 12 stories there. Setting seems to be the only thing his book and



Percy's have in common. *Conventional Emotions* is slight, unpretentious, and engaging. In fact, if this collection has a failing, it may be that it is too likable, too safe. Still, Choyce has a casual, confident touch, an offhand sense of humour, and a talent that is well-suited to short fiction.

Like all good story-tellers, he is especially adept at writing first sentences — at drawing the reader directly and immediately into the narrative. The opening line of "Inheriting the Earth" is typical and irresistible: "It's Sunday morning, I'm seventeen years old and I've discovered I'm impotent."

Without "attempting the impossible" or aiming too high, Choyce writes stories that are restrained and intimate — that make the most, of their smallness. Whether he is composing a comic tale of suburban anthronology ("Conventional Emotions") or a compassionate portrait of the dead-end future of an unemployed Cape Breton man ("An Island to Stand On"), Choyce's instincts for what works and what doesn't are sound. Even in simple, throwaway stories like "Life Saving Techniques," he is able to hit his mark and move on.

Written mainly in the first person, the stories are arranged and linked chronologically. They follow the interchangeable, autobiographical narrators from boyhood to adolescence to adulthood. Variations on the same supporting cast of characters — delinquents, drop-outs, hitch-hikers, and disillusioned hippies — appear throughout the collection. Echoes of the idealistic '60s also filter in and out of the book. (In "Touch of a Vanished Hand," the narrator is plagued by LSD flashbacks.) Through it all, Choyce's middle-class landscape is liberally dotted with enticing girls, insufferable teachers, and broken-down cars.

Concerned primarily with youth, innocence, and "the rituals of rebellion," *Conventional Emotions* is gentle, self-deprecating, and predictable. But there are also some hard-edged observations on growing up and being trapped:

You graduate from high school . . . You drink a few beer. screw around a bit, somebody gets knocked up, you get married and go on UIC till Welfare takes over. Somewhere along the line you are supposed to get fat and useless. There are variations on that schedule . . . Sometimes the order is shifted around but nobody seems to escape.

Nobody escapes in *Goodbye Harold*. *Good Luck*, either; Audrey Thomas sees to it. Combining Choyce's facility and Percy's ambition, Thomas writes about day-to-day regret and loneliness with an unflinching eloquence. It's almost as if she's testing the resilience of her characters, particularly the females. Edging their way out of a failing marriage or a bad relationship, they discover that independence brings with it a whole new set of restrictions. In the title story, there is this revealing description of a woman on her own: "She had felt safe, or at least safely defined, so long as her

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daughter was with her. . . . But now in the lounge of the Inn . . . Francine was exposed for what she really was — a woman alone in a bar."

In the introduction to *Goodbye Harold*, Good Luck Thomas confesses. "I tend to think of myself as a novelist, but. . . I must admit that people seem to like my stories better." Comparing this accomplished book with her last novel, *Intertidal Life*, an uneven, difficult work, R's easy to see why. Like Alice Munro and Mavis Gallant, Thomas is at her best working within the boundaries of the short story; she is at her most effective creating a fiction that is subtle and fragile, that is made up of hard choices and vivid moments.

"Breaking the Ice" is a typical Thomas story. Focusing on a familiar theme— a single mother starting over, searching reluctantly for something better or, at least, new — it is tough and vulnerable at the same time: full of tender ordinariness and quiet pain. It shows just how much can be accomplished with a minimum of plot and action — with an ear for dialogue, an eye for detail, and a steady hand. A simple incident like waiting for a call from a prospective lover is invested with awkwardness and hope, with a tension the reader can genuinely feel:

Yet each time the telephone went, her heart began to pound. She scolded it the way she might scold the car or a child if it were impatient . . . There, the phone again. Let it ring. One. Two. Three. Then slowly pick it up.

Although Thomas is obliged to observe the boundaries of each individual story, the collection as a whole reveals an impressive range. Along with the heartbreaking scenes, there are also cynical wisecracks: "A young woman told me that, if you have the sperm, you can impregnate yourself with a turkey blaster. I laughed and laughed and she was hurt." A feminist but not a feminist writer, Thomas is "interested in points of view," even points of view she sees as "immature, silly or unenlightened." This is evident in "Compulsory Figures," a quirky tale about a high-minded foot fetishist who "likes experienced feet," and "Local Customs," a poignant story told from the perspective of a lonely 12-year-old boy.

As different as these books are, and despite their varying degrees of success, they have one thing in common: an innate faith in the tiny cracks of understanding and experience their stories can uncover. In the end, smallness is its own reward, because what lingers, what sticks, is a detail, an instant — like a middle-aged woman waiting impatiently for the telephone to ring.

REVIEW

Flashes of vision

By Veronica Ross

Picking the Morning Colour, by Kevin Roberts, Oolichan Books, 133 pages 88.95 paper (ISBN 0 88982 888 0).

Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon, by Douglas Glover, Talon-books, 126 pages, \$8.95 paper (ISBN 0 88922 228 2).

The Picture on the Wall, by Percy Janes, Creative Publishers. 124 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 920021 23 9).

THESE THREE books — two collections of short stories from British Columbia and a novella from Newfoundland — could serve as examples of the variety of fiction being written in Canada. And the writers might be seen as typical in terms of accessibility. Punching their names into the computer terminal of my local library for citations of previous books, I found only Jane's *House of Hate*.

Picking the Morning Colour is deceptive at first. Many of the stories appear to be merely entertaining, rollicking good yams. Even the cover of pink and yellow Rowers seems, at first, misleading, more suitable to a book of inspirational verse, say. It is only later, when the stories are thought about, that their true essence emerges, much as the flowers on the cover, upon closer inspection, seem to grow out of their black background.

Roberts lived in Australia until age 25. About half the stories are set in British Columbia, where he now lives, half in Australia. They are further divided by 'mainstream' prose — tales of ordinary people — and more subtle experimental writing. Interestingly, the two locations are separated by two pieces of experimental prose. It's a wonderful structure. The metaphor and vision of these two pieces are like roadmaps to other stories.

The title story, "Picking the Morning Colour," is about two university students earning money picking fruit in Australia. Misadventures, chicanery by bosses, and union matters abound, but the story is told with wry humour. Moves right along, you want to find out what happens next, and hey, you're laughing. "We all burst out laughing. But nothing was really funny about it. Nothing at all."

Similarly, in "Hangi," the wild doings of a hunch of expatriate Australians and New Zealanders sound wildly crazy.

The host's Canadian wife is especially upset, and at the end she "shuddered visibly" at the thought of next year's "Hangi" (a long barbecue). She knew it would all happen again.

I think that is the crux of Roberts's stories. People are moved by something they know deep within themselves. Dreams are important in his fiction: a Vietnam veteran helps an old Indian to die and dreams of copulating with a deer; a fisherman dreams of a "beautiful green woman who undulated under and away from him every time he tried to possess her"; and in the excellent story "Carcharhinidae" an Australian boy obsessed with sharks dreams of "sharks mating, the male biting the dorsal fin of the female. . . and instantly the sea is full of almond shaped shadows circling in his mind."

Roberts's voice is strong, but it is the quieter flash of vision that makes his collection so vibrant.

The cover of *Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon* resembles the front page of a newspaper with scandalous come-ons for the reader: Constanze Heboyan, millionairess; Flo, ready to commit suicide; a couple about to part; and the lives, sexual and otherwise, of Teri, Annie and Philip.

Glover's fiction is contemporary and sophisticated, and set a8 over the world. Detail is piled upon fascinating detail. One reads about North Americans immersed in eastern religion, a church dignitary, swinging singles, a lonely homosexual, the "modern couple," a ritzy old folks' home. Each story shimmers memorably as a whole. And at the centre of all the detail, each story contains a fragile core: the loneliness of contemporary life.

"Dog Attempts to Drown Man in Saskatoon" won the *Canadian Fiction Magazine* contributor's prize for 1985, but all nine stories in this book are splendid.

Remembering Percy Janes's powerful *House of Hate*, I was anxious to read *The Picture on the Wall*. Like *House of Hate*, the setting in Janes's new novella is Newfoundland, but there the resemblance ends.

Knuckles and Jade are bored young down-and-outers who vandalize, steal, and generally lead disreputable lives. They have no money for beer, diversion, or food more interesting than canned spaghetti. By contrast, Norman and Edythe are older, middle-class, and sedate, and are slow4 and oh-so-carefully falling in love. Knuckles and Jade torment them because Norman fired Knuckles from his house-painting job.

It's an interesting plot, but it reads more like an outline for a novel than a

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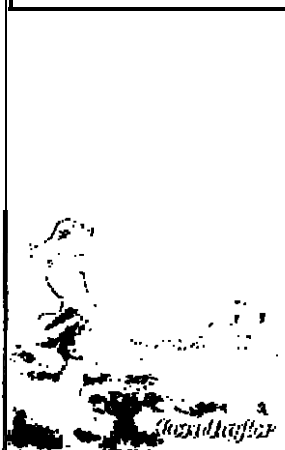
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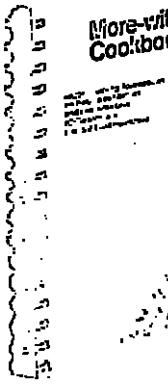
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full-length work. I genuinely became interested in the characters, but I wanted to find out more. (I wanted to know, for instance, about Norman's former lover — name, hair colour, and why the relationship broke up. And Edythe — what scandals lurk beneath her fetching frocks?) The strength of this novella lies in the plot, but I wish James had fleshed *The Picture on the Wall* out more. □

REVIEW

Quiet skill and overkill

By Neil Bissoondath

Foreign Affairs, by Keath Fraser, Stoddart, 320 pages, \$12.93 paper (ISBN 0 7737 5042 8).

August Nights, by Hugh Hood, Stoddart, 215 pages, 312.95 paper (ISBN 0 7737 5046 0).

THE FIRST LINES of the stories in *Foreign Affairs* are often attention-catching: "This is a calling like any other, except I was not called." "Clam holes. Peeping dunlins. The beached star. Yes. she can remember freedom." "We grew up with earthquakes." Yet, while several of the stories offer promising starts, they do not always deliver. And what is true of these stories is also true of the book as a whole.

Although some of the stories — "The Emerald City," "There Are More Dark Women in the World Than Light," "The Punishment of Luxury" — do not work, others are very good. "Teeth," a tautly told tale of fear and senseless violence, is always engaging, as is the wistful "Merit of Ours." "The History of Cambodia," the story of a young, female Canadian journalist captured, used and abused by Khmer Rouge guerrillas, is a" extended nightmare of a novella. It flickers between the brutal conditions of her captivity and her sweet, fantasy-like memories of life back home on the beach end in Phnom Penh before the fall. The story is marred only by unnecessary drawings of oarlocks that Fraser twice includes. This doodling in the middle of fiction is a technique I have little sympathy for. It seems to me that a writer of ability — and Fraser is clearly one — should not have to resort to cartoons, should even" fear them as a sign of failure of vocation.

"Foreign Affairs," the title story, is for me the most satisfying. It traces with a nicely measured ruthlessness a man's descent into incoherence through the ravages of multiple sclerosis, his tight

against it, and the eventual, inevitable decline of spirit. Silas's growing incoherence is marked in the way his dialogue is written: "That's mo ocking. A mo ocker and a mi imic are different." By the end of the story, he is pronouncing only vowels and syllables, speech almost totally incomprehensible. The technique works wonderfully. Silas engages us with his wit and his strength of mind. He is a man who relishes life even as it dims for him, maintaining a presence well beyond the end of his touching, frightened story.

The final novella, "Here," however, is an unfortunate way to end this collection. Too long and burdened with an unengaging main character, this story unsuccessfully repeats the dialogue technique used so well in "Foreign Affairs." In "Here," it proves tiresome, a magic trick that loses its magic through repetition and becomes transparent. In addition, the first line of the story is "Here is how it ends," a clever reversal. The line is repeated intermittently throughout the story, the aim being, one surmises, to set up a kind of chant (or mantra, the story being set in India) to lend a certain measured solemnity to the narrative. But as the story drags purposelessly on, the repeated line becomes a" irritating, and the reader longs for the fulfilment of its promise.

Fraser is a literary technician who enjoys finding "eat tricks to help him tell his stories, but such techniques must inevitably justify themselves: Do they add anything to the story? Do they offer a dimension that could not otherwise have been" achieved, or are they simply hicks, important only to themselves and unnecessary to the telling? And, most important, do they distract more than they inform? Too often in these stories, they seem" to be there only as symbols of technical dexterity, to the detriment of narrative inventiveness. Why, for example, in "13 Ways of Listening to a Stranger," is dialogue presented in" unpunctuated italics, unparagraphed conversations sometimes running confusingly into each other? It adds nothing to an already slim story.

As a final note, let me make a plea for fewer puns. It is, it seems to me, simply Fraser's trying too hard to be clever that most mars this book.

There is "one of this in Hugh Hood's latest short-story collection, *August Nights*. Lively and inventive, focusing always on vivid, telling detail, these are the stories of a writer in admirable control. *August Nights* is Hood's 20th book, and his experience shows. Not a word wasted, not a sentence misplaced.

There is nothing overtly dramatic in these tales of quietly desperate lives, but a sense of discovery keeps Hood's read-

ers moving from one story to the next.

What does it more than anything else is Hood's solid grasp of character. Marian of "The Small Birds," a highly descriptive story that is testimony of Hood's powers of observation; Max Strathay of "Cute Containers"; Bud of "Evolving Bud," about the decay of innocence in cottage country; the sex-obsessed Gracie Falconer of "Quicker Coming Back": these are deftly sketched characters who prove memorable in their own small ways. Even Sally and Patricia, the breezy baseball groupies of the satirical title story, manage to impress themselves on the reader as sadder people than they pretend to be.

"I've Got Troubles of My Own," my favourite in the collection, is a story that could easily have fallen into facile caricature but deftly avoids it. A tale of moral dilemma, it tells of a single mother who, squeezed for money, is forced to evict tenants — whom she has never seen — for irregular payment of rent. Only afterwards does she find out that the husband is a cripple, the wife pregnant. Her only response—the only one left to her in a cracking free enterprise system — is anguished self-justification.

Many of these stories, even the fairly grim "I've Got Troubles of My Own," are laced with satirical humour:

"Mrs . . . Mrs?"

"Mzzzzzz," she said sturdily.

She realized that he didn't even suspect what Ms stood for and decided not to follow up on identification. Let him think what he liked. He probably figured she was Mrs. Mzzzzzz.

In "Cute Containers," an outside toilet acquires with the passing of the years "the status of a hallowed antique, an historic edifice, something that ought to be protected by Heritage Canada."

One story, "Moskowitz's Moustache," is attempted Gogolian satire that takes on television news, the CBC, Ottawa and the top of Barbara Frum's head. Unfortunately this story tries too hard to be funny and, in its wild exaggeration, fails to be. But it is a rare failure. Even the fantastical "The Blackmailer's Wasted Afternoon" and "In the Deep," each in its own way a product of the twilight zone, prove persuasive.

Hood's settings for the most part are less the exotic than the ordinary — cottage country, suburban living rooms, even Yorkville — made exotic. Through closely observed description, Hood infuses each place with the patina of a reality beyond everyday banality, rarely ever letting it get out of control and thereby turning it into the stuff of literature.

In *August Nights*, there is little sense

of the manipulated or the manipulative. Beading the stories was, like any evening spent with a fine story-teller, an unalloyed pleasure. □

REVIEW

Minding their Q's and A's

By Sylvia M. Brown

Voices & Visions: Interviews with Saskatchewan Writers, edited by Doris Hillis, Coteau Books, 228 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 9199% 47 9) and \$ 11.95 paper (ISBN 0 919926 48 0).

Joker for the Apocalypse, by David Carpenter, McClelland & Stewart, 189 pages, 812.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 1908 4).

THE INTERVIEWS IN *Voice.3 & Visions* were done not just to describe personal influences and writing habits but to trace the literary movement in Saskatchewan — as Eli Mandel says in his introduction, "the story of the discovery of a writing community or even the founding of it." Some of those interviewed are editors and publishers as well as writers, who have "contributed to the growth of Literature in the province" through such ventures as Grain magazine. Thistledown Press, Thunder Creek Co-operative, Coteau Books, and through the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild and the Saskatchewan Summa School of the Arts. Just as they excitedly talk about these other interests, Hillis draws them back to comment on the importance of place in their own work.

In Guy Vanderhaeghe's view, Saskatchewan is a "good place because there are not the pressures here as on a writer living in Toronto. But, at the same time, the writer in Saskatchewan is less inclined to be thought of as a national writer. . . ." For Lorna Crozier, place literally means the prairie landscape, to which she has felt spiritually close. In contrast, the immigrant Elizabeth Allen is oppressed by an agoraphobic openness and the prairie winter. The peripatetic Ken Mitchell managed to take the place with him when he wrote a country-and-western musical while living in Greece. Although, as Terrence Heath expresses it, "prairie writers are feeling themselves free to deal with other subject matter," it is clear from the gorgeous cover painting by Anne E. Meggitt that response to the landscape is the book's organizing principle.

Hillis, a poet and critic, solicits definitions of what it is to be a writer as well as

practical advice: claims Anne Szumigalski, "The people who shouldn't be in [writers'] groups are those who immediately accede to everybody's demands." Vanderhaeghe and Glen Sorestad find writing to be a voyage of self-discovery, whereas Gertrude Story insists that "the words were delivered to me. . . . I heard the words being spoken. . . . I simply took the words down . . ." She gives the impression of having been misunderstood a great deal through those "dam books" she wrote, and would prefer "never to write another word for publication . . ."

Writers use the opportunity to expound upon what they take to be fundamental truths: that the female is a guardian of the continuity of the human species (Szumigalski); that "those people who understand themselves the best make out the best" (Vanderhaeghe); that we gain wisdom and understanding through pain (Patrick Lane); or that "we are free to accrue unto ourselves as much pleasure as we can, providing we cause the least possible pain to others" (Story).

One moot point is discussed — the "problem of the reader confusing art and biography," to quote Lane, who adds that "direct experience from life becomes metaphorically transformed." As Brenda Richer says, "What starts off as being biographical becomes fictionalized." I do not think Hillis was asking if any of their work is autobiographical (Story views such questions as immaterial), but merely probing to find out if upbringing is ever considered by the writer to have literary relevance. Lane, for instance, says that he became politicized through what he witnessed of poverty and oppression in his travels through South America: "My growing up as a working-class kid had somehow made me a member of the same disenfranchised group."

His is preparing a second volume of interviews to include other Saskatchewan writers not represented here. I would hope to see an Indian or Métis included, since only one writer in this volume — Heath — discusses the "regard and respect for Indian people and their culture" that appears in his writing. And a sample of each writer's work — an excerpt from a poem, story, or novel — might precede each interview.

On the whole, Hillis performs the interviewer's art well; she does not depend on other critics but offers first-hand reactions to the work. She is intelligent, widely read, and equally at home discussing prose and poetry. She leaves room for disagreement and defence, and is often complimented by the interviewees on her perceptions.

From this same literary scene comes David Carpenter's first novel - actually two novellas, the second set largely on the grounds of the Saskatchewan writers'/artists' colonies at Emma Lake and Fort San, a former tuberculosis sanatorium. These humorous yet harrowing tales are linked by the figure of Walmsley, the pilot killed in a plane crash before the beginning of the first story, who turns out to have been the father of the alcoholic music teacher in the second. Both are set in the context of a marriage on the rocks — a time for accounting when memories come flooding back.

"Jokes," with its subtitled section on "Lola" (shades of *Lolita*?) is reminiscent of a number of antiheroes — Audrey Thomas's Munchmeyer, or an older Holden Caulfield, but especially of Nabokov's Humbert Humbert and his female figure who contributes little dialogue but satisfies the protagonist's lust. The earlier "Luce" section is more evocative and reverberates with questions of dream and reality. There is much artistry in the summer explorations of pubescent boyhood into sex, death, and the unknown when everything is "nocturnal... secret and holy and terrifying. What I mean is. enchanted."

Exaggerated stories of a monstrous fresh-water pike with the jaws of a shark, told by a potential pedophile appropriately named Mr. Hook, instigate a mock heroic quest, the pursuit after an unholy grail. All of nature — moth and spider, jackfish and pike — is either eating or being eaten. The ravenous imagery of a huge mouth first gaping beneath the surface of the lake, then grinning "serpent-like," mingles with Drew's nightmares of some monstrous thing watching and hovering near him. Freudian critics could make much of the imagery of the unconscious here-water, fire, blackness, and holes. The libidinous youths act out murderous games in retaliation against the safe, tea-cosy world their elders would have them believe exists. They are on the brink of a repressed truth about reality, about to make darkness visible, about to fall from the grace of innocence.

Drew's awakening to adult understanding occurs to the rhythm of poetry, a reading of "The Cremation of Sam McGee," after the gigantic fish "Adolphe" has been devoured by celebrities. The devils of *Paradise Lost* are unleashed upon the earth with the realization that his own father possessed the killer instinct in the face of perishing hunger. This novella shows skill in its allusiveness and suspense from yet another gifted story-teller from the prairies. □

REVIEW

The price of progress

By Michelle Heinemann

Vancouver Fiction, edited by David Watmough, Polestar Press, 198 pages, \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 919591 05 1).

The **Secret Journal of Alexander Mackenzie**, by Brian Fawcett, Talonbooks, 206 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88922 7214).

THERE IS ONE striking similarity between *Vancouver Fiction* and Brian Fawcett's *The Secret Journal of Alexander Mackenzie*. Although the former is more genteel in tone than are Fawcett's 17 tough-edged chronicles, both collections express the consciousness of a marked beginning and both pose the question of whether the end is near.

Vancouver Fiction relies extensively on the city's most accomplished writers. It includes new work by Jane Rule, Keith Fraser, Audrey Thomas, and D.M. Fraser and previously published stories by Malcolm Lowry, Ethel Wilson, and Betty Lambert, among others. It begins with a story about beginnings: an excerpt from Hubert Evans's *The New Front Line*, in which the return of the First World War of thousands of young men marks the end of an innocent era. New futures lie ahead, but for the central character, Hugh Henderson, a new war has just begun.

The Secret Journal of Alexander Mackenzie deals also with the beginning of the end: the discovery of the Pacific Northwest in the late 1700s by Alexander Mackenzie, which marked the start of industrial development in the region. The narrator of the title story has found a secret journal kept by Mackenzie, which differs considerably from the "official" historical version. As the entries proceed, it becomes clear that Mackenzie's adventure was not simply a discovery of the land. An inward, almost spiritual exploration parallels the geographic one, enhanced by the consumption of bulbous flowers and the mysterious appearance of an English manor, complete with a lush

garden and voluptuous blonde woman.

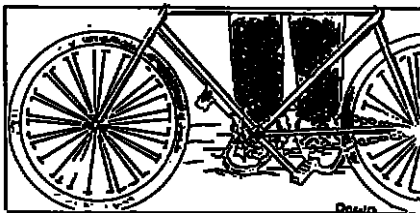
The manor, located on an island near the mouth of the McGregor River, and the woman, the same one who had unleashed Mackenzie's "cleanliest appetites" months back in London, reappear in several of the stories. In "The Deer Park," a 50-year-old surveyor dying of cancer reveals his experience on the mist-enshrouded, eerily seductive island — now overrun with deer — in 1932. In "The Castle" a wealthy developer recreates the manor complete with plastic garden and plastic deer on a hillside. The plastic comes to symbolize the lack of depth in the man's marriage.

Throughout his stories, Fawcett hits upon a more fundamental lack of depth in modern life. In "The Endako Hotel Massacre," he laments the loss of "the kind of world in which people are able to hold onto a sense that reality has more dimension and depth than the single focus of their personal well-being." He's exceptionally skilled at working through many layers of deception to reveal the simple truth. In the process, though, he takes no care to hide his pessimism. His comments on the plunder and rape of a region once lavishly blessed with an abundance of nature's gifts are caustic.

Fawcett is at his best in such stories as "The Enemy Within," which compares aggressive economic domination by corporate America to a silent war, with an "invisible invasion, invisible invaders, invisible casualties..." Yet the casualties are not quite as neatly bidden as Fawcett would initially lead his readers to believe. Rather, it appears to be more a game of survival of the fittest, as when the U.S. conglomerate Dairy World puts a stranglehold on the local dairy.

The question of continued survival looms heavy over both collections. In *Vancouver Fiction*, D.M. Fraser's post-bomb "Recessional" is a sorrowful, brilliant, deliberately confused account of a time so close that it makes still-unresolved fears of Second-World-War coastal upheaval seem inconsequential. In a more positive vein, David Watmough's sensual "Vancouver Summer Pudding" offers a fictional record of the annual Peace March.

Fawcett, for his part, places his bitter-sweet stamp on the question of human survival when he delivers "My Friends Are Gone," in which the northerner Don Benson reveals that survival has taken him back to the caves. Fawcett juxtaposes feelings about the futility of progress against his faith in the basic human instinct for survival. Rhetoric about concern for the continuation of humankind falls flat compared to his insistence that life still offers some options, however primitive. □



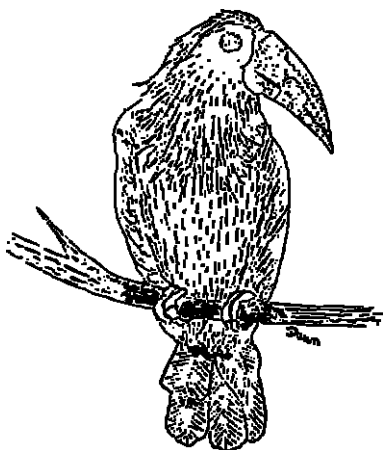
CRITICAL NOTICES

ARTS & CRAFTS

still sane, by Persimmon Blackbridge and Sheila Gilhooly, Press Gang Publishers, illustrated, 101 pages, 912.95 paper (ISBN 0 88974 028 3).

Ey Dona Sturmanis

THIS COLLABORATION by Vancouver sculptor Persimmon Blackbridge, narrator Sheila Gilhooly, and other writers, is a power-packed **exposé** about the **surprising political and social attitudes** that **still** exist relative to feminism, **lesbianism**, and mental illness. **Blackbridge's** sculpture series, accompanied by experiential texts, chronicles a period of three years that **Gilhooly** spent in **psychiatric** institutions. **Although** focusing primarily on the **injustice and ignorance** the psychiatric care system demonstrates towards gay women, the **underlying** emotions of fear, anger, and outright defiance **can easily** apply to other similarly victimized groups. Images of drugging, **sexual** abuse, and shock treatments **make** for a disturbing, precise **documentation** of a nightmare survived and assimilated into the



victim's life not as a **forfeit**, but as a source of **renewed strength**.

still sane first appeared as a well-received sculpture series at Vancouver's Women in Focus Gallery in 1984, but this book is certainly not an art catalogue. It is a **confusing**, not **confused**, tribute to an art vigorously laden with social and political content, something

NOTE

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

sadly lacking in Canadian art as a whole. In this sense, a thousand words can be said in an image. The **response** may not be as objective as if the themes were addressed separately to **lengthy** study books, but **that** is the whole point. **The** punch delivered here is **meant** to be an emotional **one**, and effective **enough** to get **through** to anyone who reads it. It should be mentioned that **Kate Millet**, Margaret Atwood, and Judy Chicago have already **praised** *still sane* lavishly. This book should inspire **not only awareness of some vital social issues**, but an effective new way of **addressing** them. □

BELLES LETTRES

Spider Blues: **Essays on Michael Ondaatje**, edited by Sam Solecki, Véhicule Press, 369 pages, \$15.00 paper (ISBN 0 919890 66 0).

By Sparling Mills

THIS USEFUL anthology combines **25** essays *by a variety of critics*, an extensive bibliography, and two interviews of Ondaatje by Sam **Solecki**. In the **1975** interview, we meet an open, **congenial** young man; in the **1984** interview his **manner has changed** — he is more **reticent, impatient**, exact. After **nine years** he **will not** allow the interviewer to put words in **his** mouth.

The most important word Ondaatje utters in the second interview is "architecture." He is responding to **Solecki's** asking what he would **like** to discuss most in "media interviews." Ondaatje goes on to explain that he means "bon **one composes** a book" — "structure; "design." "context," "Where the **narrator stands**." **Solecki** is very **dense** about all this, introducing into the conversation **Ondaatje's** frequent use of the word "magnets" in his work. Ondaatje, **exasperated**, corrects him: "You're talking about a thematic **echo**, a psychological echo; what I **want is something** mom physical, something **having** to do with the placing of a **scene** in one place and not in **another**." The **critics** might be **wise** to explore **more "architecture"**; in their haste to **nail** Ondaatje down within a literary tradition, their comments are not as vibrant as **his own**.

At least **Michael** Ondaatje should be pleased with the "design" of this book. **The cover** is sensuous, with leaves, orchids, satin, and a furry black spider in its own **margin**ed square. The **emphasizing** colour of the whole book is teal blue. □

Writers of Newfoundland and Labrador: **Twentieth Century**, by Lisa deLeon, Jesperson Press, 380 pages, \$18.95 paper (ISBN 0 920502 58 X).

By Cathy Simpson

THIS HEFTY collection of — **would** you believe? — 37 Newfoundland writers, including poets, novelists, playwrights, folk **raconteurs**, and the **unclassifiable** J.R. **Smallwood**, could have been a **useful** reference for students of Newfoundland literature, history, and culture. **Certainly** the format is **logical and** pleasing: a chapter averaging **10** pages for each writer with a biography, **synopses** of selected works, an excerpt, commentary on **the writer's oeuvre**, a quote by or **about the writer**, and a selected bibliography. Obviously, **deLeon** has worked hard to amass a tremendous **amount** of raw **information**.

Unfortunately, she has grave **difficulties** in presenting it. Her **biographies** are **clumsy assemblages of facts and trivia** — who really cares if Jack Fitzgerald coaches minor softball? Her synopses and commentaries are naive and repetitious, studded with axioms parading as **insights**: "a character is often juxtaposed with another to lay the **groundwork** for the **arising** conflict." Them is **even occasional nonsense**, as when she **describes a character** as returning to "the **periphery of his ancestry**," or **notes** the "ironies of **life** — bad weather, flat tires." All in all, the best reading here is in the excerpts, which are lamentably too **short, often** just a page or two.

It's a pity, **really**, because a **pair of scissors** and a blue pencil, ably **weighed**, could have so **easily** excised all this silliness and corrected the irritatingly abundant **errors in spelling** and sentence construction to boot. **The result** might have been a book of less bulk but greater worth. □

FICTION

A **Family Madness**, by Thomas Keneally, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 336 pages. \$18.95 doth (ISBN 0 88619 102 5).

By David Jordan

AN ARMENIAN murders a Turk outside a coffee bar in **Sydney**; an East **European** diplomat is shoved from a **moving train**; **suicide-murder** claims a family of live.. Are these merely random acts of violence, or **small** parts of a larger pattern?

In Keneally's world these are only symptoms of the mass madness of our times, the same madness that is accountable for everything from bar-room fist fights to the Jonestown massacre. Keneally traces the common thread of madness through two contemporary families: Terry Delaney, typical Australian working-class jock, is drawn into a crazy plot to prepare for the end of the world when he falls in love with Michelle Kabbalski, daughter of a former second world War refugee.

Keneally brings the two worlds together with impressive skill, moving with ease from Delaney's life of rugby, beer, and adultery to Kabbalski Père's memories of refugee camps and storm troopers. The two stories seem to progress independently, but a gradual sense of unease overtakes the reader as he realizes that the atrocities committed in the name of war are not all that different from the everyday fights, stabbings, end domestic disputes that fill today's newspapers.

Just as madness can be a disturbing subject. A *Family Madness* is a disturbing book. One cannot help wishing that at least one of the many themes touched upon — these include the decay of family and religion, the folly of war, the mindless brutality of sports — could be pinpointed as the cause of the mass insanity Keneally sees all around us. But of course there are no such simple explanations, and Keneally defies the traditional novelist's task of trying to impose order on a disordered universe. There is no moral to this story, no neat, simple conclusion; what Keneally does offer is a superbly rendered mosaic as insightful as it is disquieting. ★

The *Fraternity of the Stone*, by David Morrell, st. Martin's (Methue"), 375 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 312 30360 2).

By S.A. Newman

OPENING IN a secluded monastery in Vermont, and charting the spiritual path of Drew, a former political assassin, now a monk, this novel raises old questions of whether the survival of religions depends on faith alone or the violent defence of it. Drew's past political assassinations — committed for his government — childhood memories, his desire to avenge the murder of his parents by terrorists, and the gory ways he most kill while later fleeing for his life all battle with Drew's desire to remain solitary, celibate, prayerful, and far from the anguished world he fled when he first entered the monastery.

With all the intricacies of a Robert Ludlum novel, the story follows Drew as

he is jolted from his spiritual reverie when his fellow monks are poisoned. Incredibly, Drew's life is saved by a mouse, an occurrence that in turn ignites equally unbelievable events that draw him into the grasp of a gun-wielding priest, a" active member of the secret fraternity of the Stone, who plots to threaten the existence of the church to which Drew clings. This leads him to question his religious values — religion and faith at what human expense?

In a well-written but populist piece of fiction, Morrell, author of *First Blood* and *Brotherhood of the Rose*, perhaps attempts too much. He wants an action-packed story that raises the question of the role holy wars play in international politics, contemporary martyrdom, and sainthood. The result is overwhelming physical action in which any growth by characters is swamped. The question is: which comes first, religious influence on governments or the way government uses religion to achieve its ends? Morrell answers no questions, instead telling a story so wild only Hollywood would buy it. □

The *Phoenix A Novella*, by Gordon Rodgers, Creative Publishers, 85 pages. 06.95 paper (ISBN 0 920021 24 7).

By Cathy Simpson

WHEN THE COUNTRY awoke on Dec. 12, 1985, to the news of Canada's worst air disaster, Newfoundlanders recalled a similar awakening almost 20 years ago when a small Czech airliner crashed in a bog at Gander, killing 37 passengers. The former poetry editor of *Prism International* here describes the impact of this earlier accident on 13-year-old Michael, who through his quest for and discovery of the crash site on one pivotal August day breaks with childhood and takes his first steps, towards a mature understanding of life and death.

The skilful hand of the poet shows in the conning interweaving of thematic images — birds, light versus darkness, aircraft shattered and whole, apparitions — which in reflecting and refracting the underlying symbol of the phoenix give depth, texture, and freshness to Michael's rite of passage. Rodgers's hand as a story-teller is less sore, and falters seriously at the climax with the in-

troduction of a Monty Pythonesque character and the omission of the expected grisly corpse (which eventually turns up in a later scene).

In *The Art of Fiction*, John Gardner defines the novella as a "single stream of action focused on one character [whose] world is radically changed." The character of Michael, thoughtful and independent, manages to overcome the faults of the plot and provides a well-drawn focus for a spiritual coming-of-age story that would appeal especially but not exclusively to adolescents. □

Voyage to the Other Extreme: Five Stories, by Marilú Mallet, translated from the Spanish by Alan Brow", Véhicule Press. 105 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 919890 62 8).

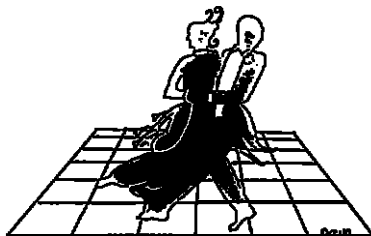
By Annel Pekkonen

EVEN WITHOUT checking the notes on the back cover, the reader of this collection of short stories would know that the author was from South America. It is all there: the magic realism and the graphic depictions of torture that have become the distinguishing characteristics of this sort of fiction. This is what constitutes the book's central weakness. In its structure and prevailing tone it resembles a little Frankenstein monster cobbled out of trends and themes that happen to be fashionable at the moment.

The book is too heavy with other literary voices to be gripping reading. In one story only — "How Are You?" — does Mallet seem to speak honestly and simply as herself. This tale of a love affair between the narrator and another refugee in Montreal retains the politically correct sentiments of the other four stories, but uses them to buttress the characters rather than the reverse. The reader is given someone to sympathize with.

Which is not to say that the book does not have any merit. Clean-born Mallet is known primarily as a film-maker, and it is this sensibility that permeates her stories. Her images stay with the reader: the eerie small details of life inside and outside prison remain in the mind.

The narrative is always in the first person and, though the narrators vary in name and gender, they remain interchangeable and static. The patient, resigned persona in each of these tales endures the randomness that constitutes the main horror of life in Mallet's Chile. The single chair, an empty corridor, a mouse-tail speak louder than the dramatic situations. The author is at her best when she deals with external details, for the" she can slough off the other influences that cloud the work of this otherwise promising writer. □



Wooden Rooster, by Stuart Ross, Proper Tales Press. 60 pages, \$5.00 paper (ISBN 0 920467 05 9).

By Grant David Shilling

THIS NOVELLA is full of comic exaggerations and exotic dreams in a style consistent with that of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. However, Ross does not enhance or explore the Marquez style — he satirizes, and as a result his work often rings hollow and tends to be over-written.

Wooden Rooster does have its moments. Fortunately those moments belong to Ross:

The women spoke again. "Hello." A smile spread across her face. On the top of her head, a bun of dark, strew-like hair balanced precariously. The misplaced weight of a single gnat could topple it. She was constantly being watched by scheming gnats.

Ross has a wonderful ability to blend the real with the fantastic. The strength of his work is an ability to blur the lines between the two, and focus with humour. He successfully reinvents reality, forcing the reader to accept a world "stuck in the wrong frequency."

His story of Carlos Venom portrays a man whose world nuns surreal and horrifying when he has a carpenter construct a wooden rooster for his pregnant wife. Venom attempts to seek out the carpenter and return the rooster. His journey takes him to America and the Ed Sullivan television show. Why Ed Sullivan is anyone's guess.

The narrative reads like a B-grade western movie, which, depending on your tastes, may be good or bad. Originally written for a three-day novel writing contest, apparently it has undergone a lot of editing and rewriting. But not enough. Ross's most disturbing habit is his frequent repetition of words and concepts, a technique that diminishes the impact of the work and tries the reader's patience. Still, there is much promise here. □

HEALTH & WELFARE

The Foot Doctor, by Glenn Copeland with Stan Solomon, Macmillan, illustrated, 276 pages, 914.95 paper (ISBN 0 7715 9895 5).

By Jean Wright

BY ME, FEET are, well, kind of yucky, and it's a good thing that they are usually kept decently out of sight in shoes or under bedcovers. Perhaps it is some subconscious dislike of feet that inspires shoe designers to create footwear that seems to have in mind distortions as bizarre as Chinese foot binding.

Dr. Copeland falls to convince me

that congenital problems, not shoes, cause most foot troubles. even though he reports that barefoot bushmen have bunions too. In fact, much of this sprightly and often humorous book, written with Stan Solomon, deals with congenital and mechanical ailments. A long section is devoted to athletes feet, as befits a book by the podiatrist for the Toronto Blue Jays.

Other topics include bunions, calluses, and warts (for warts you could try cod liver oil), itchy feet. how to care for your nails (no, you don't cut them straight across), and getting a good fit in footwear. Although there is an occasional lapse into jargon ("abnormal supination syndrome"), the book is surprisingly interesting and enjoyable to read. Some of the puns — "soft-core corn" — may make you cry "Oh, my aching feet," but the foot-sore public will undoubtedly find much useful information as well as a few surprises. Including the fact that Copeland doesn't find feet yucky. He likes them! □

ON STAGE

The Bay Boy, by Daniel Petrie, Pottersfield Press, illustrated, 78 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 919001 29 7).

By Paul Illidge

ALTHOUGH IT IS presented in screenplay form, Daniel Petrie has kept cinematic jargon to a minimum, so that his script of *The Bay Boy* emerges as a stilling period-piece that is in every way as enjoyable as the Genie award-winning film (which, incidentally, Petrie directed).

Lessons of love, sex, friendship, religion, and responsibility, which tend to be give" simplistic and superficial treatment elsewhere these days, are portrayed here with the careful attention to truth and tenderness they deserve.

All the heightened feelings of adolescent experience are captured vividly in Petrie's treatment of his main character, Donald Campbell, a Cape Breton lad who would certainly be refused membership in *The Breakfast Club* because he is too believable. too human — too intent on working things through without the collective support of an artificially chummy group of peers.

No, the "Bay bye" (as the hem is known) must contend, on his own, with the sometimes disturbing realities of adult life which, though the story is set "in a remote coal-mining town of 20,000 situated quite literally at the end of the earth," are in no way diminished in their significance or scope either by the remote locale or the all too familiar Depression-era circumstances in which he finds himself.

Indeed, these two factors enhance Petrie's drama, making it a warm tale of growth and understanding, one that allows him to move favourably back through large themes in his own life (the screenplay is semi-autobiographical) with eyes that are, by turns, frightened, fond, fascinated, and ultimately forgiving. □

The Music of Canada, by Timothy J. McGee, W.W. Norton (Penguin), 258 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 393 02279 X).

By Janet Windeler

IF IT'S TRUE, as Flaubert asserted, that style arises from subject matter, then by that token alone this lacklustre, oversimplified, conservative, and curiously proportioned volume on the music of Canada will not illuminate anyone's understanding of either the very real urgencies of avant-garde composition, or the vivid complexities involved — historically and today — in making music in this country.

In a mere 257 pages of text that sweep the entire saga of Canadian music, including jazz, pop, and music of the Indians and Inuit, 64 pages are taken up by an "anthology" of score excerpts that is meant — as McGee, a University of Toronto music professor, points out in the preface — "to provide a basic overview of the field." The anthology (which disregards jazz, pop, and music of the original Canadians entirely) begins with an excerpt from North America's first opera by Montreal for-trader end composer Joseph Quesnel, who landed on this continent when his French munitions ship was captured in 1799 off the coast of Nova Scotia; it concludes, 12 excerpts later, with a visually stunning slice of a score by that madcap contemporary composer and graphic artist, R. Murray Schafer. The anthology, as McGee concedes in the preface, is "a bit uneven."

The final chapter of the book deals with the music of the Indians and Inuit, covering some fresh territory in a field that has received insufficient treatment in the past, and it is to McGee's credit that he attempts to analyse this music critically within the context of native culture. As well, he offers consistently cogent analytical suggestions for the numerous technical sections that appear throughout the book and are clearly set apart from the general narrative in enclosed boxes. But the narrative itself is problematic, basically amounting to a not very arresting amalgamation of facts that have been "trimmed, pruned, and pulverized and appear hell-bent on steering clear of controversy.

McGee makes no mention at all of the serious decline in tie Canadian music publishing industry over the last six years as a result of cutbacks in Canada Council grants. He heralds the CBC as giving "enormous support to Canadian composers and performers" — a statement that is the truth, but certainly not the whole truth in light of the CBC's diminishing role in the commissioning of new works and the growing despair among the majority of composers in this country who can find no outlets for their writing. □

THE PAST

Emily Murphy: Rebel, by Christine Mander, Simon & Pierre, illustrated, 150 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88924 173 2).

By Paul Illidge

THIS BIOGRAPHY is vigorous and appealing — like its subject, Emily Murphy, who was born in Cookstown, Ont., but lived in, and experienced, during the late 19th and early 20th century, places as diverse as Ingersoll, Toronto ("a stinking, filthy place"), Chatham, London (England), West Germany, Swan River, Man., and Edmonton. Her friends included Emmeline Pankhurst and Nellie

McClung; she met three prime ministers of Canada; she travelled the timberlines of northern Manitoba in winter, and lived with Doukhobor farmers (who impressed her considerably).

Murphy worked with drug addicts (her study *The Black Candle* remains the most exhaustive on the subject) and prostitutes (whom she helped rehabilitate by employing them in her home); she knew a missionary's life (her loving husband Arthur — who emerges in this book as a wonderful character — was eminent on two continents). She was also a writer (sewn books) and a reporter (*Maclean's*, *Chatelaine*, president of the Canadian Women's Press Club), a devoted mother of four, a police magistrate (for 15 years in Edmonton — the first woman to hold such a position in the British Empire), and she was largely responsible for the landmark decision made in 1929 by the Privy Council in London to consider women as "persons."

One is continually surprised by what the author turns up in this succinct, sparkling story of a vital, dedicated, generous, perceptive and (at the same time) humorous Canadian woman who has been called "a pioneer on the frontier of understanding of social responsibility in the 20th century." □

Gas! The Battle for Ypres, 1915, by James L. McWilliams and R. James Steel, Vanwell Publishing, 247 pages, 319.95 cloth (ISBN 0 920277 012).

By Roy MacLaren

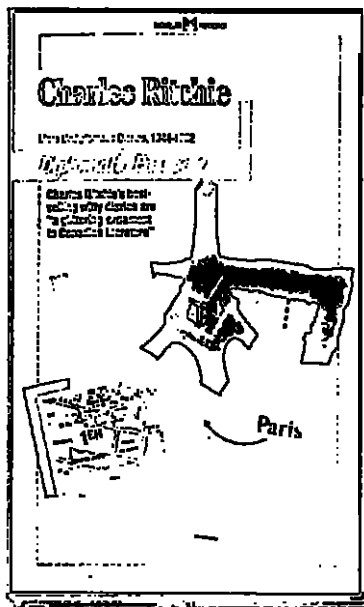
OF ALL THE various devices that men have ingeniously devised to kill each other, none seems, at least in certain respects, more horrible than chlorine gas. Those who have survived a flame-thrower or a nuclear blast might disagree, but there remains something fundamentally appalling in the way that gas kills by blinding, burning, suffocation, or by more gradual poisoning — a fate that overtook veterans of the First World War as much as a decade or more after the war to end all wars had ended.

McWilliams and Steel write about the initial German gas attack at Ypres in 1915 in a detached, almost clinical fashion — and their book is the better for it. The horror of what they write about needs no elaboration from them: their interviews of survivors and their exhaustive search of records ensure that their account has a disturbing immediacy. Major Andrew McNaughton — later Chief of the General Staff — noted the effect of chlorine on neighbouring Algerian infantry, the first gas victims, as they streamed by his gun

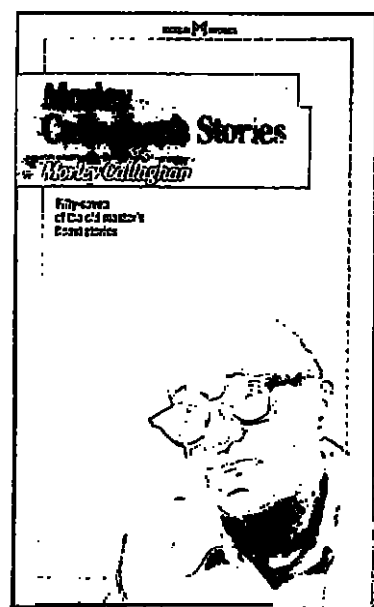
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emplacements in full retreat: "They were literally coughing out their lungs: glue was coming out of their mouths. It was a very disturbing, very distressing sight."

So is **McWilliams** and Steel's book: it is disturbing and distressing, despite their account of the courage of the raw Canadians who fought desperately to close the gaps in the Ypra front that resulted from the first German gas attacks. Their account, clearly written and authoritative, is one more indictment of man's inhumanity to man. □

I Fought Riel: A Military Memoir, by Charles A. Boulton, edited by Heather Robertson, James Lorimer, illustrated. \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88862 935 4).

Ey William Clayton Law

AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT of the mythology that surrounds the Riel rebellion posits that those who were opposed to it were irrational, bigoted Orangemen with a lust for Métis blood. Certainly the rebellion stimulated that element, but not all opposed it from blind prejudice. The value of *I Fought Riel* is that it was written by an eyewitness who, though a reasonable observer, would have been appalled if he

had known of Riel's future beatification.

Major Charles Boulton first published these personal accounts of the rebellion in 1886. His involvement in the first phase of the rebellion (1869-70) was greater than in the second (1885), but he was present or a participant at key stages of both; thus his account has authority. Indeed, in the matter of the execution of Thomas Scott, it was Boulton who was Riel's first choice. It was one of many encounters Boulton had with Riel face to face.

Boulton's motivation for opposing Riel was his belief that British law and authority must prevail over a pro-American revolutionary. He says that "there is no doubt he [Riel] conceived the idea of forming an independent government and handing it over to the United States for a good round sum." To many Canadians at the time, the U.S. represented an evil empire, while the British Empire was on the side of good; Riel, therefore, was an apostate. But in Boulton's observation Riel was a tyrant for other, very tangible reasons: he seized and opened mail, suppressed the local press, imprisoned civilians, and thwarted the Crown. Boulton was imprisoned by Riel, fought him, saw him hang. To his mind, justly so.

Though Boulton's account is told in an elegant Victorian manner that is surprisingly crisp (no doubt credit is due to Robertson), it must be admitted that he was too much the military man. His tale lacks the detail and colour that a professional writer might have added to give the depth this passionate historical event contains. □

Quebec and its Historians: the Twentieth Century, by Serge Gagnon, translated from the French by Jane Brierley, Harvest House. 240 pages, 512.50 paper (ISBN 0 88772 026 9).

By Cyril Strom

IT SHOULD SURPRISE NO ONE that the history of Quebec has been an arena for partisan debate. Nor will it surprise many to hear of the interest with which these debates have been followed in the province. Dispossessed peoples, or nations with a grievance (Poland is an example sometimes cited) are said to accord particular notice to their historians, whose findings contribute to their self-definition and inform or even legitimize current politics; and in such a situation the historical profession will in turn become politicized.

Gagnon, professor of history at the

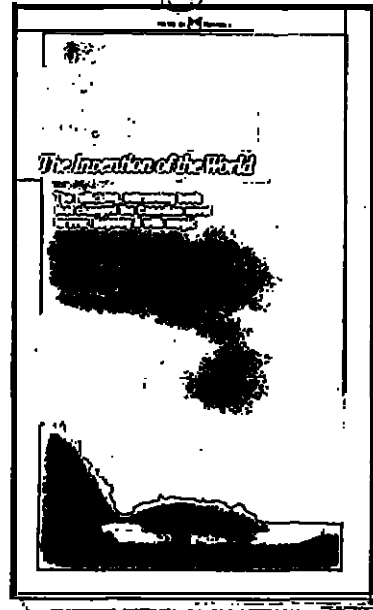
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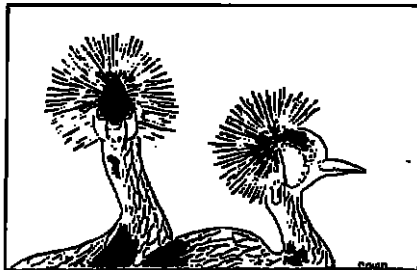


Hugh MacLennan
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Jack Hodgins
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\$5.95

Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, has written this book as a sequel to his Quebec and Its Historians: 1840 to 1920. Here he documents the emergence in postwar Quebec of professional history based on modern methods. He is especially concerned with analysing the influence of the national question on certain key works of historical scholarship — in large measure, this book



serves as a critique of ideological history-writing. It is also a platform for the author to take his stand on many of the recent debates within the profession, and to present his own reflections on theory.

Gagnon credits Guy Frégault and Marcel Trudel with initiating the scientific treatment of Quebec's history in reaction to the methods and spirit of the "clerico-conservative" tradition. Still, he finds that their work and that of their successors can be read as contributions to contemporary political controversy. Openly or implicitly, they speak to the issue of Quebec's former backwardness and inferiority, and in accordance with their support for or opposition to French-Canadian nationalism, locate the cause either in conquest and colonization or in Quebec's internal development.

The next generation, represented by Marcel Hamelin, Fernand Ouellet, and later Louise Dechêne, introduced the methods of the new social and economic history into Quebec under the influence of the *Annales* school in France and in response to the social and cultural upheavals of the Quiet Revolution. Gagnon reserves warm praise for Dechêne's work with the *Annales* model.

For Ouellet, however, there is little praise. Devoting two long chapters to a review of his work is a kind of compliment to his stature in the profession; their matter, though, imputes to Ouellet nearly every sin capable of commission by a historian. His rhetoric is subjected to a close reading and found to substitute hidden polemics and moral judgements for causal analysis. His analysis of ideologies is found to be vitiated by bias and anachronism. His assembly and interpretation of statistical data are given a step-by-step critique and

revision. Ouellet is made to represent the harmful effects of political partisanship and a "questionable passion for figures" upon talent and learning.

It is imperative, Gagnon concludes, to depoliticize professional history. His analysis of the dialectic of method and ideology moves smoothly to a synthesis: the adoption of advanced scientific methods will make historical argument less vulnerable to ideological distortion. Perhaps it moves too smoothly. Achievement of an acknowledged scientific methodology in the human sciences remains an elusive goal. Gagnon's suggestion to dump attempts for now at "total history" in favour of regional and thematic studies may hold more immediate promise for the realization of his aim. He is also optimistic for the possibilities of a new humanist and voluntarist historiography, based "the latest phase of the *Annales* model, as a supplement to the more deterministic quantitative approach.

Itself a contribution to partisan debate, this enormously informative book is persuasive evidence that, notwithstanding revolutions in historiography, ink will continue to be spilt for the cause for a long time to come. ★

My Dear Susan Ann: Letters of Joseph Howe to his Wife 1829-1836, edited by M.G. Parks. Jespersen Press. 209 pages, \$13.95 paper (ISBN 0 920502 65 2).

By Lorne Ellaschuk

JOSEPH HOWE, the 19th-century Nova Scotia journalist and politician, is known for his articles and speeches. This collection of letters to his wife, written early in their marriage, does not seem to alter the public knowledge of him. He and his wife do not have a private life (separate and hidden from the world) that these letters reveal: they were working too hard to keep a quality newspaper alive. He was out nearly half the year trying to find new subscribers and collect money from old ones. Hence these letters from all parts of the colony. She ran the paper in Halifax and attempted to make ends meet, not in the house but at the office.

But our public knowledge of Howe is subtly altered by reading what is really a collection of business letters to a partner. By the time we've read 85 expertly annotated letters, we know something about the partnership that would move on from newspapers to produce that important figure, the Tribune of Nova Scotia. Behind a legend are a man and a woman dividing up labour, and as is still the custom in our culture, building up around the man". □

POETRY

The Alternate Guide, by Monty Reid, rdc press, 64 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 88995 026 1).

By Phil Hall

IN 1979 REID edited *A Nature Guide to Alberta*. The collected materials for that museum book "stood some five feet tall." Now from "the text that was cut" we get a *literally alternate guide: poems* that are terse, hushed, and thin; little three-line stanza poems of landscape and body-rape in cohabitation.

The original sources for many of these poems were field notes, taped memories, dated texts. But the result is far from fragmented. Rather, the result is an accumulated (and accumulative) voice: the unkillable (until this century, at least) long and elusive memory. One poem ends surely by saying no more than "Dave Spalding/made this note"; another quotes a "James Hector/1859"; and many linger over names or place names: "sphagnum," "The Hand Hills," "death camas fringing/the sloughs." When love is quietly spoke" of, it is, like Alberta, "not/an ideal garden but/a recognized/terrain."

This is a great idea for a book (the National Topographical Maps for Alberta are included, and the titles of the poems are map co-ordinates). I hope the delicate lyricism of these pieces is not overshadowed by format.

and in the boats

of the heart
we set nets across
the slow water

dreaming of one
luminous fish
from so far upriver

it has more
than a name

□

The *Alchemy of Clouds*, by Mark Frutkin, Fiddlehead Poetry Books/Goose Lane Editions. 60 pages, 86.95 paper (ISBN 0 86492 060 1).

By Frank Manley

FRUTKIN'S SECOND book of poetry is divided into five sections with titles like "Drenched in Light," "Century 0 Century of 'Clouds,'" and "Apollinaire's Footprint" in addition to a two-page section labelled "Notes." As a whole, this collection bespeaks an exoticism of experience as Frutkin invokes many well-known artists (Dante, Picasso, Pound), and a rhapsody of landscaper (Africa, India, Paris).

Frutkin's major weakness as a poet is

that he often fails to bridge the gap between invocation and art: he overlooks the mechanics of good poetry (fresh language, precise imagery) as his romantic sensibility soars. The result is often disconcerting, as one is confronted with reckless description ("she is a beautiful animal/that also can think") the ungrammatical cliché ("I lay awake all night, watching my thoughts") and the banal ("a gray day/at the end of a gray week/the dog sighs/pages in a book turn"). Indeed, pages in this book will turn as the reader searches for sustained insight — evidence that the poet's impressionistic vision ("Incense rises like dreams in a spine") will not dissipate, taking with it the meaning that should link writer and reader.

A handful of poems in this collection work, where Frutkin allows language and meaning to be synthesized and his original vision is not usurped by verbal pyrotechnics. "Slash of Lethe," "Bells," "A Cup of Chai," and "The Watch" are all short poems, and perhaps because of this, are reasonably well sustained.

One disturbing aspect of this book is the inclusion of "notes" for some of the poems. Does it help us to know that "voluble" and "willow" are cognates" when the poem fails as a whole? Should semantic and etymological dissection replace meaning as the arbiter of a poem's success? In choosing impressionism over realism Frutkin allow his poetry-like the title of the book -to connote much, while denoting Little. □

The *Atlantic Anthology*, Volume 2: *Poetry*, edited by Fred Cogswell, Ragweed Press, 240 pages, \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 920304 30 3).

By Doug Brown

THIS SECOND of a three-volume series presents prose, poetry, and criticism of writers connected with the Atlantic provinces. It follows an earlier volume of prose, and anticipates one of criticism. The selection, beginning with what the editor identifies as the first distinctive generation of Canadian poets, harkens back to a century ago when Sir Charles G.D. Roberts without cloying could employ the now long-lost demonstrative "yon." It ends with the fine free verse of George Elliott Clarke pondering his black and Baptist heritage. Altogether there are 49 poets and almost 250 poems.

As one would expect, poets like Bliss Carman, E.J. Pratt, Alden Nowlan, and John Thompson are well represented. Cogswell himself contributes a number of pieces, notably a deft and tender *sestina*. And I was reminded once again

of Milton Acorn's eloquence and range. Over all, the quality of writing is high. About three-quarters of the poets included piqued my interest to some degree, and about 10 are impressive. Among the younger writers, aside from such rarities as a villanelle by Brian Bartlett, formal verse is virtually absent.

What is peculiarly Maritime in this collection is not hard to isolate. It derives from a devotion to landscapes and history. A lot of material comes from the attachment to earlier ways of life, to a past that is perceived as passing or as passed. Old and decrepit farmsteads provide potent symbols. Many poems deal affectionately with rural subjects, and encounters with a nature both homey and grand. Others display a dedication to the dignity and vulnerability of individual endeavour. But not one of these tendencies amounts to any sort of common denominator. For those interested in regionalism in Canadian literature, or for anyone wishing to sample new poetry, this anthology can be highly recommended. For a Maritimer, it is a must. □

Immune to Gravity, by Mary di Michele, McClelland & Stewart, 118 pages, 89.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 2823 7).

By Louise Longo

IN HER NEW book of poetry, di Michele turns her hand with impressive skill to a range of ideas, images, and emotions that are often both contemporary and timeless. In many ways her largest theme is the physical cycles of life — birth, childhood, the development of sexuality, the rigours and pitfalls of the sexual life, aging, and then the mysteries of death. Her strong, vividly physical images give these poems their immediacy and power. In "French Kisses, Blue Brassieres":

*Blue is lavender in the lamplight,
you imagine life simply
as a multiple of seventeen,
the twilight traces a deeper texture
on your jeans, a thin tank top,
new nipples erect and brittle as candied
violets.*

some of di Michele's strongest poems become a kind of melancholy ode to the instinctive life; she explores as well themes of beauty, decay, and suicide: To state such themes so baldly does her work a disservice. Its complexity, depth, and technique, together with her distinctive voice, lend the four sections of the book a rare and satisfying cohesiveness.

Though I am reluctant to describe di Michele's work as specifically feminist, she does explore brilliantly the darker and less explored side of sexuality in such poems as "False Analogies," "The

Second Head Talking," "Sex and Death," and "Beauty and Dread In 1959." If this collection weren't as well balanced as it is, she could almost be accused of morbidity; but with the inclusion of poems along more lyrical lines, such as "Natural Beauty" and "Translated World," she avoids that.

This is a strong collection, and di Michele is a poet who has definitely come into her stride. ★

Nimrod's Tongue, by Rafael Barreto-Rivera, Coach House Press, 109 pages, 88.50 paper (ISBN 0 88910 310 0).

By Lorne Ellaschuk

"*RAPHÈL MAI amècche zabì almi,*" Nimrod shouts in a mixture of languages at Dante and Virgil in Hell. The giant had built the Tower of Babel and consequently brought the curse of many languages on man. Unable to understand or speak to him, the older poets move on. Barreto-Rivera (his first name on Nimrod's tongue) stays. In four long poems he plays with the language of Nimrod.

"Here It Has Rained" is a prose poem in which a number of images and phrases constantly recur, stalling the linear movement we still expect in prose. It is like bpNichol's *Journal*, only shorter, lusher in language, and less frightening. "Jersey Shore Album" uses the annual summer visit (to in-laws near the sea?) as a means of taking snapshots, over time, of a marriage. It is written in the intense, disturbing language of a man's conjugal passion.

"Derridative Poems" seem to be selected marginal notes made during a Derridian reading of some early Wittgenstein. Bertrand Russell and the Austrian philosopher, in quest of the "simplest kind" of proposition, are treated as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza: "To attempt to know/a windmill/is to know the futility/of ever fully knowing it."

The best poem is last. "Old Hallam's Bones" uses Tennyson's In *Memoriam* as a controlling metaphor. It is "a record of a poet's mood variations" over several years. Barreto-Rivera's tendency to very lush language (see his previous collection, *Noises, Voices*, 1982) is controlled by the wonderful excesses of Tennyson "before him." Several sections of "Old Hallam's Bones" consist of the few simple, ordinary words to be found in a section of In *Memoriam*, just bits of its skeleton, a few old bones. This poem bears comparison with George Bowering's *Kerrisdale Elegies* and Frank Davey's *King of Swords*, also works from Nimrod's tongue. 0

Persephone, by Kenneth Banks, Lushino Press, unpaginated, \$7.00 paper (ISBN 0 9891351 14).

By Brian Bartlett

"IMMENSITY" is a big word most poets leave alone. You don't have to be a hard imagist to recognize its dangers: vagueness, heaviness, overkill. If the lines of a skilled poet, of course, any word can radiate poetic force. But when Banks writes of "dark immensity," "children of immensity," or "immensity of mind," he only gives the big words a bad name.

Persephone, a sequence of 50 sonnets published from Pictou Island, Nova Scotia, is an unhappy blend of care and carelessness. The stanzaic patterns, the fastidious rhymes, the sometimes surprising off-rhymes, all show much care; the imagery and language show much carelessness. That laxness indulges to the hilt the poet's weakness for grandiose effects: "adagios of floating flowers," "love's burning speciousness," "the tattered annals of your pain." Quoting out of context may be a notorious practice of obtuse reviewers, but after a while *Persephone* would numb any reader to everything but its oppressive rhetoric: "the long lament of time," "song's opening sweet endless eyes," "the stark inane." Whatever drama, thought, or emotion is here gets buried. A rare, original passage like "a flirt/of light across the tablecloth" is just that — a flirt. Soon, Banks falls back into character, proclaiming something like "immensity must see fair walls/arise" or "Immensity has wept its till." Indeed, it has.

I dosed *Persephone* with a sense of despair — with "one vast bowl of sighs," as the book says. Though no fan of Charles Bukowski's wearying disarray, I caught myself muttering *Pass the Bukowski, please*. The, turning to our nimblest 20th-century sonneteers (with hopes Banks does the same): *Pass the Frost. . . the Lowell. . . the Heaney*. □

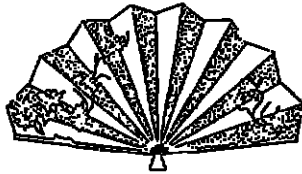
Seventy-One Poems for People, by George Bowering, rdc press, 128 pages, 59.95 paper (ISBN 0 88995 025 3).

By Doug Brown

THE BLURB TELLS us this book contains six poem sequences. In fact, there are five groups of poems: "Some People," "Cops," "Canadian Scenes: "Vietnam & Other Wars," and "Our Other (Latin) America," organized loosely around certain central subjects, and a sixth group, "The Poems of Ed Prato," which seems to be a miscellany. Some poems are dated as early as 1962, and from references in others we can infer that the latest were written sometime last

year. Thus, the poems effectively span the last quarter of a century. Much of the collection's value derives from this fact.

One of Bowering's preoccupations is Canadian nationalism, and anyone interested in the issue will find a review of certain strains, particularly anti-Americanism, in our national thinking.



Besides this one. Bowering's favourite themes are the brutality of our system of law and order, the hypocrisy or vanity of the bourgeoisie, the institutionalization of war, and, cropping up here and there, the redemptive power of love. In general, the subjects are not far removed from the interests of editorialists: these poems are nothing if not social commentary.

Bowering's manner is consistently wry and ironic, sometimes cryptic, and often haphazard. There are several potshots at the establishment that at a remove of 10 years or more strike one as naïve: as if the True Way would lead to an apotheosis of Saturday morning scruffiness. Indeed, Bowering offers little in the way of penetrating analysis, preferring to let sentiment and pathos surround his observations. Nor does he go far toward envisioning remedies. Yet he succeeds in involving us in the problems that concern him.

The difficulty one has with these poems rarely has much to do with their subjects. Some poems are simply anecdotes. Perhaps the desire to sound unguarded and committed leads him to eschew poetry's potential for varied and complex expression. This is a problem he hints at in his preface, and in one of the early poems he writes of "leaving off wit and doing the important work" — which at the time might have seemed plausible. Even though he does "not hold to this formula, and can be witty enough, the passage identifies a genuine tension running through these poems.

This is the tension between the clever detachment of the poet as maker and his concern with disturbing social problems. Unfortunately, Bowering doesn't make much use of it. In the face of an immense, daunting, and intractable subject matter, the poet calls very few shots, as if he must take dictation from an incoherent subject (society). Perhaps it is this situation that gives the poetry its haphazard quality. With such material there can be little freedom to shape one's themes to purely poetic ends. □

Storms and Screens, by Francis Sparshott, Childe Thursday, 80 pages, \$6.50 paper (ISBN 0 920459 05 6).

By Doug Brown

SPARSHOTT'S SECOND publication with Childe Thursday is like the earlier collection, *The Hanging Gardens of Etobicoke*, very much a mixed bag. Sparshott's subjects range from Knob Hill's meet counters through a cottage country beleaguered by longings for transcendence to the poignancy of individual destinies (among them those of Terry Fox, Archimedes, some well-known academics cavorting at a conference, Cassandra, and Stan Rogers). While covering this ground he presents us with a gamut of moods, though whether jaunty and whimsical or plain and plaintive, his tone is generally subdued. To mix this up further, these poems are written in several sorts of free verse as well as over a dozen regular metrical and stanzaic forms.

It is clear that an important part of Sparshott's poems is an emphasis on word-play. To enjoy these one most respond to attention paid to etymology, a deliberate and slightly eccentric vocabulary, and such things as anagrams and found poems. Here is the final stanza of a 10-line poem of anagrams beginning 'A nasty age! rage on':

*A saga, yet no anger;
a gay reason agent,
a neat gray sage. No,
a great sane agony—
George Santayana.*

This sort of detached tinkering is evident throughout the collection, though the poems are "ever allowed to maunder into riddling facetiousness or obscurity.

In spite of the fact that Sparshott writes such upfront and short lyrics, I found that it took a few sittings to warm to these poems. At first, I thought this was due to his somewhat choppy style. But it has more to do with the unusual figures he comes up with. These are sometimes bizarre:

*animal mistrust ran its hot eraser
round the wax contours.*

*A prudent child pays out his nylon line
carefully as the teller in the corner bank
thumbs his soiled notes against a
pensioners cheque.*

In a poem such as "Exhalations of a Dying Metaphor," they can be the object of baroque elaboration. As is "not uncommon in contemporary poetry, the selection of images can seem arbitrary at times, and their presentation a bit crowded. But if Sparshott's images do not always hit home immediately, they are seldom without interest and are informed by the same curiosity evinced by his word-play. □

Cries of Victims — Voice of God, by Remi J. De Roo, **Novalis/James Lorimer**. 172 pages, 59.95 paper (Novalis ISBN 2 89088 255 1; Lorimer ISBN 0 8862 951 6).

By Mary Frances Coady

REMI DE ROO has become increasingly known as an outspoken leader in Canadian Catholicism ever since he became bishop of Victoria in 1962. As chairman of the Canadian bishops' eight-member social affairs commission, he was catapulted to national prominence early in 1983 after the publication of the commission's document, *Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis*. Expressing concern about the large-scale unemployment problem, the statement questioned the underlying ethic governing Canada's economic structures. The government, the commission suggested, was not living up to its responsibility to care for the poor and the disadvantaged in our society.

Social problems are not a new concern for the Catholic church, nor is De Roo the only bishop speaking out about them. For several years, the bishops have been issuing annual Labour Day statements, stressing the primacy of workers' rights over profits. Most of these have been ignored.

For the past century, the Catholic church's social teaching has been formed on two principles that form the basis of De Roo's book: the value of persons over things and the importance of work in giving human beings a sense of dignity. For De Roo, this is becoming increasingly urgent, as Western society tends to undervalue humans as beings in favour of technology. The result is that "people are treated as an impersonal force having little or no significance beyond their economic usefulness."

He tries to show that such a problem is a moral one for society and, like other recent Christian leaders, he tries to broaden his readers' thinking beyond the purely private and personal. Church-going Christians should no longer regard their faith as a Sunday affair, content to live the rest of their lives according to some other ethic. Sin, he says, exists in the very make-up of society, and anyone who cares about humanity must assume responsibility.

De Roo speaks of the need to "transform society" so that all people may receive a more equitable share of goods. His vision does not become specific, nor does he claim an ideological bias — saying that any alliance between the church and particular social and political systems is unwise and unhealthy.

Trying to create an awareness that,

united, people have the power to change their lives, De Roo advises his readers to "think globally but act locally." To be effective in helping to form a just society, he says, churches need "to learn new skills in forming community leaders, providing human and spiritual support groups, providing a forum for discussing and evaluating local issues. . ."

The book is succinct and well-edited. It can be read easily by anyone who finds church documents too stolid and top-heavy with theology. De Roo's views can be argued with, but they can't be ignored — not, at least, by those who realize that the danger in a technological society is that human beings can become disposable pawns. □

The **Serpent & the Rainbow**, by Wade Davis, **Stoddart**, 297 pages, \$22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7737 2073 1).

By S.A. Newman

SOME MEMBERS of the medical community think that deadening the body while the mind is conscious would be infinitely safer than the potential perils always present with general anaesthetics. This surmise leads them to look more closely at the pagan and primitive practice of zombification, in particular as it is performed in Haiti's vodoun religion. Part thriller, part scientific documentary, this well-written narrative introduces the reader to the complexities of Haitian life and the hypnotic allure the sometimes barren, sometimes lush country holds over the book's author.

Davis, an ethnobiologist working on his doctorate, had studied 15 tribes in Latin America before travelling to Haiti. Initially, his journey led him into an exciting exploration of plant and animal poisons thought to be the cause of zombification. But he discovered that poison alone was too simple a cause. His search eventually led him to the vodoun religion, its fascinating rituals, the many-tentacled secret societies, and the faith many Haitians place in their gods and in spirit possession.

Davis weaves the rich fibres in Haiti's history — freedom-seeking slaves, temperamental European masters, a religion brought from the depths of Africa — into a tapestry as resilient, languid, colourful, and seductive as the country and its inhabitants, people ruled as much now by the houngan and their religious fears as they were in the days of the French tyranny they once overthrew. Whether your interest lies in the spiritual mysteries of an ancient religion or in understanding the troubled past that bred in Haiti such despots as the Duvaliers, this is not a book to miss. □

Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape, by Barry Lopez, **Collier Macmillan**, 464 pages, 533.95 cloth QSBN 0 684 18578 4).

By John Goddard

ON VISITS TO Alaska and the Canadian Arctic from his Oregon home, author Barry Lopez found himself bowing to the birds he saw. The urge to bow and other personal responses to the North struck him as potentially meaningful. "What, I wondered, had compelled me to bow to a homed lark?" he writes in the preface. "How do people imagine the landscape they find themselves in? How does the land shape the imaginations of the people who dwell in it? How does desire itself, the desire to comprehend, shape knowledge?"

Lopez returns to these questions throughout the text, which consists mostly of second-hand descriptions of musk-oxen, polar bears, narwhals, icebergs, the movement of the sun, and the voyages of such explorers as Martin Frobisher, Job Davis, Henry Hudson and William Parry.

"The laud is like poetry," Lopez writes on page 274, pursuing his metaphysical themes. "It is inexplicably coherent, it is transcendent in its meaning, and it has the power to elevate a consideration of human life." But on page 413 he concludes: "There are simply no answers to some of the great pressing questions. You continue to live them out, making your life a worthy expression of a leaning into the light."

Phrases like "the power to elevate a consideration" and "a worthy expression of a leaning" occur throughout the book, apparent attempts to lend an air of profundity to a series of uninspired biology and history lessons. □

Kingdom of the Ice Bear, by Hugh Miles and Mike Salisbury, **Harcourt Brace Jovanovich**, illustrated, 223 pages, \$29.95 cloth (ISBN 0 563 20339 0).

By S.R. Gage

DON'T LET THE title fool you — this is not a collection of Nordic fairy tales but an account of the adventures of two wildlife documentary-makers in the arctic. Miles and Salisbury spent three years filming in Greenland, Spitsbergen, and Canada. Their book touches on many aspects of the northern ecosystem, with particular emphasis on polar bears, musk oxen, and caribou.

The book also gives some insight into

the tribulations of the wildlife photographer: the authors spent a month in the Spitsbergen area, manhandling snowmobiles over sea ice and soft mountain snow to get 10 minutes of edited film of a mother polar bear and her three cubs emerging from their winter den. Miles estimates they travelled 500 kilometres over the ice for each minute of usable film.

The authors did most of their filming in the Canadian North and they owe a major debt to scientists working in the area who willingly shared their knowledge and research facilities.

Kingdom of the Ice Bear will appeal to a general readership, especially those who dream of some day visiting the "true North." The book has excellent colour photographs and useful maps. It should be noted that this BBC publication was written with a certain British perspective, which produces small surprises for the Canadian reader, including the need to define "mukluks," "arctic char," and "spring break-up." □

SOCIETY

The *Politics of Human Services*, by Steve Wineman, Black Rose Books, 272 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 920057 42 X) and \$14.95 paper (ISBN 0 920057 43 6).

By Ann Lukits

A SUDDEN EXPLOSION of mass political unrest will muck the nation during the next 30 years, predicts Steven Wineman. It may be triggered by a new episode of U.S. foreign intervention, a conflict between the superpowers that proceeds to the brink of world war, the detonation of a nuclear bomb, a" ecological disaster, a seven? economic crisis, or a combination of events.

But we don't have to worry. *The Politics of Human Services* was written with just such a crisis in mind. It contains the recipe for a "holistic and integrated" movement called "radical decentralization." The movement, which offers an alternative to right- and left-wing politics, is feminist, anti-racist, pro-gay, anti-nuclear, pm-disarmament, environmentalist, communitarian, and libertarian.

Decentralization, or the reorganization of society into small social, economic, and political units, offers what Wineman believes may be the only hope for survival on a planet that is threatened from all sides. He may be right. But it is difficult to imagine this intense, idealistic, wordy, and annoyingly repetitive book persuading people, especially those in positions of power, to abandon the present social and political systems, despite their many evils.

Still, Wineman makes a strong case against capitalism and the welfare state, both of which he calls "bankrupt." A former student radical who marched in the anti-war demonstrations of the 1960s, Wineman exposes the New Right's opposition to welfare programs as "an elaborate smokescreen for racism and class privilege." The right presents itself as promoting individual autonomy, he argues, but "its alternative to big government is big business, which is equally centralized and bureaucratic." But Wineman's vision of an "egalitarian, co-operative, participatory" society that defines self-interest as a person's ability to contribute to the common good seems like a wildly impractical and hopelessly naive alternative. At least he has the good sense to admit that prospects for radical change seem "faint." □

Sex, Power and Pleasure, by Mariana Valverde, The Women's Press, 212 pages, \$8.95 paper (ISBN 0 88961097 5).

By Barbara MacKay

RECENTLY I MET a woman who is working with a committee to remove sexually explicit material from public view. She was careful to explain that the group was anti-porn — not anti-erotica, the" added, "But we haven't found any erotica yet."

Valverde's book highlights many of the issues, explicit and implicit, in this anecdote. Not only is it difficult to legislate against pornography without censoring feminism (note the recent legal battle against Page's book store in Toronto for displaying a feminist art installation), but the women's movement has had a lopsided focus on sex, concentrating only on the dangers for women: assault, rape, and pornography.

The book's introduction promises an examination of sexuality that is both theoretical and experiential, and for the most part the promise holds. However, despite the disclaimer that this is not a cookbook of sexual recipes, the chapter on heterosexuality seems "pop-psych" prescriptive — for example when addressing the "scarcity problem." In general, the middle chapters on lesbianism and bisexuality seem more a primer for those whose views on sexuality lean toward theories of what's "natural," and assume a less well-informed reader than the rest of the book.

The book is most interesting when discussing the ways in which desire is socially constructed, and the last chapter, "Pleasure and Ethics" — which disputes the libertarian notion that sex is purely individual and any-

thing goes between consenting adults — is a fresh and welcome contribution to the feminist discussion of sexuality. □

TEACHING & LEARNING

School Wars: The Assault on B.C. Education, by Crawford Kilian, New Star, 241 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919573 50 9) and \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 919573 51 7).

By Phil Hall

FOLLOWING IN THE line New Star tradition of books that are political scrapers, namers of the enemy, analysers of the issues (Stan Perky's *Son Of Socred* or *The House That Jack Built*), this angry history and polemic against the B.C. government's "assault" on education is dynamite.

Now let me take the quotation marks away from the word "assault." No one who has fought and taught through the last 10 years of B.C. educational policy will be able to tolerate those non-committal quotation marks. And no one who reads Crawford Kilian's admirable and detailed account of the roots of the problem will think *School Wars* a strident title.

The Social Credit government is currently trying to under-fund education while forcing school boards to comply or resign. Crawford Kilian had taught in B.C. for 18 years. He wrote this book in seven weeks, and finished it June 18, 1985. His speed is the bunker-speed of a war correspondent: polish and die.

But his arguments for educational excellence have the brevity of a long, committed career. He says that the real clash is between "ecumenism" ("an attempt to bring everyone into a single community in which the shared values include respect for diversity and individuality") and the "schismatics" (those who would run schools on "a business footing,"



with no allowance for diversity). He says: "Yes, I take it personally when a public institution is threatened, because that threat is aimed at my family, my friends and my students."

He is speaking for more than himself. His book is timely and useful. A quick response, dated soon, but for now red hot. Every liberal educational program in British Columbia teeters while the Socreds dress themselves for Expo. Do not forgive them, boards. They know exactly what they do. □

BookNews: an advertising feature



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The lives of the parties

By John Roberts

One-Eyed Kings: Promise and Illusion in Canadian Politics, by Ron Graham. Collins, 444 pages, \$26.95 cloth (ISBN 0 00 217642 4).

THIS ACCOUNT OF political events in Canada from 1980 to 1985 — covering two leadership conventions, two national elections, and four prime ministers — argues, correctly I believe, that the turbulent politics of this time enables a objective observer to determine the common ongoing realities of Canadian politics. This book is more, therefore, than a simple journalistic account. It is at heart a book about the structural context of politics in Canada.

It should be said at the outset that this is a superb book. At a time when journalism often consists of quick fix and subjective myth-making, it is a pleasure to find solidly researched reporting. One can quibble with some details. Pierre Trudeau's peace initiative — as Ron Graham suggests — did reflect the idealism of the prime minister, but it was also a conscious attempt to defuse the criticism of the government's handling of the cruise missile issue by shifting attention to larger problems of peace and security. And a account of Trudeau's last government should focus as much on Allan MacEachen and Marc Lalonde as on Jean Chrétien, and as much on Gordon Osbaldesto as Michael Pitfield. But these are minor points. They are overbalanced by great advantages. For example, Graham's 30 pages on Trudeau provide a more trenchant understanding of the character and purposes of this remarkable man than is to be found in vast quantities of words by other authors.

The major virtue of this book is that, while continually interesting and easy to read, it is measured and balanced. instant history often becomes not an account of what happened but the views of those who are prepared or eager — for whatever reason — to be interviewed. Facts, even recent ones, fade to obscurity in favour of colourful episodes — sometimes episodes that exist only in the limelight of the narrator's imagination. I should add, perhaps, to establish my own objectivity that I have not been either interviewed or mentioned by Mr. Graham. Apart from this (only to me) incredible omission, future historians

will not be able to find a better balanced perspective or more accurate account of Canadian politics during the past five years. This book reminds us of what did happen, and why, and provides a clear insight to the rationale for actions on the part of the major players on the national stage.

But this book is more than a narration of events. Graham's thesis is that Canada is a essentially liberal country, that the political centre of gravity is on the left and that any government, whatever its ideological label, will respond to that political reality. Although I am in accord with this view — that regionalism and history, the challenges of geography, and the variety of cultures have created an essentially liberal society — there are times when Graham describes a almost fatalistic vision of Canada's destiny. He seems to be saying that it does not matter who governs, since the political imperatives will require all governments to act similarly. To extend Graham's argument this far is a bit unfair, but it would be unfortunate if his book persuades readers that there are no real decisions realized through our political system at a time when Canada faces very important choices — particularly in economic policy — that should and could be determined in the political process.

One other major contribution of this book is to emphasize how money and access to the new political technology of polling, marketing, and public relations have transformed the electoral process. Graham describes Brian Mulroney's campaign as

the latest model in how to fight an election in the television age. The polls, the ads, the speeches, and the platform were churned out with centralized and scientific precision. The spotlight was on the well-trained leader, and his tour was a structure for the media's daily feed. The advance men worked from the same set of instructions as the advertising gurus, and the media were pampered with their every desire — except unstructured access to Mulroney's thoughts. The crowds were large, the local candidates were kept in step, and the content was restricted to promises and platitudes. The very dynamic of the organization guaranteed that ideas, debate, and boldness were replaced by image, blandness, and caution. Money pushed aside the envelope-lickers. Polls pushed aside the thinkers. Optimistic clichés pushed aside hard reality.

As Robert Stanfield observed: "It makes a farce of a campaign from a public point of view in terms of the discussion of issues and so on. But a leader hasn't got much choice now."

Ron Graham does not analyse the implications of this phenomenon for the operating of elections, parties, and

governments in Canada. But it is one of the many accomplishments of this fine book that it stimulates readers to reflect not just on the past five years but on their importance for the coming new generation of politicians. □

REVIEW

Life in the jet stream

By Paul Wright

Time in the Air, by Rachel Wyatt, House Of Anansi, 171 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 88784 146 5).

TO READ THIS book with the expectations normally brought to a work of realistic fiction is impossible. It is an airy concoction, like Iris Murdoch set to music and animated by the clockwork mechanism of a television sitcom, with trans-Atlantic jet flights replacing the opening and dosing of doors, with coincidence defying the laws of probability, with confrontations and couplings and an occult conclusion. Implicitly feminist, light in touch, determinedly humorous in tone, fluent in language, this is fiction as soufflé.

Sidney Snowdon is an international businessman with financial and amorous interests in Toronto and Yorkshire, where his wife and sons live. At the beginning we see him secure in his double life, complacently in charge of his secrets. By the end the women have risen and joined with each other and with the larger sisterhood to take charge of Sidney.

Such a summary gives nothing of the owl's real intentions or achievements in language and plotting and in the creation of a literary mechanism — a complex of spinning cogs and gears intended to sustain interest in the absence of character development and physical description, which are jettisoned for the sake of speed. As well, looming behind the words, there may be a purpose larger than either of these, some generalization about the world and its ways, life and love, women and me. The author's voice speaks through "one of her comic creations, her statement is made, rather, by setting the terms of relationships — thus a moral observation, as comedy often is.

For whom is such a novel intended? To say that it would make a substitute for television viewing would be to dismiss a considerable technical achievement — one perhaps intended for co-sumptio in the unreal circumstances of

trans-Atlantic flight across five time zones with only a single Feature film for distraction. It would also Fail to recognize a number of good lines:

There were □ o words in his vocabulary to tell Jill that after ten years It was over. The town-how must be divided down the middle. She could rent out his half to a middle-aged working woman with clean habits.

Wyatt has, of course, the right to establish the terms in which her novel is to be read and judged. She has chosen to sacrifice weight and bulk For lightness and speed. In doing so she has created a different sort of book, distinctive and, in its way, elegant. To say that it would have more weight end power if the characters and situations had been drawn in greater depth and detail is to propose an altogether more conventional way of writing, but one that I, as a reader, would have preferred. □

REVIEW

Food for thought

By John Marvie

Down to Earth: The Crisis in Canadian Farming, by Carole Glide, House of Anansi, 192 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 83784 147 3).

OVER THE YEARS farmers have gained the reputation of being chronic complainers. Now, regardless of what went on in the past, there is no doubt they have something to complain about. Some are suffering economic hardships, and many are worried about the Future of their Industry. In recent years certain outspoken farmers and Farm groups have attempted to bring their message to the general public. They have mostly failed.

With the publication of *Down to Earth*, we may be witnessing an optimistic new trend. Here we have an account OF the crisis Facing Canadian agriculture, written by a journalist with little practical experience in agriculture but dedication to a group with whom she feels a kinship. Using a large number of interviews, the author takes us on a cross-country tour of the Farms and farmers in Canada, and does a credible job of identifying the problems facing them.

From East to West the story is more or less the same. out farmers are faced with high interest rater, high investment costs, low prices, competition From cheap imports, urban sprawl, and exhausted Farmland. The biggest concern

is that these problems are already putting farmers out of business.

Farmers, Giangrande explains, are Faced with a no-win situation. In order to compete with cheap imports (many of these from countries where labour is exploited) they must continually challenge the land with Fertilizer and pesticides to produce more and more for less and less. The Farmer's expenses are increasing and his income is decreasing. The result is degraded soil, loss of equity, and often bankruptcy.

IF our farmers can't compete why should we prop them up? The answer is in this book. Farming is a primary industry that employs thousands of people. Agricultural exports account For billions of dollars in foreign trade. The production of Food is an enterprise that all countries strive to perfect. As a result, many countries subsidize agriculture to a Far greater degree than does Canada.

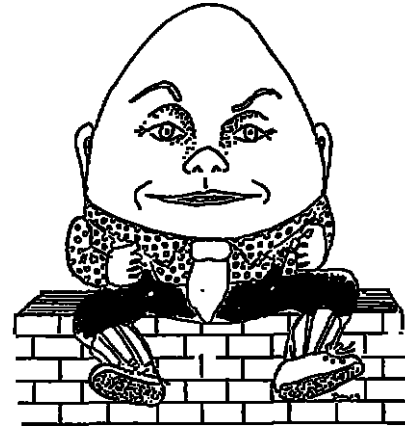
We are living in an eta of global over-production. The world produces more oil than is needed, more lumber than we can use, surplus iron, nickel, and copper. Agriculture is no exception. Every year more countries become net exporters of Food. Canadian F-s are now being challenged in areas where previously marketing our crops was no problem. This, however, can only be viewed as temporary. As Third World countries become more affluent, the exploitation of labour will decrease. As foreign agricultural subsidies run out, the cost of Food will increase. At that point we must have a diversified, successful agricultural industry.

As an agrologist, I strongly commend Giangrande's efforts. This is not to say that I think her work is faultless. I have a strange Feeling about the people she chose to interview. They seem to be too rich or too poor or too opinionated to represent the mainstream of Canadian Farmers. As a Maritimer I felt somewhat abandoned as the author travelled around Quebec, Ontario, and the Western provinces with her tape recorder.

The Atlantic provinces are mentioned only twice. Once, in the chapter on corporate agri-business, she user an interview with a P.E.I. potato Farmer to help develop a case against agri-business and to point out that the poverty and unemployment in the Maritimes are typical of a Third World country. Her only other Foray into Atlantic agriculture was an interview with a Nova Scotia sheep producer who has a lot of ideas but does not represent the interests or the opinions of the Atlantic agriculture community. This is unfortunate as many readers will be unaware that we have well-established Farmers involved in

dairy, hog, fruit, vegetable and poultry production.

All of that aside, after putting together a readable, coherent and sensitive account of the problems facing the agriculture industry. Giangrande disappoints us in the tentative solutions that are proposed. One late chapter is an impassioned account of the possibilities that organic farming holds For our salva-



tion. Giangrande seems to suggest some sort of scheme whereby all of our food would be grown organically, the middle men would be cut out of the grocery business and the Farmers would market their produce either independently or cooperatively. I have a vision of tens of thousands of beat-up pick-up trucks descending on every Canadian city in a frantic effort by Fanners to sell or trade the Food they have produced the week before. The reason we have marketing boards and middlemen and grocery stores is to avoid this situation. There are also many small and large producer co-ops in Canada doing a respectable job of moving Food to the marketplace. These organizations receive scant attention in this book.

I think the author is too hard on the corporate agri-business presence in Canada. Although she singles out McCain's and Cavendish Foods in the Maritimes as examples of the Folly of Maritimers, she neglects to mention Kraft and Hostess Foods in Upper Canada. Although there is no doubt that corporate agri-businesses are not strangers to manipulating and abusing our farmers, they are also performing a necessary Function if the consumer is to continue readily being able to buy frozen French fries.

At least Giangrande gives us Food for thought. The greatest contribution a book such as this makes to the agriculture industry is in increasing a-ess of the importance of our Food producers and that they must be paid adequately. □

Out of this world

By P. Scott Lawrence

I' **Advance of the Landing: Folk Concepts of Outer Space**, by Douglas Curran, Abbeville Press (Fitzhenry & Whiteside), illustrated, 132 pages, \$19.95 paper (ISBN 0 89659 523 4).

IN THE FALL of 1977, Douglas Curran bought a second-hand Renault, christened it *Giselle* and "began driving, looking for objects that people might have made to express their ideas about outer space and the future." Rounding the corner of a two-lane highway in Quebec's Eastern Townships, he suddenly came across a wooden rocket perched out in front of a general store. His interests in photography and Jungian theories of myth and archetype were galvanized: "It was at one and the same time the quintessential product of western civilization, a daydream of technology and a symbol of transcendence and freedom. It was nostalgia for the future."

Over the next seven years Curran travelled 125,000 miles through the United States and Canada, taking pictures of home-made spacecraft and talking to flying-saucer aficionados, amassing abundant evidence of this modern obsession with UFOs and outer space. In *Advance of the Landing* is filled with photographs of sewers and rockets of every description, some hunkered down in woodlots behind rural homes, some bolted to pylons at roadsides and atop buildings, some parked in barns and garages.

A number of these home-made spacecraft were obviously built for commercial purposes, by small entrepreneurs with questionable originality and a thing for dish-shapes: there's a Flying Saucer Gas Bar in Saskatchewan, a Flying Saucer Drive-in in Niagara Falls, and a Flying Saucer Gift Shop in Cavendish, P.E.I.

But the greater "umber can be seen es quasi-religious symbols, erected by people who genuinely believe that UFOs are real, and that the beings that visit our planet in them — Space Brothers — offer our best hope for salvation. It's Curran's thesis that these UFO cultists represent "a new mythology of gods and technology as relevant to twentieth-century civilization as Zeus and Apollo had been" to the ancient Greeks." I' the popular imagination, Curran argues, the

flying saucer is "a god wrapped in stainless steel."

Curran met hundreds of these believers, and their stories bring the book alive. There's Ruth Norman, a.k.a. the Archangel Uriel, an 82-year-old widow from El Cajon, California, who heads the Unarius Foundation. She is preparing Earth for its salvation, which will be heralded by the arrival of 32 spacecraft from the Intergalactic Confederation. Her late husband, Ernest L. Norman, is currently the Moderator of the Universe. end lives a" Mars.

There's John Reeves, a retired long-shoreman from Brooksville, Florida, who in 1968 was whisked away to the moon and Venus in a flying saucer. When he returned, he erected an elaborate monument to the aliens. The tax man eventually claimed and dismantled it, but Reeves keeps the colourful Venusian flag give" to him by his abductors, tacked to the wooden-paneled bedroom wall of his trailer.

And there's Madeleine Rodeffer, a disciple of George Adamski. Adamski claims to have had numerous close encounters with extra-terrestrials, end one of his books, *Inside the Spaceships*, is, says Madeleine Rodeffer, "next to the Bible -it's just the greatest."

Virtually all of the organizations these people run or belong to — from the Aetherius Society to the Unarius Educational Foundation — have in common intricate cosmologies into which Judeo-Christian ideas have been integrated. Jesus Christ is nearly always at the centre of things, communicating with the beings on Earth through Space Brothers.

The desire for immortality and fears of nuclear devastation and global chaos inform the ideas the cultists have about the future. Their message is simple: unless we heed the warnings of these omniscient Space Brothers, or are rescued by them, we are more than likely doomed.

It would be exceedingly easy to gawk at these eccentrics, to see them as freaks, and at first glance some of the photographs do elicit an amazed laughter. But Curran resists the temptation to ridicule them; a skilled and compassionate narrator, he relates his characters' stories and beliefs with a poker face.

And like an anthropologist, he makes his photographs I' order to record, not interpret. They're shot without apparent guile, like postcards or well-framed snapshots of the family vacation. The pictures render both the saucers and the people curiously inanimate, frozen in time and space. But that makes them eerily compelling, like snapshots of places or people we think we might have visited or known but can't quite place.

I felt a creeping sense of regret in the

book, too. The faithful Curran profiles are aging, and there don't seem to be many young believers coming along to take their place. Their metalrockets and flying saucers are rusting away, the wooden ones losing their paint. Despite their best efforts, they all seem very much earthbound.

Nevertheless, with an unshakable belief in the wisdom and benevolence of the visitors from other planets, they continue to search the heavens for evidence of the marvellous and affirmations of their faith. Curran takes great care to present their perspectives, and in so doing reminds us that the most enduring mysteries concern the lives of the beings that inhabit Planet Earth. □

Honest John

By W.G. Godfrey

The Me" from Halifax: Sir John Thompson, Prime Minister, by Peter B. Waite, University of Toronto Press, 547 pages, \$37.50 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 5659 8).

IRISH-CATHOLIC Conservative prime ministers recently became fashionable in Canada. But the first of them is long since forgotten, his brief two-year term eclipsed by memories of the Macdonald years before and the Laurier years after. From November of 1892 to December of 1894 Sir John Thompson was Canada's prime minister and, as Peter B. Waite's meticulously researched and well-awaited study reveals, he deserves far more attention than he has received.

Thompson's death at 49 years of age, at Windsor Castle on Dec. 12, 1894, shortly after being sworn in as a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council, brought to a close a brilliant and meteoric political career. Born an Irish Methodist in Halifax, Thompson embraced Catholicism shortly after marrying his beloved Annie Affleck. With the support of Bishop John Cameron, Antigonish County became and remained Thompson's political base. Provincially he represented it from 1877 to 1882, seeing service es attorney general and the" briefly es premier of Nova Scotia. At 36 Thompson was appointed a judge of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court but, pursued by Charles Tupper and John A. Macdonald, in 1885 he accepted a call to Ottawa es minister of justice, now representing Antigonish at the national level.

Knighthood in August of 1888, Sir Job" quickly became a power in the Macdonald ministry. Macdonald com-

mented that "The bat thing I ever invented is **Thompson**," and he was an obvious **heir-apparent** to the **Tory** leadership. **Always**, however, he was a **reluctant politician, distressed** at **Ottawa** sojourns **that separated** him from wife and family in **Halifax**, and so it **was only** in **November of 1892**, well over a year after **Macdonald's** death, that he accepted the burden of the prime minister's office. Imagine — a **prime ministerial contender** who doesn't bide his **time in "unpolitical"** activities in **Montreal or Toronto** while waiting for the right moment to **claim the leadership!**

Waite has **been** at work on **this** study for a considerable **time**. He **brings** to it the wit, the **charming anecdote**, the readability and, above all, the **mastery of sources** available on **this period**, both primary and secondary, that his **professional colleagues** have learned to expect in his **writing**. This is far more than a "exercise in **political history**". It is a well-narrated and broadly **social history** that offers insights concerning **legal, urban, and religious** affairs, to **name** just a few.

Like all good biographies, it **examines** both the individual **and his times, which were** turbulent if **not intolerant**. Yet a balanced, composed, and consistently tolerant **Thompson was** often able to **rein** in the prejudices and resolve the **problems that** threatened to tear apart his party and his nation. The formidable **agenda** included **Louis Riel**, religious questions, diplomatic **disputes** with the United States, a "at-times **insensitive** mother country, **provincial autonomy**, and scandals **within** Tory ranks. **Thompson's performance**, marked by good sense, **courtesy**, tact, **strength of principle**, and **clarity** of intellect, served **Macdonald well** in his last years and held the Conservative party together after the **Old Chieftain's** death. When **Thompson** died, however, as **Waite** puts it, the "cracks **began**" to open that **Thompson** had **kept closed**" and **Laurier** Liberalism would **eventually** capitalize on **Conservative** disarray. The **Tory** capacity largely to **arrange their own demise and defeat themselves** — a more pronounced **20th-century** feature of the **party** — bad emerged in the **1890s**.

There **were** few monuments and **few memories** left by the **brief** **Thompson** interlude, **Waite** acknowledges. If the **Charles** **Topper** papers were not just laundered but starched for **posterity**, this respectful and **admiring examination** of **Topper's** **contemporary** and **colleague** guarantees a **historical** niche for its subject perhaps **not quite** merited by his actual **political accomplishments**. This is not to **deny** that **Thompson's** **legislative** and **diplomatic** achievements were relatively considerable **and** substan-

tial. **Nonetheless, his time** at the helm was so limited that **his** contributions as **Conservative leader** were mainly about to **occur** rather than accomplished at the time of **his** death.

But if the book is assessed as both a life **and** times, the brevity of **Thompson's** **prime ministerial** service, **is** of **limited** importance. Here is as **good** a rendering of late **19th-century** **Halifax**, **Nova Scotia**, and **Canada** as that offered by any **writer**. Even as a treatment of a "individual, **Waite** has made a powerful case for **Thompson's** legacy of **integrity** and hard work, decency and morality. **rugged** honesty and a **sense** of duty, placing the nation above the party.

Above all, on the dual nationality question so much debated then and now. **Thompson epitomized** and **articulated** the **accommodative** approach, **growing out** of the **pluralistic** **Maritimes** society that shaped him, so badly needed in **times of suspicion** and **vindictiveness**. The **political winds** might have dictated a different tactic, but on this, as on **other** issue, **Thompson's** principled **course** would prevail if he had his way. **Waite** has rectified **John Thompson's** neglect with **this** excellent portrait and has **painted** an **arresting picture** of the united yet diverse **Canadian nation** prior to the **turn** of the **century**. □

REVIEW

William the conqueror

By **David Jordan**

Tough Guy: Bill Bennett and the Taking of British Columbia, by **Allen Garr**, Key. Porter Books, 198 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919493 77 7).

My Dear Legs: Letters to a Young Social Democrat, by **Alex MacDonald**, New Star Books, 187 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919573 38 X) and \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 919573 39 8).

BRITISH COLUMBIA politics have long been an **enigma** to the rest of **Canada** — and indeed to the rest of the world. How can a **right-wing government** continue to win election after election in a province where 48 per cent of the work-force are **union** members? If a province of lumberjacks and miners, why has the **NDP** bee" all but powerless to interrupt the **Social Credit's** **30-year** reign? The paradox of **Social Credit** role in **British Columbia** is examined by these two authors, **one** a veteran journalist, the other a " **NDP MLA** with the dubious **distinction** of having spent all but three

of **his 25** years in the legislature as a member of the **Opposition**.

If **Tough Guy**, **fiery-tongued** m-radio announcer **Allen Garr** throws himself into the task of getting to the root of the **Bennett** enigma. The book is unashamedly one-sided, as suggested by its subtitle and by the liner **notes** promising a **chronicle** of "the devastating effects that [**Bennett's**] restraint **program**" is having on **British Columbians**.

Garr begins his study of the **Bennett** dynasty with a look back to the origins of **Social credit** in the "A + B **Theorem**," a crackpot theory advanced by **Major Clifford Hugh Douglas** during the **Depression**. This formula called for a freeze on prices and for free money, or "social credit," for **all citizens**. Though **Major Douglas** has long since been forgotten, it was **his** theory that **W.A.C. Bennett** brought to **British Columbia**, where he became premier in 1952.

From this historical perspective **Garr** moves to the present, where his considerable connections afford **rare glimpses** into the **private** lives of the **Socreds**. We are treated, for **example**, to the spectacle of nightclub stripper **Big Fannie Annie** entertaining the party faithful in a **Shaughnessy** mansion; we are also let in on "the secret of the under-water rope that helped **Bennett's** representative to victory in a swimming race at **Okanagan Lake** during a private **fête** at the **Bennett** home in **Kelowna**.

Garr's most valuable contribution to the understanding of **B.C. politics** lied in his exposure of **Bennett's** **reliance** on sophisticated polling and marketing techniques. Even those who are **skeptical** of the power of the polls will feel a little **uneasy** — if **not frightened** — to read **one party organizer's** explanation of how a "unpopular **Bennett**, who had just led the province into a recession, beat the immensely popular **Opposition** leader **Dave Barrett** in the 1983 election.

Garr's unbridled **sarcasm** may tempt readers to **dismiss** him as a bitter **reactionary**. His penchant for nicknames — Wacky for the former **premier, Bill Bennett's** father; **Petesey** for **Peter Brown**, prominent **Vancouver** financier; and **Billy**, or **The Tough Guy** for the **current premier** — will undoubtedly turn off more than a few readers. But **Tough Guy** is more than simply **one left-winger's** personal attack on a **disagreeable** leader. To the **all-too-familiar** complaints one is likely to hear in **pubs** from **Vancouver** to **Prince George**, **Garr** adds his hard-won **insights** and a compendium of facts that are so often lacking in **beer-parlour** discussions of politics.

Reading the **memoirs** of **Alex MacDonald**, **B.C.'s** longest sitting **MLA**, one gets the **impression** that the **answer**

to the **Socreds's** continued **success lies** not so much in what Bennett and the **Socred** machine have done as in what the **NDP** fails to do. In a collection of letters to his young friend Hugh L-egg (nicknamed "**Legs**" — hence the book's title), MacDonald **mulls over** the **NDP** cause, **remembering** the **glory** days of the **Dirty '30s**, when **socialism** was **born** in the West with the **signing of the CCF's Regina Manifesto**, and **laying** out a blue print for world peace, **NDP-style**.

My Dear Legs opens with an **intriguing scenario**: as his **colleagues** in the **B.C. legislature** attempt to defeat Bennett's **1983 restraint measures** with **all-night filibusters**, MacDonald **hunkers** over his desk to compose a letter to his young friend, in which he **reminisces** about the **origins** of their party. A film director could have a **field day** with this setup: **flashback to farmers cheering**, **fists upraised** as the **Co-operative Commonwealth Federation** is **born**

amidst the **soup lines** of the '30s; cut to the **present** — Bennett shaking his **fist in victory** as **NDP leader Dave Barrett** is physically ejected, **chair and all**, from the **legislature**. MacDonald, **however**, fails to **capitalize** on the scene's **dramatic potential**; as his **NDP colleagues** pitch a **desperate battle** around him, MacDonald merely **ruminates** on such **lofty** ideals as the **pursuit of equality** and the **protection of liberty**.

In this **rambling collection** of letters, MacDonald spells out his **opinions** on **everything** from **health care** to **world peace**. His arguments are well **thought-out**, and his proposals often **thought-provoking**. Included in MacDonald's **dream of a** **NDP future**, for example, are **salaried doctors working in competitive community health-care centres**, **fighting** to keep **costs** down by keeping patients **healthy**, rather than **prospering** on illness. But this, like most of the **author's proposals**, has the **distinct ring**

of a pipe-dream; **beneath** his **invective** **against big business**, **small government**, and **money-gmbbing capitalists**, one catches a **definite sense** of **futility**.

MacDonald **sums up** the **plight** of the **NDP in British Columbia** by **describing** his party as "**Candidates of the Hard Truth**" with "the **unenviable lot of having** to disagree with **quite a few dominant** opinions and of trying to **convince** people they are **wrong**." This doesn't give the **NDP** much of a **chance** against the **Socreds**, who, as **Garr** points out, **find** out what the people think and then tell **them** they are **right**. MacDonald is well aware of his **party's seemingly impossible** position; his response, however, that Bennett's "cynical manipulations will **carry** him only as far as the next election" **can't** help but sound just a **little naive**, **considering** that with the **success of Expo 86** Bennett seems **poised** on the verge of a **fourth successive** election **victory**. □

FIRST NOVELS

Rewriting history

Based on real events, a new novel falls shy of its author's ambitions because it relies too heavily on the facts

By Douglas Glover

IN 1931, **AMID** the drought and hopper plagues of southern Saskatchewan, **Tom Sukanen** began to build a boat. Not a canoe or a rowboat but a **100-ton, steel-hulled, ocean-going steamship** that he **planned to float down** creeks and rivers to **Hudson Bay** and thence to the **far corners of the world**. A **Finnish immigrant** who had **served** time in **Minnesota** for **wife-beating**, an **inventor**, a

Mr. Fix-It, a **schemer** of crack-pot **philosophies**, a **man whose eccentricities** nearly drove his **neighbours** wild with frustration, **Sukanen** had almost managed to **finish his ship**, the **Sontianen** (**Dung Beetle**), when he was **certified mentally ill** in 1941 and committed to a hospital where he **died** a year later.

Dustship Glory (Doubleday, 224 pages, \$19.95 cloth), **Andreas Schroeder's** **fictional** account of **Tom Sukanen's life**, is a novel of **obsession**, **madness**, and **dream**. Based on **news-paper stories** and **eyewitness testimony**, this is a story of the **bizarre**, a cross between **Ripley's Believe It or Not** and, say, **Robert Kroetsch's 'Badlands**. **Schroeder** is **clearly** fascinated by his subject — the **ship** as it looms over the **prairie**, out of place, **improbable**, a **mighty symbol** of **fortitude** and **futility**,

and its **builder**, a man who **invents futuristic grain harvesters** and foresees **television** while **accusing his neighbours' wives** of peeing in his **machinery** to make it fall.

Unfortunately, *Dustship Glory, the novel*, falls somewhat shy of its author's ambitions. The problem is **signalled** by **Schroeder himself** when he admits, in a preface, to stopping "short of **presuming** to know **Sukanen's inner** thoughts." This is the **kind of humble disclaimer** one would expect to find in a **biography or a work of history**, not in a **novel**. The **strength** of the **novel form** derives from the author's **ability to imagine** what is **inside the protagonist's** head. Novelists are not **tied to fact**, to **research**; they don't have to rely on **educated guesses** or "hunches" — they can make it up.

Schroeder effectively **emasculates** his story, oscillating between **third-person narrative** and **first-person monologues** by **fictional "witnesses"** (repetitive, tritely folksy, the way **rural people** talk on **TV**). The **third-person sections** grow **stronger** as the book **progresses**; the description of the **RCMP taking Sukanen** away from his **ship** is **deep and powerful**; **Schroeder** could and should have **written** the whole book that way. As it is, everyone **guesses** but no one **knows what Sukanen is up to**. In the end

he **remains an obscure**, **cranky, filthy-misanthrope**.

Judith Terry's *Miss Abigail's Part* (Macmillan, 330 pages, \$19.95 cloth), subtitled *Or Version and Diversion*, is a **negative to the positive** of **Jane Austen's Mansfield Park**, or an **anti-Mansfield Park**, or a **revision**, or a **metatext**. It is *Mansfield Park* retold from the point of view of **Julia Bertram's** **personal maid Jane Hartwell**. A **little like a servant** looking up **milady's skirts** as she **climbs the stairs**, it's a **rollicking, picaresque romp**, more **Fielding** than **anyone else**.

Where **Jane Austen** seems a touch on the **prim side**, **Jane Hartwell** is **lustily** and **matter-of-fact**. She shrugs off **rape** (by **both a man and a woman**) with **barely** a thought. She catches **Maria Bertram** and **Henry Crawford** **in flagrante** in the **park at Sotherton**. She's **mauled** by **Tom Bertram** and **submits willingly** to **Henry**. She **runs off with** a **Reformist scene painter** from **London**, is **pursued** by **armed thugs**, **watches a pursuer** trampled by a **herd of cattle**, becomes **nearly the most famous actress of her day**, is **wounded** in a **dud** (by **Maria Bertram**) and **marries** a **lord**.

Where **Jane Austen** **eschews social commentary**, **exchanging the irony of politics** for the politics of **irony**, **Judith Terry** **throws her heroine** **willy-nilly** into

secret Reform Movement **coventicles** and **Dickensian** dens of under-class **iniquity** — things not dreamed of la **Austen's** universe.

This is all in fun, as implied in the novel's subtitle, and not to be compared with the inimitable **Jane**. One gets the feeling Terry is somewhat dissatisfied with **Austen**, thinks she needs some red blood pumped into those cold veins of ironic wit. That's a point of view, not one I share. Frankly, the scenes of political discussion in **Miss Abigail's Part** are a little dull. And the sex is startling without being convincing. Are we to read these sections as exercises in revisionist social history, or are they as much a literary confection, albeit of another century, as the original **Mansfield Park**?

These quibbles aside, **Miss Abigail's Part** is an entertaining first novel, especially if you've read **Austen** recently and can appreciate the sly interplay between versions.

Manitoba poet **Jacque Smyth's** **No Fixed Admission** (Turnstone, 74 pages, 97.95 paper) is an ambitious effort to sound the chords of the generations within one family, showing the way attitudes end relationships, not just eyebrows, hair colour, and foot size, are passed on through the blood. Though a scant 74 pages long, it has epic intentions à la **R.D. Laing**. In a series of vignettes, she tells the stories of children, parents, and grandparents. their huts, their weaknesses, and their failures, following each to death or to a querulous, somewhat sodden present.

Alice Peterson has left the Prairies to mend fences with her estranged father, now a motel owner in British Columbia. She lives with him for six months, listening to his reminiscences. writing letters to her sister and a former boy-friend, talking on the telephone to her mother, keeping a journal, assessing and reconstructing the litanies of **plaint and self-justification**.

My father's anger brings me back to my mother. The repetition of events. Like being locked into the credits, having to repeat the same fate over and over. And then I think it is all breath of blood and the rest is choice.

Between journal entries, the narrative slips into the past, into **Alice's** paternal grandmother's mind, into her youthful father's mind, and so on. We see the

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CANADIAN FICTION MAGAZINE

edited by Geoffrey Hancock

CFM congratulates ROHINTON MISTRY for his story "Exercisers" (#54) which won CFM's Annual Contributor's Prize as the most outstanding story of the year. Previous winners include LEON ROOKE, W.P. KINSELLA, MAVIS GALLANT, JOHN METCALF, GUY VANDERHAEGHE, KEATH FRASER, DAVID SHARPE, DOUGLAS GLOVER, ANNE COPPELAND, MATT COHEN, and PATRICK ROSCOE.

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couples combining, splitting apart, Alice's mother and father growing to a flawed maturity and passing on their "genes" along with their fates. It's a stately little dance, the dance of time and the generations, that we're watching. And there's no doubt the vignettes, piling one on top of the other, build a certain cumulative power.

No *Fixed Admission* is a marvel of ellipsis and condensation — Smyth has tried to write *War and Peace* on an aerogramme form. But, occasionally, reaching too hard for poetry, she becomes awkward and vague. (The second sentence — "Outside, fallen leaves are hidden among everything that is green" — is passive and ungrammatical.) The journal entries are devoid of action, thin. Compared with the passionate, sometimes brutal, life of her family, Alice Peterson's is a little like flat beer. Passive, victimized, she does not appear to see herself with the same clarity she demonstrates *vis à vis* her family. Nevertheless, this is a strikingly intelligent, dense, and poetic short novel.

Cornel Lumiere's *Kalavrita* (Simon & Pierre, 178 pages, 510.95 paper) with the unfortunate subtitle *A Greek Tragedy/ A Strange Low* is an anti-German, anti-Holocaust, revenge novel set partly in Canada and partly in Greece. It's the story of how Stavros Millionis, sent to Canada in 1939 at the age of four to escape the coming war, grows into a Bay Street legal barracuda, a star tennis player, a self-made millionaire (he buys Dennison stock at 10 cents while he's still at university), and writes songs that promise to eclipse the modern taste for decadent mck music (Lumiere quotes lyrics at length —

*The wind, if you listen, will tell you a story,
The tale of two bells that has never been told —
A tale of their grief and their moment of glory,
The wind may well tell you, for whom the bell tolled.*

— (Sting need not worry), the", in the 1980s, returns to the Greek village of his birth and cold-bloodedly kills 50 innocent German tourists to avenge a war-time massacre.

Stavros is not Superman. he's Super Greek. He cuts a swath through the namby-pamby Toronto establishment like a combine harvester through a field of wheat (mainly, we are told, because for the first four years of his life he ran around in the mountains with his dog and slept in caves where his father sheltered sheep). He impresses the prime minister (clearly Pierre Trudeau) during a party at a Jamaica retreat; he wins a death struggle with a shark. He can do

anything, and satisfy any woman. (Stavros approves his father's militantly chauvinist policy toward women.)

Amid this boring literary macho chest-beating, we get the story of the village of Kalavrita, where over 1,000 men, women, and children were slaughtered by the Germans in 1943 in reprisal for the Greek partisans slaughter of several hundred German prisoners of war. Of course, Stavros wasn't around when any of this took place and really doesn't show much curiosity about it as he grows up. It's not at all clear why he suddenly flips out and starts murdering tourists. (He really hates those "Huns"; Stavros is a species of racist.)

It is probably a useful thing to point out that among all the Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, intellectuals, Poles, and Russians the Nazis killed in the Second World War, they also slaughtered some Greeks. But Stavros is not a convincing Angel of Retribution and his program of vengeance is revolting.

Shirley Shea's *Victims* (Simon & Pierre, 186 pages, 512.95 paper), subtitled *A Pound of Flesh* is also a revenge novel — this time a right-wing feminist attack on the Canadian criminal justice system, which, we are told, coddles rapists and sex murderers. Shea is pro-death penalty and anti-plea bargaining, statutory remission, and mandatory supervision.

Sylvia Jennings, 39, the stay-at-home wife of a prominent Toronto criminal defence lawyer, has turned herself into Super Woman, swimming, working out, taking Defendo classes. Using her husband's case files, she hunts down and murders several men" accused of sex crimes and either acquitted (with her husband's help) or released after serving minimal sentences. Described as a rough equivalent to the Reign of Terror, these murders prompt the me" of Toronto to whimper for police protection. adopt the buddy system after dark, buy extra pen knives, and generally panic.

Sylvia manages to elude detection by framing a ma" who has tried to murder her in her home (a sub-plot — Sylvia beats up a young purse-snatcher in a shopping mall; the purse-matcher and his brother trap her in her house; she kills the purse-snatcher with her bare hands but the brother surprises her and she is only saved by the timely intervention of her pet kitty).

Victims is a polemical novel that plainly applauds vigilante acts. Throughout there are pamphlet-like, set-piece conversations, arguing for or against various aspects of the justice system. The plot is manipulated to drive the points home. AU men accused of sex crimes are guilty (whether or "ot a judge

or jury finds them so) — they ought to be punished with deaths similar to those they inflicted on their female victims.

As an argument against our criminal justice system (and who can say it's perfect?), this one is too shrill and hyperbolic to be taken seriously. Having been a court reporter on a couple of daily newspapers (and having seen a fair share of sexual assault trials) I have never ceased to be surprised at how well the system actually does work, how fair and shrewd judges appear in practice, how delicate a balancing act we perform between infringing on and protecting the rights of individuals.

Shea seems to think that in a court of law any kind of base and cynical manipulation can be brought off, that all criminals escape with less than they deserve. This damages her argument as well as her plot. For example, the planting of two pieces of circumstantial evidence on an innocent man (at least innocent of the crime for which he's convicted) seems to Shea to be enough to convince Toronto's gullible police department of his guilt.

Simon Johnston's *Lion Dance* (Williams-Wallace, 282 pages, 519.95 cloth) is meant to be a page-turner, an action-packed thriller set in turn-of-the-century China. A cruel and racist British colonel named Elliot is charged with delivering two black pearls to the Dowager Empress, a bribe for her connivance in continuing the foreign economic domination of her country. Elliot sets off for the Dowager's palace with his opium-addicted daughter Victoria. He's trailed by two revolutionary martial-arts monks, Fat-san and Fat-meen, and a" old woman whose son" Elliot has executed. Following them, in turn, is Justin Wu, the half-British, half-Chinese nephew of Sun Yat-sen, who is supposed to protect Elliot and his daughter.

This book is full of brutal, cartoonish murders, executions and mutilations (a boy is chose" to deep with the Dowager. the" has hi tongue and penis removed). On page 131, Johnston decides to switch from third-person to first-person narration, and after that he alternates the point of view for no apparent reason. The plot is loose and episodic, sometimes difficult to follow, and the writing is weak when it isn't being wildly sensational.

One supposes that part of what Johnston wanted to do was to represent the brutal extremes of imperial Cbii and foreign exploitation, but he concentrates too strictly on his cardboard protagonists to give his novel a chance at depth and amplitude. *Lion Dance* reads like a bad Western with the names changed. □

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Phyllis Grosskurth

'One of the dangers of biography is becoming too possessive of your subject. You have to stand back and grant the other person her otherness'

By Sherie Posesorski

BY CHANCE, while working on her doctoral thesis at the University of London, Phyllis Grosskurth discovered the unpublished autobiography of John Addington Symonds. Her subsequent biography of him, *The Woeful Victorian* (1964), won a Governor General's Award and launched Grosskurth on an unexpected career as a distinguished biographer and literary critic. Since then, her reviews and articles have appeared in the *Observer*, *Daily Telegraph*, *New York Review of Books*, and *Saturday Night*, and in 1980 she won international recognition for *Havelock Ellis: A Biography* (McClelland & Stewart). Born in Toronto in 1924 and now a professor at the University of Toronto, Grosskurth has spent the last five years working on *Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work*, a study of the controversial pioneer psychoanalyst, recently published by Knopf. She was interviewed in Toronto by Sherie Posesorski:

Books in Canada: How did you come to chose *Melanie Klein* as a subject?
Phyllis Grosskurth: A miracle. I' 1977, I

Phyllis Grosskurth



was in England working on my book on *Havelock Ellis*, when my son Brian, who is interested in psychoanalysis, gave me Klein's *Envy and Gratitude* to read, saying, "She's a genius and she will help you to understand Ellis better." At Christmas, 1980, I was floundering. I had taken my research on Marie Bonaparte, my next subject, as far as I could. At that point, I didn't know I had been double-crossed with regard to access to the Bonaparte archives, but I did know I couldn't continue without it. I didn't know what to do next. Brian encouraged me to write about Klein.

BIC: Why has there been such a strong resistance to Klein and her work?

Grosskurth: The resistance to her is caused, in part, by her warring relationship with Anna Freud. When Klein first arrived in England, she walked right into the right psychoanalytical circle. It was a perfect concatenation of a person with a milieu. She flourished until the arrival of Anna Freud, whose arrival split allegiances within the circle. There still remains a passionate and irrational allegiance to Anna Freud. Some people even think that she was a doctor. She was daddy's little girl, didn't formulate anything new or disturbing — unlike Klein, whose ideas are very disturbing. When the Anna Freud psychoanalysts emigrated to the U.S. in the 1930s, they brought their allegiances and prejudices against KIdp with them, and imprinted them on a generation of analysts.

Second, there is the matter of Klein's forceful personality. She was a gutsy woman. I think some of the resistance to her is simply male prejudice against a woman. Women aren't supposed to think abstractly — and worse, she had the audacity to challenge Freud.

BIC: What did you find you shared with Klein?

Grosskurth: Here were all these people that adored her — excessively, I thought. I started off rebellious, trying to put her down — feeling I'm not going to be taken in by this woman. Gradually, as I got into my research, I began to discover that there were almost too many startling parallels between her life and my own. I had to be very careful

that I didn't overidentify with her. For a while, in any biography, you have to overidentify, if you want to become engaged. You become terribly protective — absorbed in the other person. But then you reach the point where you have to stand back and grant the other person her otherness.

At one point I had to rewrite her life up to the age of 40 when some additional letters showed up in her son's loft. A translator in England started sending them over to me in batches, and I began putting together the jigsaw puzzle of her family dynamics. A series of letters depicted how Klein had sided with her mother against her sister. Suddenly, I became so disappointed in her. I remember sitting on my stairs, in tears. I thought, you'd better watch it — you're not her keeper or her defence lawyer. She had a life of her own. The book became better when I started to use the blue pencil more.

BIC: In an interview, you stated that "Klein speaks to women. Freud didn't know anything about the relationship between mothers and daughters, and that is her greatest contribution."

Grosskurth: Klein's work addresses the relationship between mother and daughter, which is the most complex of all relationships. I think that real maturity for a woman is achieved when she finally comes to terms with that relationship. Although feminists wouldn't like to hear this, women have a far more complex envy than men — because they have more to envy. I don't think the feminist movement is going to go anywhere as long as it stays at the level of blaming patriarchal society for everything, and not looking into themselves.

BIC: I know little about psychoanalysis, yet I found your biography accessible.

Grosskurth: I think that it was important that it was written by a woman and by someone who wasn't an analyst. An analyst would have got caught up in the jargon. Learning about psychoanalysis was formidible — that was the thing that scared me most — but it was the most wonderful education, the greatest immersion course. When I was writing the book, I knew it was important to

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBIN KOBRYN

make absolutely sure that I knew exactly what I meant to say. It was terrific discipline. Although sometimes I wish that I could write with more of a flourish, my strength is clear writing.

BIC: Do you anticipate that your Klein biography will arouse controversy?

Grosskurth: Yes, I expect a tremendous amount of criticism to be palatable to a certain kind of simplistic feminism. They will resist her because she doesn't say we can be anything that we want to be — she states that there are human limitations and that it is particularly difficult to be a woman.

BIC: You seem to be drawn to people who are psychological Chinese boxes, in that they are composed of layers of contradictory selves — selves that they themselves are unaware of. Why?

Grosskurth: I'm fascinated by the depths and contradictions of people — to me, that's the marvel of human nature. Even as a literary scholar, I have always been most interested in the discrepancy between illusion and reality. With Symonds, his discrepancies and self-deceptions in his life and autobiography were tied to his homosexuality. With Ellis, the deceptions in his autobiography are tied to the fact that he never understood himself. Here was a man who was handing out advice to the world, yet was so lacking in self-understanding. Of all my subjects, he was the most self-protective — he was so pleased with himself. Klein's autobiography is self-protective for different reasons. She had tremendous self-understanding. She couldn't have written her work without an acute awareness of her own complexity. But in the writing of her autobiography she withdrew from some of the pain she had experienced in her relationships with her mother, husband, and children.

BIC: What are the hallmark of a good biography?

Grosskurth: First off, I do not think it is possible to write about a living person. Second, you must be able to guarantee every single thing you say — you must provide references for your readers. Biography should have narrative pace, just as a novel does — a momentum, and that momentum should vary. As well, I like illuminating detail.

The character should gradually unfold in all his or her complexity. By the end the reader should come to feel that he has come to know that person intimately by being the one who adds up the pieces — he must be given that privilege. Yet there still should be a whole area of mystery about that person that he can never penetrate. I don't like biographies that say at the end, this is what the person is. It should be left open-ended. One of the great dangers of biography is

becoming too possessive of your subject. A supreme example of that is Leon Edel's Henry James. He simply forced you to see his James. He's so self-indulgent. He just doesn't know when to stop — the identification has become so strong.

BIC: What are the satisfactions of your work?

Grosskurth: More than anything else, it is so damned interesting. It takes over your life. You are walking around all the time with this world in your head that you are rebuilding. I think it's so difficult to understand your own world, and all your own relationships. Yet you can understand your own world better by patting together the pieces of somebody else's. □

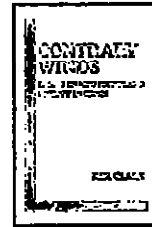
LETTERS

Psychological warfare

IN KEITH MAILLARD'S review of my book, *Objectivity and Human Perception*, (March) he states that my solution to the malaise of civilized society is "practice," or the pursuit of non-projective perceptual activities traditionally associated with mystical schools. In several passages I make it perfectly clear that such practice is merely one aspect of my solution, and that "psychoanalysis" or the analytical probing of the individual's projective system is another aspect. I state explicitly that practice is "one essential prong to a two-pronged assault on the distortions and discontentments" of our normal perception. This was a major omission and a gross misrepresentation.

Second, Maillard claims in a paraphrase that I regard "Mom" as the troublesome central presence in our problematical perception, yet I stress that it is the internalization of split aspects of the "caregiver" during the early stages of existence that is the heart of the matter. "Mom" is a conceptualization that comes into play during the course of the child's maturation, after the crucial events of the early period have commenced. The reviewer's use of "Mom" distorts and trivializes the book's thesis.

Again, the reviewer states that the "mirror relationship" between the mother and the infant is an aspect of the early period that is postulated by "certain Freudians." He fails to note — and I make this explicit, employing bibliographical reference — that the mirror relationship is widely regarded as crucial to the child's development by child



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psychologists both within and without the “Freudian” camp. Thus, when Maillard later states that he does not believe in certain “myths” about early childhood, he creates the false impression that his position puts him at odds only with “certain Freudians” and not with specialists in child psychology. This is important because it raises a larger, related issue, namely the reviewer’s failure to acknowledge the book’s persistent, unremitting attempt to differentiate between orthodox “Freudian” views and other views within the psychoanalytic community. Again and again the book employs precisely such differentiations to characterize human behaviour. Indeed, several of the book’s chapters are devoted to refuting the orthodox “Freudian” outlook on everything from infantile anxiety to altered states of consciousness. By refusing even to mention this central feature, the reviewer not only obscures the book’s nature, he places himself in a position to turn his review into a rhetorical exercise in Freud-bashing.

Finally, the reviewer wonders how I can explore my subject without bringing in the anthropological angle. If he would just read my book he would discover a discussion of anthropological issues based upon the definitive work of Erich Neumann, which makes very clear the way in which the “good” and “bad” versions of the maternal object appear in all parts of the world.

Although a reviewer has the right to dislike a book, he also has the duty to present the book truthfully.

M.D. Faber
Department of English
University of Victoria
Victoria

Keith Maillard replies: Yes, indeed, Faber’s book is quite explicit in emphasizing, as he says, “a two-pronged assault” (“practice” and “psychoanalysis”), and yes, indeed, his book does make a “persistent, unremitting attempt to differentiate between orthodox ‘Freudian’ views and other views within the psychoanalytic community.” If my review, as published, overly simplified Faber’s position, let me apologize. But granting those points leaves my central objection to his book untouched. He suggests that I have refused or failed to grasp his book’s psychological meaning. No. What I have refused and failed to do is believe it.

Everybody with any knowledge of psychology at all (even me) believes that a close, intimate bonding relationship between an infant and a “primary caregiver” (usually a mother) is “crucial to the child’s development.” What I don’t buy is all the rest of it — the interjection

of the “good mother/bad mother”; the separation from the mother setting off a “lifelong mourning process”; the endless search for “replacement”; the association of our ability to conceive of objects as separate in space with the “emotive dilemma” of infant separation, so that our notions of time, space, and our use of language are somehow related to this emotive dilemma to the point that “our perception itself is the chief carrier of our conflict.” It is this chain of speculation that I have called a “fantasy.” Not only is most of this not supported by research “data,” but most is of such a nature that it can’t be tested at all.

That the work of Neumann can be called “definitive” will come as news to many. From the Jungian tradition, James Hillman, whose writing is state of-the-art in archetypal psychology, suggests that Neumann stuffs so many images of women into the mythologem of the Great Mother that what is left is a fuzzy, undifferentiated blur. Neumann’s work doesn’t fare any better in the green groves of academe; it would not be considered by cultural anthropologists to be a model of the scientific method.

I’m not opposed to imaginative, speculative writing about the human condition nor in love with the orthodoxies of academia and experimental psychology. But Faber claims that his book is based on “data,” that it is somehow “scientific.” To compare roots: a “fact” is something found; a “fict” is something made, and Faber has certainly made something — a myth, a fantasy, a story, a fiction — but not a contribution to science.

In the preface Faber writes: “it should be remembered that the words themselves are not the pay-off.” From my point of view, when you’re writing a book, the words themselves certainly are the pay-off. I love reading the fictions of Jung, Campbell, von Franz, and Hillman. (In the right mood I even enjoy Freud’s fictions.) All these people tell good stories. AU I have against Faber is that he didn’t tell me a good story.

SIGNS OF DISSENT

GRANT DAVID SHILLING’S profile of Crad Kilodney (March) was on the whole an accurate account of this extraordinary writer’s social disillusionment, and his courage in publishing his own work and selling it on the streets of Tomato.

However, a glaring error cries out to be put right. Kilodney has never worn a sign that pronounces him to be “The World’s Greatest Author.” He indeed wears signs that are obvious and outrageous attention-getters, and although some of them are too subtle to penetrate the heads of the Bay Street crowd, and

others are so bizarre and grotesque that they make certain people flee in terror, none of them are ever as pompous and self-serving as the "on-existent one" quoted above. Kilodney's out there to sell books, not declare himself to be the world's greatest anything.

But speaking of those books: I am one who has read most of them, and in the process discovered one of the finest and most original prose-writers in this country. I fact I would venture to say the most original. It's a pity that Shilling didn't make any real comment on the writing itself, for it's time that someone published a detailed and intelligent article on Kilodney's entire body of work. No one in this country writes as he does:

no one can, and even "original" is too weak a word to describe this phenomenal and much-overlooked literary figure in our midst.

Gwendolyn MacEwen
Toronto

Grant David Shilling replies: I appreciate Gwendolyn MacEwen's comments. It is obvious that she shares my enthusiasm for Crad Kilodney's work.

Kilodney has been "selling his books on the street for the past seven years. His signs change frequently. MacEwen must be a" awfully big fan of his to be aware of all the signs he has worn during that time.

If one understands the humour of

Crad Kilodney, a sign declaring him "The World's Greatest Author" is clear. The sign was worn shortly after *Lightning Struck My Dick* was released.

LIVES OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

CARY FAGAN'S pedantically centralist review of Gertrude Story's work (*March*) sets up the trilogy as a liturgical sacrament. Like Ontario's Robertson Davies, Saskatchewan's Story (like a good girl?) is supposed to write according to tradition, and if she doesn't she is an "instinctive rather than technically sophisticated writer." What nonsense!

The idea that a fictional life should fall conveniently into three volumes labelled "early," "middle" and "late" years is ridiculous, particularly so in the case of women. Past, present, and future spill into one another. Lives get interrupted, redirected, haunted, and invaded by others.

"Technically unsophisticated" Gertrude Story dances with roomy Western Canadian magic realism in her first book, the small detail of clannish interconnected lives in her second, and post-modern Freudian fragmentation in her third, a work that consciously sets out to test the limits of language. In light of Story's technical expertise. Fagan's plodding plot summaries of her books resemble the clucking of a podiatrist at a jazz ballet.

Undoubtedly Robertson Davies could give a fascinating account of the genesis of podiatry while Gertrude Story dances beside the shadow of Upper Canada College in uptown Saskatoon. Think about it.

Anne Hicks
Waterloo, Ont.

CLASH OF SYMBOLS

I'M WRITING TO congratulate The Canadian Book Information Centre for its bold, satirical *45 Below* poster. Even the dullest of Canadians will appreciate the symbolism of this poster. The myopic Canadian writer is oblivious to the fact that he is sliding downhill and that he is destined to end up teaching Remedial English in Terrace, B.C. In the bottom right corner, a steamer is arriving to pick up a fresh load of Canadian raw resources, and below it, a cruise ship full of Canadian tourists has just left the St. Lawrence in its wake as it makes for Europe and the July sales. Judging from its worse, one would assume that Baie Comeau was its last stop. Brilliant!

Be" Labovitch
Toronto

WATCH YOUR LAWGUAGE

RE: BOB BLACKBURN'S column on "offensive language" (*March*). The other day I watched a CBGTV program

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Whether gifts or not, they are not given free;
hard work they cost, neglect, uncertainty,
anguish of worshipping Perfection's face
lo, in her unattainable far place,
lovely, alluring, and beyond embrace.
Elegance be her surrogate the while:
yearn as we do, make elegant our style.

THE ABOVE, rather worshipful, sentiments (quoted from a review in this issue) are part of an acrostic poem by George Johnston about -George Whalley, whose last name is spelled out by the first letters of its lines. We wonder how our readers — especially those in a more cynical frame of mind — "tight apply similar verses to a" Atwood, say, or a Gretzky or Mulroney. We'll pay \$25 for the best acrostic poem on any well-known Canadian, living or dead. Deadline: Sept. 1. Address: CanWit No. 112, Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9.

Results of CanWit No. 110 IN THE INTERESTS of advancing our national literature, we asked contestants to rewrite well-known plays to increase their Canadian content. The winner is S.A. Clements of Kingston, Ont., for the following dialogue, patterned after Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot, Act I*:
ESTRAGON: (Irritably) What is it?
VLADIMIR: Did you ever read *Roughing It in the Bush*?
ESTRAGON: *Roughing It in the Bush*... (He reflects) I must have taken a look at

VLADIMIR: Do you remember the Group of Seven?
ESTRAGON: I remember the paintings of All Gone Quinn Park. Coloured they

were. Very pretty. Lake Superior was pale blue. The very look of it made me thirsty. That's where we'll go. I used to say, that's where we'll go for our honeymoon. eh. We'll swim, eh. We'll be happy. eh.

VLADIMIR: You should have been a Mountie.

ESTRAGON: I was. (Gesture toward his hone) Isn't that obvious? (Silence)

VLADIMIR: Where was I... How's your foot?

ESTRAGON: Swelling visibly and frozen stiff.

VLADIMIR: Ah yes, the Group of Seven. Do you remember the story?

ESTRAGON: No.

VLADIMIR: Shall I tell it to you?

ESTRAGON: No.

VLADIMIR: It'll pass the time. (Pause) The Group of Seven painted trees and established Canada's national identity.

ESTRAGON: Canada's what?

VLADIMIR: National identity. One is supposed to have drowned and the others (He searches for the contrary of drowned) ...survived.

ESTRAGON: Survived what?

VLADIMIR: Painting .. Canada's national identity.

ESTRAGON: I'm going.

(He does not move)

Honourable mention:

(From *Hamlet, Act I, Scene II*)

JOHN: For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold, and I am sick at heart.

BRIAN: Have you had a quiet term?

JOHN: Not a moose stirring.

BRIAN: Has this deficit increased again today?

JOHN: Pierre says 'tis but our fantasy, And will not let belief take hold of him. Therefore I have entreated him along with us to watch . . .

PIERRE: Tush. tush. 'twill not increase. (Enter The Deficit, enormously increased)

— Rob Scott, Saskatoon

called "Parenting." Book stores nowadays are filled with "How to Parent" manuals. No one seems to question or protest the fact that a noun has somehow been twisted around into a verb. I have a terrible feeling it is only a matter of time until this usage of "parent" gets into the dictionary.

One of the worst examples of this kind of word-twisting came to light at a recreational seminar I attended, in which the instructors (all university-educated, no less) repeatedly referred to the act of "recreating in our spare time." We in the audience were known as the "recreators"!

Before these corruptions worm their way into acceptability, perhaps what we need to do is "recreate" some interest in correct and careful usage of the English language.

Margaret Gunning
Hinton, Alta.

RECOMMENDED

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

FICTION

The *Green Tomato Years*, by Gloria Kupchinko Frolick, Williams-Wallace. A series of vignettes about the Ukrainian community in Alberta during the Depression, Frolick's tint collection of short stories evokes a tightly-knit society where people keep their balance in a strange land by hanging on to each other.

NON-FICTION

Michele Landsberg's Guide to Children's Books, Penguin. Full of strong opinions and passionate beliefs (Landsberg detests

such widely popular children's writers as Judy Blume and Roald Dahl, but is equally opposed to censorship), this guide, which spans some 350 titles, adds up to much more than merely a listing of favourite books.

POETRY

Woman in the Woods, by Joy Kogawa, Mosaic Press. Despite the imagery suggested in the title, Kogawa's vision is obscured neither by the forest nor the trees. Though much in the world offends her sensibilities, her poetry's most engaging virtue is an obvious passion for life.

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.

Active Voice: An Anthology of Canadian, American and Commonwealth Prose, edited by W.H. New and W.E. Messenger, Prentice-Hall Canada.

Afraid of the Dark, by Barry Dickson, illustrated by Olena Kassian, James Lorimer.

All the Way Home, by Max Braithwaite, M & S.

American Illustration, 1890-1925: Romance, Adventure & Suspense, by Judy L. Larson, Glenbow Museum.

Anna's Feet, by Margaret Atwood and Joyce Kilmer, illustrated by Ann Blades, James Lorimer.

Anti-War Poems Anthology, Volume II, edited by Stephen Gill, Vesta Publications.

As Birds Bring Forth the Sun, by Ailsair MacLeod, M & S.

Althabasen Oil Sands: Northern Resource Exploration 1875-1951, by Barry Glen Ferguson, Canadian Plains Research Center.

Back to Normal, by Richard Lonetto and Gayle Kumchy, Doubleday.

The Beekeeper's Daughter, by Bruce Hunter, Thisledown Press.

Behave Yourself!, by Elena Jankovic with Sandra Bernstein, Prentice-Hall.

The Bishop, by David Helwig, Penguin.

Blue Jays '86, An In-Depth Look . . ., by Seymour Swoff, Steve Hird, and Peter Hird, Collier Macmillan.

Buried on Sunday, by Edward Phillips, M & S.

Buxbaum, by Ted Bissland, Dell.

Canada: A Story of Challenge, by J.M.S. Careless, Macmillan.

Canada Among Nations, edited by Maureen Appel Molot and Brian W. Tomlin, James Lorimer.

Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation, by J.L. Granatstein, M & S.

Canadian Broadcasting: The Challenge of Change, Colin Hoskins and Stuart McFadyen, University of Alberta.

The Canadian Economy: A Regional Perspective, by Donald Savoie, Methuen.

The Canadian Writer's Handbook (Second Edition), by William E. Messenger and Jan de Bruyn, Prentice-Hall.

The Child Care Crisis, by Fredelle Maynard, Penguin.

City Critics: How to Live with Urban Wildlife, by David M. Bird, Eden Press.

Company's Coming: Desserts, by Jean Fare, Company's Coming Publishing.

Co-operative Education Modules, by Eva Nichols, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.

A Christmas Tree from Fiddler's Stone Hill, by Elsie Hadden Mole, illustrated by Sylvia Hahn, Penumbra.

Dance with Desire, Love Poems, by Irving Layton, M & S.

Death Is an Anxious Mother, by Anne Campbell, Thisledown Press.

Discovery of the North: The Exploration of Canada's Arctic, by Daniel Francis, Hurtig.

Don Valley Legacy, A Pioneer History, by Ann Guthrie, Boston Mills Press.

Egg-Carton Zoo, by Rudi Haas, Hans Blohm, David Suzuki, Oxford.

En Bons Termes, by M. Parmentier and D. Porvin, Prentice-Hall.

Fabulous Meals for Busy People, by Hannelore Bloom, Barron's.

The Face of Jack Mauro, by Tom Wayman, Harbour Publishing.

A Farm in the Family, the Many Faces of Ontario Agriculture Over the Centuries, by John and Monica Ladell, Dundurn Press.

The Fells of Brightness, Second Volume, Wenckebanna, by John Whyte, Longspoon Press.

The Fox and the Missing Mask, Colleen Rutherford Archer, Penumbra.

French Kiss Or: A Fung's Progress, by Nicole Brossard, translated by Patricia Claxton, Coach House.

Gabriel Dumont: Le chef des Metis et sa patrie perdue, by George Woodcock, translated by Pierre Desrusseaux and Francois Lanctot, VLB Editeur.

The Gates of the Sun, by Sharon Butala, Fifth House.

Giving: Ojibwa Stories and Legends from the Children of Curve Lake, edited by Georgia Elston, Waspoone Publishing.

Gods and Other Marials, by Helen Humphrys, Brick Books.

Harvest from the Rock: A History of Mining in Ontario, by Philip Smith, Macmillan.

Heather Hits Her First Home Run, by Ted Plantos, illustrated by Maureen Paxton, Black Moss Press.

A History of the Dublin Library Society, 1791-1881, by John Bruce Howell, Dalhousie University School of Library Science.

Hockey Showdown, by Bruce Kidd, illustrated by Leoung O'Young, James Lorimer.

A Hot-Eyed Moderate, by Jane Rule, Lester & Orpen Dennys.

The Hungry Time, by Selwyn Dewdney, illustrated by Olena Kassian, James Lorimer.

Information, Enrichment and Delight: Public Libraries in Western Australia, by John Cook, Dalhousie University School of Library Science.

The Joy of Bridge Companion, by Audrey Grant and Eric Rodwell, Prentice-Hall.

The Loneliness Theme, by Dale Locant, Waluku Press.

Marie Chappelaine, by Louis Hémon, translated by W H Blake, Macmillan.

The Measurement of Cohesion in Sports Teams, by W. Neil Widmeyer et al., Sports Dynamics.

Melanie Klein, Her World and Her Work, by Phyllis Grosskurth, M & S.

Michael's Ship: The True Story of a Young Boy's Struggle to Survive, by Sol Goldstein, Prentice-Hall.

Midnight Found You Dancing, by John Smith, Ragweed Press.

Mike and the Bike, illustrated by Leoung O'Young, James Lorimer.

Momentam, by Marc Diamond, Pulp Press.

The Night the Dog Smiled, by John Newlove, ECW Press.

No Lies and Other Stories, by Ken J. Harvey, Robinson-Blackmore.

On Stage with Maara Haas, by Maara Haas, Lith Publications.

Other Fires: Short Fiction by Latin American Women, edited by Alberto Marguel, Lester & Orpen Dennys.

The Other Parts, by Mavis Gallant, Macmillan.

Out of the Willow Trees, by Peter Stephens, Thisledown Press.

Parliament and Canadian Foreign Policy, edited by David Taras, Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

Pacific Challenge: Canada's Future in the New Asia, by Eric Downton, Stoddart.

The Pillow, by Rosemary Allison, illustrated by Charles Hilder, James Lorimer.

Please Don't Interrupt, by Joanne Brisson Murphy, illustrated by Maureen Paxton, Black Moss Press.

Point Blank, by Lyn Cockburn, Lith Publications.

Programmeurs à pages, by Jacques Bissonnette, VLB Editeur.

The Provinces and Canadian Foreign Policy, edited by Tom Keating and Don Munton, Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

Rare Jewel for a King, a Tribute to King Clancy, by Anne M. Logan, foreword by Jim Coleman, Boston Mills Press.

Reaction: The New Combines Investigation Act, edited by Walter Block, The Fraser Institute.

The Red Apples, by Marion Mineau, illustrated by Shirley Day, Black Moss Press.

Red Lights on the Prairies, by James H. Gray, Boston Mills Press.

Salts and Stevens, by Cyril E. Poole, Harry Cuff Publications.

The Secret Code of DNA, by Mary Razzell, illustrated by J. O. Penname, Penumbra.

A Short History of Ontario, by Robert Bothwell, Hurtig.

The Seapeople Complex: Toward a Mythology of Shadow and Gull, by Sylvia Brinton Perera, Inner City Books.

Sir Charles God Dagan: The Life of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, by John Coldwell Adams, University of Toronto Press.

Six Dam Cows, by Margaret Laurence, illustrated by Ann Blades, James Lorimer.

Slush, by Jeannette Armstrong, Theytus Books.

Social Communication in Advertising, by William Leiss et al., Methuen.

Solomon's Children: Exploding the Myths of Divorce, by Glynnis Walker, Doubleday.

Some Talk Magic, by Penny Kemp, Ergo Books.

Starmageddon, by Richard Rohner, Irwin.

Start Your Own Business, the Canadian Entrepreneur's Guide, by Peter D. Cook, Stoddart.

Suburbs of the Arctic Circle, by Mary Burns, Penumbra.

The Top of the Heart, by Lesley Choyle, Thisledown Press.

The Vancouver Guide Book, by Ginny and Beth Evans, Eve Publishing.

Vatican Splendour: Masterpieces of Baroque Art, by Catherine Johnston et al., National Gallery.

Visitations, by Steve Yearlight, Underwhich Editions.

Voices of Deliverance: Interviews with Quebec & Acadian Writers, by Donald Smith, translated by Larry Shoultice, Anasol.

The Wall Street Gurus, How You Can Profit from Investment Newsletters, by Peter Brimelow, Key Porter.

The Watch That Ends the Night, by Hugh MacLennan, Macmillan.

Whale Waddle, by Judith Fitzgerald, illustrated by Maureen Paxton, Black Moss Press.

Who Killed Janet Smith?, by Edward Starkins, Macmillan.

Who's A Soccer Player, by Bruce Kidd, illustrated by Jerrard Smith, James Lorimer.

William Notman: The Stamp of a Studio, by Stanley Triggs, AGO/Coach House.

Willow: The Story of an Ambian Foal, by Patricia Jessen, illustrated by Jeannette Lightwood, Penumbra.

Writing Fundamentals (Second edition), by Joseph T. Lyons, Prentice-Hall.

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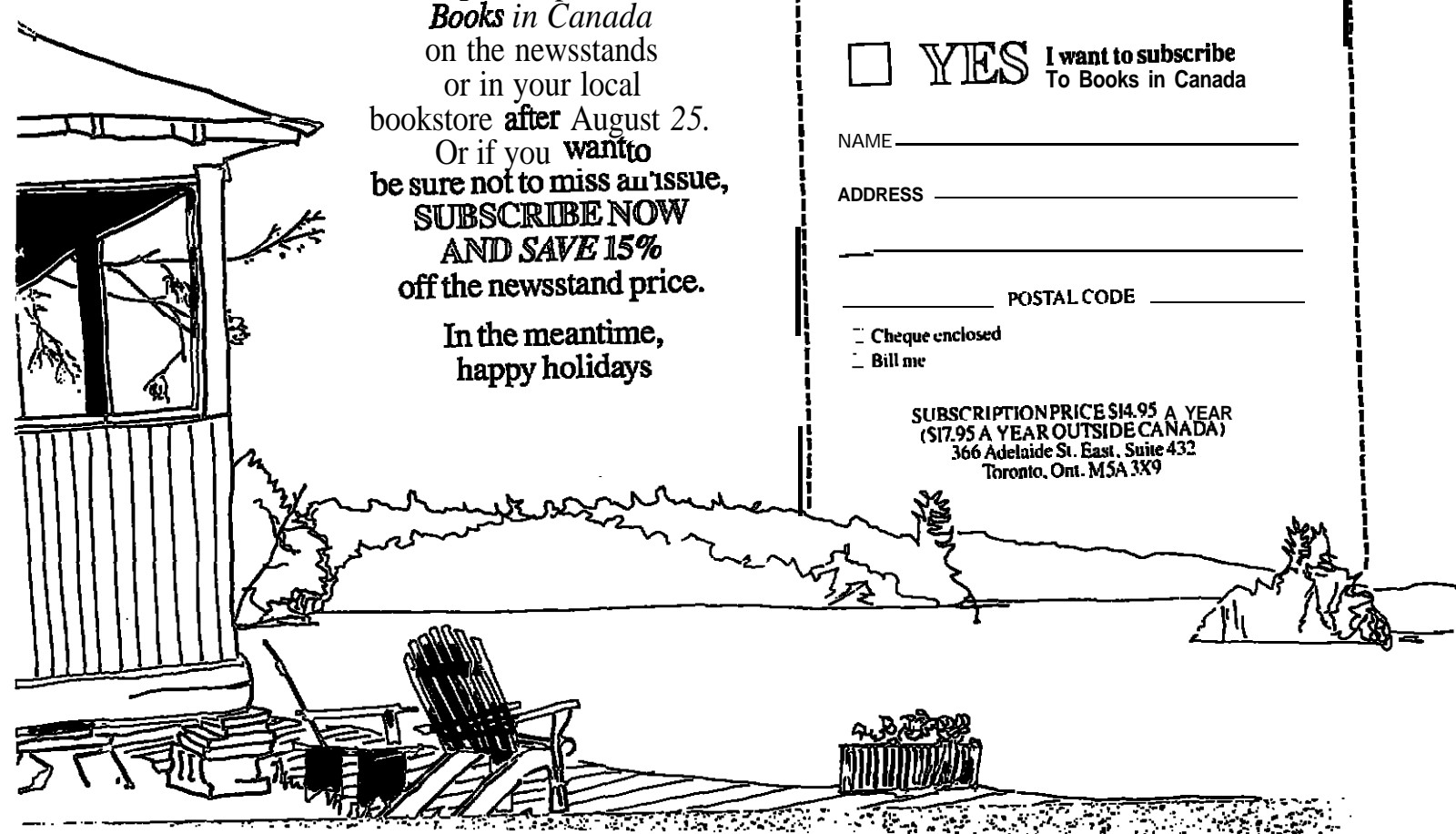
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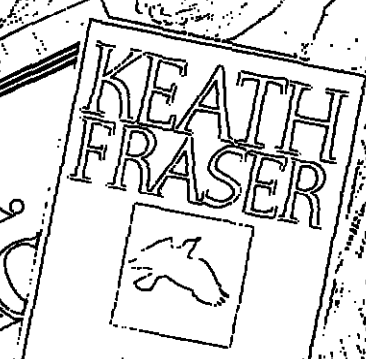
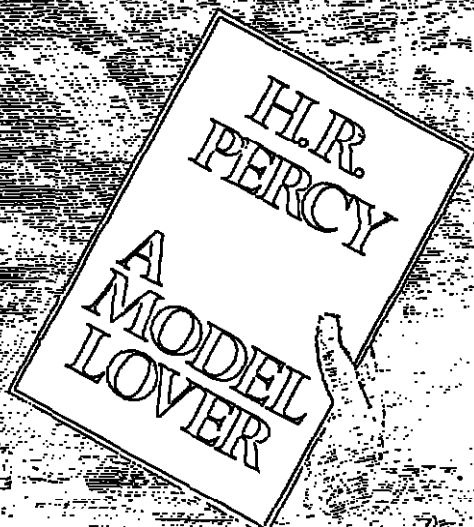
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