

BOOKS *in* CANADA

the independent book review magazine

VOLUME 2 NO. 2

APRIL/MAY/JUNE, 1973

Spring and summer books . . .

THE WEST

THE MOUNTIES

NATIVE CANADIANS

. . . plus all our regular features

BLOOD MARRIAGES

KAMOURASKA

ANNE HEBERT (translated by Norman Shapiro)

Musson; cloth \$6.95; 250 pages

reviewed by Beverley Smith

AWARDED THE FRENCH *Prix des Libraires* and praised by critics throughout the Francophone world, *Kamouraska* deserves the masterful translation now given it by Norman Shapiro, professor of Romance Languages at Wesleyan University.

The novel, added to the earlier success of *Les Chambres de Bois*, marks a dazzling new height in the artistic achievements of Anne Hébert — novelist, poet, playwright and storyteller. A film version of this new work, directed by Claude Jutra and starring Genevieve Bujold, which is being shown in Quebec and is about to be released in English also, has been received with equal enthusiasm.

Based on a real-life love triangle and murder that took place in Canada in 1840, the characters and events that take shape in the novel are coloured by the highly evocative imaginative powers of their author, and take on a life all their own.

The story is focused on Elisabeth d'Aulnières, wife of the respected notary Jérôme Rolland, who dutifully

tends her dying husband in a bedroom of their home in the Rue du Parloir:

As her husband of 18 years conjures up memories from the past — a past Elisabeth would rather forget, we come to see that he is playing a ruthless game. He has never believed in his wife's innocence and uses the occasion of his dying to torment her and finally reveal his true loathing for her.

Haunted by the hallucinations and nightmare images that grip hold of her, and won out by her present concerns, Elisabeth, herself, takes to bed, where she can give vent to all the demons of her tortured imagination. Gradually and skilfully, through the shifting, kaleidoscopic images of Elisabeth's memory and fantasy, we piece together Elisabeth's past: a past of passion, intrigue, violence and scandal.

Married at 16 to the brutish squire of Kamouraska, Antoine Tassy, given to his "flings" of drinking, gambling, whores and the occasional wife-beating, Elisabeth is spirited home to

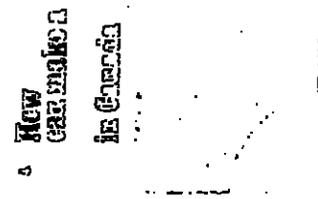
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Author Anne Hébert (top)
and scene from Jutra's film.

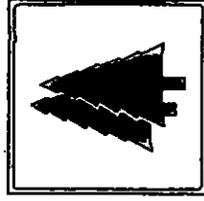
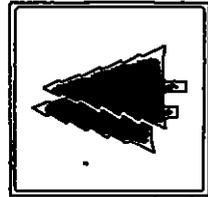


THE CANADIAN PAPERBACK PUBLISHER PRESENTS

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contents

FEATURES

Canada and China	9
The Year of the Mounties	12
The Spoken Word	19
The West	21
Write-In	26
The Canadian Stage	27
Doomsday: Progress Reports	30
The New Canadian Library	32
To Begin With	35
An Editor Regrets	47
Civil Service books	48
Paperback Rack	50
Travel books	52
Our Founding Peoples	57
With Reference	60
Nationalism and after	61

REVIEWS

Kamouraska	1
Lovers and Lesser Men	4
Oxford Anthology of Can. Lit.	5
Canada and Immigration	6
Wilderness Writers	10
Survey: Short History of Can. Lit.	10
Canadian Literature: Two Centuries ...	10
Various Persons Named Kevin O'Brien ..	16
Rat Jelly	17
The Bandy Papers	18
Voyage to the Edge of the World	24
One Woman's Arctic	24
Passing Ceremony	25
Look Comrade, The People are Laughing	36
Jasper	36
Dance to the Anthill	36
Greenpeace	37
Storm of Fortune	38
The Speaking Earth	38
Muse Book	38
Philosophy of Railroads	39
The Acadians	41
History of Willow Bunch	41
Waiting for Wayman	42
Bittersweet	43
A Place, A People	43
Polarized Man	44
Archives, Mirror of Canada Past	45
Steamboats on the Saskatchewan	46
A North American Education	51
The Arctic Imperative	52
Gone Indian	55
Canadian Ghosts	55
Eleven Canadian Novelists	56
A Lover Needs a Guitar	62

BOOKS IN CANADA

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EDITORIAL

FOR ALMOST three years now the melodrama of the Canadian publisher (with the Canadian writer in a supporting role) has been played down-centre on the public stage. The Ernst and Ernst Report on the economics of publishing, the Ontario Royal Commission on Book Publishing, numerous editorials and features in newspapers and magazines, endless speeches and seminars — all these have left in the public mind an image of the Canadian publisher that is heroic, tragic and far too large for reality.

On some sections of the audience, the play has had a stimulating effect. Governments, both federal and provincial, always alive to the need to be *seen* doing good, have allowed themselves to be precipitated occasionally into actually *doing* good. Booksellers and librarians, vaguely conscious that they should be playing some part in the drama and puzzled that they have never been called on-stage, have been rehearsing suitably patriotic gestures in the wings. Readers, the main body of the audience, stimulated by the notion that where there's blood-and-thunder there might be excitement, have been discovering what they might well have discovered before, that Canadian writers in increasing numbers are writing as well (or as badly) as they have ever done.

The leading actors themselves have found their on-stage heroics affecting even the mundane reality of their off-stage publishing lives. A majority of them have begun to put their money and acumen and muscle where their lobby is and have begun to produce some of the books that Canadians are owed. Even those non-Canadian publishers cast as villains have begun to burnish their off-stage image as good cultural citizens by increasing and energetically promoting their range of Canadian books.

As we said here so often before, to the point of tedium even for ourselves, the only worthwhile objective for publishing business should be to put the writer in touch with the reader, the right writer with the right reader. The publishing drama we have watched so far gives little indication of any such

finale. While it may be that more Canadian writers are being published than ever before, that does not mean that the publishing pie has grown proportionately bigger. It is our suspicion that many more writers, with appetite and creativity stimulated by publication, are having to subsist on minute shares of a pie that is only slightly bigger in terms of overall sales. Readers, newly conscious of being Canadian, are naturally pleased to notice the Canadiana sections in bookstores and libraries expanding. But if they do not find there books that in quality and variety (never mind the numbers) are the equal of the non-Canadian books they used to read, they will go back to reading those books.

Such an observation applies, of course, only to those Canadian readers who happen to have libraries and bookstores to go to. There has been current amongst many book people a glib axiom that Canadian publishing can never become viable unless it expands its market overseas. The federal government, acting on the assumption that axiom is true, is now activating a book export program. There is nothing basically wrong with such a project. After all, showing our literary Maple Leaf abroad is one of the best ways of being seen to be doing good. And we must believe that only good can come from pitting the worth of our writers and publishers against their kind in other countries. But the basic axiom derives from the assumption that the home market is, and must remain, too limited to make Canadian publishing viable. We consider that assumption erroneous, and we suggest that the federal order or priorities, motivated by the lure of easy prestige, is wrong. What is needed first, before too much is spent thrusting Canadian books on those who hardly need them, is an all-out effort to get them to those who badly need them; in fact, an export program *within* Canada directed at those millions of Canadians who, in want of an adequate bookstore or library, live exiled from their own literature.

If the play is ever to reach its appropriate finale, to the fulfillment of

our writers, the satisfaction of our readers and the profit of the book business, our governments must ensure that parts for all the essential players are written into it. The overplaying of some of our publishers has about it the heroic extravagance of Don Quixote, forever tilting at the illusory windmills of foreign or corporate domination, forever challenging those around them as dragons or scoundrels. And forever dragging after them as Sancho Panchez the Canadian writer, humble and bewildered on his donkey. One example of their arrogance, discussed here recently, has been their tendency to dismiss Canadian printers as extortionate bandits. Another, just as damaging to the future of a Canadian literature, is their denouncing of librarians and booksellers as — put at it's bluntest — traitors and cheats.

A miasma of distrust and antagonism has long clouded the relations between publishers on the one hand and librarians and booksellers on the other. It has arisen from causes that are historical, understandable, but no longer realistic or tolerable. Because of their intimate contact with the needs and desires of Canadian readers, booksellers and librarians are in a position to provide the basic data for research of the market which, as the Ernst and Ernst report noted, has been almost totally neglected by publishers. Similarly, booksellers and librarians hold the key to that expansion of the home market that is so urgently necessary.

The proposal before the Canadian Booksellers' Association for a Book Education, Promotion, and Animation program will be, if it is adopted, a token of the retailers' good faith, and it is to be hoped that it will be a central topic of discussion when the booksellers convene this month in Banff. Some equivalent initiative from Canadian librarians, meeting in Halifax, would underline their awareness of the importance of their future role.

Good faith and good intentions, however, cannot alone disperse the divisive smoke of old battles. Prompt, decisive and creative action will be required of both levels of governments if all the players are to be actively involved in the play. First impediments must be removed, then dialogue must be encouraged. Expansion of the home

Continued on page 18

KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS

LOVERS AND LESSER MEN

IRVING LAYTON

McClelland and Stewart

paper \$2.95, cloth \$5.95; 109 pages

reviewed by *Clyde Hosein*

IN ADDRESSING A. Solzhenitsyn on "The World," Layton, that pugilist, stands in his corner with his guard up heftily proclaiming of men: "The pricks change but the arse remains the same."

Thus he is ready to batter lesser fighters with a combination of irony, eloquence and hysteria from that mental vista in the ring.

Under such a dramatic world view, he, unlike Hamlet, fills "That Is The Question" with a dry rage for the soulless, sick city — Toronto. While he is away in Skyros with . . .

*cheerful relaxed people
who do not own a pot to piss in
. . . he is certain that . . .*

Toronto does not exist.

And when he returns home . . .

*to grey streets and greyer people
who lock their hearts
for safe-keeping in vaults and boxes*

. . . he is persuaded that . . .

*Toronto exists
and keep asking everyone why.*

Here is Layton at his best, poet of the "fuck and rage" school, religiously following his *alma mater* to battle against a world condemned to crassness by mindless twits. He is at once mourning the stink of death and decay, or repetitive history, and telescoping that dust in the grey lives of Canadians, who besides communists and the Governor-General Awards committee are the target of his temper.

Like life's little paradoxes, which he is not loathe to pounce upon, Layton says: "Poets err or they lie" ("Poetry And Truth"); yet he never addresses himself, who is part of the "dull-witted," "graceless" people . . .

*Ideally placed
for gawking and the long soak in alcohol
(who are)
A young nation of wizened neurotics,
mediocrity
fits them like a paralytic's glove . . .*

Indeed, "the pricks change but the arse remains the same." And the poet is at once God and victim.

In the widest context, Man, that Mad Cripple, is "like an octopus [who] feeds on himself [and] builds graceful stupas to mutilation and loss" in this great looney bin of values and achievement.

The whole of humanity is therefore sharing the same ark on a rising immigrant sea of neurotics and mediocrities whose "undistinguished history" is . . .

*. . . religious hypocrisy and superstition
bourgeois exploitation robbery plunder.*

While Layton's stance (*vide* his recent argument with Malcolm Muggeridge, CBLT's Arts 73) is the general outrage of poet and priest juggling the old arguments for the autonomy of either anarchistic lecher or impotent goody-goody intellectual, he has a feel for the fire of distant realities.

That vision of the invisible and hidden preached by mystics and madmen for all recorded history can be glimpsed, however, in only a very few of these 86 poems. And in these few especially when he is speaking as a Jew. For only in that credibility can he distill the phosphorescent fires of his passion to convince us of our sleep.

In too many does he "err" into minor personal squabbings, those angry immaturities of living from which stem the delusion of the

superiority of fucking and raging and arguing that he is unlike the rest of demented hockeydom — “spineless, soft as the shit a madman scrapes from bowls.”

The truth is underneath all his bravado Layton is running scared like the rest of us whose petty pet theories keep changing as we change: forever and ever, amen.

Now, like an errant juvenile he goes by running to confess to Jack McClelland how the world is hard and what a big, bad bruiser he is (“Poetry As The Fine Art Of Pugilism”). Twenty-eight poems before he was claiming conversion to the power and violence of The Silence, proclaiming:

*Now I have nothing to say
to anyone.*

But he continues to rant against wickedness in high and low places. He still strains to reconceptualize God by redefining man as a shit machine pure and simple (“Magic”).

The poet, now as analytic surgeon-anarchist is cutting up the rotting corpse of society, yet he is proclaiming its right to live.

Talented poets usually come to this “forked road” on the way to “truth”. It begins when one realises that the rational intellectual mind has failed, and that the increasing divinity of personal freedom is making a man a law unto himself.

It is from that position that Layton could chastise literary critics in the conceited manner in which he bawls out Edmund Wilson:

*A hundred years from now who will
read your books?*

*The fame of a critic does not last long;
Erudition and wit have their brief
hour*

*But time itself preserves the poem
and the song.*

Surely, Layton too is subject to that wit. For what can he say to guarantee the immortality of those four lines above. Is he the only spokesman for time?

Surely, he must know that inner excellence is where it's at; and that one must embrace a better attitude if one is not to become scrap on the rubbish heap of time. □

CLYDE HOSEIN, who was born in Trinidad, is a scientist and writer who has settled in Toronto; he broadcasts with CBC Overseas Service.

OXON DRAWN BAND- WAGON

THE OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF CANADIAN LITERATURE

*Edited by ROBERT WEAVER
and WILLIAM TOYE*

*Oxford University Press
cloth \$13.50, paper \$5.50;
illustrated; 546 pages.*

reviewed by Chris Scott

DO NOT be deceived by the title of this book: it is not what it claims to be. The editors, both experienced bookmen, admit as much in their Preface: “Two thirds of the book is devoted to many of the writers who created the present self-confident literary climate that had its beginnings in the late 1940s.”

The best that could be said for it, then, is that it is an anthology of modern, even of contemporary Canadian literature. There are, for example, four selections from the 17th century, one from the 18th, and two from the first half of the 19th. Nevertheless, the book has its pretensions as a “capsule history of Canadian writing,” and this particular capsule I found somewhat of a bitter pill to swallow. To begin with, the editors have abandoned the usual chronological and generic arrangement of the anthology form. “The arrangement of this book,” they aver, “has been dictated by the alphabetical sequence of the authors’ names and therefore lends itself to browsing among familiar and unfamiliar writers.” Somebody, it seems, has a secretary with a passion for alphabetical order.

The editors’ statement that “it is somehow liberating to view our writing apart from categories” is arguable, especially if one believes that a function of the anthology is to reveal the historical development of those

categories. As things stand with the Oxford volume, however, an attempt has been made to represent *all* genres: verse, satire, the novel, short story, drama, *etc.* With the obvious exception of the short poem, the necessary consequence of this is that the entries are extracts rather than complete pieces. Further, because of the great number of fragmentary entries, it is impossible to gain any sense of a given writer’s style. Add to this the fact that French-Canadian literature is but sparsely represented, and then given only in translation, and the dominant impression is one of chaos — both editorial and literary.

Even allowing for the limitations imposed by the one volume format, the Oxford anthology bears no comparison with the series currently issued by Holt Rinehart & Winston which will prove valuable to students and teachers alike. There is pause for ironic reflection here in that both companies are branch-plant operations.

Margaret Laurence recently observed that Canadian writers are not bitchy enough. That, at least, can be changed, though on the evidence here presented she is undoubtedly correct. The biographical notes abound with incestuous pleasantries, given in lieu of any critical judgments, and Messrs. Toye and Weaver emerge as men without opinions. George Woodcock, of course, has opinions. He finds Robert Weaver “interesting,” while Robert Fulford writes that Dennis Lee finds being a citizen is hard. A. J. M. Smith has written a *poem* on F. R. Scott, whereas Gwendolyn MacEwan has to be content merely with an “interesting” article by Margaret Atwood who finds John Newlove among the “most important” writers of his generation. George Bowering has written a book on Al Purdy; Ondaatje on Cohen, Mandel on Layton, Waddington on Klein — and so it goes, a mutual admiration society. Empirical evidence to the contrary, it is hard to suppress the feeling that all these persons, whether dead or alive, male or female, are in fact one and the same writer if not one and the same reviewer and publisher.

As the editors claim, there are many cross-references in this book. For the entry under Alain Grandbois

we are told to "See the note on Saint-Denys-Graveau (page 144) for an explanation of the obsession with death in French-Canadian writing." Turning to page 144, the curious reader finds Roch Carrier parenthetically quoted in conversation with Donald Cameron. And where space is paramount, this reviewer could see no justification for perpetuating the deathless prose of William Lyon Mackenzie, which for rhetorical turgidity is rivalled only by the *Memoir* (not anthologized) of his infamous opponent, that minion of the English Pharaoh, Sir Francis Bond Head. Mackenzie, granted, is fashionable; the other gentleman, thank heaven, is decidedly not.

The Oxford Anthology of Canadian Literature is produced on excellent

stock with photographs of the authors and art work by Doug Panton. For those who prefer to read there is a list of further reading. For those who like their culture pre-digested there is also a dismayingly gimmicky list of Themes and Subjects with headings such as ALIENATION, DEATH, MADNESS (only three writers have addressed themselves to this subject if the editors are to be believed; it would be a pity to reveal their identity here), and predictably enough, SURVIVAL.

My favourite was ENDURANCE.

CHRIS SCOTT, writer and broadcaster, came from Britain to teach here and in the U.S., and settled in Toronto. His first novel, *Bartleby*, was published by Anansi in 1971 and he is now working on a second.

BLOODLESS MOSAIC

CANADA AND IMMIGRATION: Public Policy & Public Concern

FREDA HAWKINS

McGill-Queen's University Press paper \$3.75; 444 pages

reviewed by Norman Lederer

PROFESSOR HAWKINS has written a long, boring book about a fascinating subject. Immigration and the migration of peoples is after all one of the *leit motifs* of history, from the days of the Germanic *volkerwanderung* into the Roman Empire through the explosion of Europe outward in the 19th and early 20th centuries to the current emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union and the expulsion of Ugandan Asians and their dispersal throughout the world. Immigration has provided the heartblood of new lands enabling such areas as Australia, Canada, Argentina and the United States to become nation states strong enough to gain a hearing at the conference tables of the world. To the cultural pluralist, Canadian immigration is especially interesting because of the continued ethnic identity of older immigrant strains replenished on a regular basis by recent arrivals from the lands of origin. Canada, to the outside observer, appears to have gone

a lot farther down the road of achieving a genuine cultural mosaic of ethnic and minority groups than has the United States.

There is an inherent drama and colour in the immigration experience which is completely missing from Professor Hawkins' study. The author's focus on the administrative aspects of immigration and the fluctuations in official attitudes toward the influx of new peoples onto the Canadian scene results in a valuable analysis of the machinery of government concerning immigration but with a bloodless, impersonal view of the triumphs and tragedies of millions of desperate men and women.

Pervading the text of the book is an attitude of aloofness on the part of the author, which may be meant to denote objectivity and a lack of bias but which to the reader rather suggests a lack of compassion and empathy for the immigrant on the part of Professor Hawkins — an attitude all the more

strange considering the fact that she herself emigrated from Europe to Canada in the postwar years. The author's efforts at objectivity also cannot disguise her belief that unrestricted immigration is an undesirable state of affairs and her approval of the present Canadian emphasis on reserving places in the provinces for the highly talented, skilled professional elements who presumably would be a greater credit to the land.

Ms. Hawkins, like the administrators with which she closely identifies herself, use the argument that the unskilled will be unable to find work in Canada and thus be a burden on the resources of their kin and on the provincial and national governments. Unfortunately, as matters have worked out there is at present a European and American surfeit of skilled and professional white-collar workers, including especially professors such as Ms. Hawkins, coupled with a still growing demand for unskilled labor willing to be "the hewers of wood and the drawers of water." The procedures by which relatives already resident in Canada are able to bring over their kin from European countries come in for a good deal of censure from the author, although certainly even given the excesses involved in this migration the thousands of Italians, Greeks, etc., added to the Canadian mosaic would seem to have performed the beginnings of the task of eliminating the provincialism and cultural isolation that marked the Canadian scene down to World War II.

Despite the caveats issued above, Ms. Hawkins' work does have a considerable amount of merit to it, especially considering that it is the only up-to-date study of Canadian immigration policy available at the present time. The author has diligently engaged in laborious research into governmental files, interviewing almost everyone connected officially with immigration policy and service as well as exploring the religious and private agencies interested for altruistic and selfish reasons in the movement of peoples into Canada. Ms. Hawkins has written very close to the documents, so close in fact that it is almost possible to hear the pages of the documents turning as the text moves along.

Choice choice from Doubleday

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H. Allen Smith
A collection of uproarious essays, sketches and foolishness with chapters such as "My Brief Career in Duelling". \$7.95.

THE F.D.R. MEMOIRS: As written by

Bernard Asbell
Introduction by Anna Roosevelt Halsted
"The tales of those historic years as indeed they might have been told by the architect of the New Deal"; Anna Roosevelt Halsted. \$11.50.

● Doubleday Canada Limited

The most interesting facet of post-World War II immigration policy brought to light by the author is that for some years after the war there was in reality no thoroughly thought-out policy at all. Immigration was a suspect thing in the late 1940s, given the vivid memories of Canadians of the Depression years and the fairly general feeling that with the end of the war a serious recession if not depression was in the offing. Labor unions looked with suspicion on the prospect of an inundation of immigrants coming into the country, driving down wage scales and through language and cultural differences being resistant to organization. The French Canadians were uninterested in the promotion of immigration, given their general isolation at the time and their not unjustified suspicions that European immigrants in Canada would tend to identify more with the English speaking majority than with themselves. Because of these and other pressures, the Canadian government gave until very recent years a low priority to immigration administration, with pro-

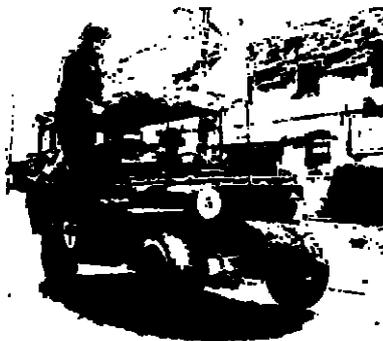
vincial governments willing to place virtually all responsibility for the selection and placement of immigrants into the hands of the national government.

The various Canadian postwar governments tended to view immigration as more of a bother than a positive good and unlike Australia, for instance, made no real effort to solicit immigrants in Europe and to prepare for their transition into Canadian citizens once across the Atlantic. Immigration officials were low men on the civil service totem pole and realized this fact in inferior status and wage levels as compared to other government workers abroad. This attitude of relative indifference and neglect is all the more surprising considering that postwar Canada's population has increased more rapidly than any other industrialized country with more than three million immigrants making up a great deal of that increase.

About the only elements in Canada strongly interested in immigration after the war were industries desper-

ately needing unskilled and skilled labour and government manpower administrators closely connected with those interests. Canadian immigration policy and implementation today is very closely tied to manpower requirements as is indicated by the placing of immigration into the present portfolio of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration without being awarded its own autonomous status. Ms. Hawkins' study closely follows the involved and convoluted evolution of immigration policy from indifference to relative concern at the present time; but it concludes with the definite impression that even with the upgrading of the immigration service and a rising consciousness of the importance of immigration among governmental officials, both national and provincial, the phenomenon still does not have the emphasis and degree of concern to which it is entitled. □

NORMAN LEDERER is director of the University of Wisconsin System, Ethnic & Minority Study Centre at Stevens Point.



Not in Vain

KEN BELL

Ken Bell photographed the Canadian Army in a Europe ravaged by World War II. Twenty-five years later he retraced his footsteps. In stunning contrast to the black and white photographs of that devastating war stand the colour pictures of lands and people restored to normality. Text by military historian C.P. Stacey and captions by author/critic Kildare Dobbs enhance the visual impact of this superb book. 70 colour, 84 black and white photos. \$9.95

AT YOUR BOOKSELLER

Charisma

IRVINE SCHIFFER

Dr Schiffer who is both psychiatrist and political scientist theorizes that each individual contributes his own unique developmental conflicts and his own heroic imagery to the creation of an idealized political leader. He examines electoral behaviour and analyzes how people help to create leaders who have that quality called charisma. \$8.50

People in the Way

J. W. WILSON

In 1964 the B.C. Hydro Authority undertook to build three dams on the Columbia River to provide electrical power. This book describes what happened when these dams finally flooded the valleys, displacing hundreds of people whose homes and villages disappeared under water. The author writes of how and why this project came to be and of the effects the resettlement had on the people. Photographs. \$12.50



Thoreau MacDonald

MARGARET E. EDISON

This striking volume is a bibliographical and graphic compilation of the work of Thoreau MacDonald. Reproductions of 270 pen drawings and linocuts accompany many of the items listed. The material is divided into four sections: his work with commercial publishers; for periodicals; as a private printer; and with his father J.E.H. MacDonald, member of the Group of Seven. \$15.00 Special limited edition \$50.00

University of Toronto Press

CANADIAN CHOP SUEY

STRANGER IN CHINA

COLIN McCULLOUGH
McClelland and Stewart
cloth \$7.95; illustrated; 292 pages

FORMER GLOBE & MAIL Peking correspondent, Colin McCullough, in remarking on his 18-month stay in China, quotes an old Chinese saying to the effect that it is one thing to have a camel described to you, but quite another to be in its presence. Since most of us will never be in the presence of this particular camel, we are reduced to relying upon the reports of others. And many have been the reports in the last few years. Yet McCullough's *Stranger in China* is perhaps the most successful in making us feel as though we were in the presence of the beast; and it is pleasing to realize that he is not interested in selling us this camel, nor, indeed, is he interested in selling us a horse instead.

The narrative is considerably heightened by the fact that McCullough took up his duties in Peking just in time to catch the tail-end of the famous Cultural Revolution. He tells us of the isolation of the foreigners, the dangers, the terrors, the dust-swept streets of the city, the problems of shopping, and the intransigence of the Chinese service-professions, all amidst the howling xenophobic fury of the Red Guards.

Despite it all he does not judge the Chinese, but tries, rather, to understand why such reactions would result, going beyond the immediate manifestations to the political pressures and sorry history of foreign domination that inspired them. There is the lamentable story of the burning of the British embassy, the miseries of its staff; and the story of Anthony Grey, the Reuters correspondent who was held for some two years under house arrest. Yet McCullough makes it quite clear that both these regrettable incidents might have been avoided had, in the one case, the British Government been less politically obtuse, and, in the other, Reuters been a little less perfidious and the Hong

Kong English community a little less antagonistic.

By and large the book is also highly amusing. From inside, McCullough reproduces the muted farce of the entire nexus of international politics reduced to the village-like proportions of the small diplomatic community that was dependent on itself for entertainment, company, and often, protection. There is the story of the Soviet diplomats who, having been invited to one of the British Embassy's film nights, sat through the mortifying experience of *Morgan*, one frame of which centres on a portrait of Karl Marx hanging next to that of an ape. Side by side is the overwhelming gratitude and respect of the Soviet diplomats for those British Embassy staff who, besieged themselves, nevertheless helped the Soviets protect their families from the harassment of the Red Guards as the Russian women and children were enplaning at Peking airport.

As a description of a personal experience, *Stranger in China* is a highly entertaining book; yet it is for that very reason that I can't help wishing it were written by a better writer. Where, from this wealth of material, we expect some of the writer's personality, wit and observation, we get only a series of anecdotes written in a rather pallid bland prose. □

HANS WERNER

CHINA: An Introduction for Canadians

Edited by RAY WYLIE
Peter Martin Associates
cloth \$8.95, paper \$3.95;
illustrated; 176 pages

reviewed by David Stucky

THE PROBLEM with this book is that it was published. That it was published is reflective of a problem of the Canadian publishing industry at present. One need only see the addendum to the title to realize that something is amiss. Why is it necessary that a special general information book on China be put out for Canadians when there are any number of books already on the market in English? You will note that this is not a book about Chinese-Canadian relations. Although it does make some effort in that direction it, is more justification than substance. Nor is it about anything else peculiar to Canada or Canadians. The only reason for its existence that would be justifiable would be that this is a better or more complete general book on China than is currently available. It is not. It is not nearly as good as many, some of which are listed in the bibliography. *An Introduction for Canadians* is a singular insult in that it consistently patronizes the reader. Its general lack of validity



is illustrated by the plethora of repetition, due in part to an insistence on using only Canadian sources regardless of their pertinence.

The writing succeeds only once, in "Impressions of Mao Tse-tung" by Mark Gayn. It is not only not readily available elsewhere (although it is available in Franz Schumann and Orville Schell's *China Reading 3! Communist China*. Random House.) but reaches out in as living a way as anything I have read in the "impressions-of-the-great" genre. But it is brief and hardly compensates for a book that ranges from barely adequate to barely readable. We are treated to the illuminating information that the Chinese too love babies, and, in several places and in several ways, that the Chinese are inscrutable but not all that inscrutable. Repeatedly we're informed that the communists are not trying to destroy the family, and presumably they do not eat children. At this point in time when our renewed interest is predicated on at last having more both psychological and physical access to China, what are expected are new insights and information not rehashed knowledge and reprints.

DAVID STUCKY, writer and designer, was born and educated in Kansas and served with the Peace Corps in Southeast Asia; he now lives in Toronto.

NATURAL SELECTION

JAMES POLK

Clarke Irwin

cloth \$3.50; illustrated; 147 pages

reviewed by Pat Barclay

THIS IS THAT rare animal — a popular treatment of a piece of Canada's past. It's so entertaining, in fact, that I began to wonder whether Polk saw his readership as a horde of junior high-school children, looking for snappy background material to pad out their book reports.

This impression was reinforced by Polk's occasional weakness for the fatuous ("Well, that's the sickliest smile I ever did see, Charlie Roberts.

Whatever's wrong with you, you march right in and talk it over with your father . . . Now, get") and even the gratuitous ("... he began wearing a *pince-nez*, small eyeglasses that clip directly on the nose"). But in the end, I decided that here's actually a man who feels *enthusiasm* for a Canadian subject, and wonder of wonders, it's contagious. If you've read Margaret Atwood's *Survival*, you're already acquainted with James Polk's basic discovery. Atwood acknowledges her debt to Polk by describing him as the man "who thought first about animal victims." But whereas Atwood seizes the idea, stirs it into the doubtful proposition that "animals in literature are always symbols," and comes up with another formula for the Canadian as Victim, Polk suggests only that Canadian writers were the first to produce animal stories based on realistic knowledge of the facts. ("It is not surprising that Canadians should be the first to develop this type of fiction, since Canada has always been a country of vast wilderness areas . . . Certainly a writer would think twice before turning an Ontario wolf and Jasper Park grizzly into miniature persons with shoes, hats, and big vocabularies.")

Wilderness Writers contains a brief history of the animal story in Canada, followed by biographies of three of our best-known nature writers: Ernest Thompson Seton, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, and Grey Owl. The chronological arrangement seems unfortunate, for although heaven knows the lives of Roberts and Grey Owl were far from dull, it is Seton who both commands and holds our regard.

By rights, Ernest Thompson Seton should have been the Ultimate Canadian Victim. His constitution was frail; he was cross-eyed after a childhood accident, and he was bullied by a selfish and sadistic father, who once presented him with a bill for "every cent he had ever spent on him . . . beginning with the doctor's fee for bringing his son into the world." Where he a fictional character, no self-respecting novelist would have had the nerve to allow him to survive past puberty.

But Seton not only survived, he transformed himself into a hero. He

was successful in three fields — art, natural science, and writing; he was astute in money matters (an instructive anecdote tells how he got the better of Charles Scribner, his New York publisher) and, perhaps most remarkable of all, achieved a well-balanced private life.

Seton was also the original inspiration behind the Boy Scout movement, seeking to train boys "to become men through close experience with life in the woods." He objected to Baden-Powell's introduction of military ideas on the grounds that "the Indian, not the army general, should be our ideal."

Imagine, a real-life Canadian Horatio Alger success story, who was also white North America's first ecological hero! No wonder Polk is enthusiastic. Canadian film-makers, are you listening? □

PAT BARCLAY, who has lived and studied in Vancouver, Berkeley, and Aberdeen, and has reviewed books for many Canadian newspapers, has now settled in Youbou, B.C., and writes a weekly book-column for the *Victoria Times*.

CANLITTER

SURVEY: A Short History of Canadian Literature

ELIZABETH WATERSTON

Methuen

cloth \$8.50, paper \$4.75; 215 pages

CANADIAN LITERATURE:

Two Centuries in Prose

Edited by BRITA MICKLEBURGH

Foreword by MALCOLM ROSS

McClelland and Stewart

paper ; 306 pages

reviewed by Fraser Sutherland

AS NIGHT FOLLOWS day, a spate of new anthologies and historical surveys has followed the wide-spread growth of high school courses on Canadian literature. The courses, an encouraging development, are in danger of being darkened by a dispiriting mediocrity. The two books under consideration here are no exemption to the trend.

Of the two, Waterston's book, shamelessly entitled *Survey*, is the

more trendy. It comes with a glossy black cover and a format nearly seven inches square. The book also features an interesting time-chart that parallels historical events with literary activity in Canada and elsewhere. For example, in 1917, the year of the Bolshevik Revolution, Frank Packard published *Jimmy Dale, Detective*.

Waterston affects a lively style and chooses a thematic rather than a chronological organization but nothing can detour the deadly parade of names and dates. Occasionally the parade halts long enough for her to venture a judgment, most of them perceptive enough, though sometimes rather odd. Discussing the city as a labyrinth she says, "Curiously enough, most of the artists who exploit this motif are themselves city-dwellers."

The discussion of regionalism is weak — Leacock is cited as an example, another is the Montreal group of storytellers whose work, Waterston informs us, is "rather grim." Leacock, of course, ranges far beyond Mariposa, and the Montreal group — Clark Blaise, Hugh Hood and others — has disparate styles and locales.

As history, her book has a few gaps and the occasional error. New Canadian plays are given much less attention than other recent works. John Sutherland, the most important figure in 1940 Canadian poetry, is just another listed name. Brian Moore's *The Luck of Ginger Coffey* is set in Montreal, not Dublin, and Dorothy Livesay's recent anthology is called *40 Women Poets of Canada*, not *Poetry by Canadian Women*, and is published by Ingluvin, not Inglavit.

Criticism can be literature but literary history at *Survey's* level cannot, and students will profit far more by reading Canadian novels and poetry first. If they wish a reference book, Norah Storey's *Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature* should be in the nearest library. Books such as Waterston's don't stimulate interest; they extinguish it.

Like Elizabeth Waterston, Brita Mickleburgh is a teacher of Canadian literature but her book actually presents the work of writers. Her selections, with one notable exception, are mainly short stories or excerpts from novels ranging from Frances

Brooke's *History of Emily Montague* to Percy Janes' *House of Hate*. Along the way she sacrifices quality for the sake of an historical survey. Thus Ernest Buckler and Northrop Frye get bumped in favour of Gilbert Parker and James de Mille. The excerpts, too, are so fragmentary that the sampling leads not to appetite but to indigestion.

Perhaps the book's most curious inclusion is a passage from Morley Callaghan's memoir *That Summer in Paris* that describes some of his boxing episodes with Hemingway. Evidently Mickleburgh shares Norman Mailer's view that the Hemingway-Callaghan

relationship in the book was really a superb short story imbedded in a mass of superfluous material.

I hope that any similar calamity will not befall "the 'boom' in Canadian literary studies" that Malcolm Ross talks about in his foreword. Surveys and anthologies of fragments are no substitute for, nor even a worthwhile supplement to, the fine literature we do possess. □

FRASER SUTHERLAND, who lives in Montreal, is Editor of *Northern Journey*; he has recently published a collection of poetry *Strange Ironies* (Fiddlehead) and a critical study of Callaghan and Hemingway.

tigers of the snow

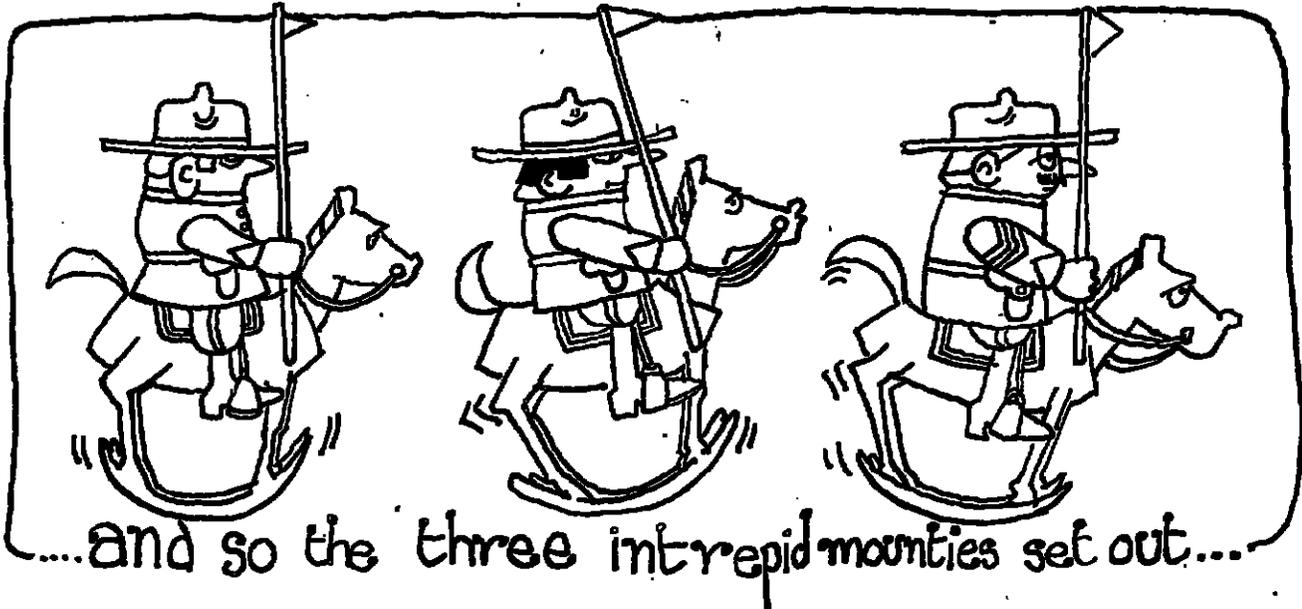


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THE LONG LONG ARM OF THE LAW

IN 1877, ONLY four years after they had been formed, the North West Mounted Police was glowing referred to by the London *Times* as being a *corps d'élite*. Stated that august journal: "The pay is good, the uniform handsome, the term of service short and the life congenial to adventurous spirits." The words undoubtedly pleased the Empire thumpers but any Mountie reading that account probably turned apoplectic. The pay was about half a dollar a day, the uniforms were poorly made and soon fell apart, the four-year term of service may have sounded short to the *Times* but to a few of these men it was so desperately long they deserted, and while all of them joined up in the spirit of adventure the conditions of squalor in which they lived robbed them of any enjoyment of their duties. The life was in no way congenial and yet, despite the dreadful circumstances, these 300 Mounties scattered around the huge area that now makes up southern Alberta and Saskatchewan quite literally saved the Canadian West.

Apart from the absurd mention in the *Times* the North West Mounted got their first rave notices in the newspapers of Montana. After supervising the migration of bands of Sioux into Canada, the force was praised by the Fort Benton *Record* as not scaring "worth a cent." It was this bush-league paper that originated the "get their man" phrase which still makes every

THE ROYAL NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE: A Corps History

CAPT. ERNEST J. CHAMBERS
Cole's Canadiana Collection
paper \$6.05; illustrated; 220 pages

FORTY YEARS IN CANADA

SAMUEL B. STEELE
The Ryerson Archive Series
(McGraw-Hill Ryerson)
cloth \$8.95; illustrated; 428 pages

MAINTAIN THE RIGHT

RONALD ATKIN
Macmillan
cloth \$11.95; illustrated; 400 pages

reviewed by *Tony Thomas*

Mountie cringe. In discussing their suppression of the whisky traffic on the Canadian side of the line, the Fort Benton journalists reported that the police "fetched their man every time." Over the years such reports filtered into most British and American newspapers, soon becoming the stuff of dime novels and pulp magazines. Hollywood latched onto the Mounties as early as 1920 — the very year they ceased being a western body and became the national constabulary, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police — and by 1948 the *RCMP Quarterly* was

moved to point out, with an almost audible sigh of despair, "The public's reading about the Mounted Police is almost wholly fiction, and rather cheap fiction at that. If the Force were a myth like Sherlock Holmes the inaccuracies and misconceptions instilled in continents of readers would not matter . . ." Well, this is 1973, the year of the centenary of the redcoats, and anyone interested in discovering the truth about their history has a fair choice of literature at hand.

A few months ago Dent re-issued Sir Cecil Denny's *The Law Marches West* and now Coles, in their Canadiana collection, have brought out *The Royal North-West Mounted Police, a Corps History*, by Captain Ernest J. Chambers, who apparently wrote a number of Canadian regimental histories. This came out in 1906 and Coles have reproduced it as an exact facsimile complete with advertisements of that year. The ads cover about a third of these pages, and for once I don't mind a bit. Chambers prose is stilted and his accounts of the mounted police are laudatory and uncritical, although he does jam in an enormous amount of information and quite a number of photos I haven't seen in any other books. But it's those ads that I find myself re-examining — ads for horses, rifles, farm implements, first-class hotel rooms for three dollars a day, the Royal Military College offering a three-year course for \$750

and the Province of Quebec offering farm land at 40 cents an acre.

McGraw-Hill have re-issued Samuel B. Steele's autobiography *Forty Years in Canada* in their Ryerson Archive Series, and as old soldier Sam might have said, "So they damn well should." However, the title of the book is unarresting and McGraw-Hill have done nothing to intrigue the potential buyer by putting it in a plain, dull jacket that in no way suggests the wealth of experience the book relates. Steele was Canada's most colourful military figure and his long service included the first quarter-century in the history of the North West Mounted. He was born in Ontario in 1851 and joined the militia as a youngster, and at the time of his death in 1919 he had reached the rank of Major General and had received a knighthood for leading a Canadian division in the World War I. Steele was one of the original mounties of 1873 and was part of their operations in the 1885 rebellion and the Klondyke gold rush of 1898. A year later he lead the mounties who volunteered to serve in the Boer War as part of the crack regiment known as Stracona's Horse and he stayed on to head the South African Constabulary, which was patterned after the North West Mounted. There's a quaintness to Steele's writing, he was the kind of old warrior totally alien to political and

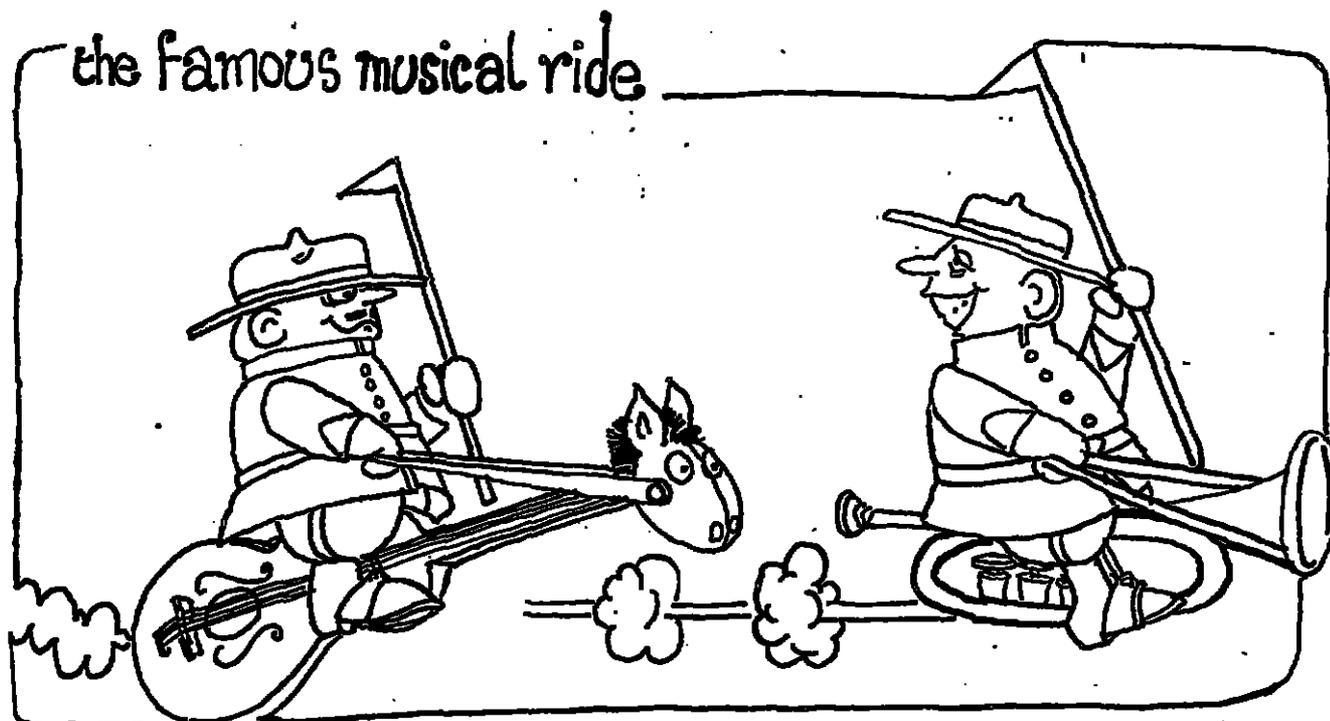
diplomatic considerations and absolutely single-minded about his mission in life. Like most military men of the Empire he clearly looked upon the Anglo-Saxon as just about the best thing a man could be and in writing about his men in South Africa he says, "We saw much fighting and I think proved that from the Dominion came as good fighting men as ever played at the great game of war." This kind of view must be given due respect, simplistic as it may seem today, because Steele was a man of genuine justice who reached for his pistol only when all else failed. He ends his book with an account of a trip to the west in 1907, amazed to find Calgary a city of 75,000 when it had not even existed when he first saw the foothills of the Rockies, and that same summer he visited Edmonton and found a bustling town: "It was hardly credible that this was the place where we wintered in 1875, with only half a dozen log houses in sight."

What Samuel Steele and the other few hundred Mounties had seen in their years of service was the birth of the Canadian West, and this is fully covered in *Maintain the Right*, a history of the North West Mounted from their inception to the completion of their duties as peace keepers in the Yukon during the fantastic gold rush. The author is Ronald Atkin, who is a sports editor for the London *Observer*



Samuel B. Steele

and also holds a position with the Canadian Government Travel Bureau. Mr. Atkin is a punctillious researcher and he had filled in the tidbits men like Steele and Sir Cecil Denny overlooked — including the facts that Sir Cecil was more or less forced to leave the service because of his womanizing and that recruits under Steele complained about the severity of his drilling, so tough that several fledgling Mounties headed south: "The international boundary wasn't very far away and none of them were caught." Atkins book is concisely written and gives a sympathetic, honest accounting



of the early years in the force. The Royal Mounted is so thickly shrouded in fictional images that it needs a skillfully wielded hatchet to cut the way through to the truth. Atkin has done this and in discovering how hard and miserable was the lot of these men in that first period of their history he reflects greater credit on them than all the musical rides and all the flag waving. They were underpaid, underfed and under-appreciated, certainly in Canada — it wasn't until 1904 that they received the prefix 'Royal' and with the formation of provincial police forces there was a move to eliminate the Royal Mounted. Fortunately for the Canadian image abroad, some sanity prevailed in Ottawa — that handsome uniform has drawn a lot of tourists — but it still remains that an Englishman, Ronald Atkin, has written an excellent history of the early Mounties, and Americans who make movies glorifying them. Hopefully enough Canadians will find time to read these three books. □

TONY THOMAS, a veteran broadcaster and writer whose main interests are Hollywood and the Old West, lives in Toronto; his most recent book was *The Films Of Kirk Douglas* (Citadel).

HUNTING PINK

AN UNAUTHORIZED HISTORY OF THE RCMP

LORNE & CAROLINE BROWN
James Lewis & Samuel
paper \$1.95

THIS YEAR should be the occasion for reflection upon the Mounties' history, their traditions and the contribution they have made to the growth and development of Canada. *An Unauthorized History of the RCMP* adds a leaven of malice to the centenary cake of celebration.

Lorne and Caroline Brown have taken the opportunity afforded by the birthday celebration to attempt to deal realistically with the Mounties and break with a past tradition which portrays an incorruptible Force composed of men resolute in duty and dauntless of courage locked in a perpetual struggle



against evil lawbreakers. Their revisionist counter-history does not share the pride members of the Force feel in their acceptance by most Canadians as true representatives of Canada and it adds some historical background to Corporal Jack Ramsey's "Case Against the RCMP" which shocked us all so much when it appeared in the July, 1972 number of *Maclean's*. The author of *An Unauthorized History* presuppose that people cannot be reminded too often that police forces are at best a necessary evil and question the problem of alleged abuse of police power "centralized in one arrogant, secretive and militaristic organisation." Moreover, they suggest that the RCMP may not even be necessary at all.

The *Unauthorized History* is marred by its hurriedly *ad hoc* composition (apparently the result of the rush to meet the centennial deadline), its lack of a full scale bibliography and an index, and an ambiguous argumentative stance which drives one to the unsatisfactory conclusion that the RCMP have made good work of a bad job. If one takes seriously their description of the machinations of Canada's state police, the authors of *An Unauthorized History* have shown no small courage in their attempt to bell the cat. Nevertheless, they would have served the writing of left-wing history and their readers better had they restrained a penchant

for strident polemic and given a flatter view of the RCMP's role in enforcing Canadian federal domestic policy while protecting Eastern English hegemony in national affairs against the threat of foreign, regional and racial subversives of whatever stripe. MICHAEL SUTTON

MICHAEL SUTTON studies at the Centre for Medieval Studies in Toronto and reviews occasionally for *Toronto Citizen*.

OTHER READING

Mounted Police Life in Canada. Captain Burton Deane; illustrated; 312 pages.
Troopers and Redskin. John G. Donkin; illustrated; 289 pages.
Official Reports RCMP: Settlers and Rebels 1882-1885. Intro. by Commissioner W. L. Higgit; illustrated; 298 pages.
Official Reports RCMP: Law and Order 1886-1887. Intro. by Commissioner W. L. Higgit; illustrated; 300 pages.
Official Reports RCMP: The New West 1888-1889. Intro. by Commissioner W. L. Higgit; 394 pages.
Official Reports RCMP: Opening Up The West 1874-1881. Intro. by Commissioner W. L. Higgit; illustrated; approx. 307 pages. All published by Coles Canadiana Collection and priced \$5.95.

BLOODY MARRIAGES

continued from page 1

Sorel by her three maiden aunts and widowed mother, under whose watchful care she and her two children remain. Though Antoine lives with them, he is denied his wife's company.

Humiliated by this treatment, and the jealous onlooker of an adulterous affair between his wife and his former school-mate, Dr. George Nelson, a dark-haired American, by whom Elisabeth eventually has a child, Antoine departs for Kamouraska to salvage his wounded pride, but vows to return one day to take revenge on Elisabeth.

In desperation, Elisabeth decides to kill Antoine first, rather than be killed herself. With the aid of her lover, George and her servant-girl, Aurélie, who takes strange delight in the goings-on of her mistress and the doctor, Elisabeth concocts a plan to poison her husband. Aurélie will be the agent.

The plan, however, misfires. George then takes matters into his own hands: Antoine is murdered in a cove near Kamouraska, George escapes over the American border and Elisabeth's honour is compromised.

After two years of imprisonment, cut short because of Elisabeth's ill health, charges are withdrawn, extradition proceedings to bring George to justice grind to a halt, and Elisabeth's respectability is restored when M. Rolland asks for her hand in marriage.

The love triangle or the tragic love affair — one of the oldest of literary themes — is, in itself, banal. It is Anne Hébert's treatment of it that makes this novel unforgettable.

The animal beauty, blatant sensuality and sheer physicality of Mlle Hébert's description of the passion that consumes her protagonists is powerful and stunning. The blood imagery is straight from *Macbeth*. The novel is saturated with it and the stench of death is everywhere.

The atmosphere, too, with its variations on the theme of red is reminiscent of Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*: sunlight the colour of raspberry juice streams in the windows; blood-red geraniums accent the dull walls of the mansion in Sorel; red-blond is the colour of Elisabeth's hair; and the red the child Elisabeth

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uses in her embroidery outrages her aunts (who think she should use more subdued tones). All these signs point to a future filled with foreboding and disaster.

Mlle Hébert seems fond, too, of black-white contrasts to counterpoint the struggle between innocence and evil in which her characters are caught up. Elisabeth is fascinated, and almost hypnotized by the awesome beauty of George's black beard and the black of his horse against the pure white snows — a recurrent image in the novel.

Animal parallels are everywhere apparent. While wild geese and birds arouse the blood-lust of the hunt in Elisabeth and Antoine, her three dried-up spinster aunts are compared to "three dead birds, stuffed in their faded feathers".

Many similarities can be drawn between *Kamouraska* and other French forebears. The stifling, oppressive atmosphere reminds one of the novels of François Mauriac: the poison plot and the trial seem directly inspired from Mauriac's *Thérèse Desquérus*; while the more vivid scenes of adultery are as if taken from a Flaubertian novel.

The atmosphere of predestination or fate from which there is no escape encircles all of Anne Hébert's characters; they are as if caught in a spider's web — powerless to struggle against the forces that entwine them. Both George and Aurélie seem to possess strange and evil powers: Aurélie in her dabbling in sorcery and witchcraft; George in his entrancing (in the literal sense of the term) charm; even Elisabeth at one point is compared to a witch. All seem to have their parts to play. As George explains, in referring to a childhood chessgame with Antoine: some of us are born to win; others to lose. Antoine, who had lost at chess, was now destined, it seemed, to lose at love.

The great talent of Anne Hébert, in *Kamouraska*, is that she is able to involve the reader totally. It is as though she has us under her spell. Once tuned in to Elisabeth's stream-of-consciousness, the reader is swallowed up by her passions. Tossed between past and present, hurtled along at dizzying speeds, as memory, dream and reality alternate and fuse with one another, we are caught in the whirl-

wind that destroys all of the characters and leaves us gasping for air.

In *Kamouraska*, Mlle Hébert reveals a mastery of language and form that most certainly earn her a place as one of the leading novelists of our time. □

BEVERLEY SMITH, who has moved from Montreal to Toronto by way of France, is a writer, broadcaster and translator.

INSIDE AN OUTSIDER

VARIOUS PERSONS NAMED KEVIN O'BRIEN: a fictional memoir

ALDEN NOWLAN

Clarke Irwin
cloth \$6.75; 143 pages

reviewed by Ann Greer

Always the start was the village ... This was the fixed point by which he knew his position in the world and his relationship with all humanity ... No man ... could live alone in the village ...

STANLEY, Hants County, Nova Scotia has been a preoccupation in Nowlan's work for well over 30 years. Readers who know that work will recognize the landscape in this first novel. "Lockhartville" is a frontier community that the frontier left behind. It is a backwash of frustrated Puritanism where the hard work of keeping back the wilderness is as tough as ever. There is no time for tenderness or frivolity and none of the optimism that the frontier took with it as it moved westward.

Irving Layton once asked Alden Nowlan, half-jokingly, why all Maritime poets were so big; Nowlan replied, half-seriously, that the little ones had been all killed off before they were 12. The village is powerful in its ability to destroy. Most of the children there are pruned and clipped and straightened into the form that the village demands. Nowlan's autobiographical hero, Kevin O'Brien is a weed. This novel is the record of his survival in spite of all attempts to eradicate him. Kevin has escaped but now returns and he carries with him "a

number of manuscripts in which he has attempted to explore and explain his past". In these memoirs we meet the child Kevin who seems constantly baffled and sickened by the behaviour of the others in the village. We meet the adolescent Kevin who works in the Hetherington Sawmill that supports the community; he is treated as a freak and is sickened and amused by the others. But he never fits in.

In one of the most amusing, and sadly true, incidents in the novel Kevin is investigated by the RCMP for writing letters to the editor of a "Commie" newspaper. His father despairs of him:

God, boy, why can't you be like other people? ... Can't you get it into that God damn stupid head of yours that people like us should keep our mouths shut and our arses down?

Most of the others in the village want nothing more than to escape notice. Kevin is alien because he is filled with a "dumb aching wonder at how strange it is to be here inside this body and in this world." Alineation from the village is alienation from the world. The trick is to come to terms with the village.

In this novel, Nowlan tries returning. Kevin convinces himself that he is part of this village, that he belongs in



Alden Nowlan

this place. Yet, as the novel ends, even at the peak of his reunion, he is laughing and is asked again, "What are you laughin' at?" "Damned if I know," he answers. Perhaps Nowlan has achieved the hope that Kevin expresses:

The most anyone can expect from life is to be granted the ability to contemplate one's own essential absurdity.

It may seem strange for me to say that I think such a dictum optimistic, but I do. As this novel is. It is a book of understanding, wisdom, compassion,

humour and hope, and highly recommended as either a synthesis of or an introduction to the work of Alden Nowlan. □

A BITTER ASPIC

RAT JELLY
MICHAEL ONDAATJE
The Coach House Press
paper \$3.00; 72 pages

reviewed by Bert Almon

THE STRIKING cover of this book promises an ambiguous feast: a detail from a stained glass window found in a nursery school has been reproduced in sumptuous color. It depicts an impish, even leering baker with platter of pies. The title printed by the man's image indicates that Ondaatje wants to shock:

*See the rat in the jelly
steaming dirty hair
frozen, bring it out on a glass tray
split the pie four ways and eat
I took great care cooking this treat
for you*

So the title poem begins. Another piece is called "Looking into the projector", and it surely offers a hint about the author's intentions. *The Projector* is a brilliant cartoon-novel published by The Coach House Press, and it contains a series of horrifying images of death and transformation in a mechanized, sadistic culture. Ondaatje's poems offer similar images, and recurrent ones at that as in the novel by Martin Vaughn-James.

I found the feast disappointing. Repeated images become merely repetitive more easily in poetry than in drawings, or at least they do in *Rat Jelly*. And a reader familiar with Ondaatje's other work will find some images (wounded or dead birds and animals especially) and allusions (the paintings of Henri Rousseau) too familiar. The campish poems about King Kong and the tributes to friends don't carry their own weight either, and the frequent references to various American poets are puzzling rather than illuminating. Ondaatje has obviously tried to put together a book, not just a collection of poems: his division of *Rat Jelly* into sections,

each with an epigraph and controlling theme, shows that, but the important poems — the ones exploring suffering and the creative process — are mixed in with light and occasional pieces. There are too many ingredients in the aspic.

I for one resist being shocked, even by a platter of rat pies. I feel suspicious of bloodshed and maimed animals as literary devices. "Heron Rex" is a fine poem marred by this ending:



*These small birds so precise
frail as morning neon
they are royalty melted down
they are the glass core at the heart of
rings
yet 15 year old boys could enter the
cage
and break them in minutes
as easily as a long fingernail*

It's the *could* in these lines that disturbs me: as if real outrages aren't enough, Ondaatje creates hypothetical ones. The mutilations in this book can deaden emotional responses as easily as create them. (I should admit that I don't like Peckinpah pictures.)

There are strong poems in the collection, to be sure. When Ondaatje explores suffering through believable situations (or mythical ones, like "Philoctetes on the island") he is very moving. "Billboards" deals with the complexities of living with a wife who has been married before and has children from that marriage. "Letters and Other Worlds" considers an alcoholic and temperamental father and moves brilliantly from bitter comedy to the pathos of his solitary death. And some of the poems about writing should be mentioned: "Spider Blues" is a *tour de force* — poet as spider — and "Burning Hills" looks at the role of memory in creation. The last poem in the book, "The White Dwarfs", asks the hardest questions. The best contemporary artists seem to move to the edge of silence, the edge of whiteness — the minimal work, or even no work at all. Think of Beckett. The silence, Ondaatje suggests, may have two sources: pain that leaves the artist mute, or insight that makes expression superfluous. Awareness of pain may lead the writer to care only for the "perfect white between words" while the awareness of a transcendent whiteness may turn him into a white dwarf, an imploded star with nothing to say. We should hope that this poet will remain more interested in words than in the perfect whiteness between them. □

BERT ALMON is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and a writer of both poetry and fiction, his work appearing widely in Canadian and American periodicals.

market can only come from further proliferation of retail outlets. But this will not be feasible as long as retailers are denied a share of those profitable sales that publishers now make directly to libraries and schools. Quebec has already passed legislation on this count; the other provinces must be induced to follow suit. The common practice amongst our libraries of buying our own books through American wholesalers emerged from their dissatisfaction with the service offered by Canadian

publishers. The governments must, by subsidy, or if necessary by setting up a distributive and servicing chain, discourage this demeaning procedure. And moreover they must somehow make it possible for libraries to both demand and afford the Canadian books their readers want. With action such as this written into the Canadian publishing drama, with all the players involved to the hilt, it is just possible within the foreseeable future that we might arrive at that desirable *finale*, the uniting of the right Canadian writer with the right reader, to live happily ever after.

VAL CLERY

SMILE, SMILE, SMILE

THE BANDY PAPERS

Vol. 1: Three Cheers for Me
Vol. 2: That's Me in the Middle

DONALD JACK
Doubleday

cloth \$7.95 each; 279 and 300 pages respectively

reviewed by Douglas Marshall

WHEN A NEW YORK firm first published *Three Cheers for Me* 11 years ago, the 1,000-odd copies sold in Canada soon became collectors' items. Toronto author and playwright Donald Jack picked up the Leacock Award that year and then subsided back into relative obscurity — churning out bread-and-butter scripts for the CBC. (For a full portrait of Jack, see *Books in Canada*, November, 1971.) By the late 1960s, the author had suffered a literary fate even more galling than rejection; he had been eclipsed by his own comic creation. The fame of Lieut. Bartholemew Bandy, insouciant young World War I flying ace with a "smooth, bland and maddening" Ottawa Valley face and a natural inclination toward hilarious misadventure, was spreading across Canada like gossip — fanned by word of mouth and tattered first editions. Bandy's underground reputation finally reached the ears of Doubleday Canada, who decided to publish a slightly revised edition of *Three Cheers* together with a sequel, *That's Me in the Middle*,

collectively called *The Bandy Papers*. (A third Bandy novel is in the works and a fourth is projected).

Bandy fans awaited the reappearance with an eagerness tinged with dread. Would Bandy still be as engaging as we remembered him 10 years ago when our only copy slipped from our hands into that vast circulating library of books borrowed and unreturned? Would Jack-whatever-his-name-was be able to maintain his high level of inventive humour throughout a second volume? The quick answer to both questions is yes.

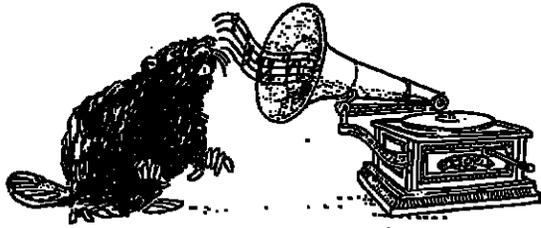
The Bandy Papers are the work of a thoroughly professional writer who knows how to tell a gripping story. As such, they are excellent middle-brow entertainment — a commodity this survival-conscious country has never been noted for producing in any great abundance. Indeed, Jack and Robertson Davies are almost alone among contemporary Canadian novelists in cultivating that fertile acreage of fiction known as the good straightforward

plot. It's a welcome relief from the savage ironies of the ghetto, the rugged symbolism of the blasted Shield, and the all-too-littoral prose that drifts in from the depths of introspective lakes.

Better still, these books are true products of the creative imagination. No autobiographical sleight of ego here. Jack, who is 48, has done his historical homework, applied an artist's powers of description, and evoked the spirit and substance of the world as it was more than half a century ago. Bandy's progress from colonial prude to urbane Falstaff — the difference is Bandy believes *indiscretion* (usually verbal) is the better part of valour — reflects the suicidal disenchantment of the era. In countless authentic details, from the tangible squalor of the trenches to the squalid senility infecting Whitehall, we are reminded of the organized idiocy of that most appalling of all wars. And when Bandy rolls his Camel across the wet dawn grass to go Hun-hunting in the morning sun (the dog-fight sequences have the narrative drive of a perfectly pitched propellor), we share the flyer's sense of exaltation as he escapes from chaos.

Above all, *The Bandy Papers* are funny. Laugh-out-loud funny. Jack is a genuine humorist, a *rara avis* that ought to be designated a protected species in Canada. The one weakness of the books is that he hasn't yet learned to keep his comic versatility under control. He pirouettes from wit to farce, from black to bedroom comedy, from set piece to throwaway line like a Nureyev who has just discovered himself. Inevitably, he sometimes falls flat. Bandy lording it over young Mike Pearson or tossing rhetoric around with Churchill is pushing it; Bandy running into Renny Whiteoak is going too far.

Exaggerated? Yes, but still within the bounds of reality. Jack's splendid grasp of the absurd has nothing to do with surrealism. Toward the end of the second volume Bandy becomes attached to an improbable corps of cavalier Canadian bicyclists whose heroic escapades blunt the big German advance of 1918. Yet there *was* such a Canadian corps free-wheeling around Flanders in 1918. And they were every bit as mad and brave as Jack describes. Bandy may not have been there but he is of their company. □



THE SPOKEN WORD

MOODIE REFLECTIONS

THE JOURNALS OF SUSANNA MOODIE

by MARGARET ATWOOD
read by MIA ANDERSON
CBC Learning Systems
LP Album \$5.00

reviewed by Susan Swan

SOMEDAY SOON our souvenir stands may be full of Susanna Moodie dolls and trinkets, nestling right in there with the carved Indians and totem poles.

Already she has become something of a pop symbol for the Canadian frontier. Commune dwellers living on farms read her books for inspiration on their new life style; on university courses, she is discussed as "an embryonic artist," and Margaret Atwood, a popular Canadian writer, has written a book of poems about her which are available now on this LP put out by the CBC.

Who is Susanna Moodie? She was a stuffy young Englishwoman who came to Canada in 1832 to start a farm with her husband. She wrote two books about her experience as a settler — *Roughing It in the Bush* and *Life in the Clearings*.

They must be the only minor Canadian classics written as a warning not to come here. Moodie felt English speculators were duping potential immigrants with a phony picture of Canada as a land of milk and honey. So she started recording her life with an eye to discouraging others from coming. She died here, remaining to the end a Canadian by choice, but in her heart of hearts not always a Canadian out of conviction.

A good introduction to her quirky personality is this recording of Atwood's poems, read by Canadian actress Mia Anderson. Moodie first appeared in a dream to Atwood who saw her as a single figure sitting in an empty white stage singing an opera Atwood had written about her. Atwood had never written the opera, much less read Moodie's books. The woman had been no more than a name out of a Grade 5 history book. At any rate, the dream inspired Atwood to read Moodie and later to write *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*.

The recording of the poems has been around for a while (1969) and it is part of the CBC's program to sponsor Canadian poets.

In an introduction on the record jacket, Atwood claims that Moodie's schizophrenic personality is typical of the Canadian temperament:

She claims to be an ardent Canadian patriot while all the time she is standing back from the country and critiquing it as though she were a detached observer, a stranger. Surely that is the way we still live: we are all immigrants to this place even if we were born here.

Mia Anderson closely follows Atwood's interpretation on the record. She is two voices, divided as Moodie was split into the strident, almost hysterical English prig and the softer, more approachable female who realizes she never manages to grasp the lessons the bush could teach her.

*I am a word
in a foreign language,*
is what the Englishwoman exclaims on disembarking at Quebec, her sensibilities a quiver from the behaviour of the immigrants and the harshness of the land. Anderson's voice shrills over Moodie's prejudices; her indignation at her scruffy Yankee neighbours, her stiff-upper-lip reserve that eventually wears down into an uneasy resignation.

In my favourite poem in the book, "The Wereman," Anderson half chants

a breathless terror over the woman's secret fear. That is, the fear that under the spell of the forest, she and her husband may be changed into non-human shapes.

At the end of the record, Anderson is the mad old eccentric Atwood saw Moodie becoming. The last poems deal with Moodie's resurrection and appearance on a Toronto streetcar.

Moodie may be a nut case, but she is undefeated in the sense that her spirit survives or as Atwood says on the jacket: "Susanna Moodie has finally turned herself inside out and has become the spirit of the land she once hated."

Anderson has acted in Shakespearean festivals in England and in Stratford, Ont., and her enunciation is easy to understand. Still, if you are jealous of missing a word of the poetry, it helps to follow her reading with the text. But the greatest problem lies with the listener who must resist the North American habit of treating records as background for another activity. The sometimes amusing, always painful and surprising story of the crusty old pioneer demands total attention. □

PLATTERS OF POETS

CANADIAN POETS 1

CBC Learning Systems
LP Album (2 discs) \$7.50

THE TWO-RECORD album, *Canadian Poets 1*, came out in 1967. I'm mentioning this right away so it doesn't seem like the album needs a hype or a con job.

It was the first of a series the CBC started to promote Canadian poetry. However, the series hasn't had much promotion itself, probably because the CBC feels the audience for Canadian poetry is a dedicated group who finds out what it wants anyway. I'm not sure this is true and I do think the record, along with the rest of the series, deserves more publicity and attention.

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It's a medley of eight Canadian poets reading their work — Earle Birney, Gwendolyn MacEwen, John Newlove, Alfred Purdy, Phyllis Webb, Irving Layton, George Bowering and Leonard Cohen.

Since 1967, most of the group have become entrenched poets; Cohen, now 39, even has had time to peak from the pop-star phenomenon he was in the late 1960s. But the quality of his work hasn't dated. In fact, all eight poets sound fresh and provocative, making the album a good blend of vintage talent.

Birney, who was born in Calgary in 1904, is the only one who reads his work poorly. Purdy is the best at it; therefore his seven poems are the most exciting in the album. At first, nothing comes across except a nasally, flat voice mouthing ordinary words, but a flash of recognition and surprise soon follows. Purdy is speaking with an Ontario accent and using an Ontario idiom and the little details that have been absorbed but not noticed are all there — flies buzzing, screen doors shutting, a herd of cows in a pasture, a carpenter fixing a church spire. Purdy brings Ontario back from the never-never land of unconscious recognition. He makes it knowable.

This is his right. Born in Wooler, Ont., in 1918, Purdy is of Loyalist stock and he is usually cited as a self-made poet who has been shaped by few influences except his own.

In Irving Layton's selection of 10 poems, are two of his finest — "The Bull Calf" and "Keine Lazarovich 1870-1959." The last is a lament for his dying mother, a magnificent gypsy of a woman whose final word was a curse, her mouth "a small black hole, a black rent in the universe." "The Bull Calf" also deals with death and both show the trait at the bottom of Layton's greatness — his gut assault on anything, no matter how big, that affects the human condition.

The youngest poets in the group, Bowering, MacEwen and Newlove, are in their early 30s now and sound on the album much the way they do today.

MacEwen is a magical mystery tour of exotic images and incestuous passions, Newlove — a gruff and stoical Prairie voice and Bowering is West

Coast folklore which sometimes flowers, as it does in "The Descent", (one of his four poems on the record), into a lyrical and profound piece of work.

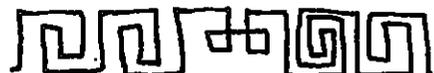
There are seven poems by Phyllis Webb and six by Earle Birney who hasn't included his most famous poem, "David." The poems read by Birney amount almost to a travelogue, from "Anglosaxon Street", written in 1942 to "Sestina for the Ladies of Tehuantepec," written in 1956. Birney is one of the few Canadian poets whose sophistication make him able to write memorably about what he encounters, not just things he knows well. He is a Chaucerian scholar, a journalist and one of the first to give creative writing courses at a university.

Webb, 46, lives in British Columbia and her "Selected Poems 1954-1965" was published in 1971. Her poems — mainly dealing with personal relationships — are by far the most gentle and sometimes the most moving on the record.

Then there is Leonard Cohen with seven poems from three of his books. They are rich and powerful, drawing their energy from images like, "an empty telephone booth passed at night and remembered," a line from the poem, "What I'm Doing Here." Cohen is a sensualist who along with fellow Montrealer, Irving Layton, was one of the first to prove that love poetry is a special Canadian talent. His poem, "You Have the Lovers", is a rhythmic description of the surrender of self; as the lover gets into bed, he or she joins the thousands of others who have performed or are performing the act of love.

Cohen intones his poems the way he sings, in a sleepy, priest-like voice which reminded me of the remark one critic's wife made the first time she heard the poet on radio — "Never mind his record, bring me Leonard Cohen."

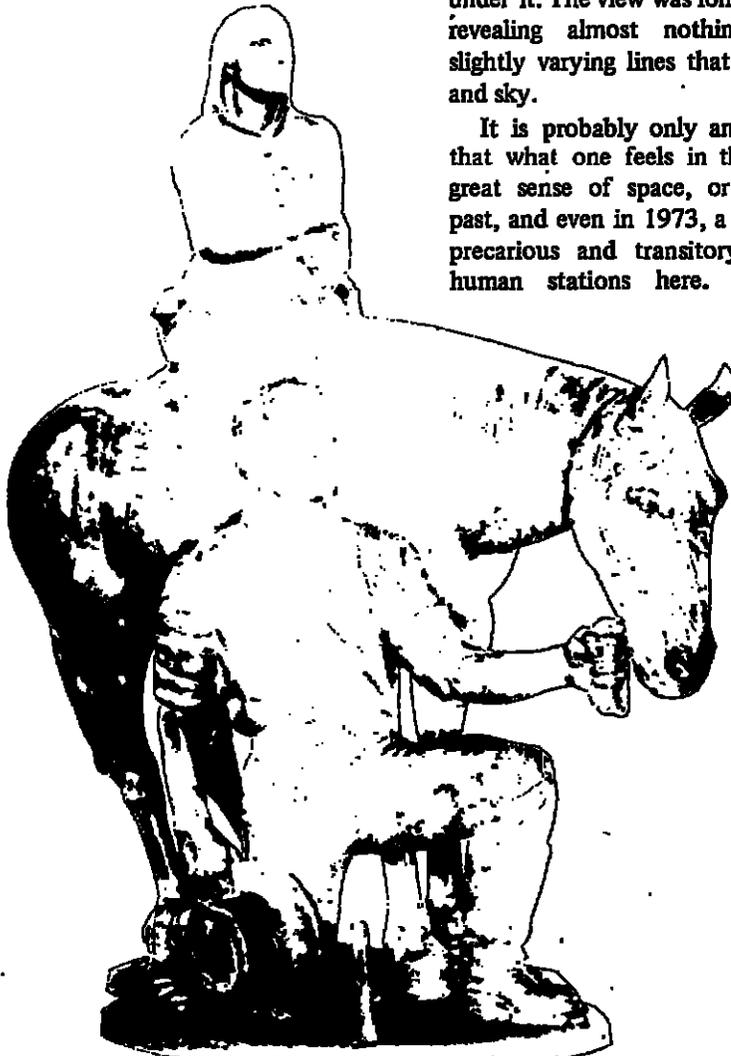
The album has a jacket introduction by the late Robert McCormack and can be ordered through the CBC or bought in bookstores specializing in Canadian literature or in some record stores. □



THE WEST

HOW THE WINNERS WON THE WEST

I RETURNED TO Alberta for a visit early this spring, and so it happened that I read the new Alberta history on location. I eyed the people around me carefully to see if they revealed any of that rugged pioneer stock that MacGregor talks about. I lifted my eyes to the poetically named Nose Hill, which is more like an enormous bald pate emerging from among the subdivisions in the north end of Calgary. I was looking for the beauty that MacGregor extols in his work: "The glowing parklands and the rolling prairies, . . . wide, flowering meadows, broad smiling valleys and



reviewed by *Katherine Govier*

alluring hilltops . . . tall grasses, teeming bird life . . . trickling streams. A wild beautiful, untouched paradise . . ." I did not see it. I saw another kind of land, jaded as my eyes were by their exposure to Eastern views. What I saw was an overpowering ratio — space over the horizon surpassing mass under it. The view was long and broad, revealing almost nothing but the slightly varying lines that define land and sky.

It is probably only another cliché that what one feels in the West is a great sense of space, or air moving past, and even in 1973, a sense of the precarious and transitory nature of human stations here. The Prairie

A HISTORY OF ALBERTA

JAMES C. MacGREGOR

Hurtig

cloth \$10.00; illustrated; 335 pages

Indians were nomads. This land is not one to inspire proprietary pride. It is just there, and it does not give way much to the ministrations of the settlers. It has refused to support trees for the dusty Calgarians, and it still manages to scare people away with its long winters.

Undoubtedly James MacGregor is a bit of a Western chauvinist. He may also be one of the most knowledgeable living persons on the subject of the popular history of Alberta and the rest of the prairies. He has written 10 other books on his subject, including *Edmonton: A History*, *The Klondike Rush Through Edmonton*, and *Pack Saddles to Tete Jaune Creek*. As a reference this book is bound to be valuable — the facts, the dates, the names are all there and an index, an historical appendix and maps by Lillian Wonders make the information easy to find.

But the book is not as successful as it might be, despite the anecdotes about the missionaries, the funny money, and the famed women's basketball team; despite the inclusion of some of the elusive folklore that helps to enliven a history written essentially from the top end of the political spectrum. The author embellishes historical data with occasional paragraphs expounding the beauties of the Prairie landscape and the freedom it offered. But he has a heavy hand. In moments of emotional overflow, MacGregor tends to cliché, and often repeats fusty expressions meant to be amusing. He has an unfortunate habit of extending metaphors beyond their

EMPTY SADDLES

WHERE THE WAGON LED: one man's memories of the cowboy's life in the old West

R. D. SYMONS

Doubleday

cloth \$8.95; illustrated; 343 pages

reviewed by Ann Howes

endurance. Aside from these matters of style, MacGregor has difficulty drawing sharp conclusions to his masses of detail. He does not synthesize clearly. For this reason, the book is difficult to follow, even though the content is interesting enough.

A popular historian is not a people's historian. If his sentiments were somewhat more radical, and his content more from the lower shade of the spectrum, then MacGregor would have written quite another book. *A History of Alberta* gives the story from the point of view of its winners — the traders, financiers and farmers to whom the book is dedicated. While he has not failed to exhibit the proper interest in the Indians, and to include a few pages about settlers who starved and died of disease, MacGregor is essentially interested in progress. It is progress that changed Alberta from a backwoods to what MacGregor calls a land of Abounding Material Riches.

This history demonstrates the myth of the West as a secular Mecca drawing toward itself seekers of adventure and riches. After the buffalo hunters, the fur traders and the homesteaders came the prospectors for minerals — gold, coal and oil. Some Westerners, like MacGregor, see their land even yet as the mythical place of wealth and opportunity. I do not hold that image of Alberta, and neither can I agree with those who see Alberta as the Texas of Canada or a Bible-thumper's haven. I do not recognize such places as the place I know. But then I suppose no one's West is quite the same. □

KATHERINE GOVIER, who now lives and works in Toronto, was born and educated in Alberta; one of her main interests is theatre.

THE WEST

MEN WHO regarded fence posts as heralds of tyranny are a dying breed. Unlimited and unclaimed space to ride over meant space for such men to live. Symons was such a man and his book has the wide ranging flow of his life. He arrived in New York at the age of 16 in 1914 with an academic knowledge of Western Canada, enough money to buy a pair of good boots and a saddle, and a determined love for horses. Wasting no time in New York, he soon arrived in Maple Creek near Moose Jaw and headed to the (eternal) Chinese cafe for a meal and directions to the nearest livery stable. After his engagement by the proprietor of the stable as a ranch-hand on an outlying spread, Symons never looked back.

From this point the book rambles on in folksy sketches of rustlers, unexpected plains-lore about buffalo stones or how to find one's way by the manner in which grass grows on the northern and southern slopes and the making of basket racks to carry hay. Symons' interest in natural history was acute and it is one of his book's reliable delights that small and various birds and animals constantly wander into the narrative only to disappear in more curious clumps of growth.

It's not all sweet spaces and sun though. The terrible winter losses of livestock are sharply detailed — riding out to count the carcasses, destroying animals frozen blind but still living and the way they would turn towards the sound of the rider with "that ultimate standing at bay which is instinctive to creatures about to die".

The larger part of the book covers the run of Western life from cattle drives

to Mounties, to the local Maple Leaf bar and the girls behind lace curtains on the outskirts of town. But Symons did give plenty of space to his favourite horses.

Horse men are notoriously prickly about their methods and their ability to spot a likely animal (their 'eye'). And the favourites here as always are the ones bought as renegades or half-starved useless 'skins'. These are the horses that prove one's horsemanship and Symons had an enviable number of successes.

The book is a mine of esoteric information about horses in Western Canada. Many of the Indian cayuses bore the "thumb mark of Allah", a small depression on the neck behind the jawl, a mark often seen in the thoroughbred, attesting their common Arabian ances-



try. These tough little Indian horses, exported to France, Palestine and South Africa, were deemed the most adaptable and sturdy cavalry mounts obtainable. However the Indian Department, in its wisdom, decided to import draught stallions, hoping by cross-breeding to produce an animal that would pull a plough for an Indian who didn't want to follow a plough. The Indians were encouraged to cut their own young studs and the result was the loss of an original useful breed and the gain of an indeterminate creature of no use.

Symons' chapter on war and horses is brief but his observations on the behaviour of mules and horses are unusual. Mules never died of shell-shock; horses did. The mules however were sabotaged:

The supply of these rugged animals began to run short before 1917, for hundreds died of some virus on the transports. This was due to the sabotage of Franz von Papen, then German Ambassador to Washington whose agent "needled" hundreds of mules and horses in the stockyards or when they were en route after their purchase by the British Government.

There are quick glimpses of ranching in Mexico, Australia and South America. Cowboys are still riding there. In Canada, with the second outbreak of sleeping sickness in 1938 when 15,000 head were lost, machinery moved in. From then on the cowboy has been an entertainer or a fringe fugitive. Since 1965, Ontario has been the quarter-horse capital of Canada and ranches are not to be found in Ontario.

While Symons apparently never cast a lingering glance back towards England, his sketches and drawings rank him as the Cecil Aldin of Western Canada. They are an integral part of this lament for loss of our ability to hear the four-hoofed cadence of centuries. □

ANN HOWES, a writer and poet who is interested in breeding and producing Canadian dressage horses, works for the People Or Planes Committee in Pickering, Ontario.

PLAIN TALES

THE OPENING OF THE CANADIAN WEST

DOUGLAS HILL

Longman

paper \$2.25; illustrated; 292 pages (Reprint)

reviewed by Glennis Zilm

THE OPENING of the Canadian West produced a stimulating and colourful period of our history, full of drama, excitement and tension, when little-known pioneer settlers played roles as vital as those of the well-known officials, politicians and railway magnates.

Douglas Hill, a Canadian now living in Britain, realizes this and makes the stories of both come alive on the page. His book covers the development of the western interior and West Coast from about 1670 until 1905 when Saskatchewan and Alberta were

formally inaugurated and the western boundaries as we know them were more or less set. It is full of anecdotes about ordinary people, with their lively pioneer spirit, that make you want to know more about them.

One is about Mrs. A. G. B. Bannatyne, the wife of "a leading citizen" of the Red River Colony in about 1868, who took issue with newcomer Charles Mair. Shortly after his arrival, he had sent back letters to his brother in Perth, Ont., and these had found their way into newspapers. The settlers considered them full of "slandorous, racist lies," and Mrs. Bannatyne

took a horsewhip from the wall and whipped Mair out of the store and down the street. He was ordered out of Red River by the furious colony.

Another was the story of Captain E. M. Pierce, who established Cannington Manor in southeast Saskatchewan in 1882 "as an attempt to bring gracious living to the empty frontier":

The Cannington people brought their finery of leisure — dinner jackets and ball gowns, cricket bats and tennis rackets — and occupied themselves with fox hunts, dances, shoots and sports while hired labourers attended to the farming. A farm instructor reportedly remarked that he was glad "when the young gentlemen took to tennis, so I could get on with the work".

He opens up some new mind-pictures of the West that make one long to know more — so very little has been published — about the day-to-day life on the Canadian Prairie frontier in which were rooted some of the essential differences from the American West.

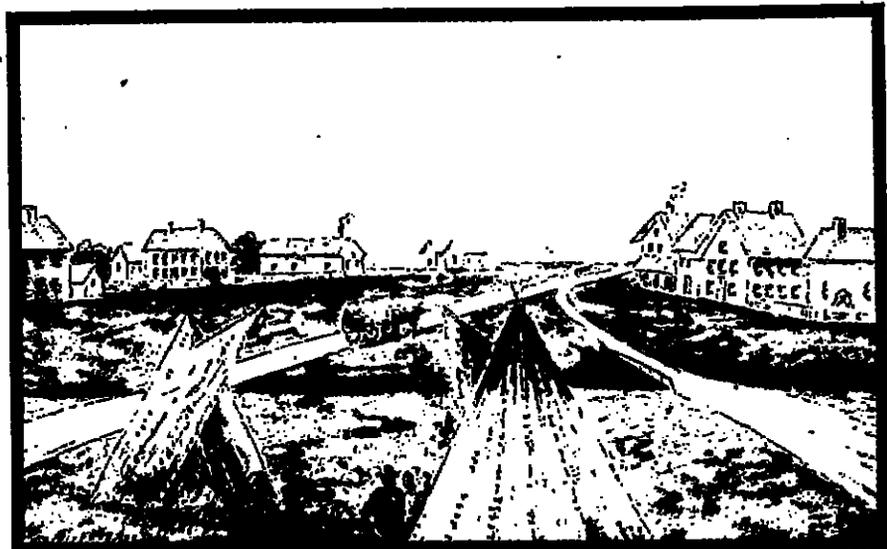
Hill was born in Brandon, Man., and raised in Prince Albert, Sask., according to the book's jacket blurb, and attended universities in Saskatchewan and Ontario. He moved to Britain in 1959, contributed to several periodicals, including *The Guardian*, and wrote or edited several science fiction books. He returned to Canada to research and write the *Opening of the Canadian West*, which was published in hardcover in 1968 by William Heinemann Ltd.

This is a well-researched, well-written general history and a welcome addition to Longman's Windjammer paperback series.

I have one major criticism, however. Although Mr. Hill has dealt excellently with the trials and tribulations of European and Chinese immigrants, the foundations of today's Canadian mosaic, he has given short shrift to Canada's native peoples.

For him the West "opened" when Europeans arrived; there is little consideration of the noble civilization that existed there already. Nor is much attention paid to the stories of either those Indians or their leaders, leaders who contributed so much to that opening. There is a good and complete treatment of the Riel Rebellion, handled with both objectivity and compassion. But otherwise the original Canadians and their ways of life get wooden treatment. □

GLENNIS ZILM, who was born and raised in the West, now reports on science and medicine for *Canadian Press* in Ottawa.



DE PROFUNDIS

VOYAGE TO THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

ALAN EDMONDS
McClelland and Stewart
cloth \$10.00; illustrated; 254 pages

reviewed by H. G. Levitch

WHEN ALAN Edmonds writes as good a book of popular science as this is, then he deserves better treatment than his editor and publisher gave him. Science for the layman is a bastard art, but Edmonds has made an artful job of it.

There was grizzled Bill Sutcliffe, brilliant biologist who had given up the directorship of his own U.S.-run institute to go back to pure research at the Bedford Institute and to whom Hudson 70 meant a chance to test his theory that it was possible to measure the productivity of the oceans with unprecedented accuracy by finding out how much ribonucleic acid is contained in samples of zoo-plankton, the insects of the sea. There was Carol Lalli, the leggy biologist from McGill University, who would come abroad at Rio de Janeiro to collect samples of two species of tiny creatures called pteropods to see whether they have the same feeding habits in the Antarctic as they do in the North Pacific, and who, in the process, might draw conclusions that could help change the feeding habits of every living creature on earth.

The year-long voyage of the Canadian scientific vessel, *The Hudson*, cost \$1,500,000, took three years to plan, and conducted diverse oceanographical

Alan Edmonds



tests on an itinerary that stretched from Halifax to the Antarctic and round the southernmost tip of South America back to Vancouver, and into the Arctic, exploring the Northwest Passage.

Edmonds humanizes that experience for his readers. He shows us the men who conducted abstruse experiments and makes us believe we understand what they're doing — no mean feat. This verisimilitude is so convincing that, as Edmonds himself must confess, many readers assumed it was a first-hand account, and not merely the skillful reconstruction Edmonds devised so well.

In the fall the swell is particularly bad because the winds have strengthened and are turning to blow from the north for winter, and on the day that Hudson 70 began — November 19, 1969 — it was worse than usual; bad enough to even send veteran sailor Dr. Cedric Mann to his Chief Scientist's cabin to lie on the bunk. On the bridge Navigating Officer Ray Gould, who also felt squeamish, noted that it was a twenty-foot swell, and on the deck below Mann lay looking out of the porthole, thinking that even with the *Hudson's* vaunted stabilizers — even though she was the only oceanographic ship outside Russia to have such luxuries — it was still a little like being in an airplane one minute and a submarine the next.

It's disappointing to report — after Edmonds' admirable efforts — that McClelland and Stewart seem to have gone all out to sabotage this book. Where is the index? The extended chapters sometimes cover a half-dozen different topics — how is the reader expected to refer back? Where is the Table of Contents, descriptive or otherwise? By my count, there are 51 photographs in 32 pages. Why not include a list of illustrations? Why not key them to the text? After turning the reader on to one or another topics, why not include some kind of selected bibliography or list of recommended reading? As for the typographical errors — did anyone bother to proof-read this book at all?

We shouldn't end this review on such a sour note. After all, the book is well-worth recommending. As for the slap on the wrist of dear old M & S, well, there's always the next edition to look forward to. □

H. G. LEVITCH, a native of Tennessee, now resides in Toronto where he writes on discography for the *Toronto Citizen*, navigation for the Ontario Government and bibliography for *Saturday Night*.

THE WHITE NORTH

ONE WOMAN'S ARCTIC

SHEILA BURNFORD
McClelland and Stewart
cloth \$6.95; 122 pages

reviewed by Jim Lotz

SHEILA BURNFORD'S new book tries to work at two levels. At one level, the author succeeds extremely well in conveying to the reader what the Arctic landscape is really like. At the other level, it's embarrassing to see so talented a writer trying to stretch isolated jottings into a book.

Sheila Brunford went north to Pond Inlet, a Shangri-la of a place in northern Baffin Island. With the aid of a Canada Council grant, she accompanied an artist friend, Susan Ross, to this remote settlement of 400 Eskimos and 15 whites, and spent a spring and summer there.

Once seen, the Canadian Eastern Arctic is not easy to forget. The vast sweeps of sea, mountain and sky; the essential timeliness and emptiness of the land; the puny and transitory nature of even the greatest human effort in this enormous wilderness; the way in which the wildlife catch and hold the eye and the interest — all these aspects of the North are wonderfully described by her. She writes of "this most peaceful acceptance of my microscopic unimportance", and in this phrase, and others like it, manages to catch the essence of being in the Arctic.

When she is reporting and describing the land and the people, the book reads well. But it is when she tries to analyze what is happening in the settlement, among the Inuit, and in the North in general that she gets into difficulty. Whites erect a series of barriers to control any interaction with "the natives" that might be threatening. Stereotyping, entering into master-servant relationships, "trying to figure out what is going on in their minds", romanticizing the Eskimo, photographing them and engaging in all kinds of unconscious manipulation — all these techniques appear in the book. So long as the

Eskimos are in "their place" (as defined by the whites), all is well. The Eskimos don't appear as human beings at all, but as vague figures grouped around the edges of the author's own ego. For instance, there is a lament that the Eskimos may become labourers in the proposed iron mine near Pond Inlet. There is not the slightest hint that the Inuit have never been informed about, or involved in, the development of their land or the direction of their lives.

The book is at its best when Sheila Burnford tells of going to the floe edge, or when she describes an archaeological dig, or writes of a northern priest, or tells of the death of a fulmar.

But, like a hair in a glass of beer, there's an ethnocentric strain that makes the book hard to get through. And the sloppy editing does not help matters. An anthropologist is described as "integrating himself from every possible aspect". A book on the Eskimo "drew away a great many veils from understanding". And how could "The Canadian Publishers" spell that infamous brand name as "Coco Cola"?

Sheila Burnford is a superb nature writer, and she obviously has lots of guts to do the things she did in the Arctic. But someone seems to have been in a hurry to get this book out, and in this may lie some sort of moral for Canadian publishing. □

JIM LOTZ's *Northern Realities* has recently been republished in paperback; he and his wife have recently completed a book on Cape Breton Island, and he himself has just conducted a survey of Canadian book-selling.

FACES OF THE DAMNED

PASSING CEREMONY

HELEN WEINZWEIG

Anansi

paper \$2.95, cloth \$6.95; 120 pages

reviewed by Juan Butler

EMMANUEL SWEDENBORG, the 18th-century Swedish engineer whose writings on science and mathematics were found to be generations ahead of his time, began at the age of 60 to

apply his genius to the study of religion, an occupation which not only resulted in some of the most profound psychological observations into the human condition ever to appear in print then or now, but which enabled him to declare in his calm, matter-of-fact way that he had conversed with angels and spirits of the dead (including St. Paul himself) and had been allowed to make tours of heaven and hell.

Indeed, in his most immediately appealing work, entitled simply *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell*, Swedenborg, with the acute presence of mind that marks all his writings, leads us by the hand into a region where

all spirits in the hells . . . appear in the form of their evil. In general, evil spirits are forms of contempt of others and menaces against those who do not pay them respect; they are forms of hatred of various kinds, also of various kinds of revenge. Fierceness and cruelty from their interiors show through these forms . . . their faces are hideous and void of life like those of corpses; the faces of some are black, others fiery like torches, others disfigured with pimples, warts and ulcers; some seem to have no face, but in its stead something hairy or bony; and with some only the teeth are seen; their bodies also are monstrous; and their speech is like the speech of anger or of hatred or of revenge; for what everyone speaks is from his falsity. While his tone is from his evil. In a word, they are all images of their own hell.

In *Passing Ceremony*, Helen Weinzwieg, herself on the threshold of that magical age of 60, invites us — not too forcibly, not too timidly, and always with a smile — to share her own particular vision of the hells she has observed during her obviously rich lifetime.

Set against the velvet background of a sumptuous wedding reception, we are allowed to watch with varying degrees of fascination and horror as the collective facade of gaiety, polite conversation, good cheer and love and affection for all concerned slowly cracks and collapses under the stress and strain of its own intolerable weight, thereby revealing the hatred, envy, cruelty, lust, insanity, conceit and lies, lies, lies that poise concealed, ever-ready to strike, just beneath each person's life-mask.

Containing subtle whispers of Anais Nin's vibrant lucidity and Gertrude Stein's self-absorbed abstractions, Dorothy Parker's dry wit and Virginia Woolf's cold, cerebral anger, Djuna

Barne's detached madness and Colette's gentle sensuality, Anna Kavan's heroin-heightened, paranoid visions and even Marika Robert's delicate masochism, Helen Weinzwieg's voice remains nevertheless very much her own as she wryly places before our delicate sensibilities the vile stench and loathsome writhing of the serpent in our nature that all of us possess (yet few have the courage to recognize, let alone struggle against) in a style as uniquely contemporary as the theme is universally timeless.

A fascinating descent into the naked eye of the mind, *Passing Ceremony* serves formal notice on all us young Canadian writers that just as regional chest-thumping is no substitute for originality in thought and word, neither does barren intellectual theorizing compensate for the experience of *living* life. And these latter two qualities — the unmistakable signature of a true artist — Helen Weinzwieg possesses in abundance. □

JUAN BUTLER, who lives in Toronto, has published two novels, *Cabbagetown Diary* and *The Garbage-man*, and is now working on a third.

ALDEN NOWLAN

various persons named kevin o'brien



A great Canadian poet emerges as an important novelist with this story about a boy's emergence into manhood.

Clarke Irwin \$6.75

write-in

FROM THE LOINS OF FAMILIARITY CITY STATES

Sir,

There's nothing new in the suggestion, apparently espoused by George Woodcock in *Nationalism or Local Control*, that Canada's provincial boundaries be redrawn to give the largest cities provincial status, etc. See page 77 of *Canada Can Thrive* (1962).

R.S. Rodgers (Ph.D), White Rock, B.C.

IN THIS CORNER, WEIGHING . . .

Sir,

I'm pleased that Rudy Wiebe thinks I have good intentions but his review (Jan./Feb. issue) of *The Style of Innocence*, my comparative study of Hemingway and Callaghan, may mislead the disinterested student. His reflections on the nature of sand ("Sand is forever moving, it is forever fitting itself into the contours of the moment . . .") are interesting but say little about the book he is, shall we say, *theoretically* reviewing.

Wiebe does raise two specific objections to my book. He says that "... work about Callaghan is of the summary kind, and by giving Hemingway equal space, all the critical weight falls to the American." Not true. Discussing individual works, I always begin with Callaghan, and maintain an emphasis on him. For example one chapter, "The Devious Path", devotes seven pages to Callaghan, three to Hemingway. Is this "equal space"? I don't care about others' "critical weight", mine centres on Callaghan.

Wiebe also contends that in 91 pages "... there is, actually, no extended study of any one novel or story to prove the critical thesis the title implies." I'm surprised that Wiebe thinks I have a thesis; his review blithely ignores it!

Fraser Sutherland, Montreal

BEST WEST

Sir,

I liked your "Books in English Canada: 1972" (Jan./Feb. issue) which reviewed developments in Canadian books from across the country. But I was most interested by Pierre Cloutier's "Books in French Canada: 1972". I would have liked it to be longer, more detailed or possibly two reviews by different writers (French Canada is not just Quebec).

With regard to the article by Reg Vickers (*Calgary Herald*), which gave the Alberta perspective on books, I wish to point out that the first course devoted to studying the English prairie writer was not held at the University of Calgary in 1972 but at the University of Alberta back in 1970 (if not earlier). This course, conducted by R. T. Harrison and Rude Wiebe, was English 590, Prairie Fiction.

In the coming term at U. of A. in the Dept. of Comparative Literature, E. D. Blodgett will conduct a seminar course on the English and French Western Canadian novel. This course, Comparative Literature 560, will also be a first in the West for Canadian Literature.

Joseph Pivato,
Dept. of Comparative Literature,
The University of Alberta,
Edmonton.

OUTSIDE THE BEYOND

Sir,

May I suggest that in future when looking for someone to review a book on the Occult, that you use as a reviewer a student of the Occult, or at least someone who does more than quoting from an article in one of the weekend papers to the extent of more than half of his supposed review. This "struggling Toronto author, Juan Butler, who has lately been writing book reviews for \$25 or \$50 dollars a time," (Globe, April 23) knows very little about the Occult, and seems only to be interested in presenting a denigration of the weekend magazine, *The Canadian* and its article on witchcraft, than in reviewing the book as he was supposed to do. I see that he is the author of *The Garbage Man*. How apt!

Roy Dymond, Toronto

WHO OPENED THE CLAM?

Sir,

I must say that I was disappointed to see in the January/February 1973 issue that Katherine Govier in her review of *The Clam Made a Face* failed to acknowledge that the play was first commissioned and produced by Holiday Theatre (now Playhouse Holiday) in Vancouver, yet she did mention that a particular Toronto-based company once produced it. Please, let us give credit where credit is due.

I am fairly certain of this information as I was closely connected with the company that first produced Eric Nicol's play.

Laurel Bresnahan, Willowdale, Ont.

OAKLEAF

Sir,

Milton Acorn's *More Poems for People*:

*Oh, glorious Milton,
O Acorn, you nut,
You're going against the
Grain again, suggesting (of all things)
That love poems should contain
Two people. Imagine!
Two growing souls (or more)
Binding themselves together
To share their growth. God save America,
If Canada catches on to that!
And wait till our poets turn off
Their pneumatic chisels,
Take off their American made
sunglasses
And watch the flowers bursting
from what they thought was a corpse.*

Charles Grubmeyer, Victoria, B.C.



York University

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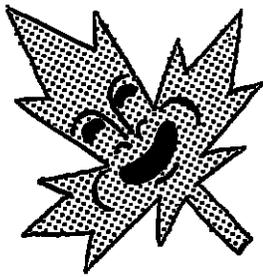
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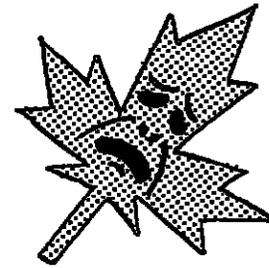
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THE CANADIAN STAGE



DIALOGUE & DIALECTIC: A Canadian anthology of short plays

*Edited by Alive Theatre Workshop
Alive Press
paper \$3.95; — pages.*

THIS IS THE FIRST major book from Alive Press, an ambitious but struggling publisher located in Guelph, Ontario. With a couple of brilliant exceptions, it is an average collection of Canadian plays, yet the book's very existence is almost as remarkable as those exceptions. Alive Press had its origins in a literary magazine first published four years ago by two high school teachers as a forum for their student writers. One of the teachers, Ed Pickersgill, was fired from his position at the school — owing to the radical nature of the magazine and its possible influence on all those young unformed minds — but the magazine was revived when Pickersgill returned to his home town of Guelph. It became *Alive*, a magazine of Independent Canadian literature, which announced itself as an unaligned alternative to organs of the “established publishing cliques.” Through the incredible energies of its publishing co-op the magazine has not only appeared monthly for three years without the advantage of grants or advertising but also Alive Press operations have expanded to include a news service, book store, and its most important endeavour — book publishing.

The books published by Alive Press have steadily improved both in content and production since the first sloppy volumes of awful poetry. They have recently published two handsome books of poetry by fine young writers C. H. Gervais and Robert Hawkes. *Dialogue and Dialectic* is their first play collection and it is as good a

collection as any produced by a Canadian publisher.

The plays cover the field from nationalist propaganda, stark existentialism, and political realism to mime and outrageous farce. The book does the service of revealing a few unknown but promising playwrights such as Leonard Pluta, author of “Little Guy Napoleon,” a play set in Poland in 1944 that focuses on the ignorance and intolerance implanted on the daily life in a Polish peasant village under fascism.

Another play that deals with the dynamics of control and the bludgeoning of freedom under authoritarianism is Carol Libman’s “Follow the Leader”. The short play is a skillful presentation of the psychology of dominance and as a “political” work it succeeds where something like “The Subsidiary Vice-President” by Jerzy Szablowski fails dismally. That work has about as much excitement and appeal, as a 10-hour tactical meeting of student Trotskyites conducted under Roberts rules of parliamentary procedure. Its subject is the operation of the Canadian subsidiary branch of an American firm. The theme, as you can probably guess (and if you can’t what’s wrong with *you?*), is American domination of our economy and what it means to our self-determination. Instead of spot-lighting the problem in order to provoke a response of anger and concern about our lack of economic control, what the play does is blur the whole question with a veil of boredom. And, more seriously, since it is the first play in the book, it makes you have doubts about continuing to read.

But, the second play “The Love Song of Rotten John Calabrese” by Charlie Leeds is as good as the first play is bad, and that is very good indeed. It presents the confrontation between a very down drug addict, a

born loser and Menace to Society called The Artful Dodger, and Mister Success himself, a man who has everything it takes and more (including a habit), Rotten John Calabrese. Their lines read like a script prepared for Groucho Marx and W. C. Fields by Alfred Jarry and William Burroughs. The play’s statement is that society today and people in control of it are utterly absurd and ridiculous. At the end Artful shoots Rotten John and himself and their bodies are eaten by a pack of dogs. This is a brief masterpiece and good as anything in the literature of the absurd, certainly enough reason for buying this anthology from Alive Press. □

TRISTAN EAGER

ERWIN PISCATOR’S POLITICAL THEATRE

C.D. INNES

*Macmillan (Cambridge University Press)
cloth \$14; illustrated; 256 pages*

THE NAME of Erwin Piscator is usually linked with that of Bertolt Brecht and suffers as a result. In one of the more interesting passages in his Erwin Piscator’s *Political Theatre*, York University’s C. D. Innes clears up the confusion that attends the conjunction of the two names and does so with considerable insight into the essential qualities of both men. Where Brecht attempted to abstract the massive canvas of 20th-century issues by reducing them to fables, Piscator sought to use 20th-century methods to mirror these gigantic forces directly upon the stage.

This led Piscator, who is more famous for his attempts than his achievements, to seek a new aesthetics of the theatre in a technological society suffering from information overload. That Piscator’s innovations

were often aesthetic failures can be explained largely by the fact that he had no playwrights, and had himself to show the playwright what to him were the necessary conditions of 20th century drama. It is only with such writers as Hochhuth, Kipphardt and Weiss that Piscator's long struggle with the medium has borne some fruit.

In pursuing the broad scope of Piscator's career that spanned many of the upheavals of this century, Prof. Innes has hit upon some of the central problems of the theatre of today which, despite the experiments of an inner-directed variety such as the *Absurd* or the *Ridiculous*, has hitherto met with little more success than Piscator in its attempts to present the living realities of complex contemporary forces on the stage. According to the professor — and I agree with him — radio and television have established new standards of intimacy that almost makes kitchen sink or naturalistic drama in the theatre an anachronism. On the other hand the expansive canvas of the epic sort is equally difficult to realize dramatically for the essentials of existence today are abstract: power resides in bureaucracies, not kings, and conflicts are between masses, not duelists. Somewhere between these two conditions there is the possibility of theatre.

While thus posing some crucial questions, Professor Innes' book still remains a disappointment. Piscator's theatre was a visual theatre, but the book has only four pages of illustrations and these are of second-rate quality. Moreover, written in that functional computer-prose whose only justification is its scholarly pretensions, no attempt is made to recreate through language the effect of what must have been quite astounding visual pyrotechnics. After reading the book you feel as though you have just been wrestling with a skeleton and have not been rewarded with much substance for your efforts.

The book will likely have little effect on Canadian theatre, though you might well wish otherwise. The burgeoning "underground" theatres do not have the resources to mount such productions while the "established" theatres such as Stratford, the St. Lawrence, and MTC are too beset by

the fear inherent in Canadian bureaucratic dilettantism to invest in any new play of such proportions. Most insidious of all is the current trend of Canadian theatre to reduce the problems of the world to domestic and sexual trivialities. Were Piscator with us he might well say that banality is best served by television, that the theatre ought to be reserved for better things.

Professor Innes' slim volume, incidentally, is exorbitantly overpriced at \$14. Read it — but wait till your library buys it. □

HANS WERNER

ENCOUNTER

EUGENE BENSON

Methuen

paper \$5.75, cloth \$9.50;

illustrated; 200 pages

THE EIGHT PLAYS included in this survey are drawn from stage, radio, television and film. They also range from comedy to tragedy, from realism to the absurd. As a limited view, Dr. Benson's selections illustrate both the strengths and weaknesses of nationalistic drama.

Robertson Davies' *Overlaid* is a witty account of a culture-shy farmer whose dream of going to New York to attend the Met is dashed by his daughter's dream of using his insurance money to obtain a family tombstone. The view that Canadians value necessities over luxuries is gently parodied but the overall impression that one is left with is a sad one. Gwen Pharis Ringwood's *Still Stands The House* is a rather turgid little piece set in a poor farm in the badlands. The young wife has persuaded her husband to sell the family homestead and in jealous malice her sister-in-law allows them both to go out in a blizzard with lamps that will fail, dooming them to die and preventing the sale. An Ibsenite drama without Ibsen coupled with a predictable finish. Kay Hill's *Cobbler, Stick To Thy Last*, by contrast, is a charming period piece (late 18th century) with no moral tub-thumping at all, making it a valid theatrical work. An old cobbler, thinking his wife will die, advertises for a second — and gets one only to

find his first wife still alive. The ensuing complications make for pleasant comedy.

Tilt, by Michael Cook, is a play for radio. Radio has the advantage that the audience sets the scene but the disadvantage that the context must be kept simple so as not to confuse. This play deals with the conflict of two lighthouse keepers, totally isolated, one of whom dies and the vagaries of the other's mental deterioration. To call it "Beckettesque" as Dr. Benson does is perhaps too laudatory, but it is an imaginative work. Mavor Moore's *Come Away, Come Away* blends all the best aspects of radio drama. An old man remembers the past in the company of a little girl, who is, in reality, death; a poignant account.

Ride To The Hill, Ron Taylor's TV play, shows the maturing of a young girl when she must leave the "childish things" of her youth and accept the role of womanhood. There is a good mixture of visuals in this play with the hill representing, I feel, the aspired dreams of childhood, when all things are possible, forever lost in the adult world. *One's A Heifer* by Sinclair Ross and adapted for TV by Rudi Dorn concerns a boy's dealings with a lonely old man in his search for some lost cows. The enigmatic air about the old man's farm is reinforced by the vague, almost absurdist, ending. In this script visual details are overlaid with symbolism — much more in the vein of Ionesco than any other text included here.

The film play is the most far-ranging in scope. True the TV plays cover ground, and in radio the flight of fancy is the only barrier, but in film the point of view shifts from one character to another, from exterior to interior; by its very portability the cinematographer can re-establish the feeling of the human eye. Joan Finnigan's *The Best Damn Fiddler From Calabogie To Kaladar* concerns the welfare of an indigent family. The father rebels against any public assistance for always in the past the neighbours have been mutually helpful, as is common in a rural community. Even though he may die from a liver complaint, he carries on as before, and the end of the film shows that the family will too. The daughter Rosie,

by trying to escape the usual treadmill that would be her lot within the family, finds only an isolation of the soul.

These plays cover a wide range. If the book was only a collection of plays it would be worthwhile. But Dr. Benson's remarks serve only to obfuscate the issue with a pedantic fog, causing the plays to be considered in more of a textbook fashion than is necessary. The whole point of drama and theatre (from the Greek for a dancing place) is that in it they are liable to a multitude of interpretations; to posit one as final is fatuous. □

DOUGAL FRASER

AMADEE DOUCETTE & SON

TOM GALLANT
Square Deal Publications
paper unpriced; 125 pages

TOM GALLANT IS a Maritimer who has numerous songs and several plays to his credit. His English-language tragedy is sensitive, mature and highly stageworthy. It portrays the existence — and ultimate death — of a very vital but poor Acadian family. An ageing lumberman, his embittered wife and their frustrated children are caught in the tightening downward spiral of time and money. The fact that each rebels against, and then shares their fate in his own particular way makes them rather more sympathetic and representative than Miller's Willie Loman. They are familiar, likeable and flawed people who are forced to gamble everything on the supreme symbol of success, mobility and escape — a car.

The gamble fails ("The car hasn't been built that can get us out of here"), but in the meantime the characters are developed and bounced off one another and their surroundings with tremendous skill. The echos radiate far into the past and future and make psychological implications important enough to make this a genuine tragedy.

Nowhere is there stilted dialogue, false emotion or sensationalism to upset the balance; and the ending, like every other scene in the play, fits to perfection. □

NIGEL SPENCER

FOUR CANADIAN PLAYWRIGHTS

MAVOR MOORE
Holt Rinehart & Winston
paper \$2.95; illustrated; 92 pages

THE STUFFY-LOOKING 1930s' cover of Mavor Moore's new book belies its true function so completely that one is sorely tempted to cite the old, painful cliché about not judging . . . yes, exactly. Simply called *Four Canadian Playwrights*, it soberly lists the names of our theatre establishment's "grand old men" (sic). In case you don't know, they are Robertson Davies, Gratien Gélinas, James Reaney and George Ryga.

First of all, the book is *not* an anthology of four complete works, though your browser's thumbnail may tell you it is. Rather, it contains some fair-sized extracts (from "Fortune My Foe", "Ti-Coq", "The Killdeer" and "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe") with equally fair-sized introductions and commentary. It goes far beyond the "sample-kit-complete-with-instructions" formulas so popular in school texts, to give us an insightful, basic and highly readable background to Canadian theatre. Who could be better equipped to do this than the original "grand old man", and someone who has known the other g.o.m.'s throughout their careers?

In the foreword and introductions, his experience as performer and teacher comes into full play with some fascinating and helpful comment on teaching, acting and other maladies of Canadian culture. Thus, in dealing with these writers, he treats them as elements of the entire fabric with bits from their work as further illustration.

For example, Davies' sensitivity to his surroundings and his progressive shift from satire to demonality suggest a "working-out" of some of our fundamental contradictions. The selection from "Fortune My Foe" puts us eyeball-to-eyeball with the old "identity crisis" in 1949, and it looks just as fresh as tomorrow. So do the teachers, "communicators" and arts tycoons who perpetuate it by feeding us pap.

Authenticity expressed through experimental forms and styles is at the

heart of Moore's enthusiasm for Reaney and Ryga, although he never pulls his punches when they are due.

Likewise, he praised Gélinas for finally uniting Quebec's theatre with its audience; however, here his limitations begin to show. For, having established honest attention to one's cultural roots as the first requisite for good theatre, and having praised everyone's ear for accents — Reaney for Ontario, Ryga for the West, and Davies for our Anglo-American cradle — he criticizes young Quebec playwrights such as Tremblay for being too preoccupied with local speech. He does not mention that they make it work, nor that they and some of their English-speaking counterparts do it with some of the freshest staging around.

A further shortcoming, then, is that Moore and his choice of playwrights seem a little dated. Yet this is a history of Canadian theatre and he has given it all the fun of a wide-eyed hike across virgin territory. □

NIGEL SPENCER

CAPTIVES OF THE FACELESS DRUMMER

GEORGE RYGA
paper \$2.50; 119 pages

THE ECSTASY OF RITA JOE

GEORGE RYGA
paper \$2.50 94 pages

RINSE CYCLE

JACKIE CROSSLAND
& RUDY LAVALLE
paper \$4.00; illustrated; 79 pages

CRABDANCE

BEVERLEY SIMONS
paper \$2.50; 119 pages

All published by Talonbooks

I'M OFTEN accused of being a bit rough on what comes at us from across the stage these days mainly because I think I've done better. Yet every now and then I really am delighted to encounter a writer who makes me feel humble. George Ryga makes me feel humble.

DOOMSDAY: PROGRESS REPORTS

George Ryga is good. His mind can deal with issues honestly, directly, deeply and completely: whether it examines urban guerrilla warfare more than faintly reminiscent of the October Crisis in *Captives Of The Faceless Drummer*; or whether it probes into the degradation and destruction of our so-called "Native Peoples" in *The Ecstasy Of Rita Joe*. Ryga is a powerful and poetic writer, often reminding me of the Buchner of *Wozek*. With songs and images he surrounds us with the atmosphere of the soul. His vision is clear and alive; his humanity is overwhelming. It is impossible to read or see *Rita Joe* without responding to the cry of anguish that, in the words of Chief Dan George, "should be heard by all." Very few playwrights in Canada today use stage time and space with the mastery of George Ryga.

For these two volumes Talon Books is to be commended; commended also for including an exhaustive documentation of the controversy that surrounded *Captives Of The Faceless Drummer* when the Board of Governors of the Vancouver Playhouse refused to honour its commitment to produce it on the grounds that the October Crisis was too close to life to make good art. Also to be commended is Peter Hay's biting description of the "bureaucratic dilettantism" of boards of governors in general.

Unfortunately, Talon Books is not so happy in its choice of the other two books on its list. *Rinse Cycle*, while containing a good idea in its re-creation of the 50's we all grew up in, reads like a skeleton, lacks substance, and merely shows the obvious failure of improvisational theatre. Nevertheless, it's an improvement over some of the things we've been seeing in Toronto, and somebody ought to do it. *Crabdance*, alas, is so boring that I couldn't get past the first act, and even at that it needed editing. □

HANS WERNER

Nigel Spencer, a Montrealer, is a graduate student of drama at University of Toronto; he reviews theatre for *Toronto Citizen*. Tristan Eggar, an actor and writer, is now working on a *Complete History Of Dada*. Dougal Frazer is an actor and director from Victoria; having studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. Hans Werner, who immigrated from Germany in 1965, is a Toronto poet and actor.

THE PLOT TO SAVE THE WORLD

WADE ROWLAND
Clarke Irwin
cloth \$7.95; 194 pages

THE PLOT is the June, 1972, Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.

It might have been the most important single international conference to date on earth, as Rowland suggests dramatically in his title, his approach and his style.

To write lucidly about international conferences of politicians and specialists is as difficult as containing the worse classroom when the idiots have taken over. But Rowland manages to adopt much the same mature approach as the Canadian delegation, particularly Maurice Strong and T.C. Bacon.

Rowland explains how the decision to convene the conference was based on the known aspects of the earth's endangered ecosystems, impelled by a growing international concern for the preservation of human life. He contrasts the real prospect of a slowly unfolding global death with the petty ideological and racial attitudes of the developed powers. What emerges from behind the events of the conference, therefore, is a reinforcement of the fear that Man is going to finish himself off for all time.

That observation is not based on mere pessimism: the method of arriving at the conference's Declaration on the Human Environment unmasked the delusions of the "rationality" which our species is quick to claim.

The delegates did agree to all help maintain the purity of most natural ecosystems. They agreed on environmental management, anti-pollution techniques, ecological balance and the exchange of information pertinent to such tasks. But in the painful conceptualisation of these agreements the redundancy of the traditional political apparatus is evident, and Rowland must be complimented for undermining this.

In presenting what is on the surface a journalistic fact sheet of a pure event, the author has taken the trouble to examine the views of rich and poor, the black and the white, the dancers and the pipers.

Such an exercise was bound to reveal the immediate need for anti-pollution strategies against the human mind. Once we have established the Declaration as a reality (Appendix II on Page 140), we move towards the greater reality of mental attitude. The infantilism of governments, of their agents and their saboteurs, still persists after 27 years of the UN's rickety existence. In the end the conference organisers had to state their conclusion that the US government had again "tried to manipulate" (through CIA and Kaplan Foundation) "the course of events at Stockholm by taking the spotlight away from those (like themselves) who had been arguing that an improved human environment demanded an end to capitalism."

Again, the persistence of old squabbles on the everlasting nature of capitalism and communism threatened to defeat any hope for achieving common objectives. So it was left to the "developing," or "most-robbed" nations to guide the programme to its confused ending in co-operation with the Red Chinese and the superb Canadian team.

Constant amendments by the Third World countries indicated that the original "forecasts and blueprints" were planned to favour industrialised countries. Nothing new this, but the course of events indicated that the poorer countries had become a power bloc. If nothing else, their amendments drew attention to the neglected axiom that mankind is the most important natural resource on the earth, and that the preservation and improvement of people should be the basis for future thought and action.

It was not therefore in the fine United Nations spirit of comradeship that mention of "apartheid, racial segregation, discrimination, colonial and other forms of oppression and foreign

domination" was drafted into the final statement. Or when aid to developing countries was interpreted as the mere dumping of high-polluting industries on unsuspecting peoples.

Perhaps the most important background contribution of this book is that it gives visibility and substance to immense changes in the world, to the sudden realization that growth as development is the end of progress, that the steady-state economic concept is the common political target of 3.5 billion humans whose realities and destinies were previously undefined. In face of this, as Rowland shows, a feeling of helplessness and confusion has struck the civilised world at what it thought was its finest hour. □ CLYDE HOSEIN

THE LAST PLAY: the struggle to monopolize the world's energy resources

JAMES RIDGEWAY
Clarke Irwin
cloth \$7.95; 446 pages

IT STRUCK ME as odd, in a recent conversation with one of Canada's more far-sighted energy commissioners, that one of the things bothering him most was the growing membership of major oil companies in the Canadian Nuclear Association. But that was before I'd read Ridgeway.

What Ridgeway writes about in *The Last Play* is the transformation of what we've thought of as the oil company into the multi-purpose Energy Corporation.

He does it without polemics, in sober, documented, *Fortune* magazine style. He lets the facts speak. And they are eloquent.

Ridgeway's point is that the Big Seven oil firms that have long controlled the oil and natural gas supplies of the non-Communist world are diversifying to profit from every phase of the tightening energy shortage. They are, of course, drilling for oil and gas in all the seas and most of the nations of the world. Beyond that, they're buying coalfields. They're into uranium, ore processing and nuclear fuels. In all these fields, they lobby for higher prices and lower taxes. Whoever is hurt by the

"energy crisis" — and most of us will be — it will *not* be them.

Consider Imperial Oil, whose officials have emerged as such public-spirited advocates of a pipeline to the Canadian Arctic. Imperial has been commendably proud of its "good corporate citizenship." But, Ridgeway reminds us, that's only part of the story. Imperial is also the loyal footsoldier of another Empire, one with more economic clout than the Canadian nation-state.

What is Imperial? One of 15 regional operating organizations of Standard Oil Co (New Jersey), which owns 70% of it. It's the Canadian counterpart of Creole Petroleum (Venezuela) and Esso Standard Libya.

Standard is the textbook example of the Ridgeway thesis. It has world oil reserves of 50 billion barrels and gas reserves of 126 trillion cubic feet. It produces five billion barrels of oil a day and seven trillion cubic feet of gas. It has an interest in 70 refineries in 37 countries and 25% of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. It has six million tons of coal, nearly 200 tankers grossing seven million tons and 37 European hotels. It's into liquefied gas, nuclear fuels, uranium and hydrogen fusion research. Its revenues approach \$20 billion a year and it pays less than 11% of income in taxes, which is more than middle-class Canadians can say.

Imperial is Canada's leading oil producer, with massive leases in Alberta, the Arctic, off the Atlantic coast and in the Athabasca tar sands. The top 10 producers in Canada are all subsidiaries of Energy Corporations. The reason for that, as Eric Kierans has pointed out, is that the Canadian tax system has been tailored to fit the needs foreign resource companies. If U.S. capital invests in service industries, it's taxed on 87% of profits. In metal mining, it's taxed on 13%. In petroleum, it's taxed on 5.7%. The invitation, as Kierans noted, says "Come and get us".

It is not Ridgeway's purpose to single out Imperial's conspicuously successful career as Corporate Welfare Bum. He carefully scrutinizes all the energy empires and all their dominions. But it is refreshing to find an American critic with the candor to write of Canada: "In recent history the U.S. has come to regard the place as a sort of resource

storage bin into which we dip as we feel the need."

His book is a useful contribution to our energy debate. □ PHIL SYKES

THE FATE OF THE GREAT LAKES

JAMES P. BARRY
G. R. Welch
cloth \$14.95; illustrated; 192 pages

A CULTURAL historian can convincingly present Montreal as the Paris of the New World. An ecologist, equally plausibly, can portray the same city as an island in a sea of sewage. What's important is the point of view, selecting the material and defining the work.

This well-illustrated "portrait of the Great Lakes" lacks that unity. It reads, in places, like an outdoorsman's celebration of lake pleasures, like an earnest pollution warning, and like a shipping reporter's review of trade. Not, overall, a seaworthy mix.

Barry is best on fish. He retells the decline of the once-abundant Great Lakes fishery — a classic episode in the century-long tragedy of advancing technology profitably applied without thought for the future of natural systems.

Before diligent Upper Canadian settlers dammed the streams beside their mills, Atlantic salmon flourished in Lake Ontario. In the late 1800s, thousands of sturgeon were piled like cordwood on Great Lakes beaches, doused with kerosene and burned — they damaged the gear of the commercial herring fleet.

By the time the St. Lawrence Seaway began operation and 35 million people had urbanized the shores of the world's largest freshwater system, overfishing, pollution, pesticides and lampry had reduced the Great Lakes fishermen to a specialization in second-rate species, dependent, as Barry says, on "dockside plants that convert fish of moderate desirability into acceptable foodstuff."

For all its good photography and careful research, Barry's work misses its target — whatever that might have been. It has neither the urgency of the environmental polemic nor the opulence of the best coffee-table books. □

PHIL SYKES

IT USED to be one of my favorite ambitions when yet a pup to work my way through the entire Random House *Modern Library*, from Adams, Henry: *The Education of Henry Adams* to Zola, Emile: *Nana*. It seemed to me then, and does now, that, whereas your neighbourhood North American college or university stressed not *what*, but *how*, you should read, the *Modern Library*, if taken on faith, offered the best liberal education available, and the cheapest. I did not, sad to say, come close to realizing that early ambition and I had long ago forgotten it until I undertook the present assignment — to describe and assess for the information of the general reader another uniform edition, McClelland and Stewart's *New Canadian Library*.

At a mere 109 titles, the *New Canadian Library* is no match for the *Modern Library* with its more than 400. Nor is reading *Tiger Dunlop's Upper Canada* quite the same as reading *The Persian Wars* by Herodotus. Yet, always providing you don't attempt the 13 volumes of Leacock at a single bound, and don't forget to peruse the 12 works of criticism in *The Canadian Writers Series* by the whimsical light of *The Pooch Perplex*, you'll have done yourself a favour to become acquainted with as much of the *NCL* as time and inclination permit. In the process you may not acquire a liberal education — it's more likely to be a Tory one — but, all things considered, perhaps that is what you've been needing all along, the better to understand this country and its prevailing winds.

In this, and in the three articles to follow, it will be assumed that you have not read the books under consideration. All too often, it seems to me, reviewers who are specialists in Canadian literature simply *assume* that an allusion to *Roughing it in the Bush* or *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* will be understood by the reader. This stratagem may sometimes have the effect of tantalizing you into researching the allusion. More often, such bad manners simply leave you confused and bored, convinced that CanLit can get along fine without you, and you without it.

Margaret Atwood's *Survival* does not adopt such an arrogant stance. For that reason, and because it is so

eminently readable, Atwood's thematic guide through the bush garden of Canadian literature is an interesting way to approach the subject, notwithstanding the occasional strained generalization and some oddly selective reading lists. Unlike *Survival*, which pretends not to be evaluative, our investigation of the *New Canadian Library* must be understood not only to describe but also frankly to assess the books under review. It will be left up to you to decide the extent to which your tastes correspond with mine.

As for the order in which the specimens are examined, we proceed according to whim, vagary and chance.

The Luck of Ginger Coffey,

Brian Moore;
244 pages, \$2.35.
Introduction: Keith Fraser.

Nearing 40, encumbered with wife and child, swollen with day-dreams and good intentions, here come Ginger Coffey, shanks'-maring it around Montreal in deepest winter, looking for work. Lately over from Ireland, where the New World's rags-to-riches reputation seems too good not to be trusted, Ginger sports a jaunty moustache, the duds of a Dublin squire, and an aptitude for wishful thinking. He has already squandered the passage money home. Shortly, he finds himself minus a wife who, in absentia, looks a very desirable article indeed. And when he does find work, it's more like rags than riches delivering diapers by day and proofreading for the *Montreal Tribune* by night.

And things go from rags to worse. Near novel's end, his luck in tatters, no day-dreams left, derelict Ginger winds up in court, charged with indecent exposure for having obeyed a call of nature in the shadows of a hotel entranceway, deep in a drunk and despondent New World's winter night.

By the time it's all over, he has learned his lesson: "Life was the victory, wasn't it? Going on was the victory. For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health . . . till . . .". *The Luck of Ginger Coffey* is a fine and funny novel that deserves more than one reading, especially for the immigrant's perspective of Canada it supplies and for its rare and emerald wisdom.

SERIES O

The current surge of interest in Canada to our contemporary writers. But producing Canadian books as long as we don't know about those writers by them while we were at school or Canadian writers (and many still produce Canadian reprint series. The article by of the largest series, published by M

NEW CANADIA

reviewed by Isa

The Favourite Game,

Leonard Cohen;
233 pages, \$1.95.
Introduction: R. J. Smith.

In many predictable respects, this is more like a long lyric poem than a novel. I happen to have read *The Favourite Game* several times, just as I have *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, and whereas to reread Moore's novel is to encounter an old friend, Cohen's forces a slightly different response every time. Unlike *Ginger Coffey*, ineffectual and forlorn, Cohen's youthful poet-agonist, Lawrence Breavman, specializes in creating experience, restlessly testing his own responses and the loyalties of those who love him. Hence,



N SERIES

Canadian books may well be a response there have been Canadian writers as there has been a Canada. Most of the cause nobody bothered to mention university. To make amends to past (sent) Backlist will regularly review how is the first of a four-part survey Clelland and Stewart .

N LIBRARY — PART ONE

c Bickerstaff

as Breavman hews a line for himself and friends to follow, from wealthy Westmount boyhood to self-seeking manhood in old New York, the reader finds himself, like Breavman's acquaintances, required to applaud or commiserate with the young man's fancies, but always at a respectful distance.

The Favourite Game, Cohen's first published novel, is decidedly autobiographical. Throughout, the author treats his younger self with both irony and indulgence, setting down how it was with wit and candour.

Canadians are desperate for a Keats. Literary meetings are the manner in which Anglophiles express passion. He read his sketches for small societies, large college groups, enlightened



Stephen Leacock

church meetings. He slept with as many pretty chairwomen as he could. He gave up conversation. He merely quoted himself. He could maintain an oppressive silence at a dinner-table to make the lovely daughter of the house believe he was brooding over her soul.

There is no question that Breaman/Cohen is some kind of genius/Messiah. It is possible to read *The Favourite Game* as you would a hymnal, singing his praises, lauding his suffering, celebrating his magnificent conceits.

Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town,

Stephen Leacock;

153 pages, \$1.50 (according to the jacket), \$1.95 (according to a recent brochure from the publisher).

Introduction: Malcolm Ross.

Leacock is presently in disfavour. Within the last 12 months, *Macleans* told us he was nowhere near as funny as the young Montreal cartoonist, Aislin, and reviewers of Leacock biographies have castigated him for his Tory attitudes and old school ties. Margaret Atwood disavows him by implication; nowhere in *Survival is Sunshine Sketches* even mentioned. Which is hard to figure out, since almost every theme that Atwood finds common and significant in Canadian literature is right here in Leacock's best book.

Talk about victims! There's Peter Pupkin who commits suicide three (or is it four?) times, convinced that his love for Zena Pepperleigh will never be requited, and Jefferson Thorpe, the barber, who blows a bundle on a Cuban land swindle — "have you ever seen an animal that is stricken through, how quiet it seems to move? Well, that's how he walked." Talk about the "Canadian author's two favourite 'natural' methods for dispatching his victims — drowning and freezing . . ."; why, when the *Mariposa Belle* goes down in Lake Wissanotti; she takes half the town of Mariposa with her! Talk about your mistreated artists and writers:

I don't know what it is about poets that draws women to them in this way. But everybody knows that a poet has only to sit and saw the air with his hands and recite verses in a deep stupid voice, and all the women are crazy over him. Men despise him and would kick him off the verandah

if they dared, but the women simply rave over him.

Talk about "Canadian literature is not strong on orgiastic sexuality . . ."; there's not a hint of it in *Sunshine Sketches!*

If you're a creature of the modern metropolis and have never experienced small town life, you may not appreciate Leacock's nostalgic yet sardonic look at turn-of-the-century Canada. If so, however, you have my condolences.

Literary Lapses,

146 pages, \$1.75.

Introduction: Robertson Davies.

Frenzied Fiction,

157 pages, \$1.75.

Introduction: D. J. Dooley.

Winnowed Wisdom,

141 pages, \$2.35.

No introduction.

Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich,

157 pages, \$1.95.

Introduction: Ralph L. Curry.

My Discovery of England,

198 pages, \$1.95.

Introduction: George Whalley.

Nonsense Novels,

155 pages, \$1.25.

Introduction: S. Ross Beharriell.

Moonbeams From the Larger Lunacy,

139 pages, \$1.75.

Introduction: Robertson Davies.

Behind the Beyond,

125 pages, \$1.50.

Introduction: Donald Cameron.

Further Foolishness,

164 pages, \$1.95.

Introduction: D. W. Cole.

My Remarkable Uncle,

187 pages, \$1.75.

Introduction: John Stevens.

Short Circuits,

220 pages, \$1.65.

Introduction: D. J. Dooley.

Last Leaves,

213 pages, \$1.95.

Introduction: J. M. Robinson.

Sunshine Sketches, Leacock's *tour de force*, has never been duplicated. And though "The Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias" has been separated out and anthologized much more than is good for it, *Sunshine Sketches* deserves to be read as an integrated unit. As you browse through Leacock's other books, collections of "humorous" pieces, you are reminded

of how often Leacock the Funnyman has been imitated by other professional humourists and of how frequently and persistently he imitated himself.

I defy anyone to read any of these books at a single sitting without getting either bored or impatient with Leacock's dogged foolishness, nonsense and lunacy. The only reasonable way to tackle *My Remarkable Uncle*, for instance, is intermittently, over a period of several days. That way, your sense of humour doesn't get kneed in the groin and you can stroll blithely off the field with your equanimity still intact. For me, the best of these volumes are *Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich* and *My Discovery of England*. From the latter:

After this I got to understand that when a Londoner says, "Have you seen the Tower of London?" the answer is "No, and neither have you."

* * *

At the Tide's Turn,

Thomas H. Raddall, 178 pages, \$1.95.
Introduction: Allan Bevan.

The Nymph and the Lamp,

Thomas H. Raddall, 330 pages, \$2.95.
Introduction: John Matthews.

Roger Sudden,

Thomas H. Raddall, 358 pages, \$2.95.
Introduction: J. R. Leitold.

The first of these volumes is a collection of short stories, set for the most part in Nova Scotia in the latter half of the 18th century. The emphasis is on fidelity to historical particular, on the musket-flash of battle, on the glimpse of a well-turned ankle, on the stink of death when smallpox savages a coastal settlement. Since I prefer my historical romance in small doses, I find *At the Tide's Turn* more satisfying than *Roger Sudden*, a novel that traces the multivarious adventures of a young rake-hell who ventures to the New World after fighting by Bonnie Prince Charlie's side and is executed as a traitor by the French minutes before Wolfe brings Louisbourg to its knees.

When *The Nymph and the Lamp* begins, Matthew Carney is 46, Isabel Jardine almost 30. The year is 1920 and Carney is roaming Halifax, on leave for the first time in 10 years from his post as chief radio operator on the desolate Atlantic island of Marine (modelled on Sable Island), "a

desert in the sea." Carney is an innocent and, though he does not know it, a legend:

Even inland, on the Great Lakes, young fresh-water radio operators had visions of a giant with a yellow beard and mild blue eyes . . . They vowed that he swam like a seal and rode the wild ponies of Marina like a Cossack . . . that on stormy days and nights he liked to stride along the beach with his yellow hair blowing in the wind, shouting lines from Byron at the top of his wonderful voice . . .

Trapped, as she thinks, in Halifax, Isabel journeys as the wife of this stranger to Marina, only to find herself now circumscribed by the raging Atlantic and trapped by a liaison with Carney's second-in-command.

Randall evokes his barren island setting with great skill, just as he does the fecund Annapolis Valley where most of the last 100 pages of the novel are set. And listen to him when he describes the workaday world of the radio operator:

Whistling, growling, squealing, moaning, here were the voices of men transmuted through their finger tips, issuing in dots and dashes, speaking twenty languages in one clear universal code, flinging what they had to say across the enormous spaces of the sea.

Here were the Americans with their quenched-spark sets, their high flute notes; and the British tramps with their synchronous-rotaries, their hoarse baritone whose tune was half-way down the scale, the Canadians and their high wailing rotaries; the curious musical pop-pop-popping of the Germans with their Telefunks; the French tramps and trawlers bleating like small sheep lost in the green wet pastures of the sea, and their liners crying out in a quick precise tenor to the shore . . .

* * *

A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder,

James de Mille, 252 pages, \$2.75.
Introduction: R. E. Watters.

This is a literary curiosity, first published anonymously in 1888, eight years after the author's death. It's written somewhat in the manner of a bemused and besotted Jules Verne who has just crawled home from a madcap revel where S. J. Perelman and Nathaniel West, along with Edgar Allen Poe and Baron Corvo, have been jiggling ring-around-the-rosey with Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defore, every man-jack declaiming at the top of his lungs how splendid are his accomplishments.

In deepest Antartica, our hero, Adam More, finds himself among the Kosekins, a perverse race of creatures whose values are exactly the reverse of ours. They seek out death and can conceive of no greater happiness than to die for others. They reserve titles and luxuries for the most despised among them, while paupers are their most honoured and envied class. To show their regard for More, they plan to make him the victim of a hideous sacrificial rite. "Death is our chief blessing," explains a spokesman, "poverty our greatest happiness, and unrequited love the sweetest lot of man."

Suitably for a Utopian novel, everything works out perfectly for More in the end — although what represents bliss for him would disgust and depress any sensible Kosekin.

* * *

Roughing it in the Bush,

Susanna Moodie, 238 pages, \$1.95.
Introduction: Carl F. Klink.

The Backwoods of Canada,

Catherine Parr Traill, 125 pages, \$1.50.
Introduction: Clara Thomas.

Tiger Dunlop's Upper Canada,

William Dunlop, 187 pages, \$1.75.
Introduction: Carl F. Klink.

Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill were sisters who emigrated with their husbands to Upper Canada in 1832, both couples eventually settling near Peterborough. They came from a middling large family of Suffolk gentlefolk each of whom seems to have written upwards of a dozen books. In *Roughing it in the Bush* and *The Backwoods of Canada* the sisters record their pioneer experiences. Susanna's journal is always opinionated, sometimes spirited and other times petulant. She had little tolerance for her social inferiors:

The confusion of Babel was among them. All talkers and no hearers — each shouting and yelling in his or her uncouth dialect, and all accompanying their vociferations with violent and extraordinary gestures, quite incomprehensible to the uninitiated. We were literally stunned by the strife of tongues. I shrank, with feelings almost akin to fear, from the hard-featured, sunburnt women as they elbowed rudely past me. . . . The vicious, uneducated barbarians, who form the surplus of overpopulous European countries, are far behind the wild man in delicacy of feeling or natural courtesy.

Catherine, an enthusiastic amateur botanist, had a mature serenity of outlook that informs every page of her guide:

Few [women] enter with their whole heart into a settler's life. They miss the little domestic comforts they had been used to enjoy; they regret the friends and relations they left in the old country; and they cannot endure the loneliness of the backwoods.

This prospect does not discourage me: I know I shall have plenty of occupation within-doors, and I have sources of enjoyment when I walk abroad that will keep me from being dull. Besides, have I not a right to be cheerful and contented for the sake of my beloved partner?

Tiger Dunlop's Upper Canada consists of two short works by Dr. William "Tiger" Dunlop, *Recollections of the American War of 1812-1814* and *Sta-*

tistical Sketches of Upper Canada for the Use of Emigrants by a Backwoodsman. And though the books by Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill make for fascinating reading, I find Dunlop's vigour and great humour even more irresistible:

How poultry is dressed, so as to deprive it of all taste and flavour, and give it much the appearance of an Egyptian mummy, I am not sufficiently skilled in Transatlantic cookery to determine; unless it be, by first boiling it to rags and then baking it to a chip in an oven. But I shall say no more on the subject, as it would be un-gallant to anticipate Miss Prue.

I highly recommend you making the acquaintance of this trio of lively and observant pioneers. □

doing to a "fellow adult." The book, *A Little Mouse*, is a case in point. It is intended to teach gender but does it at the expense of calling a mouse a man, woman, girl and boy.

My father is a man.
He is a man.
He is my father.

The illustration shows a mouse sitting in an armchair puffing on a pipe. Here my daughter exclaimed, "A mouse isn't a man!" which are my sentiments too. This may be a small quibble in the face of the story's intent but it could have made its point with a human family and still kept within the boundaries of a child's sense of logic.

My second criticism is one all writers of children's stories (and others) should bear in mind. In this day of Women's Liberation movements and equal opportunities for all, regardless of sex and race, it surprised me considerably to read these six books by women and find not one female hero or a female cast in a role of being a person. Where the female of the species is mentioned, it is in the traditionally imposed sex role as the stereotype of wife and obedient girl. The male is the hero in all of them. It is the boy who plays, bangs, has a dog, goes riding in a snowmobile. The girls

TO BEGIN WITH



ONE SYLLABLE SEXISM

THE MAKWA SERIES

LOIS DALBY & JEANETTE McCRIE

illustrated by Lois Dalby

Peguis Publishers

paper \$1.50 each; unnumbered pages

reviewed by Stephanie J. Nynych

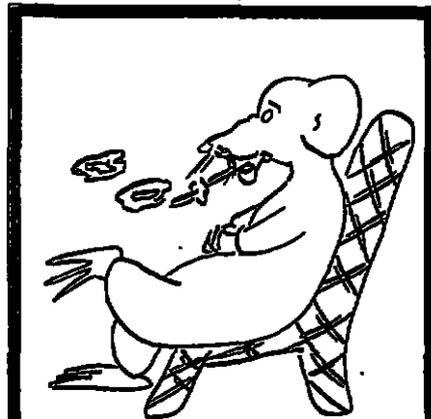
THESE SIX SHORT books — *The New Baby*, *Here I Go*, *A Little Mouse*, *The Bang Book*, *Jack and Jet* and *Grandma Knows* — are a series specifically designed to teach Indian children the English language. Having been raised on *Dick and Jane* readers, I found them a refreshing departure in subject matter and presentation.

The incidents are real, day-to-day experiences of the children for whom the books are intended. They are written simply with sufficient repetition to impress the new vocabulary upon the child's mind. Background for each story is outlined at the end of the

books. Suggestions for presentation and accompanying activities to extend the story are also offered. These are valuable additions that teachers will find useful as devices to supplement their own ideas for further practise.

The illustrations are large and clear with a simplicity of line that captures a delightful expressiveness in the faces and bodies of the characters. They work successfully with the text to enhance the auditory impact of the words as well as depict the actions described. In *Jack and Jet*, the boy and dog are drawn in elongation as the dog is running and dragging the toboggan along the snow. This technique superbly portrays the speed at which dog and boy are moving. The final test is the child of course, and in this case, my four-year-old daughter laughed delightedly at *Jet and Jack* as they approached the sound barrier. The type varies in height from 3/16 of an inch in some books to half an inch in others and the illustrations are in two or three colours.

A child's sense of logic (which is not unlike that of adults) must be kept in mind when writing for children. An error adults often make when teaching children is to say and do things to children that they wouldn't dream of



My father is a man.
He is a man.
He is my father.

are in the background; they do not bang, in fact they don't like bangs; they dutifully carry pails to go blueberry-picking and help look after the new baby. Girls should have been included in all the activities listed for boys. Little girls (and big ones) do like to bang. My four-year-old daughter attests to that, banging everything in lieu of the drum she keeps asking for. Little girls like dogs and want dogs for pets. Even if Indian girls are not presently involved in these activities, it is time that someone wrote books about girls who are. If it be mere fantasy, why prefer the mouse as man over the girl as person? The authors of these books could have taken the liberty of raising the horizon of possibilities for these girl children, expanding it in terms of activities of persons rather than "sex roles."

Human relationships have been based on one difference rather than on the overwhelming similarities. The possession of one unlike organ in the human body has been used as the pretext to foist a separation and duality upon the human race; that all other organs are the same and perform the same functions has had no bearing on the matter. The operation of this sole "feminine" and "masculine" characteristic should be confined to the bathroom and bedroom.

It is this dilemma of similarities versus difference that must be resolved to the greater advantage of humankind and of the individual, for her/his personal development and evolution. For this to happen, there must be freedom within the society and in the mind of the individual herself/himself as to the unlimited potential possessed by human beings for self-expression. Social change can most effectively be initiated through the education of children. Dalby and McCrie write and draw for children and can choose to portray the universal values in terms of the similarities. Their work can contribute to the changing of the forces that produce a social atmosphere conducive for girls and boys and women and men to function as persons towards liberation and the universal good. □

STEPHANIE J. NYNYCH, who has educated her own daughter, recently published . . . and like i see it (Gleaner Books).

BEARABLY FUNNY

LOOK COMRADE THE PEOPLE ARE LAUGHING . . .

Collected & edited by JOHN KOLASKY
Peter Martin paper \$2.50; 135 pages

JASPER

SIMPKINS (Introduced by PETER C. NEWMAN)
McClelland and Stewart; paper \$1.25; illustrated; unnumbered pages

DANCE TO THE ANTHILL

GEOFFREY B. RIDDENHOUGH
Discovery Press (Box 695, Postal Station "G" Vancouver)
cloth \$5.95; 114 pages

reviewed by Richard Lubbock

THERE IS no such thing as innocent merriment. Laughter is always aggressive. Laughter is uniquely human, a reflex crow of triumph over a despised victim, and is very possibly the vilest form of human behaviour.

That one man's fun is another man's boot in the crotch is demonstrated by a compendium of drab anti-Soviet quips entitled *Look Comrade The People are Laughing . . . They're laughing at us!* Most of the "jokes" are well-ripened political antiques, dating from the times of Napoleon and Attila the Hun. Connoisseurs of this genre should welcome these old favourites with warmly expressive gestures of recognition and disgust.

Another example of flaccid, zero-voltage humour is a new collection of *Jasper*, some bear cartoons selected from the pages of *Maclean's* magazine. The only hilarious element in the book is its introduction, composed by one Peter C. Newman who is alleged to be the editor of *Maclean's*.

This fellow Newman reveals himself as a brilliant and savage ironist, and potentially a righteous scourge of the idiotic and absurd. But he must ensure that his rapier-like thrusts do not puncture the very causes he champions. His introduction to these stupefyingly vapid cartoons contains one of the most acerbic, if accidental, denunciations of Canadian culture I have ever witnessed in cold print.

Evidently intending to write in praise both of the vacuous *Jasper*, and

of Canada, Mr. Newman declares that "*Jasper* the bear is the quintessential Canadian . . .", and concludes ". . . this latest collection of *Jasper* cartoons captures our national character so well that some day we may even change our national emblem from a beaver to a bear."

No more destructive insult to Canada could be imagined. Mr. Newman really must try to stop picking on his friends as targets for his incomparable satirical gifts. Once he gets his aim right, however, I'm sure I shall be able to applaud his wicked wit, and I dare to prophesy that before his glittering career is over, at least one intentional joke will have streamed from the tip of his naughty little pen.

A less unwitting attempt at the satirical is embodied in Geoffrey B. Riddough's book of light verse, *Dance to the Anthill*.

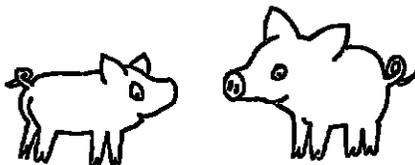
Professor Riddough is obviously far too nice a man to declare publicly the fury eating at his heart, even under the socially acceptable rubric of humour. Beneath the plaster surface of his polite rhymes you can only just detect the hurt and rage aroused in him by such of his inferiors as his colleagues, his students, chaps with beards, ladies in miniskirts, and various other assorted anathemas.

It is universally recognized that inside every genteel English Lit. Prof there is a hot-eyed gorilla raging to ascent the status ladder. This is the most favourable condition for the production of worthwhile jollity.

Unfortunately, the mores that have dominated the Canadian spirit until lately have done their dirty work once again, so that the hapless Prof's indignation comes across to us like the stifled grunts of a gagged berserker, strapped in a cultural strait-jacket and sealed away from the public in that soundproof and escape-proof suffocation cell that is the genius and glory of the Canadian publishing business.

These three small forlorn volumes are sad testimony to the fact that, though humour may well be the best medicine, it's a therapy without value unless it draws blood. □

RICHARD LUBBOCK, broadcaster, writer and photographer, was associated with the British satirical magazine *Private Eye* before settling in Toronto.



NOT WITH A BANG...

GREENPEACE

ROBERT HUNTER

Photographs by ROBERT KEZIERE

McClelland and Stewart

paper \$4.95; illustrated; unnumbered pages

Everyone was standing on deck in the cold soiled-cloth light of the morning, the water a sick dark green. The *Greenpeace* flopped placidly (sic) at anchor one hundred yards from the shore. Hardly anyone was speaking. What was there to say? After two years of soul-draining organizing, hundreds of meetings in church halls, fund-raising campaigns and speeches enough to fill several dictionary-sized volumes, our elaborate protest against nuclear testing was finished. Wiped out. We had just lost what we believed might be the first naval engagement of World War Three, the battle to preserve the Earth from environmental ruin.

WITH THE deft skill of a one-armed pizza baker, Robert Hunter sure writes

a conclusive first paragraph, Notice how he avoids any of the usual hypocritical journalistic tricks to hold the reader's attention: no phony suspense and none of that dramatic tension shit; no fake heroics or campy posturing; and no false hopes or misleading expectations, nothing grand or anything — just an honest dollop of self-pity and a forgivable snivel of self-righteous failure. Not exactly what you'd call a deserving epitaph to a great and noble tale of inspiration. In other words, writing the history of an ignominious flop must necessarily be a self-defeating task.

By avoiding any semblance of stylistic consistency, Mr. Keziere's photographic nicely complement Mr. Hunter's superfluous text. To isolate any one of Mr. K.'s snapshots, studying it as one might a Cartier-Bresson or a Walker Evans, reveals a characteristic pointlessness. If great photographs can literally be "read", then Mr. Keziere must be something of an instamatic illiterate. □

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STORM OF FORTUNE

AUSTIN CLARKE

Little Brown

cloth \$8.95; 312 pages

THE THEORY is often expressed in academic circles that the decline of the realistic novel is attributable to the social sciences. The sociologist, so the argument runs, impinges on the novelist's territory. No more can a Dickens, a Zola, or a Thomas Mann address himself to the vast themes of social class, the family, or industrialization, for these subjects are now the eminent domain of researchers, quantifiers, analysts, all in the tradition of Swift's crazy projectors. Sociological metalanguages, however metaphysical in point of fact, are somehow more appealing to this empirically minded age than the subjective conjurations of the novelist, who — in total disarray — retreats into surrealism, the absurd, or mere contrivance.

Once in a while there comes a writer who carries the war back into the enemy's camp. Austin Clarke is such a writer. A born story teller with a fine ear for language, he is by degrees amusing and sad, eminently readable and always engaging. Readers of Clarke's earlier fiction will know that he has made the West Indian immigrant 'experience' in Toronto uniquely his own, though the very intensity of his focus (his device, for example, of using the same characters from book to book), raises the local to the level of the universal. Clarke is read and appreciated in both the U.S. and Britain, something that can be said of few authors writing in or about Canada.

"Black people," Bernice Leach tells Dots Cumberbatch in *Storm of Fortune*, "aren't the same as white people." Viewed as a whole, the novel examines the validity of Bernice's epidermal proposition through a series of encounters between black and white. There is little reciprocity to these encounters and Clarke manages the related themes of sexual and financial exploitation with great skill. Bernice's sister, Estelle, is

hospitalized after a failed abortion attempt; the father of her child is Bernice's Jewish employer, Mr. Burmann. While in hospital, she strikes up a strange, equivocal relationship with a white woman, a Mrs. Macmillan who invites Estelle to her home in Timmins. Estelle interprets this as a genuine offer of friendship, but it is more a misunderstanding and the relationship ends in a mixture of farce and absurdity.

Perhaps the key to the book is the marriage between Henry White, that loser in life, women and dice, and Agatha Sellman, a Jewish zoology graduate student, who is rich, unattractive, and black obsessed. Henry, at least, has few illusions about himself. He is, he tells Boysie Cumberbatch, "an imaginary man." In a very real sense Agatha is the enemy, not because she is white, or Jewish, but because of her appalling misconceptions. "You're missing the point, Henry," she bursts out during an argument on black anti-semitism:

You are *always* missing the point." She said this with great scorn. She said it also with the superiority of what she herself would have called (had she been writing a paper or discussing this present problem in a seminar) "the sophistication characteristic of a higher civilization." And as she saw how her words hurt him, she lessened or tried to lessen the injury by adding, "Whenever you're losing in an argument, you always have to resort to abuses and, and, and raising your voice and abusing everybody who isn't a *preclous negro* . . .

Clarke himself makes no concessions to black anti-semitism (it is so fashionable in the U.S.) but attempts to defuse the issue. Much the same can be said of his views on the so-called black sexual mystique.

The only reservation I have with this kind of writing is that Agatha (given her presumed training) does not seem a very bright or believable character. She is, I think, more of a foil for the author's

own resentment, not against white society *per se* so much as the whole tribe of social workers, who — for whatever motives — bring a misplaced and patronizing compassion to their work.

Every generally favourable review must have one or two quibbles. While there are moments of some poignancy in *Storm of Fortune*, there is also a tendency (as in his earlier *When He Was Free and Young and He Used To Wear Silks*) towards sentimentality. And Henry White's suicide, as well as his belated emergence as a poet, albeit on the strength of one incredibly bad poem, I found altogether gratuitous.

Bernice's statement that black people aren't the same as white people comes late in *Storm of Fortune*. At such a level of generalization, of course, black people aren't the same as black people, no more than white people are the same as white people. We are all different; all the same. This, finally, is the meaning of Clarke's novel.

Austin Clarke is something of an idealist as well as a very entertaining writer. □

CHRIS SCOTT

PASTORALS

THE SPEAKING EARTH

Edited by JOHN METCALF

Van Nostrand Reinhold

paper \$2.95; illustrated; 127 pages

MUSE BOOK

reviewed by Nancy Naglin

AS EDITOR of *The Speaking Earth*, John Metcalf has produced a compact, well-chosen sample of Canadian poetry. The poets range from well-established to newly published and in skill from merely versatile to moving.

The book is basically pleasant — poem follows poem interspersed by photograph or graphic. The poetry plods along as placidly as the land, sea-scapes and family albums it describes. Some of the poems never get beyond pretty words or clever phrasings but others are unexpectedly tender or cruel. Special are the poems by Ray-

mond Souster, Dorothy Livesay and Alden Nowlan for their gentle-not-so-gentle irony, carrying surprises within well-turned phrases, spurning more artful expression for meaning.

Several other poets stand out also. Some of their best poems — best because they attempt the most — deal with the frailty of human relationships. Elizabeth Brewster in "The Night Grandma Died" reaches for some kind of truthful statement from a little girl witnessing death. Richard Somner writes a poem about a man fishing and tells us all we need to know about a husband and a wife. In "The Cabin" George Bowering captures a poignancy that goes beyond the craftsmanship of others.

The poems, all in all, are not great, masterful or earthshaking; they are modest efforts that discuss the quieter, hidden sides of life.

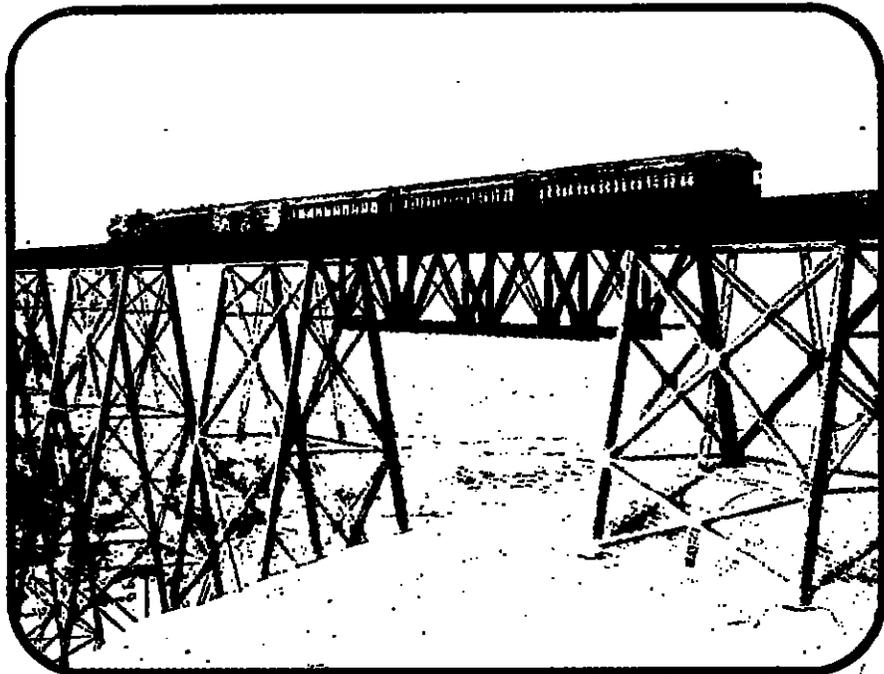
Musebook (dedicated to Her and all Her assistants) might border on the stagey if it were not for Skelton's obvious enthrallment with womankind. His poems moon their way through rapture, servitude or melancholy, depending on the past, present or projected states of the latest lover-friend. Herbert Siebner's rather interesting, interpretive ink sketches make the book attractive.

The love poems are sometimes poignant, sometimes erotic, but all celebrate life. The only objection, perhaps, is that Skelton is just a little too self-satisfied, a little too self-proclaiming. After all, he isn't the first to discover the pleasures — or the pitfalls of love.

For Skelton woman is object still, albeit a delightful one. Perceptions come from a male mind, tethered to a male body, grateful, loving and protective to the anima shrouded in the female form, but not terribly knowledgeable or curious about the person beneath the body.

Sometimes witty, sometimes reflective the poems revel in their sensuality, mocking censor or moralist that would deny people the pleasures on one another's body. The best poems reach beneath the surface of present pleasures to scratch at loss or age or the sorrow inherent in love. □

NANCY NAGLIN, who lives in Toronto, also reviews for the *Toronto Star*.



RAILING AGAINST FORTUNE

PHILOSOPHY OF RAILROADS & Other Essays

T.C. KEEFER (Edited & introduced by H.V. Nelles)

University of Toronto Press
paper \$3.95, cloth \$12.50; 185 pages

reviewed by Donald Swainson

UNTIL RECENTLY the study of Canadian history was dominated by political and constitutional themes. This changed during the 1960s and Canadian historians are now vitally concerned with economic, intellectual and social history. A result of this reorientation has been the publication of numerous innovative and often exciting books, and the reprinting of old classics and hitherto neglected works germane to non-political themes. *The Social History of Canada* is part of this phenomenon. This reprint series is published by the University of Toronto Press under the general editorship of Michael Bliss, and has made easily accessible such important works as Goldwin Smith's *Canada and the Canadian Question*, E. W. Bradwin's *The Bunkhouse Man* and J. S. Woodsworth's *My Neighbour*.

A collection of the writings of T. C. Keefer is particularly welcome. Keefer's essays are not well enough

known. They illustrate in an impressive manner the indivisibility of economic, social, intellectual and political history.

Thomas Coltrin Keefer (1821-1914) belonged to a powerful Niagara peninsula family. After receiving the best engineering training available, he adopted Montreal and devoted a productive life to engineering and writing. He became a publicist for that city and for transportation; in the words of his editor he was "a poet of metropolitanism". In *Philosophy of Railroads* Professor H. V. Nelles of York University has reprinted four pamphlets: "Philosophy of Railroads" (1849), "Montreal" (1854), "A Sequel to the Philosophy of Railroads" (1856) and "Railways" (1863). The decade of the 1850s was Canada's first great railway era. Keefer's pamphlets are valuable because they were written by an unusually well informed authority on transportation and related politics.

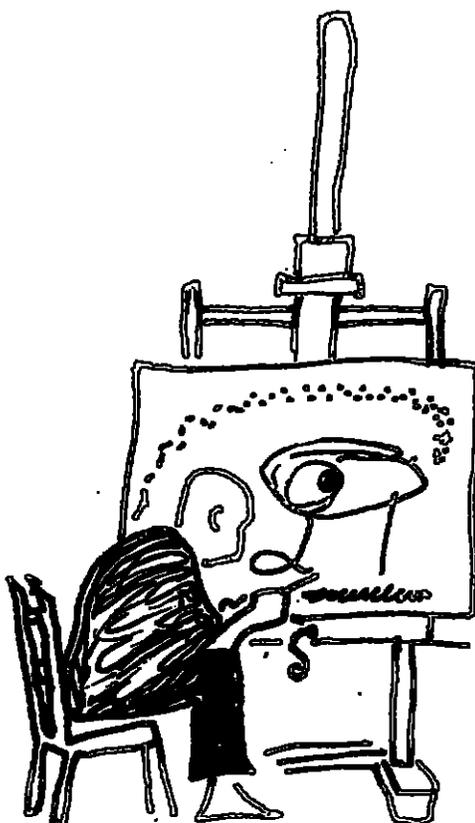
They also reflect one man's growing disillusionment with railways. Initially Keefer identified railways with progress and saw them as a totally positive force. He referred to the "civilizing tendency of the locomotive" and suggested that the railway "is the perfected system and admits of no competition." By the 1860s Keefer had changed his views. In "Railways" he argued that costs had been excessive large-scale blunders perpetrated and public morality corrupted. The booster of the 1850s thus emerged as a relentless critic of Canadian transportation. During recent years, we have had a revival of interest in railway history. In many minds, railways are regarded as agents of national unity and symbols of Canadian identity. Keefer's trenchant criticisms bear reading within the context of these euphoric and simplistic attitudes.

These essays also teach much about themes not directly connected with Keefer's chief concerns, and about personalities and issues that occupied only a small portion of his attention. In Keefer's view, for example, the venality and incompetence of railway builders could be combatted by giving greater authority to certified engineers, and he became a leading advocate of the professionalization of engineering. This attitude was intensified by setbacks he suffered during the 1850s. He regarded his opponents as unworthy and unprofessional. As Nelles explains: "The idea of a professional was a weapon to be used against those who called themselves engineers or performed engineering functions by men who considered the title and the activity exclusively their own. They wanted the jobs..." In this way we learn a little about the dynamics of the much neglected history of professions. Keefer's nationalism was fomented by similar considerations. He resented bitterly British control of the Grand Trunk Railway and the role played in the line's construction by British engineers. This provoked him to a vigorous defence of Canadian involvement in enterprises of this sort. Even this early in its development, Canadian nationalism had about it an aura of organized cupidity! In a fascinating passage he described the power of Samuel

Zimmerman, a shadowy railway financier who "organized a system which virtually made him ruler of the province for several years. In person or by agents he kept 'open house', where the choicest brands of champagne and cigars were free to all the people's representatives... and it was the boast of one of these agents that when the speaker's bell rang for a division, more M.P.P.s were to be found in his apartments than in the library or any other single resort!"

Professor Nelles has contributed a superb introductory essay that describes Keefer's life and analyzes his intellectual development. *Philosophy of Railroads* provides an interesting and different perspective on both railroads and 19th-century Canadian history; it deserves to be read widely. □

DONALD SWAINSON, Professor of History at Queen's University, is currently on leave-of-absence working for the Government of Manitoba.



DEUX NATIONS

THE ACADIANS: Creation of a People

NAOMI GRIFFITHS
McGraw-Hill Ryerson
paper \$3.25; 94 pages

A HISTORY OF WILLOW BUNCH, SASKATCHEWAN

REV. CLOVIS RONDEAU &
REV. ADRIAN CHABOT
Canadian Publishers Ltd., Winnipeg
paper \$7.00; cloth \$9.00;
illustrated; 479 pages

IF FILMS SUCH as *l'Acadie, l'Acadie* and the recent Toronto production of *La Sagouine* — a tale told by an Acadian scrubwoman — point out the fact that Acadia is very much in vogue these days, so, too, does the astonishing statistic that, since 1970, more than 300 books and articles have been published on this fascinating subject.

Naomi Griffith's contribution to this literature, with *The Acadians*, is an attempt to discover what factors have led to the creation of a people distinct from either their Quebec relatives or their English-speaking Maritime neighbours.

Though Miss Griffith is now an Associate Professor of History at Carleton University, it was during her teaching career at the College Maillet in New Brunswick that her interest in the Acadian people was born. It resulted in the publication of *The Acadian Deportation* in 1969 and in the author's current involvement with a three-volume history of the Acadians and a television script on this subject for ETV.

What emerges in Miss Griffith's *Acadians* is the strong sense of identity and ties to the land that bound the Acadians together, and made them almost oblivious to the changes of government and internal intrigues of which they were the political footballs during the 17th and 18th centuries.

As early as 1613, the settlers had established their independence from

any central authority and demonstrated an individuality that was to characterize them throughout their history.

The complexity of rivalries and loyalties that were being played out on the soil of l'Acadie or Nova Scotia, and the ability of both the French and English governments to legislate the affairs of l'Acadie with little or no regard for what was happening in the area is also stressed by the author.

While the earliest settlers of Port Royal were French, charters granted then revoked by the French crown pitted Protestants against Catholics. With the seizure of Port Royal by a Virginian pirate, and the granting of a charter to William Alexander for the founding of the colony of "Nova Scotia," the Acadian situation became even more complicated.

Amid this political turmoil, and the numerous changes of governors sent out to administer the colony, the Acadians attempted to carry on their daily life. Once a French colony, they passed into British hands under the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. When war

came, in 1744, and the English captured Louisbourg, Acadian neutrality was put to the test. The Acadians, who refused to take up arms for the French, saw themselves as loyal subjects of the British. Not so the British, unfortunately, who considered them unsatisfactory citizens because of their refusal to swear an oath of loyalty to the Crown; nor the French, who saw them as unreliable allies.

But it was really only after 1749, when Louisbourg was returned to the French, and New England was exerting pressure on the Central Government, that this refusal to swear the oath was seen in a more serious light. For the colony was now of great strategic importance to the English who were more determined than ever to make the Acadians loyal subjects and to populate the colony with Protestant settlers. The French, on the other hand, who were building forts and strengthening their defenses, were attempting to coerce the Acadians into either rising up against the English or moving into French territory. The Acadians had little desire to do either.

They enjoyed British rule, had fewer demands made on them than under the French, and wished, above all, to protect their lands. It was this self-interested desire to remain neutral that was to be their downfall.

When open warfare between the English and the French broke out in 1775, they again were given the choice of swearing the oath of allegiance or being deported. Since the Acadians saw themselves as distinct from the "natural subjects" of King George, they naturally refused.

The deportation order was disastrous for the Acadians. It marked the destruction of their society and the dispersal of their closely knit family units. As many as 10,000 Acadians were displaced from their lands; many died in exile. But, isolated by their language, religion and customs from the communities into which they were to be integrated, some Acadians survived. Their strong feeling that a great injustice had been done them also was a factor in their survival, since they presented a united front in petitioning various government author-

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ities about their case, until they eventually were allowed to return to Nova Scotia, in 1764.

To this day, Acadians have remained a distinct group. This can partially be explained by the isolation of the infertile lands they were allowed to settle upon their return to Nova Scotia. Another important barrier, besides those already mentioned, which prevented assimilation, was the Acadians' own view of the deportation. Largely owing to Longfellow's poem, connections between "Evangeline" and the Acadians became commonplace. The Acadians, convinced that the poet's idea of the deportation and their national character matched their own, developed, by the 1880s, their own flag, national saint and feast day, different from those of Quebec. They remained a self-conscious society, believing in their cultural and social distinctiveness.

One result of the Acadian deportation was the dispersal of the Acadians, not only to various parts of the United States, but to Canada as well. Some made their way to Quebec, and it was their descendants who helped establish some of the earliest French-Canadian settlements in Western Canada such as Willow Bunch or "La Montagne de Blis" in Saskatchewan.

The History of Willow Bunch is a retrospective look at the coming of the French missionaries and fur-traders to Western Canada and their relations with the Indians of the area. The establishment of the Roman Catholic Church and the Metis mission, the buffalo hunts, the coming of European settlers with the railroad, and the transition of the Metis from a nomadic life, to one of ranching and farming are all related in great detail.

In some ways, the dispersal of the Metis from their land, by invasions from the U.S., parallels the removal of the Acadians from their villages. Only after the Riel Rebellion, were those Metis who did not take part in the uprising compensated by the government with grants of land, and assured of use of their language.

But the *History of Willow Bunch* is not so much a political history of the area as an ecclesiastical one. History is

largely reduced to how many Indians were converted and how many baptisms were celebrated in the settlements. The book suffers greatly from this narrowness of scope. The joy of the missionaries at seeing all the "savages" become "good Catholics," and such statements as "they [the settlers] would undergo any hardship to have a priest among them" all too often reveal the bias of the authors, who, at times, indulge in overt racism.

Miss Griffith's study of the Acadians is informative, well-written and holds the reader's interest. Not so, the *History of Willow Bunch*. The style is, to say the least, deadly. For one thing, the book is divided up in such a manner that the second part, intended to cover the period 1920-1970, largely reiterates what has

preceded in the first half (1870-1920). For another, the English translation is terrible (the history is available in both English and French) and there are many typographical errors; one wonders whether anyone had taken the trouble to proofread the manuscript before it went to the printer.

It is indeed unfortunate that this potentially interesting history of the French colonization of Western Canada (in the example of this particular community) has been viewed in such a self-congratulatory and introverted manner. One can only hope that the dullness of the *History of Willow Bunch* is not representative of its inhabitants, to whose vigour and pioneering spirit it most surely does an injustice.

BEVERLEY SMITH

HAMMER AND SONGS

WAITING FOR WAYMAN

TOM WAYMAN

McClelland and Stewart
cloth \$4.95; 111 pages

reviewed by Ted Whittaker

I RARELY GET a chance to write about someone's poems that are so all-of-a-piece as these by Tom Wayman. Admission Number Two: most of his recognizable prejudices are the same as mine, so it's going to be hard not to praise them in the firmament. This note will take, I hope, what Robin Mathews calls a "Frygean" (non-evaluative) approach, at least in part. Respect must be paid just to what's going on, if we're to avoid banality.

A few words, to begin, on Wayman's background; he has ink in his veins. I think he was editor of the student newspaper of the University of British Columbia, in the early '60s, and now he puts out the *Solidarity Bulletin*, the monthly mimeo news sheet of the Canadian Administration of the Industrial Workers of the World (which, if he weren't working at anything more imposing, would likely make Wayman a member of Industrial Union Number 450). All this involvement with the Wobs, and the picture

of Wayman naked from the waist up, bearded and smirking, on the back dustjacket of his book, half-flexing a meek bicep in front of a huge poster of a mushroom cloud, are consonant with the tone of the poems — rational in Bertrand Russell's sense of that word, implying a selection, when action is necessary, of the desires relevant to promoting that action; and orderly in the anarchist sense of that word, including a loyalty before all else to voluntary I-Thou associations between persons that arise naturally or "organically" from within them.

The poems have a large ability to laugh at themselves, to mock injustice, to praise with their own grace that of various obvious and not so obvious human sacraments — birth, marriage, being in one's house, making love, getting mad at a busted car. And then there is the (just as real) irony, sadness and anger at the hierarchical exploitations that go on daily in work and in love or hate, between men and men and between men and women.

It is time for some fairly typical citations; let us examine passages from poems illustrating the forms Wayman's irony often takes, and then we'll look briefly at his celebrations.

The title of the book gives a clue to one of Wayman's favourite tricks, writing about himself — in what turn into grotesque situations — in the third person. So we get Wayman in the work force, Wayman in bed, Wayman in an airplane, Wayman editing a little poetry magazine, Wayman writing poems, Wayman waiting for Wayman waiting for . . . This Wayman is a schlemiel, tossed about, observant, good-natured enough, compliant, ingenuous, ineffective, a bit schizophrenic, the middling sensual man. Sometimes the emphasis is on his discomfort, but here it's merely his observation that he is part of the grimly hilarious alienation of those he's working with, that brings his words about them to life. He is the green kid out of college, and all the others are drunk on the foolish, boring job. No nobility of honest toil here:

*Milo the electrician
tests for current. Two fingers go
in each socket. He gives a slight twitch;
there is a smell of burnt flesh.
He notes the results on a clipboard happily,
stumbling among the empties.*

Wayman is handed a bottle and joins in, bemused. Or, in another poem he's making love and Doktor Freud and Doktor Marx climb into bed and analyze the act. These are the acts of the powerless, acts rendered absurd

because those who do them are ciphers in others' eyes. Beneath the scaffold where Wayman works, there is a scene from W.S. Burroughs:

*Up from the sidewalk come the howls
of the bums.
Tonight they have organized: John
the Colonel,
Reggie Wheelchair, Montana and the
Leopardskin Coat
are together. "Eight cents,
Eight cents for a starter," they call.*

The apparent contradiction to this grotesqueness — though there are other moods Wayman explores in between in poems of simmering and direct wrath, satires of Canadian provincialism, quiet elegies for former loves — are Wayman's canticles of his delight in and for women and friends.

The final minutes of Bo Widerberg's *Joe Hill* are set in a Wobbly Hall, where a few of Joe's tired friends are putting spoonfuls of his ashes in envelopes and mailing them out to Fellow Workers around the earth.

Wayman's appreciation of human closeness is akin in intensity to the scenes I've described. His intimate world is the necessary domestic one, full of both joy and drudgery; here are words from a litany to a child about to be born in the death of the year:

*Though we will not win
Though the mother separate from the
father . . .
Though the future is laundry and
babyshit . . .
Though there is a fire made to adhere
especially to the flesh of the newborn . . .
Praise, then
Praise for the mother . . .*

*She is the Queen of Heaven, in her sweat
and glory . . .
Praise to the child who comes, he is the
family.*

The connection is important, then, this is what Wayman has to keep hammering at us. The savage and soothing are the two masks the world wears; we look through each at the other, endlessly, and try our best never, when stunned by the basilisk reflection of the former, not to forget the latter is what we can become, if only we will labour to observe it so. □

TED WHITTAKER, a Toronto freelance writer, is a former book-review editor of *The Varsity*.

IN CANADA AND OUT

A PLACE, A PEOPLE

ROBERT HAWKES

BITTERSWEET

C. H. GERVAIS

Both from *Alive Press, Guelph, Ont.*
paper \$1.95 each; 64 pages each

reviewed by Sharon Goodier Dale

BOTH THESE new books from *Alive Press* are brief, set in brown typeface on parchment with jagged edges.

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"KAMOURASKA — a book to which you will become addicted." *John Richmond — Montreal Star*

"A best seller in French and undoubtedly will become one in this English edition." *Chatelaine — May*

MUSSON — \$6.95

Robert Hawkes, entitled collectively, *A Place, A People*. They are pleasantly warm and human, portraying personal experiences and impressions of childhood and manhood, colloquial conversations, the plight of the elderly, weird twists in Canadian temperament and personality, the poignancy of life close to the land, friendship with an Arab rebel, and others about coal miners and the struggle between farm fields and coal explorations.

His writing ripples with a feel for the life and the people of Canada, with a pastoral terseness and rhythm that thrills with its gentle largess. He makes everyday events occasions for the subtlest revelations. In all, an inspired meeting with Canadian life, rural habits and habitats, the English language, Robert Hawkes, and ourselves.

Bittersweet by C. H. Gervais, was not so satisfying an experience. Perhaps I missed the point, but I think Gervais misses it too.

It is, like his other works, prosey, lacking smoothness (to my ear), and often weighed down with long-winded imagery. He writes a lot, as before, about sexual experiences and the body, bringing both into the plane of everyday events where they belong. But he does not do it in a way that inspires or enlarges my experience of either event or actuality. Nor does he inspire or enlarge my perception of the other characters and occurrences on his poems: broken relationships, death, "Pages From the Family Tree", the marketplace, "Old Man on Walpole Island", and more. His poems are simply "where they're at" and they leave me without the impetus or desire to take them or myself anywhere else. □



MANKIND OF PARTS

POLARIZED MAN

EVA TAUBE

McClelland and Stewart
paper \$3.95; illustrated; 175 pages

reviewed by Wayland Drew

THIS IS AN anthology of short readings chosen to illustrate the tensions, dilemmas, and paradoxes of life in our advanced technological society. The presence in the appendix of a perceptive essay by Eva Taube on modern fiction, and several pages of "suggestions for discussion", mark the book as a high-school text. It deserves a much larger audience.

At the outset Eva Taube engaged me with the sheer maturity of her selection, which includes some of my personal heroes — Loren Eiseley, Irwin Shaw, Vincent Van Gogh (a splendid writer), and Jacques Ellul. Also included, together with compensating reviews of their work, are such people as B. F. Skinner, Charles Reich, and Alvin Toffler. Camus, Hesse, Kafka, Lawrence, Thoreau, Updike, and Vonnegut are represented as well. The Canadian contingent consists of Louis

Dudek, Hugh MacLennan, and Marshall McLuhan. Sprinkled throughout the main text is a wealth of snippets from other writers, and browsing on these is one of the book's delights. They are shrewdly chosen and placed. Eva Taube does not condescend to her readers, whatever their ages might be.

Emerson said, "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind", and integrity and fragmentation are what this book is about. The polarized man is not just the man of conflicting impulses; he is the contemporary individual who feels himself "diminished, pattering, dispirited, destroyed, numbered, computerized, propagandized, spied upon, tapped, hounded, busted, lobotomized, big brothered to smithereens." In Rene Huyghe's words, "One way of summing up our age would be to

describe it as an extensive, prolonged assault on common sense." The subtlety and power of the forces making that assault are suggested in a short piece by Herbert Marcuse and in a fine essay by Peter Marin, both offered here as answers to Charles Reich. The most poignant personal testament to these forces is from Fitzgerald's *The Crack Up*: "I saw that the novel . . . the strongest and simplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art . . . in which words were subordinate to images, where personality was worn down to the inevitable low gear of collaboration." Most evocative is Hugh MacLennan's "Sunset and Evening Star", in which he describes a group of young people bored and paralyzed by their temporary lack of cars and motorboats. It is significant that none of the Artists and thinkers featured in Eva Taube's literate anthology is under 40.

I am enormously saddened when I read such books. It is the same sadness that assails me when teaching friends tell me what liberating things they are doing with their classes. The horror is that all of it — the trips, the games, the poetry, the penetrating shared insights — takes place within a system strong enough and shrewd enough to encourage it. Is there a real chance for integrity where groupthink prevails; where one is denied even the privacy of one's own locker and beset by "teaching aids" of relentless sophistication; where one's learning day is chopped like an egg in a wire slicer? A puzzled visitor to Ontario once asked me to describe the province's education system. I did so as fully as I was able, stressing the variety of courses designed to produce integrated, universal men and women. He was impressed by the ideal. "But my God," he said, "what goes wrong?"

Despite its considerable merits, *Polarized Man* is a symptom of what goes wrong. It shares with other high school anthologies the scattergun, fragmenting tendency that it is apparently intended to counteract. In this manner, even the keenest assessments of our condition can be neutralized. Even the most enticing

subversions towards life can be pinned and loved to death.

As a picture of what confronts us, however, *Polarized Man* is notably successful, and it is a healthy sign that textbooks of such scope are being compiled. One never knows what effect they will have. Besides, as Fitzgerald said, "One should be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise." Eva Taube is admirably determined. □

WAYLAND DREW, who lives and works in Port Perry, Ontario, has recently published a novel about men and wilderness, *The Wabeno Feast*, with Anansi.

FROM THE NATIONAL ATTIC

ARCHIVES: Mirror of Canada Past

ANON
University of Toronto Press
paper \$7.50; illustrated;
313 pages; bilingual

reviewed by David Beard

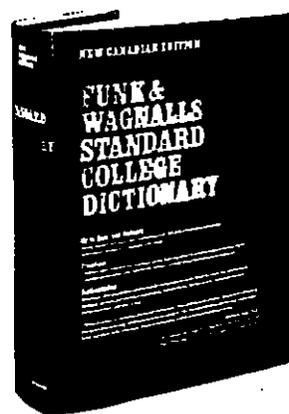
A MODERN wonder of our world is the transformation of the cold museums of Victoria's day into places for warm public response to our past. After 100 years of devoted collecting and funding, the Public Archives of Canada has by the publication of this book, taken its first step in a possible love affair. Money does seem to make the world go around, but, in this case, a loving response from the public will keep it well oiled.

The cover of this well-documented book might frighten the potential buyer; The large, easy-to-read format will invite his purchase. On seeing the pale-water colours of Indians, missionaries and traders one has the usual response. It all seems a little too folksy — too grade sevenish — and of stale things Canadian. Then, open the book. The dazzling pictures, reproductions of letters, maps and cartoons will entertain and instruct. Gathered here are 37 themes, 134 photographs and 162 other items of unusual interest. A guide to our

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treasures of the past. A source book for growing lovers. A place of topical themes. Roots are revealed;—Womens' Liberation, unemployment nationalism etc., are represented. Here is some of the evidence. "Dukhabor women pulling a plough, 1899" a superb, detailed photograph revealing 16 women providing the "man-power" while two men guide the machine. In contrast a water colour of Lady Emily and Lady Mary Lamton, daughters of Lord Durham (1814-64) depict the genteel ones doing their own water colours. Mrs Laura Secord's adventure is recorded in a fascinating piece of Victorian-style exposition. Alas, there is no mention of the cow:-

The weather on the 22 was very hot and Mrs Secord whose person was slight and delicate appeared to have been and no doubt was very much exhausted by the exertion she made in coming to me, and I have ever since held myself personally indebted to her for her conduct upon the occasion. . .

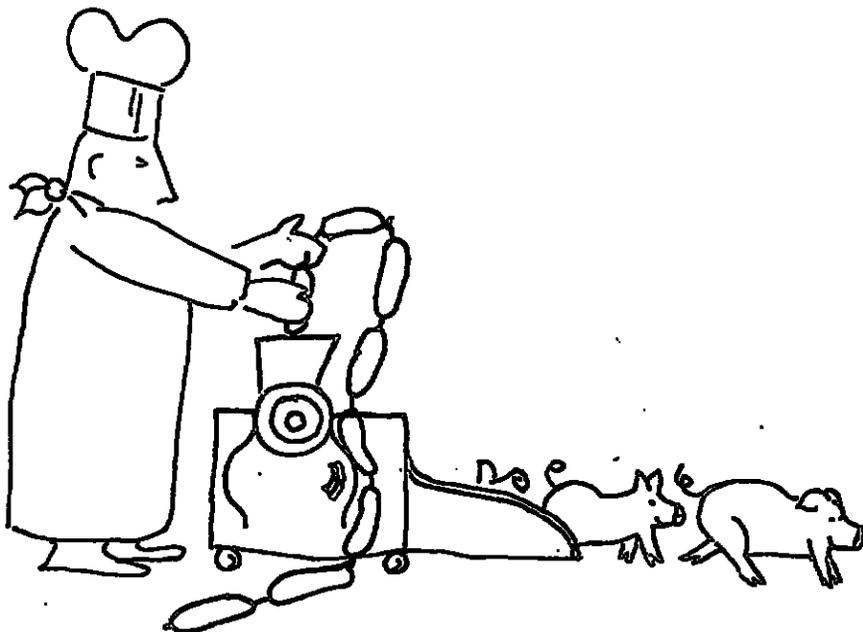
Each theme is introduced by a prose piece. These are a little stiff, but the material is basic and informative. Perhaps too much space is given to the text. It is a case of the picture being worth a thousand words. Contrasting the bleak, bloodless, academic evaluation in "Economics" the prose gives, "Industry is one of the tangible manifestations of a civilization" with the detailed photograph of human expression called, "General view of threading mill department — No. 101 British percussion fuse." and "Sardine Canning at Black's Har-

bour, N.B. Cover making machine C 1900" the latter conveys the human story, allowing us to respond to the past.

The Archives contain a number of manuscripts and letters of the greats of English and Canadian literature. Louis Hemon's letter to his mother, 28 Oct. 1811 gives his impression of the French spoken in Canada (not translated). *Marie Chapdelaine* was published after his death. He was killed by a transcontinental train while walking along the CPR tracks to Western Canada. (How many young Canadian artists will hit the highway in that direction this summer?). Bliss Carman, considered by many to be Canada's poet laureate, did most of his writing in the United States. The Archives possess an autographed copy of his, "The Choristers". While the last poem of Louis Frechette, "La Mort" is reproduced. His reputation in French Canada has endured and he is Carman's counterpart in French. Letters and other materials of Charles Dickens, Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin relating to Canadian life are catalogued.

The hundred years are memorable and this volume issued to celebrate the event is in itself a celebration. □

DAVID BEARD, whose interests are film and the unusual, is the owner of Cine-Books, a Toronto bookstore specializing in film books and memorabilia.



MID STREAM STEAM

STEAMBOATS ON THE SASKATCHEWAN

BRUCE PEEL

Prairie Book Service

cloth unpriced; illustrated; 238 pages

ON AUGUST 26, 1874, the Reverend Henry Budd, missionary for the Church of England at The Pas, Manitoba, made this note in his diary.

The long expected steamer "Northcote" came puffing up in sight. They blew the whistle so loud they made the very cattle rear up their heels, and took to full gallop with their tails up in the air in full speed to the woods . . . the people of all ages and sexes were no less excited at the sight of the boat, the first boat of the kind to be seen by them in all their life; in fact, the first steam boat going in this river since the Creation.

The Reverend was witnessing the beginning of several decades of steamboat transport on the Saskatchewan River. The river system was difficult and unreliable, for the water was very often so low that boats were stuck on shoals and sandbars, and there were several rapids and "swifts" in the route, the most extreme being the Grand Rapids on Lake Winnipeg and Fort Edmonton.

The last working steamer, the S.S. *Northwest*, beached on the Ross Flats on the North Saskatchewan at Edmonton, was carried away during a flood in mid-August of 1899. She struck a submerged pier (the foundation of the Low Level Bridge) and a hole was ripped through her hull. With only the deck and pilot house above water, she sailed away. "The steamer was last seen," Mr. Peel reports in his latest style, "passing Saddle Lake." It wasn't quite the end, for tramp steamers were used occasionally on the South Saskatchewan after the demise of the steamboat lines. One, the *David N. Winton*, worked the Carrot River until she was sunk by the action of ice in the spring of 1954.

Bruce Peel, who put together the invaluable *Bibliography of the Prairie Provinces*, has put his talents for research to another test. This time he has pieced together the scattered

details of a little-known aspect of the development of the West. His material is drawn from early newspapers such as *The Edmonton Bulletin*, from the diaries and letters of settlers, churchmen and river men, and from reports of police and government agents. He hasn't missed a thing, either. Even the captains of the boats were traced and the details of their exploits on other lines and their eventual ends are given. The photographs, reproductions of sketches, and maps that are spaced throughout the book are helpful and interesting in their own right.

There is material in this book for a hundred stories. The author has chosen to stick pretty close to the bare facts. Still, it's a great story at the Battle of Batoche where *Northcote* served as a gunboat — starting with a missed rendez-vous with the Canadian Troops, the steamer, pulling a barge, no less, drifted through the town of Batoche and had her smokestack broken off as the rebels lowered a ferry cable that ran across the river. The soldiers in the ship's cabin were hiding behind a billiard table which had been pilfered from Dumont's (the rebel military leader) stopping place upriver. Despite the farcical showing of the stern-wheeler, Batoche fell to the Canadians. One week later the *Northcote* carried Louis Riel down to Saskatoon on his way to trial.

Peel is so tireless in pursuing the facts that in spots the book reads like a business statement or an almanac. But there is a certain appeal in his rational understated reporting. Regardless of style, the book has that appeal that exists almost by definition in the sagas of many of our transportation systems. The story may lack the magnitude of the story of our railroads, the competitor which put the steamboats off the river, but it is a fascinating one. □

KATHERINE GOVIER



AN EDITOR REGRETS

HIDDEN AWAY in his fortress of manuscripts the book editor sees little of the real world. Nobody takes him out to a lavish lunch and then, nudging and winking, discreetly asks for a no-strings-attached political contribution from his company; no cheery superior tells him how to get the widow to leave her house without a fuss; nobody, not even an ambitious authoress, blandishes her sexual favours as a return for his assistance up the career ladder; no hoarse voices on the phone threaten to break both his legs unless he takes out the chapter about jukeboxes; he is never — well, hardly ever — even asked to act as a look-out for a bank robbery. All in all he leads a very sheltered existence, far from the hustle and bustle of the real world where fortunes are made.

Very occasionally, however, that world comes elbowing its way into his office. Usually, like the returning Odysseus, it comes in humble guise; the editor receives a letter, perhaps handwritten, that reads something like this:

Dear Sir or To Whom It May Concern,

I have wrote this book thats very good I think and with my interesting life and all its human and has some real thoughts. Ruffian Press in New York say its great and will be a bestseller but will you publish it for less than \$3000? They say thats the lowest subsidy they can do my book for but I can't afford it that easy maybe Ill need to take out a mortgage and being retired and all will your subsidy be less?

Thanking you and oblige
Wilhemina Johnson (Mrs.)

It's the old story - Mrs. Johnson has got herself involved with a "vanity publisher". Unless she has the good sense to

become uninvolved, it will cost her \$3000 to become sadder and wiser.

A "vanity publisher", you see, is just what you'd expect from the name — a company designed to work on the vanity of would-be writers to persuade them to pay large sums of money to have their manuscript published.

It works like this:— An author who has shyly been trying her hand (no sexist slur is implied — the villain is the publisher, and in this story he's going to be male) at writing a manuscript, sees an advertisement in her local paper which says something like "WE NEED MANUSCRIPTS! IF YOU HAVE WRITTEN A MANUSCRIPT, PLEASE SEND IT ALONG TO US AT ONCE. IT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE!!". The author hasn't noticed any other publishers advertising for manuscripts — perhaps, she wonders, they're not interested in new manuscripts — so she timidly sends off her manuscript to the "distinguished publisher" whose post office box number is at the foot of the ad. She knows that she doesn't have much education and that she's never tried her hand at writing before but maybe. . .

Imagine her delight, then, when an admirably typed letter on distinguished notepaper from the president — the president *himself* — of Ruffian Press arrives telling our author that her book is a splendid piece of work and could well be a best seller. He encloses the reader's report (the report is short on details that show familiarity with the contents of the manuscript but long on very general terms of great enthusiasm for the author's style, her ability to rival Hemingway in simplicity etc., etc.) and goes on to outline in some detail his hopes for the manuscript. He has swept on to details like the style of the jacket cover, the plans to hit bookstores all across the continent and to get the author on the major TV talk shows before he mentions, in passing, that the "fee" (or maybe, the "subsidy") will be \$3000. So if she'll just sign the enclosed contract and make out a cheque for the \$3000 and send them both to him, the whole exciting process can get going right away.

I have seen letters like that. Although I have never seen a sample contract, it seems unlikely that any of the letter's enthusiastic half-promises of appearances on late night talk shows and

so on actually find their way into the legally binding contract. And so, to cut a long story short, the author finds that the sum total of her publisher's efforts on her behalf is to deliver 1000 cheap-looking books to her basement. If she wants to sell them she will have to summon up the energy to take the books around to local booksellers to plead with them to display a few copies - or she'll need lots of kind and rich friends willing to buy a few copies, just as they would buy a few raffle tickets, to help her out.

No doubt, what Ruffian Press and its real counterparts do is perfectly legal; their knowledge of the exact limits of the law is, one suspects, considerably greater than their knowledge of publishing. No doubt, too, they do perform a useful service for authors of limited talent who are able to afford large sums of money for the considerable pleasure of holding a copy of their own real, live,

hard-backed book in their hands. But any printer will give the same pleasure, for about half the price.

Any way you look at it, vanity publishing is a dirty business that is based on deceiving its customers by inspiring false hopes. For the rich customer it may not matter; for the poor author who has scraped together the "subsidy" in a gamble that her book will be a best seller (didn't the President himself say it stood a good chance?) the deceit is a crushing tragedy.

Such tragedies can be averted only if the general public - which, understandably, knows next to nothing about the world of publishing - is made aware of the basic rule that *a reputable publisher will pay you for the privilege of publishing your manuscript*. If a publisher tries to get you to pay anything to have your book published, beware. It's a simple message but one worth spreading.

STET

THE HIRED HELP

THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S: Memoirs of a Canadian public servant

ARNOLD HEENEY

University of Toronto Press; cloth \$12.50; 218 pages

THE CANADIAN PUBLIC SERVICE: A physiology of government

J. E. HODGETTS

University of Toronto Press; cloth \$14.50; 363 pages

THE BIOGRAPHY OF AN INSTITUTION: The Civil Service Commission of Canada 1908-67

HODGETTS, McCLOSKEY, WHITAKER & WILSON

McGill-Queen's University Press; paper \$4.95; 532 pages

reviewed by Robert Ramsay

THERE IS a peculiar brand of mandarin found in the highest ranks of the Canadian Civil Service, and nowhere else on earth.

Geography may have a lot to do with it.

Typically, he is born in a small town to a tightly-knit family at the turn of the 20th century. He passes through the usual quondam existence of a pleasant youth, excelling in nothing very much, but determined to reshape the manner of mankind nonetheless.

He later travels to Oxford where he meets the young gentlemen who in later years will reshape a good deal of the Canadian government into their own image of moderation, fairness, and above all, quiet negotiation.

Upon arriving back on our shores with no particular trade to hoe, he drifts by chance, or in Mr. Heeney's case, by direct command, into the highest ranks of the civil service.

He first serves in Ottawa, pulling apart, frustrating, and finally whacking

into shape the newly born Department of External Affairs, what was to become and remain, until the advent of Mr. Trudeau, one of the most competent, soft-spoken forces in modern diplomacy.

Our man then travels during the '40s and '50s to London and Washington, and especially to the American capital trying always to keep whatever we possessed away from the hands of the already over-endowed Americans. It was no easy task, but if he kept his wits and spoke sweetly and reasonably in an atmosphere of good will, he would today be grossly misunderstood as a seller-out, a continentalist.

In the end, one of these gentlemen, Lester Pearson, became Prime Minister. One, Hume Wrong, served as Undersecretary of State for External Affairs. Another, Norman Robertson, was Clerk of the Privy Council, while A.E. Ritchie became Ambassador to the United States, and his brother Charles, became High Commissioner to the United Kingdom.

Arnold Heeney (who died in December, 1971) began his career in public administration in 1938 when he left a growing Montreal law practise to become principal secretary to Mackenzie King.

He continued a distinguished career as Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, Ambassador to the North American Council, twice Ambassador to the U.S. (1953-57 and 59-62), and co-chairman of the International Joint Commission.

Mr. Heeney is the first of these former mandarins to publish his memoirs.

As an autobiography of anecdotal highlights, however, they are remarkably similar to the story of Lester Pearson's early career, *Mike*.

Balance and proportion modify every incisive observation. Great men are pinioned with reverence, and the many minor characters and diplomatic foes who would to a different manner of man be dismissed simply as incompetent or a fool, are instead tapped gently with a subordinate clause.

As illustration, while Heeney was Ambassador to the U.S., John Diefenbaker was Prime Minister. Diefenbaker took an immediate liking to the young President Kennedy, a feeling Heeney did much to promote.

However, soon after the two leaders met casually over lunch on the White House lawn, the relationship cooled.

Heenev, clearly no admirer of his Prime Minister, recalls the falling out like this:

As I talked with the Prime Minister later that year it became evident that the friendly feelings Diefenbaker had earlier entertained had disappeared. He expressed little confidence in the U.S. administration and resented its failure to take effective account of what he regarded as legitimate Canadian interests. As for the President, the Prime Minister resented (that is not too strong a word) what he regarded as a series of personal slights, failure to acknowledge messages, or to do so personally or promptly. As the date for the Canadian election approached, Diefenbaker's criticisms of the United States became overt and the campaign which followed was marked by the kind of anti-Americanism which I can only deplore.

The Things That Are Caesar's is the life of a single man. But if the remaining gentlemen in that highly talented group of civil servants choose to codify their lives as well, we can expect they will do so in a similar way.

As a group they did not hold to any coherent school of thought. Rather it was a school of life that brought out the qualities of grace and moderation, modesty and toughness that in years to come may yield Canada a new form of autobiography — the mandarin confessional.

In *The Canadian Public Service*, J.E. Hodgetts speaks of this same geographic self-consciousness the preceding men underwent constantly throughout their own lives as the underlying force in the life of Canada's permanent government.

His study says nothing about public servants themselves, but does focus on the rules and organizational charts under which they worked. In Hodgett's words, it is "an historical-analytical survey, mapping the profile and physiology of the public service." As such, it will not make bedtime reading for anyone but a professional scholar.

Two points do emerge, however, that should interest many Canadians, and especially that 10 per cent of Canada's labour force who now work in the public service.

Canada's civil service, according to Hodgetts, is unique in the world because it is so caught up in structural and managerial adaption that its capacity to grapple substantive policy has been subverted.

When you have a country 6,000 miles long, half buried in snow, there is not much to be done but continually adjust and grow out from Ottawa.

What is good about all this inherent geographical confusion is that Canada's civil service stands very little chance of growing into an all-powerful, highly centralized bureaucratic monster. By ironic necessity, Canada's government can never all be located in the same place.

The Biography of an Institution is the history of the Civil Service Commission in Canada from its inception in 1908 to 1967.

More accurately, it is the story of an act, the people who created and changed it, and the organization vested with the responsibility for administering it.

As such, it will be read by the four scholars who wrote it, and the people who changed the Civil Service Act, or who worked under its terms.

And this impeccably analyzed dissection shows the act to be remarkable in itself — as a reform to uphold merit as a

principle of selection — and no less remarkable in its telling.

The history of a reform must inevitably become the history of precisely what the Civil Service Act sought to abolish, the system of patronage that for the first half-century of Canada's life, was a fact of most every civil servant's life.

Dr. W.L. Grant, head of the Civil Service Reform League in 1929, placed the problem in more cosmic terms, no doubt because he too saw that no matter how you legitimize virtue, you cannot change mankind very much:

After all, the great difficulty is the motives and the men. I can imagine the patronage system working quite well in the Kingdom of Heaven.

If you take the Calvinistic doctrine of grace, for instance, it really is a doctrine of hand-outs, and I can imagine the patronage system working well in such a place. My contention is that it does not work so well in twentieth century Canada, which is a fine country, but not the Kingdom of Heaven.

ROBERT RAMSEY, a Canadian whose education has included Princeton, Harvard and oilfield labouring, is now the president of the Company of Gentle Adventurers.

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PAPERBACK RACK



Some Would Call It Adultery (Jack Mosher. Content Publishing, paper \$1.95; 200 Pages): Sub-titled "A lusty old Canadian folktale" that aptly sums it up. It's an account of the ways (and lays) of a lusty old blacksmith named Tucker in turn-of-century Etobicoke, outside Toronto, still country then. Told with great gusto by his grandson, it recounts Grandpa Tucker's adventures in the American Civil War, his ventures with the ladies, and his encounters with a circle of highly individual neighbors. Raunchy in a manner has been almost erased by bestselling hookers and doctors.

Backroom Girls and Boys (John Philip Maclean. Pocket Books; paper \$1.50; 246 pages): Written by a former journalist and contender for the PC Leadership, this story of the wheels and deals of federal politics is obviously an inside job. Maclean writes in a husky if sometimes clichéd style about an Ottawa car dealer who is enticed into running for a Government (Grit) Party seat. He's an unlikely car dealer, combining the eligible sexiness of James Bond with impeccable honesty and charm. He doesn't make out politically, but does with two ladies. Not enough though to justify the enticing porn cover.

The Loveliest And The Best (Angela M. O'Connell. Pocket Books; paper \$1.50; 247 pages): Angela O'Connell writes with only slightly above average skill and sentiment about a Czech couple parted by World War II. Husband ends up in RCAF, wife in Czech underground. But with 30 years accumulation of similar books, why this one? and for whom? The cover is a period piece.

Gentle Pioneers: Five Nineteenth-Century Canadians (Audrey Y. Morris. Paperjacks. \$1.50. 253 pages): Good enough to make you wonder why there aren't more like it. Upper middle-class pickings in 19th-century Canadian social history. Bibliography. Index.

Sex and the Stars: A Zodiacal Study in Sexual Profiles (Martin Pentecost. Kakabeka Publishing Company, P.O. Box 247, Toronto M4P 2G5. \$2.95. 184 pages): According to the author: "The research which produced this book occupied many pleasant years." According to the publisher: "This is a work of fiction. All the characters in this book are fictional and any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental." Well-written.

Men & Women (Hugh Garner. Pocket Books. \$1.25. 277 pages). Includes 14 stories from the 1966 hardcover edition of *Men & Women*; four stories from *The Yellow Sweater* (1952); and two new stories published for the first time making this a first edition of sorts. Not to be overlooked by collectors and Garner buffs, especially the last story, "Artsy-Craftsy", which makes a skillful foray into I.B. Singer territory.

With a Pinch of Sin (Harry J. Boyle. Paperjacks. \$1.50. 230 pages): "It may have been the 'Roaring Twenties,' but to me, growing up on an Ontario farm tucked away in a valley near Lake Huron, it was a time of peace, dominated more or less by God and the Methodists!" Deceptive title. Strictly soft-corn homily grits.

Collected and Bound (Allen Fotheringham. November House. \$1.95. 183 pages): Allan Fotheringham, ascerbic columnist for the *Vancouver Sun*, writes: "One of the myths that sustains Vancouver is that Toronto is a cold and friendless place. Those of us who have lived and loved in Toronto know this to be a mistake. As a matter of fact, it is a very cosy, intimate spot where people take care of their own . . ." What on earth is he talking about? To discover the names beyond the elipsis, buy the book. Highly recommended for tourists and aspiring parvenus.

The Law and the Police (Paula Bourne and John Eisenberg. Paperjacks. \$1.25. 111 pages): Got dem ole police-state

blues again. Not exactly light reading, but to-the-point and useful. Bibliography.

Honest Ed's Story: The crazy rags-to-riches story of Ed Mirvish. (Jack Batten. Paperjacks. \$1.50. 237 pages): For those who missed a good yawn in the expensive, hard-cover edition, here it is again. Altogether now, one, two, three . . .

"I Will Fight No More Forever": Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce War (Merrill D. Beal. Ballantine. \$1.25. 398 pages): The Indians lose. Not a pleasant story, but fascinating, indispensable and readable. Photographs; 36 pages of analytical notes; descriptive bibliography; index.

Summer of the Black Sun (Bill T. O'Brien. Pocket Books. \$1.25. 157 pages): Diary of a Madman by way of One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest. Surprisingly well-done and convincing portrayal of going crazier in the crazy house. Vouched for by no less than Aldan Nowland, Margaret Laurence, Joyce Carol Oates & Alice Munro (. . . "terrifying, desperately funny").

All Quiet on the Russian Front (Kurt W. Stock. Pocket Books. \$1.50. 228 pages): Herr Stock was drafted into the German army and served four years fighting in Norway and Finland, where he was twice wounded. He was captured at the end of the war and spent the next four years in Russian P.O.W. camps. He has an unfamiliar story to tell, and he knows how to tell it well: "My thoughts wandered back to Finland again — it was October, 1944. Finland had capitulated. We were in retreat, and the Russian offensive was out to destroy us completely. During one barrage, a mortar shell hit too close and I was wounded. At first there was a terrible pain in my shoulder; then my knee felt as if it had been torn off. I nearly fainted from the pain. There was no cover anywhere and I was pinned down by heavy mortar fire. Then I saw Walter who sprinted over to aid me. I will never forget the first thing he said, 'I can't leave you alone for a minute, can I?'"

SURVIVING OURSELVES

A NORTH AMERICAN EDUCATION

CLARK BLAISE
Doubleday
cloth \$6.95; 230 pages

Winner of the 4th Annual Greater
Lakes Colleges' New Writers Award.

reviewed by Val Clery

AT THE TIME I was first reading Clark Blaise's book of short fiction, *Le Devoir* had just astounded Quebec by a series of articles that revealed a crisis of identity in English Canada. What symptomized this crisis, apparently, was Margaret Atwood's essay *Survival*, which (as we should all know by now) puts forward the theory that to be a Canadian is to be a victim, struggling to survive in the wilderness and in the Americanized world. What seemed to upset intellectual Quebec was the suspicion that here was another cunning ploy by *les Anglais*, the usurpation of a crisis that Quebecers have always felt to be uniquely theirs.

A week before reading his book, I had met Blaise, who was being conducted on a promotional sweep by his publisher. In appearance, a bearded younger and less-urbane Abraham Rotstein, quickly responsive and very observant, with a ready sense of warm irony. We talked a good deal about his background, of which I knew very little. He was born in North Dakota of Canadian parents and grew up mainly in the Deep South, but virtually on the road because of his father's frequent changes of job. He taught English first at the University of Wisconsin and later at Sir George Williams University in Montreal. He was married to a highly-talented Indian novelist, Baharati Mukherjee, and was about to set out with her and their two children for a year in India.

My immediate conclusion, having read his *A North American Education*, was that it seemed the most imaginative Canadian writing to have come my way in several years and that in essence it

delineated the crises of identity and survival with far greater clarity and perspective than even Margaret Atwood.

The collection is, I suspect, only nominally fiction. From the first paragraph there is the sense that the sequence of stories and sketches are drawn directly and painfully from the writer's own experience of living. They are the recollected episodes of the growing up of a boy and a young man, loosely arranged, out of time sequence, yet persuasively coherent. A nightschool teacher of English fumbles for some rapport with the lives and aspirations of his New Canadian pupils. In a rundown of romantic apartment, infested by roaches, the struggling university lecturer fumbles with the realities of his wife's pregnancy. Earlier, as a young graduate, he is confronted with the understanding of sexuality on a trip across Europe. As a young boy in Florida, buffeted in the slipstream of his father's promiscuity and fecklessness, he begins the exploration of what he is and who he is. Such minute synopses may suggest a similarity with many other collections of short fiction. If so, they do Clarke Blaise an injustice. His sparse ironic style, his clarity of image, his grasp of what is significant to each of us in our remembrance of living life out, combine to produce a startlingly acute recognition of the forlorn isolation, the insecurity and, occasionally, the pride of being a human being.

As an afterthought, what a book like *A North American Education* underlines is the pettiness and futility of intellectual and literary nationalism. Crises of identity are not uniquely French-Canadian or English-Canadian or Canadian, they are human and



eternal. If we as Canadians are specifically victims, the worst we have to survive is the exploitation of our human condition for abstract ends, however modish, that are foreign to our common humanity. □

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British Columbia Access (Various. B.C. Access, Box 5688, Station "F", Vancouver; paper \$2.00; illustrated; 144 pages); A third catalogue for counter-culturalists who dig the idea that if you do, plough, sow, hoe, grow, mow, sew, hew and screw their own things you shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven (i.e. B.C.) now, a down-to-earth idea no more insane than working until you're 65 so that you can afford to do, plough, sow, hoe, etc.

Exploring Toronto (Edited Annabel Slight. Architecture Canada; paper \$2.50; illustrated; 127 pages): A perfect guide for anyone who likes to walk and gawk round big cities. A set of 12 walks through Toronto, aptly illustrated by photographs of noteworthy buildings and each with a sketch map; the guides who charted and wrote commentaries for the walks are members of the Toronto Chapter of Architects, perhaps some of them as an act of contrition for their collaboration with *The Golden Horde* that has "developed" out of existence many of the splendid old buildings that gave the city its character. They can be partly forgiven as a reward for showing us where to find the scattered pockets of character that still survive.

A Guide for Travellers in Canada (Ted Kosoy. Wintergreen, distributed by McLeod, paper \$2.95; illustrated; 317 pages): In terms of pages for pennies, an economical buy; but there the bargain ends. No one could quarrel with the range of marginal information assembled by Mr. Kosoy; he even tells you how to prevent your house from being burgled while you're away. But when you come to the meat of the guide, a province-by-province catalogue

of tourist information, you begin to suspect that, in the face of his prose style, it might be less tedious to eat the pulp pages than read them. An element of diversion might be found in speculating on the rationale behind the arrangement of sections and the meagre assignment of space to Canadian cities, with little increase proportionate to their size. The restaurants listed (three each for Toronto and Montreal!) are generally so obscure that you suspect them to be fictitious. If you're planning an ox-cart trip from ocean-to-ocean, take it along. You might run out of magazines.

GROWTH ON THE ROCKS

THE ARCTIC IMPERATIVE

RICHARD ROHMER
McClelland and Stewart
paper \$4.95, cloth \$8.95;
illustrated; 402 pages

reviewed by *Andrew H. Williamson*

STUDIES HAVE been done that indicate when a story line is repeated numerous times in a newspaper, the majority of people lose interest. The ongoing story of the development of the Canadian Arctic is one of these stories. As a result, development continues, virtually unnoticed by the majority of Canadians. This is tragic because how the Arctic is developed has profound implications for the rest of Canada. What is consistently lacking in newspaper reportage is an overview that ties the pieces together, into a package, that not only gives a description of the present but attempts to describe how we got there and what the implications are for the future. What Richard Rohmer, of Mid-Canada Corridor fame, has provided us with is just such an overview. His book is a tying together of the events of Northern development that have been trickling down, over a number of years, to us, the residents, of Canada South.

The events are tied in a way that illustrates Mr. Rohmer's most urgent message — the immediate need of an end to the indiscriminate selling of Canada North. He provides us with many illustrations of decisions we have made, such as current leasing agreements, and decisions we have not made, such as construction of ice-breakers, that are collectively surrendering our claim to our resources in our Arctic. In short, the *Arctic Imperative* of the title is the need for national policies that establish the development of Canadian resources in the interests of Canadians.

The most important feature of this book is its focus. He does not pretend to cover the Arctic development from all possible angles. In a sense this book is more of a political statement, a statement of political nationalism, than an environmental study. This approach is significant because I believe that it will be the issue of sovereignty, more than any other, that will spur our government to positive action.

Richard Rohmer correctly indicates that when the Arctic was seen as a barren wilderness, there was no pressure to consider the natives or study the ecology. It was at this time that extensive leases were given at ridiculous rates. Now the situation is quite different. The pressure is to develop, making problems of native rights and lack of knowledge of Arctic ecology; making the leases more ridiculous and introducing the additional problem of bulk transportation to the North. In addition to a broad presentation of these problems it is possible to pull out of Rohmer's work the more fundamental question of time.

In the dynamic sense we must consider the rate of development. The pace of development has been increasing dramatically over the past years. This has forced the Canadian government to face critical problems, that as Rohmer points out, they have answered at best in an incomplete and piecemeal fashion. The failure is a government that has no policy, no defined direction to guide them.

It is significant to note that the source of the pressure for development, both the rate and the extent of

pressure comes largely from outside of Canada. While recognizing that the U.S. is the largest source of pressure, other sources such as Japan and West Germany are given due recognition. Apart from discussions of this pressure the book presents the multitude of problems involved in the process of development from transportation methods to financing.

Included in the presentation are the author's ideas on how the North can be, in effect, re-claimed. In short, he suggests with adequate compensation to the exploration companies, leases can be bought back and development can be legislated as a Canadian undertaking. Where Richard Rohmer is an optimist, I am a pessimist. The changes in government structure suggested and the imaginative proposals, while they may be necessary, are just not within my perception of the possible. I think the book fails to consider adequately the power of the multi-national corporation and the role of the American government in the formulation of our resource policies.

In summary, I feel this is a good current history of development. It is excellent for those who want to be briefed on some of the key events and issues of the development of the Canadian Arctic. While the book may interest you in exploring further, it will not give you much help in doing so, since documentation of references is sparse, to say the least. However, the book does sell its title, Rohmer does present a clear picture of why Canada should be concerned with, and more importantly, involved in, in the development of our Arctic.

It is imperative. □

ANDREW H. WILLIAMSON is a member of the faculty of environmental studies at York University and a partner of Environs Group, a fledgling environmental research firm.



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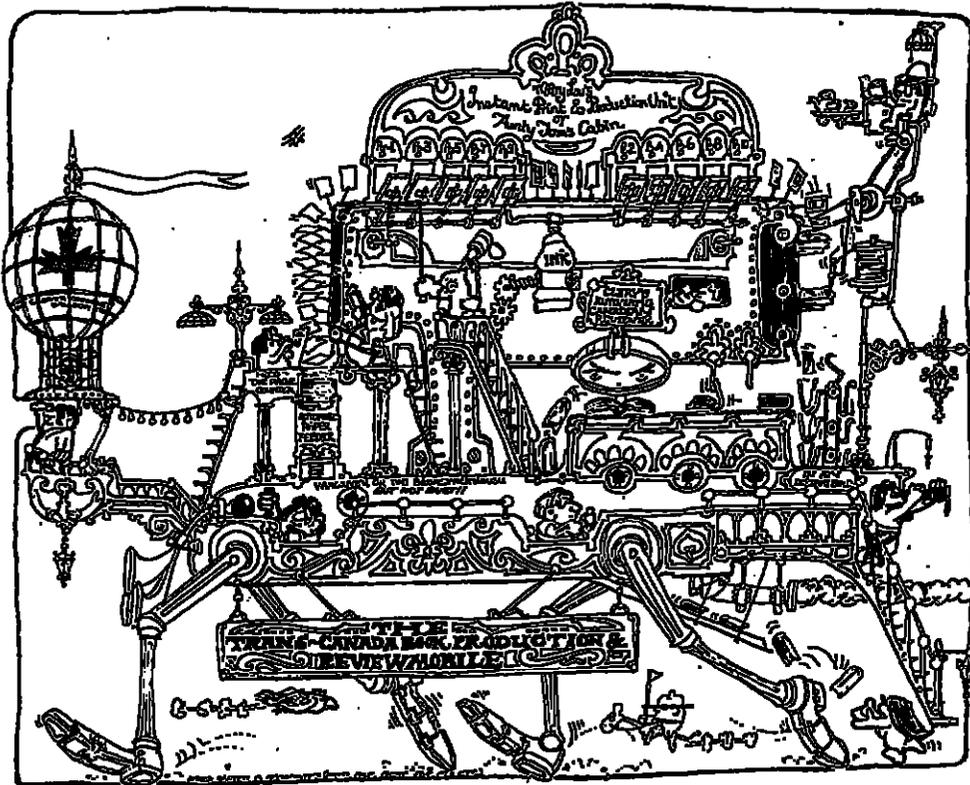
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GONE INDIAN

ROBERT KROETSCH
new press
cloth \$7.95; 158 pages

reviewed by Don Gutteridge

AFTER KROETSCH'S *The Stud-Horse Man* the reader has no right to expect that he might make its sequel as entertaining and as powerful. *Gone Indian*, the conclusion of a trilogy which began with *The Words Of My Roaring*, is both; and more. It is a brilliant extension of Kroetsch's continuing concern (obsession?) with exploring the stage of the Canadian psyche in the light of both the past and the present.

This novel brings us fully into the present, the contemporary world of New York and Alberta. Its themes, however, are those that began even before this trilogy with *But We Are Exiles*: the clash between 'civilized' and instinctual man; the simultaneous attraction and repulsion of a natural world giving spirit to our emotional and instinctual lives while at the same time randomly destroying both those who love and hate it; and the sheer joy and high humour of living dangerously on the very edge of things. These motifs are explored even more intensively in *Gone Indian* than in *The Stud-Horse Man* where the focus was clearly on Hazard LePage, the last of the stud-horse men seeking his dream of the perfect mating of stallion and mare in a society and a landscape already irrevocably changed.

Gone Indian is more ironic but no less tragic. We are put down quickly in the modern world: Jeremy Sadness is a young "American" who, having spent years failing his PhD program at a small New York College, decides that he has had enough of civilization, and sets out for Edmonton to pursue his dream of becoming a modern-day Grey Owl. His life in contemporary eastern America has left him with no degree, no job, and a peculiar sex hang-up.

His dream, of course, is much more fantastic than Hazard's, and we are tempted early in the novel to see it as

yet another darkly ironic parody of the quest motif so common (and so boring) in North American fiction; particularly since half of the book is narrated by Jeremy's English professor, Mark Madham (mad Adam?), who is a marvellous, if typical, caricature of the too finely "civilized" modern urbanite (he has left Alberta for the East, and comments eruditely on his pupil's strange quest while fornicating non-pedantically with Jeremy's equally over-civilized wife).

However, the real brilliance of the novel begins when Jeremy reaches Edmonton. For we gradually discover that this is no mere parody of the quest. While Jeremy suffers some uniquely funny misadventures which reveal the silliness of his expectations, he does — by dint of becoming involved in the Notikeewin winter festival, winning a snowshoe race, getting beaten up when mistaken for an Indian, having mystical contact with the disabled snow-king (Roger Dorck), and making love to the mysteriously widowed snow-queen — he actually does manage to cure his sexual ailment, and what-is-more come to some final vision of the scheme of things.

En route, the reader is introduced to a whole townful of Canadian characters living on the "edge" of the civilized world (Notikeewin), on the wintry brink of life-and-death. As a result, the focus in this novel is more diffuse, and the prose is hard-edged and multi-level. It allows Kroetsch to satirize Jeremy's fantasy-life, while at the same time presenting the various feats of danger (e.g., Dorck is rendered comatose after sailing off a cliff in his snowmobile, Robert Sunderland "disappears" through a hole in the ice, Jeremy and Mrs. Sunderland leap into eternity from a snow-bound railway bridge) and the power latent in the winter landscape in such a way that we

are often deeply moved while we are laughing.

The story is at once real and surreal, comic and symbolic. It's about life on the verge, a life close to the Canadian experience, to our reality and our myths. For example, there is Roger Dorck, the felled snow-king who sleeps his way through it all, dreaming perhaps of that glorious snow-moment before his fall, and rising in the end like a northern Lazarus — a man who's been there, felt the joy and weight of the mystery, but he's not telling (what a symbol! and little wonder we are misunderstood by outsiders). And the vision of the Indian and buffalo come back to Fort Edmonton and wreaking their longoverdue vengeance while we cheer from the sideline.

This is a book for people who love first-rate fiction — outsiders and insiders alike. Kroetsch, like Roch Carrier, has moved firmly into that small company of authors who live dangerously and write to save their souls. □

DON GUTTERIDGE, who lives and writes in London, Ontario, has two books about to be published, a novel *Where The Village Ends* and a collection of poetry *Coppermine: the Quest for North*.

SPOOKS IN CANADA

SOME CANADIAN GHOSTS

SHEILA HERVEY

Simon & Schuster
paper \$1.50; illustrated; 208 pages

reviewed by Kay Burkman

CANADA HAS A skeleton in her closet. The presence of ghosts in our polite land is no longer restricted to suspect lore in isolated regions. From Vancouver to the Maritimes, and from Whitehorse to St. Catharines, modern-day spirits are lurking and haunting their way into the Canadian conscience.

"Ghosts are becoming respectable," says Sheila Hervey, author of the newly released paperback, *Some*

Canadian Ghosts. But she goes on to denounce the (Casper-and-the-Groovy-Goolies) conditioned mentality, where in the supernatural is accepted without question.

Hervey sets out to acquaint us with the self-supported evidence of ghosts in Canada. But she notes from the start that "the final judgment as to their veracity will be dependent upon the open-mindedness and experience of the individual reader."

Who can see a ghost? Just about anyone, especially someone who has a strong psychic sense and happens to live in or visit a haunted area. If you're

determined to spot one at all costs, we have it at the word of the residents of Oak Bay, B.C., that an entire community of ghosts are due to appear there every spring.

Your skeptical friends may not believe you, of course, but that is to be expected. Ghosts will remain as no more than acknowledged presences, until we can deal with them in terms of a more sophisticated understanding. Sheila Hervey's book is an excellent introduction to this pursuit. □

KAY BURKMAN is a freelance writer who lives in Toronto.

TWO SERVINGS OF CANADA GOOSE

ELEVEN CANADIAN NOVELISTS

Interviewed by GRAEME GIBSON

Anansi

paper \$4.50; cloth \$10.50; illustrated; 324 pages

CONVERSATIONS WITH CANADIAN NOVELISTS

Interviewed by DONALD CAMERON

Macmillan

paper (in 2 vols.) \$3.95 each; cloth \$11.95; illustrated; 160 pages

Writers, by and large, are the dreariest people you can possibly know because they are just stuffed with words, like dry-bread dressing up a Christmas Eve goose's ass.

THIS ANYWAY is the opinion of one Canadian writer, Ernest Buckler, of his colleagues, and, if you don't share it now you are liable to after reading Graeme Gibson's interviews with *Eleven Canadian Novelists*. These dialogues prove definitely false the book jacket claim that they are "revealing and wide ranging" offering "A rare and intimate view of the novelist, his work and the world in which he lives". What they actually offer is a couple of hours of sheer boredom. The book's high point comes when Austin Clarke asks Gibson for a cigar.

It is regrettable that somewhere out there Mr. or Ms. Average Reader is going to pick up this book as a sort of introduction to modern Canadian literature, read it, or try to, and come to the same conclusion as Buckler. ("If they talk like that imagine how they must write!")

Nevertheless, I hesitate, on the sole basis of *Eleven Canadian Novelists*, to agree with the writer from the Annapolis Valley. The deficiency, I believe, lies with the interviewer and not in the innate personalities of his subjects. Gibson approaches each conversation with his homework done, his notes in order, and his generalities prepared in advance; there is not much space to move around in the confines of "do writers know something special? what is the novelist's role? does he or she have any responsibility to society? who do you write for? does being a writer demand a particular kind of selfishness?" The only time the interviews succeed in uncovering a human behind the works is when an author chooses to ignore the question such as in the Clarke interview and the talk with Scott Symonds.

The shortcomings of the Gibson book are especially glaring when read along with Donald Cameron's *Conversations with Canadian Novelists* (from which is lifted the Buckler quote). Five

novelists — Timothy Findley, Dave Godfrey, Margaret Laurence, Jack Ludwig and Mordecai Richler — are interviewed in both books. Quite simply they give good interviews to Cameron and forgettable ones to Gibson. I had never read more than a few stories by Jack Ludwig and was not encouraged to explore further after reading his interview by Gibson. In talking to Cameron, however, Ludwig comes off as an exuberant, passionate and extremely aware man whose work it seems necessary to know.

Cameron obviously recognizes the interview as a literary form and makes the writer reveal himself; he gets all of them, writers as different as Thomas Raddall and Roch Carrier, to nail a part of their humanity to the page. Cameron also reveals himself; he becomes as important to the dialogue as the novelist, a response which not only provokes spontaneous and rewarding interchange but creates a few genuinely moving moments such as in the talks with Gabrielle Roy and with Robertson Davies, which is more a confession than an interview.

Cameron adapts himself to the personality of each novelist, he makes himself conversationally negotiable whereas Gibson asks Marian Engel the same things he asks Matt Cohen. His repetitious interrogations are concerned strictly with the Work and he gets in return the "dry-bread stuffing" and nothing more. His questions could have been sent through the mail by computer for all their spontaneity. Cameron's objective is to disclose the novel and the novelist, his technique is to get to one through the other, and his success is that he shows their inseparable relationship.

An interview with a writer should enable you to consider the writer against the body of work and, more importantly, especially at this time and place in Canadian literature, urge you to read those writers whom you have neglected. Cameron's book does both as well as to provide generally stimulating reading. Cameron emerges as the main chronicler of the modern Canadian literary scene and as a master of that particularly modern form, the interview.

— JIM CHRISTY

OUR FOUNDING PEOPLES

LIVING AGAINST THE GRAIN

COUNTLESS PEOPLE in this country have a portion of Indian blood flowing in their veins. My own great grandmother had a remarkable set of high cheekbones — none of the family knows anything about her, of course. One of my favourite high school teachers was a "half-breed." Yet this obvious fact in his heritage was either unmentionable, overlooked or denied by all but himself. It was for me a simple lesson in existing social attitudes. However, the social reality of mixed Indian-European blood was and still is a very obvious Canadian trait.

The early progeny of Indian-European marriages were the sons and daughters of Canada's most adventurous and well-known men. Their names read like a list from *Who's Who*



Maria Campbell

Photo by Peter Hofle

HALF-BREED

MARIA CAMPBELL
McClelland and Stewart
cloth \$5.95; 157 pages

reviewed by James Stevens

in Canada during the 18th and 19th century: Alexander Henry; Michel Cadotte; Thomas Curry; James Finlay; Sir George Simpson; Dr. John McLaughlin; ad infinitum. With such widespread racial miscegenation, there has been little exploration in Canadian literature of the subject.

Worthy of mention is Fred Bodsworth's romantic portrayal of a Scottish biologist's love for Kanina, a Cree school teacher in his novel, *The Strange One*. Harry J. Boyle's, *A Summer Burning* surrounds the earthy revelations of a young urbanized Metis boy to a naive country lad. One recent literary attempt, *The Humback* by Mort Forer, was accomplished but dismal in character portrayal. Forer's Metis personages are dull, uncomprehending people with qualities barely humanoid.

Enter Maria Campbell, a spunky young Metis woman of Scottish and Cree descent. Her autobiography coldly reveals the anguishing experiences and the stark realities of life for Metis in the outbacks across the north in Canada. For Maria Campbell, this is a personal struggle of feelings of pride and dignity within herself and her people. These essential human feelings have not been easy to attain.

The social press from our larger society corners the Metis into a degrading psychological complex of self-guilt. In Miss Campbell's own experience, priests refused a church funeral service for her devout Roman Catholic mother because she had not received the last sacrament before death. In a school cloakroom, a

frustrated teacher righteously washed her little brother with a scrub brush until, "his poor little neck was bleeding and so were his wrists."

It becomes clear that much Canadian derision falls on the Metis because they are materially poor. Hell, they even eat gophers and beavers. That gophers and beavers are infinitely cleaner animals than hogs and cows mean little to white people who need to feel superior. It is Cheechum, the old Cree grandmother, who sees the effect of this discrimination upon the Metis: "They make you hate what you are." Through this autobiography, it becomes apparent that poverty and lack of material wealth are relatively easy to endure; it is the faceless bigotry and discrimination that are the real destructive forces of the Metis



people. When pride and self-worth are destroyed, a young Maria Campbell is made truly bankrupt.

Campbell's prose is understandably somewhat cold and detached but her people are real enough, especially old Cheechum. It is Cheechum who provides Maria with the strength to overcome poverty, prostitution, and heroin in the assertion of her own worth. Cheechum is strong, proud and unrelenting in her faith in native people and slowly through broken family, unsuitable marriage, addiction and self-contempt, Maria Campbell draws from her Cree Grandmother to find her own strength.

The book contains a short chapter on Metis history for background and then centres on Miss Campbell's young

years in a Metis settlement on a "road allowance" in northern Saskatchewan. It is her childhood experiences that are most valuable in understanding the Metis people. Her latter descent into the slums of Vancouver are common to many urban dope-freaks.

If you want to understand what native people mean when they say, "You should walk a mile in my moccasins," read this book. □

JAMES STEVENS, who lives near Thunder Bay, Ontario, is a writer and scholar specializing in North American Indian society. Amongst his most recent books were *Sacred Legends of the Sandy Lake Cree* and *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief*, which he edited.

FINDING THEIR OWN WAY

ZACH

JOHN CRAIG

Longman (for Coward, McCann & Geoghegan)

cloth \$6.95; 254 pages

WHO IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THIS MEETING?

Edited by RALPH OSBORNE

Neewin Publishing Co.,

cloth \$6.95, paper \$2.50; 100 pages

OJIBWA SUMMER

JAMES HOUSTON; photographs by B. A. KING

Longman

paper \$6.95, cloth \$14.50; illustrated; unnumbered pages

ANERCA

Edited by EDMUND CARPENTER

Dent

paper \$2.35, cloth \$4.50; illustrated; unnumbered pages

IT IS significant that the fundamental note of all of these books is one of optimism regarding the Indian's ability to come to terms with his identity and to create a future which might be other than that which white society has set out for him.

John Craig has travelled widely in Canada, and demonstrates a sympathetic knowledge of Indian ways. His latest book, *Zach*, is dedicated to the Indians he likes to think of as his "friends".

Zach is an Indian in search of his identity. He has grown up feeling secure as to who he is, since he spent all his life with his aunt and uncle on the Blind

Dog Ojibway reservation in Northern Ontario; he has never known any other home. However, when a disastrous fire takes the lives of his aunt and uncle, his only living relatives, his true identity is revealed to him by the chief of the reserve, Art Shawanaga. Zach is not, in fact, an Ojibway, but an Agawa — a people of whom he has never heard and of which he is the last survivor. Unable to believe that he is the last of his kind, and that, after his death, the Agawas will be extinct, Zach realizes that he can never be content with staying on the reservation; nor can he accept the white man's life style. For him there is no

alternative: he must go in search of his people.

His search, which is the subject of the book, takes him all over the North American continent — from Minnesota to Texas, from Lac La Ronge to Thunder Bay.

Accompanying him on his travels are Willie Matson, a disenchanted American Black; D.J., a disillusioned girl from an upper-middle class West coast family; Joe, a Ukrainian-Canadian who left his home in Winnipeg; and Darcy McGee, a middle-aged ex-crusader for social justice, who no longer believes in anybody or anything. All share a feeling of estrangement from contemporary society, and are bound together by the need to survive and to find some meaning in their lives.

John Craig tells his story simply and without artifice. There are some vivid touches of social realism in his depiction of the squalor and poverty to which the Indians Zach seeks out are often reduced. Tarpaper shacks, littered with broken glass and beer bottles, contrast sharply with the natural beauty of the surroundings. Hostility and ignorance on the part of most of the Whites Zach encounters are offset by rare displays of friendship and understanding. The white liberal has his counterpart in the Indian do-gooder who distorts the truth to satisfy his own ends.

At several points in the story, the white man's wanton destruction of nature and the environment is opposed to the Indian's love for and respect of nature. Despite the fact that these contrasts and the almost "lily-white" portrayal of Zach sometimes seem a bit forced and strike the reader as being too simple and moralistic, the author does, nevertheless, succeed in making us reconsider the values of our society, by exposing us to the questioning of them and the search for alternatives by his characters, who are "outsiders". In the end, we are led to believe that a dignified way out, if not a certainty, is at least a possibility.

Who is the Chairman of this Meeting? is a collection of essays published by the Nishnawbe Institute, an educational, cultural and research centre which encourages cross-cultural exchanges and dialogue between Indians and non-Indians. Two of the articles it contains are by the well-known Canadian Indian, Wilf Pelletier.



Laughter, Pelletier tells the reader, is his great teacher; the West should learn the art of conquest by laughter. Mr Pelletier, it seems, has mastered the art, as he presents us with a witty, tongue-in-cheek portrait of the "Dumb Indian" who had managed his affairs for thousands of years, and was unaware that he needed government to do this. Pelletier goes on to describe the population problem that must exist in Hell because of the Indians' ignorance of the concept of original sin.

But behind the laughter there is quiet earnestness, and the humour veils a depth of thought that is obvious behind every punch-line. No subject is sacred under Mr. Pelletier's pen: history, politics, education, religion, the problem of identity, the notion of property are all subjects of the author's concern. The Indian attitude is candidly portrayed in comparison and contrast to that of the whites.

Another major theme in this collection of essays is the problem of integration which mainly is seen to be a one-way street, from the reserve to the cities.

As the reader works his way through the essays, he becomes aware of the basic conflict that exists between white and Indian society: whereas the white man is alienated from reality, by constantly abstracting himself from it and looking to the future, the Indian, owing

to his concept of the unity and oneness of existence, is fully immersed in reality and in the present. It is this fundamental difference that explains the fact that total assimilation has not taken place.

As in *Zach*, there is a certain sense of optimism and hope, for the essays show us that Indians are discovering a new strength in the power of numbers, and are finding, for the first time, common bonds of tradition and culture. In their search for a viable alternative to the road that white society has taken, it is just possible that a middle road may be found between "turning the clock back" and total integration.

A third book, *Ojibwa Summer*, with text by the white author, James Houston, is dedicated to the Ojibwa people with "respect for their past and renewed hope for their future."

The written text, which accompanies the photos depicting Ojibwa life, outlines the history of the Ojibwa people, their origins and their migration to the North American continent, the nature of their social system, mythology and religion, and their contact with the white man and the resulting changes this has brought about in their life-style.

For Houston, whose contact with Indians goes back to summers spent in his youth with an Ojibwa hunting and fishing friend, Nels, the Ojibwas have every reason to be optimistic. Despite

decimation by wars and disease, they are more numerous now than ever; they have better housing, health care and educational opportunities; and, what is more, the young people are increasingly aware of their new political position and sphere of influence. Thus, like the previous authors, he sees every hope of their finding a life-style, different from that of whites, which would enable them to combine the best of both worlds.

The main portion of the book is devoted to the black and white dull-finish photos, relating Ojibwa life, and taken on three reserves in central Ontario. It opens with the face of a child, depicting uncertainty, withdrawal and mistrust and closes with the confident, joyous smile of a young boy. It takes us through fields, forests, lakes, through shacks and shanties to neat, log cabins. We see the aged, weary, timeless faces of the old, the sensuous faces and bodies of young girls, and the expressive features of children, sometimes defiant, sometimes happy. The photos capture the people in their many moods: mothers and children walking, children frolicking in cool lakes, men carrying on the traditional occupation of fishing.

Beautifully textured drawings of moose rock paintings, spirit figures, birds and other elements of Ojibwa folklore are interspersed with the photos, in a fusion of ancient and modern.

Another book of special interest to the Canadian reader is the beautiful book of Eskimo poems, simply titled "Anerca", meaning "to make poetry" or "to breathe". In Eskimo, poems are words infused with the "breath of life", the breath of the spirit.

The poems are from Eskimo groups, distant in time and space; some of them have been spontaneously created, others are age-old; none carries the signature of its maker, the authors preferring simply to disappear behind their works.

The dominant theme of the poems is the quiet celebration of life, despite the hunger, the cold, the precariousness and loneliness of Northern existence. Young girls celebrate the return of the hunters, laden with seals, by adorning themselves with ornaments; the poet depicts the awesome beauty of the caribou against the Arctic snows; a hostess sings of how joyful her house becomes when it is filled with guests; a hunter prays to the spirit of the air to send him food, while another cries "Away, away" to the cold that has bent him enough. Joy and grief, harshness and light — "the great day that dawns", the light that "fills the world" — are the polar opposites between which Eskimo life oscillates in the poems. Evident in this poetry are a humbleness and acceptance of life's blows that have enabled the Eskimo to survive in a climate hostile to human habitation.

The imagery is simple and drawn from the daily life of the Eskimo, from the hunt and the sea: the poet arises with the "beat of a raven's wing;" he "drifts as a weed" in the sea; the impotent man, fearful of women, has a "caribou stomach." Sentiments are expressed simply and directly. Legend and poetry alternate as the natural and supernatural become superimposed on one another.

Drawings by the Eskimo artist Enooesweetok expressively illustrate the daily struggle for survival against which the poems, almost despite themselves, have emerged. □



WITH REFERENCE

Bibliographies (from Bibliographical Services Division, Provincial Library, Regina, Saskatchewan): *Books For All*, unpriced, 106 pages; *Eskimos*, \$1.09; 50 pages; *Gardening*, unpriced, 29 pages; *German Books*, unpriced, 31 pages; *India*, unpriced, 8 pages; *Ideas For Home-Makers*, \$1.00, 106 pages; *Books On Library Science*, \$3.00, 193 pages; *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*; \$1.00, 70 pages. All paper-bound.

Notable Canadian Children's Books (Prepared by Sheila Egoff & Alvine Bélisle. National Library of Canada, 1973; paper unpriced; 94 pages): An annotated catalogue prepared originally for an exhibition at the National Library. Bilingual chronological lists tracing the historical development of books for children in English and French Canada with brief clear synopses and sensible prefaces and notes.

Canadian Materials 1971 (Canadian Materials Committee Canadian Library Association; paper unpriced; 39 pages): Described as "An awareness list for school resource centres of print and nonprint materials," this International Book Year project provides an index, an annotated list (often quite frank in its assessments) of available Canadian materials, and a directory of publishers/producers. A step, hopefully the first of many annual steps, in the right direction.

Canada Post Offices 1755-1895 (Frank W. Campbell. Quarterman Publications Inc., 5 South Union St., Lawrence, Mass., 01843; cloth \$15.00; illustrated; 191 pages): an alphabetical illustrated directory of Post Offices in Canada over the period. The post-marks and associated data will obviously read like the *Odyssey* for philatelists; a labor of love by Frank Campbell.

Canadian Almanac and Directory 1973 (Edited by Susan Walters, Copp Clark; cloth \$17.95; 823 pages): *Vade mecum* for the professional researcher or amateur fact-hound. (Almost) all you need to know about government, law, business, the media, education, associations and societies, libraries and galleries and museums; after two years they still haven't discovered the existence of *Books in Canada*.

Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs 1971 (Edited by John Saywell. University of Toronto Press; cloth \$20.00; 390 pages): As its unhurried publishing schedule suggests, a scholarly reference guide and record of the year before last in Parliament and Politics (federal and provincial), External Affairs, Defence and the National Economy. The review of certain aspects of Canadian culture, which used to be included, has now been abandoned; a curious editorial decision in light of the current excitement of our culture.

A Handbook of Canadian Film (Eleanor Beattie. Take One/Peter Martin Associates; paper \$2.95; illustrated; 280 pages): All you need to know if you're a Canadian film-maker, writer, actor, or movie-freak: A directory of all the individuals or groups or companies or archives or services or books or periodicals you're likely to need if you mean to break into movies (the real troubles begin once you're in).

An Outline of the Works of Herman Hesse (Robert Farquarson. Forum House; paper unpriced; 107 pages. Goot.

Easy to Use Metric Conversion Tables (Anon. Dalton Books. paper \$1.95; 85 pages): For figuring out the future.

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McGraw-Hill Ryerson

paper \$3.75; 190 pages

CAPITALISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN CANADA

Edited by GARY TEEPLE

University of Toronto Press

paper \$3.95; 256 pages

reviewed by *Walter Klepac*

ONE DETECTS in the Preface to Professor Abraham Rotstein's most recent collection of essays, *The Precarious Homestead*, a strong sense of accomplishment on the part of the author that borders on self-congratulation. An almost heroic image emerges within the Preface, of the author as an undaunted prophet *qua* political economist bravely espousing a doctrine of economic nationalism in a wilderness of Liberal continentalism. During the last 10 years the issue of an economically and politically independent Canada has become, much to Professor Rotstein's satisfaction, a matter of almost popular concern. Encouraged by the increased awareness on the part of fellow academics, various politicians of all parties, and the mass media, Rotstein addresses himself in this book to the task of outlining the problems and risks involved in disengaging Canada from the fetters of foreign (i.e., largely U.S.) domination.

In view of this tone of confidence and somewhat guarded optimism from one who has figured so prominently in the current movement for an independent Canada, a survey of four recent

books on the subject may prove dismaying. None of these books offers specific, detailed proposals for securing control of the national destiny and several put forth interpretations that are at best incomplete if not unsound and misleading. More than anything else their very omissions and questionable conclusions suggest that the problems at hand are nothing less than staggering in their magnitude and complexity.

The principal strength of Professor Rotstein's own book rests primarily on its ability to provide the general reader with an elegantly written, cogent and comprehensive primer on the dense tangle of interrelated difficulties that threaten Canada's survival as a sovereign and independent nation in an age increasingly dominated by advanced technology and the omnipresent multinational corporations. If Rotstein's themes and analyses in *Precarious Homestead* echo those of Jacques Ellul and George Grant, his treatment as opposed to theirs is tempered with the pragmatism of a practicing economist. *Precarious Homestead* also quite accurately reflects the growing awareness of the

scope and various forms of foreign domination that took place throughout the late 1960s. But this is only to be expected since many of the essays first appeared as either reviews or prefaces to most of the influential books on the Canadian Question to appear during that period. Gathered together are Rotstein's commentaries on the Watkins Report on Foreign Ownership, the Wahn Report, the Grey Report, Kari Levitt's *The Silent Surrender*, Alder-Karlsson's *Functional Socialism*, Mathias' *Forced Growth, Technology and Empire*, and *From Gordon to Watkins to You*. Rotstein manages to bring this diverse and important material together within a single, unified and lucid perspective.

Though Rotstein employs a number of concepts from modern socialism his basic approach to developing a strong rationalized, self-sufficient economy depends a great deal on the participation of the Canadian entrepreneur. For Rotstein, the latter is an essential component of any viable industrial strategy. Rotstein displays a healthy respect as well for the multinational corporations along with a keen appreciation of their subtle and far reaching influence on international economic and political affairs. (His essay, "The Political Economy of the Multinational Corporation," rather handily demolishes the facile assumption of the more naive New Leftists that the interests of the megacorporation and the U.S. government are one and same.) Furthermore, in order to make the Canadian economy competitive and independent of foreign control Rotstein seems prepared, on the whole, to accept the world-wide market structures and international relationships created by the multinationals, i.e., what Kari Levitt refers to as the new mercantilism. He feels confident that by acquiring increased control over the property functions of business enterprises (i.e., decisions concerning research and development, Canadian personnel at the operating and management levels, use of resources, etc.) the federal government can make business and industry more responsive to the needs of workers and the society at large. Unfortunately Rotstein does not provide a detailed analysis of the necessary conflict

between the priorities of society and those of the multinational corporations and hence seems to be placing great faith in the existence of an abundance of goodwill in the universe.

Despite its brave and provocative title, *An Industrial Strategy for Canada* does little more than offer a number of sketchy, provisional scenarios for the "Big Break." The essays included were originally written in response to a well publicized sneak preview of the Grey Report by the *Canadian Forum* in November, 1971. The essays attempt to assess the effects of reducing foreign ownership of resource and manufacturing industries on Canada's economic future and to develop programs for economic growth and development. With the exception of Professor Melville Watkins, the contributors, all of whom are leading Canadian economists, share Rotstein's basic conservatism and so are prepared to have Canada compete for international markets within the framework established by the multinational juggernauts.

Of the books being considered here perhaps the most probing and analytical is D. V. Smiley's *Canada in Question: Federalism in the Seventies*. It's a pity therefore, that its conclusions and general tone are so pessimistic. Approaching matters as a political scientist, Smiley systematically examines the relationships between federal and provincial governments as they have evolved over the course of the previous decade. Smiley's study provides a highly illuminating back-drop to any serious discussion of national economic and industrial strategies. He devotes a closely argued, amply documented chapter to each of the following points. The increased aggressiveness of the provinces in demanding a greater say in determining national economic policies has considerably weakened Ottawa's position in dealing with both the U.S. administration and the multinational corporations. The growing importance of natural resource development, which is primarily under provincial jurisdiction, has given corporate donors strong incentives to contribute directly to the provincial

parties thereby adding to the independence of the provinces. The separation of federal and provincial branches of the same party has not contributed cohesion to national solidarity. No matter what the election results, the same basic federal-provincial tensions remain. The chapter on Quebec by itself, is worth the price of the book.

Capitalism and the National Question in Canada, edited by Gary Teeple, is reinterpretation of Canadian economic and labour history along Marxist lines. It analyzes the major stages of Canada's development as an industrial society in terms of the interests of the dominant class prevailing over those of the other classes. Although its essays cover a wide range of assorted topics they are all consistent in arguing that it was the merchant bourgeoisie, i.e., "the shopkeeper aristocracy," and its decisive influence on the trade, land and immigration policy of the federal government that forestalled and hence, permanently weakened, Canada's chances to establish a strong, indigenous industrial economy. Though thoroughly saturated with the jargon of Marxist ideology and therefore a bit tedious to read, *Capitalism and the National Question in Canada* does offer a fresh and instructive perspective on the issues of economics and nationalism. It also implicitly suggests that Professor Rotstein and his fellow industrial strategists may, in replying on native entrepreneurial initiative and expertise, be putting their eggs in the wrong basket. □

WALTER KLEPAC, a native of Detroit whose interests include politics, economics and contemporary art and who has written for *Guerilla* and *artscanada*, now lives in Toronto.



HUMOROUS GENTLE MAN

A LOVER NEEDS A GUITAR

DAVID E. LEWIS
McClelland and Stewart
cloth \$6.95; 180 pages

reviewed by David Williamson.

WHEN I FIRST saw this book, I suspected that it might be yet another reminiscence of the Depression. A peek inside told me that the author is a Maritimer, that the book's locale is a small town in Nova Scotia. What relevance would this have to contemporary, urban, Western me? Maybe I'll learn something, I thought, and I began to read.

In a gentle, conversational style, David E. Lewis records some humorous highlights of life in Bridgetown, N.S., from age nine to 19. As I read, in the opening story called "Nine is a Desperate Age," of Lewis's risky retrieving of a baseball from a spinster's garden, I recalled a similar incident in my own childhood. Good old nostalgia, I thought. Maybe there'll be other things I'll recognize.—

In reading "My Early Musical Career," I recalled my brief stint of learning to play the piano from an eccentric woman. Lewis's school teachers made me think of mine. Then, the story entitled "A School Concert" took me not to my childhood but to the present — I had only the night before seen my daughter and her schoolmates put on a junior high play.

But while Lewis was showing the funny side of experiences common to us all, he was also introducing characters both familiar and different. Many are elderly ladies — Lewis has been acquainted with more than his share — but each is distinctive and human. Then there are the kids, such as that smart Alec, Martin McGuire (who stymies his Latin teacher with "vomitorium"); the lovely Grade 9

pitcher, Jane Swanson (who receives the wrong diary as a gift); and unkissable Minnie Marlowe, Lewis' very first Post Office partner. Equally captivating are those mysterious men, Ed Wheeling (was he really a bigamist?) and Mr. Killam (was he really the brother of the richest man in Canada?).

What became so apparent to me was that David E. Lewis had been able to combine humour, nostalgia, human insight and personal memories with a fine sense of story-telling. Sure, there is sentiment, but it's great to see it in this age of wild fantasy and cynical comedy. Lewis is sometimes the observer, sometimes the central char-

acter, and often the brunt of his own jokes.

The stylized drawing on the book jacket perfectly reflects the tone of the book. On the front are a guitar player and a girl, on the back a dog sitting on a piano. It is one of the book's nice ironies (and another joke on the author himself) that, although "a lover needs a guitar," Lewis had to settle for a piano, and a peculiar way of playing it, at that.

As I finished the 19 stories and wondered how much of them was fact and how much was fiction, I thought of Dave Godfrey's comment in the recently published *Eleven Canadian Novelists*; he says that a true novel

must be tragic. In the same book, Marian Engel says that it's old-fashioned for a serious writer to create characters. If Godfrey and Engel are correct, the onus is on humorists such as David E. Lewis to provide us with entertaining comedy and refreshing characters. *A Lover Needs a Guitar* demonstrates that Lewis can beautifully handle both. What's more, he's bound to give the depressing novelists a run for our book-buying buck. □

DAVID WILLIAMSON, who teaches creative writing at the Red River Community College, reviews regularly for the *Winnipeg Free Press*.



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