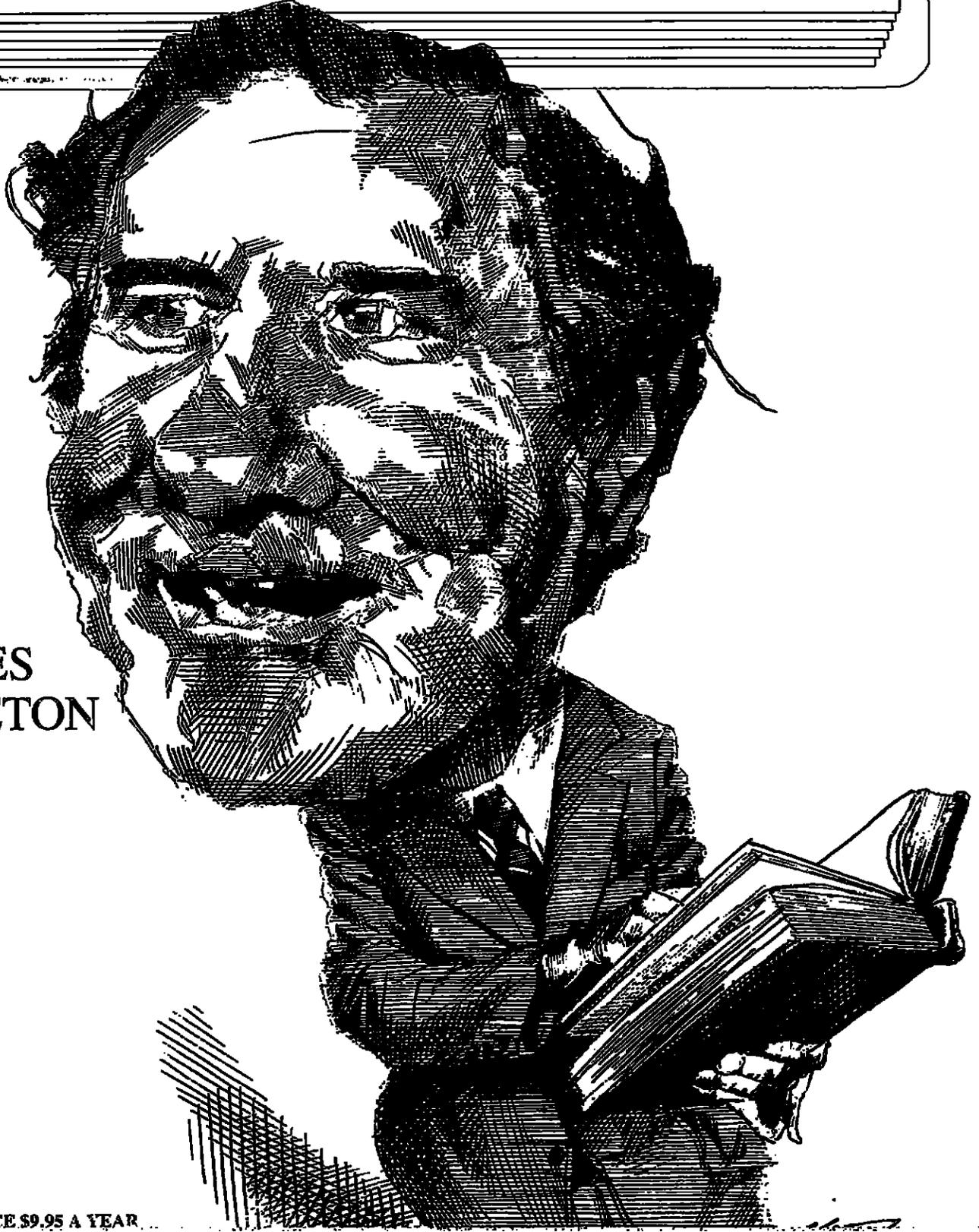


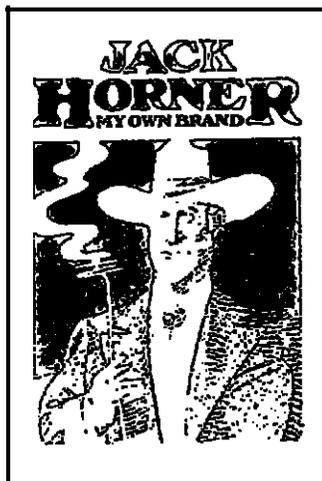
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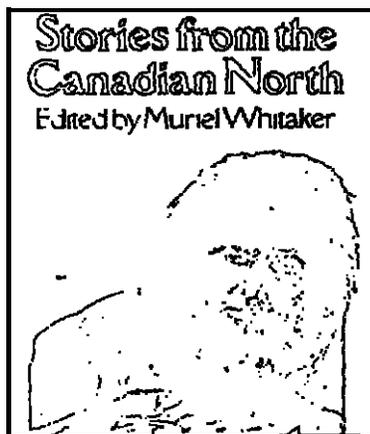
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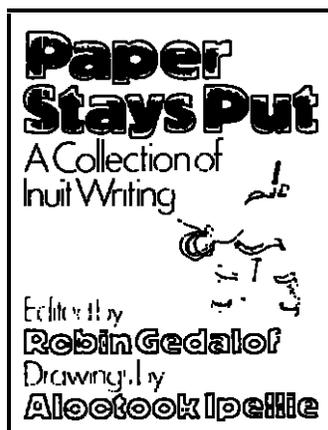
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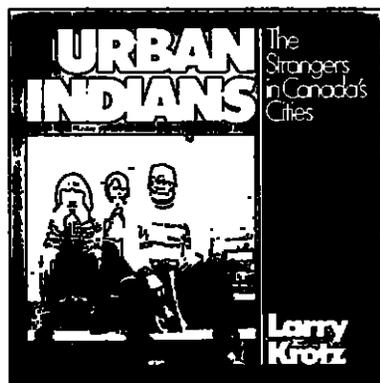
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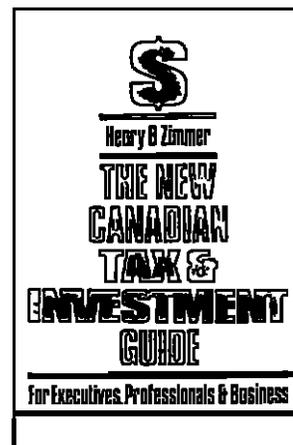
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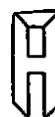


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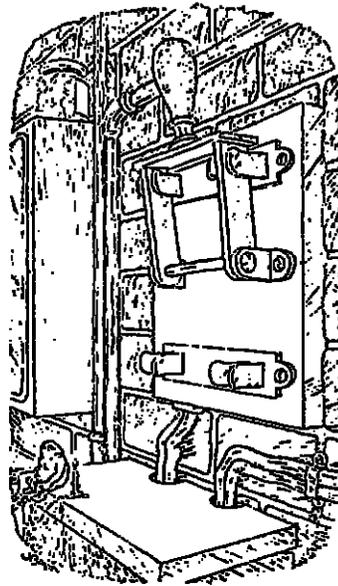
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YOKNAPATAWPHA, N.B.

A northern Faulkner with a dash of Dostoevski,
David Adams Richards tells Upper Canadians that
it's a treat to beat your feet on the Miramichi mud

by Phil Milner

DAVID ADAMS RICHARDS just laughs when he's asked about his reputation as a recluse. A prolific young writer who gave 10 readings in the Maritimes last year, Richards is a recluse only if the term may be defined as a person who doesn't get to Upper Canada too often. "I sometimes wish I *was* a recluse. If I was a little bit more disciplined I'd get more work done. And that means going to my study and locking the door and taking the phone off the hook.. Ernest Hemingway said, God bless him. that a writer's job is to wire."

But if Richards doesn't think of himself as a recluse, he is often treated like one. Writing full-time in the relative isolation of a small Maritimes city, he has found that recognition comes slowly. He has produced two deeply felt and nicely crafted novels, *The Coming of Winter* and *Blood Ties: a volume of short stories, Duncers at Night*; and a play, *The Dungarvon Whopper*. He has been favourably reviewed in the major Canadian literary magazines, and has been recognized in the Soviet Union, Scotland, and Denmark. It is an impressive achievement for a man who has not yet reached his 30th birthday. But *Maclean's*, for example, has yet to review any of his books. In a survey published in the January, 1979, *Books in Canada* he was named by several critics — Fred Cogswell and David Helwig, among others — as one of the country's most underrated writers.

All of Richards's fiction is set in the Minmichi Rivet region of northern New Brunswick, which provides his subject, characters, and themes, and remains his home. He still lives in New Castle, where his father owns two movie theatres, the Uptown and the Midway Drive-in. His wife of nine years, Peggy—who works at an iron-ore mine in New Castle—was born just 13 miles away, at Bartibog Bridge. Richards lived for three years in Fredericton, when he studied English and history at St. Thomas University, but he spent most of his time hanging around the Ice House, a popular local meeting place for both young and established writers. He speaks with respect of encounters with such writers as Cogswell and Bill and Nancy Bauer.

Richards's novels and short stories are not so much separate works as they are interlocking parts of a regional saga. The temptation to compare him to William Faulkner seems inescapable. Like Faulkner, he takes the place he knows best and creates a world in which Past and present mingle to make people and events work as they do. Like Faulkner, he is an eccentric and original stylist who refuses to let grammatical niceties get in the way of the vision he is unfolding. And isn't he doing with class distinctions along the Miramichi what Faulkner did with class distinctions in his Yoknapatawpha County novels about northern Mississippi?

"Not so much class differences as religious or ethnic differences," says Richards. "The Scottish Presbyterian up river to the low-river Irish Catholic. . . It's very strange when you have been brought up in a Catholic background, as I have been. I've never written deeply about a Protestant character. Many of my friends — people at the Black Horse Tavern in New Castle — can tell by a person's accent whether he is from up river, or even what part: whether its the sou'east or the nor'west branch, or whether he's



David Adams Richards

from down river or across the river or from Nelson. It's very funny. A friend of mine can tell where a person's from by the way he walks."

The similarities to Faulkner led one reviewer to complain that *Blood Ties* contained "too much Mississippi Mud." The charge is unfair. Richards has not been influenced by Faulkner so much as he simply resembles him. What he learned from Faulkner is that it is all right for a writer to risk failure: "He took every chance in the world in *Absalom! Absalom!*, and it almost sprang loose, but it doer work. My soul!" he says quietly. "If I had half the vocabulary Faulkner does."

Though the comparison with Faulkner is inevitable, the real

He worked his way through the complete works of Dostoevski. Later, he read and admired Chekhov, then Tolstoy, whom he considers the greatest writer that has lived. It is appropriate... that a Soviet publishing house has purchased world publishing rights for *The Coming of Winter* from Oberon.

influences on Richards's fiction are Russian. An Acadian friend, Don Doiron, gave him a copy of *Seven Short Russian Novels* when he was 16. Richards read the book straight through, then worked his way through the complete works of Dostoevski. Later, he read and admired Chekhov, then Tolstoy, whom he considers the greatest writer that has lived. It is appropriate, given Richards's fascination with the Russians, that a Soviet publishing house has purchased world publishing rights for *The Coming of Winter* from Oberon Press. The book is currently being translated into Russian.

On the subject of his approach to writing, Richards finds himself talking about the Russians. Dostoevski would begin his novels with an idea for a story, then let the story and characters grow out of the idea. Turgenev, on the other hand, planned his stories meticulously and knew how they'd come out before he began to write. Richards's method more nearly resembles Dostoevski's. "I sit down and I have a basic idea, and things more or less come from there. In *The Coming of Winter* I started with the idea of writing a novel about a young man who shoots this cow. I thought it would end in a court-room scene, that Kevin would be taken to court for killing the animal. But as it turned out, he never got to court. He got married instead."

The Coming of Winter, Richards's first novel, focuses on two weeks in the life of Kevin Dulse who, after carelessly shooting a cow, gets drunk twice, sees a friend die in a car accident, and celebrates his 21st birthday. At the end of the novel, he settles into a depressing marriage and a job as a labourer at the pulp mill. Kevin remains torn between his love for Pamela, and his friendship with John Delano, an oddly appealing figure who reappears in Richards's second novel, *Blood Ties*.

Blood Ties, also published by Oberon, concerns two years in the lives of the MacDermot family and their friends. These down-river people are tied together by blood and history. The characters do a lot of drinking, dancing, hunting, and card-playing—all of which has an element of futility about it. Orville steak church candles and burns them in his mom; Leah is unhappily married, and Cathy at the end effects an unpromising escape to Toronto. Everybody resents the intrusion of a couple of American artists who want to introduce an alien culture to the people of the Miramichi.

Richards's control of his material and his use of symbolism are surer in *Blood Ties*, but there are enough links between the two books to convince anybody that he is working out of an elaborately realized fictive world. John Delano appears in both, and Kevin, the hero of the first book, is on the edge of things in the second. Kevin and John begin a boat trip in *The Coming of Winter* and complete it in *Blood Ties*. "Once someone asked me who I associated myself with, you know, autobiographically, in The

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For almost three years, Ian Adams has been fighting a libel action brought by Leslie James Bennett, a former RCMP intelligence officer, who claims that the central figure in Adam's novel, *S: Portrait of a Spy*, is based on himself.

Throughout the lengthy period since the legal action began, Ian Adams has been able to realize almost no income from *S: Portrait of a Spy*, a book which was well on its way to being a best seller with over 12,000 copies sold in the first months following publication.

In the summer of 1980, the case took an unprecedented turn. Ian Adams was ordered to reveal the sources of his information in researching the background to his novel. This marks the first time in Canadian history this has happened to any fiction writer and the first time a Canadian fiction writer has been held accountable for a product of imagination in this way. The publishing industry united to produce a statement of profound concern. If sources cannot be protected, all writers must content themselves with government handouts and other flotsam on the surface of events for information, and the health of a vigilant, vigorous democracy is in peril.

The legal costs of the Ian Adams case continue to mount. The *Ian Adams Defence Fund* has set a first-stage target of \$25,000 by the end of October. Please send a donation today.

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Coming Of Winter. I said, 'Kevin, but I think he is so whiney... I love John mote.' I think Kevin is extremely kind but I think there's something lacking in his backbone. John's a much more fascinating character for me than Kevin is. John's the current I was trying to get at."

This comment and others show the intensity of Richards's belief in hi characters. Because his people and situations are so profoundly imagined, creating is largely a matter of getting it down.

Oberon accepted Richards's first novel without a written contract, then did an extensive job of revising the manuscript. Richards simply refused to let them publish it until they restored it to something like its original condition.

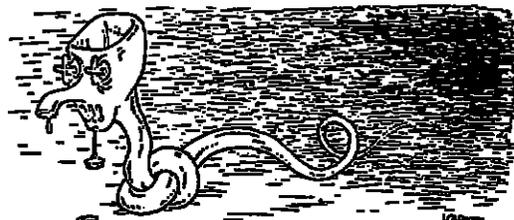
He throws sway material when his writing takes a wrong turn, but he does very little rewriting. He composes each book from start to finish on his Remington standard typewriter, makes pen-and-ink corrections, then gives it to his wife for retyping. It is thii retyped version that he submits to Oberon Press. "I've never really written a complete draft over again," he says. "If I were to start a draft over again, it would end up a different novel."

He uses one typewriter ribbon for each book. Sometimes, the type becomes so faded that Richards has to go over the manuscript after his wife has typed it and ink in the illegible words before sending it off to his publisher. He writes at night, usually from about midnight until live or six in the morning. Lately, though, he's been doing some writing during the day.

He pays a price for his method. Some critics find his willing style — and here is another incidental similarity to Faulkner — off-putting. John Mills, writing in the Queen's Quarterly, quoted a particularly prolix passage of *The Coming of Winter*, and ended his review: "Its cadences are either non-existent or too subtle for me to grasp. Therefore, I deliver this novel over to the reader. If he can make sense out of this passage I've just quoted, if he likes it, then I wish him, in all sincerity, the joy of it."

If Richards's style troubles some critics, others realize that it is so tied up with his subject that it becomes an appropriate vehicle for his material. Oberon Press learned to its dismay that this is not something to tamper lightly with. Oberon accepted Richards's first novel without a written contract, then did an extensive job of revising the manuscript. Richards simply refused to let them publish it until they restored it to something like its original condition. That is unprecedented behaviour for a first novelist, but Richards knows exactly what he is after. "You can see flaws in my work because of my method. But when I edit myself down I often feel I'm taking the soul or spirit out of it. I don't think I could sit down and rewrite a page 10 times and have it come out resembling anything like what I started out to wire."

At the moment he is working on his third novel, tentatively titled *Lives Of Short Duration*. It is about two half-brothers who have spent their lives across the river from each other, and moves back and forth from one man and hi family and friends to the other. One of the men is 82 years old, and sneaks away from the hospital to return to the river. The other is being charged with income-tax evasion. After a false start in which he tried to write from a point of view that didn't work, Richards started over again last year. The book is nearly complete, though he worries that it is very long. He knows his characters and material inside out. The difficulty is getting it down right. □



RURAL ROOTS

The prairie sod broken by Sinclair Ross lay at the heart of his best work, and proved fertile for a new crop of Canadian writers

by George Woodcock

Sinclair Ross, by Lorraine McMullen. Twayne Publishers. 159 pages, \$16.05 cloth (ISBN 0 8057 6385 6).

SINCLAIR ROSS'S *As For Me and My House* has, as a book, had a "extraordinary life.. It was published almost 40 years ago, in 1941, and though far from being a popular success, it was immediately recognized by perspicacious readers as a novel that expressed with a peculiar sharpness and intensity some of the special problems of existence in C&da. A few people, even then, recognized 1941 as a year that marked a significant step forward in the Canadian novel. For *Barometer Rising* also appeared, and however different the ways of writing and the subsequent careers of Ross and Hugh MacLennan may have been, there is no doubt that their emergence in the same season showed Canadians looking at their land and their society with a fresh and autonomous insight.

Since it was published, *As For Me and My House* has never gone out of fashion, perhaps because in the best-selling sense it was never "in fashion." Certainly by 1980 it had become as neat to a classic as we have in Canada, a model of writing about a special place and time (the Prairies in the dust-bowl era), and something of an exemplar in its economy of statement and its peculiar combination of irony and lyricism, of the kind of writing that seems appropriate to our condition as Canadians.

A good many of our best critics have been drawn to *As For Me and My House* not only for its admirable conciseness of form and its sharpness of psychological perception, but also for its insights into the situation of the artist in Canadian society. Though Lorraine McMullen's *Sinclair Ross* is the first book specifically devoted to Ross, its checklist presents a respectable list of studies of his first novel by writers as varied as Roy Daniells and Ed McCourt, Henry Kreisel and John Moss, Warren Tallman and W. H. New. And though it would be hard to point to a school of disciples (whom Ross in his modesty and his reclusive inclination, has never sought), there is no doubt of an awareness of his presence and achievement among not only novelists but even poets who have made the prairie their setting. I do not suggest there is any specific way in which, say, Margaret Laurence has borrowed from Ross, yet I suspect her novels might not be quite what they are if *As For Me and My House* had not been written: Ross's Horizon and Laurence's *Manawaka* have some obvious similarities as narrow little prairie communities of the Depression years, and though these are partly owing to what was there in all such settlements in the first place, there is also an underlying community of perception that one seeks vainly in prairie novels before *As For Me and My House*. A candour and an irony new to prairie fiction came in with that book. And I feel also that a poet such as Dale Zieroth, sensitive to the historic echoes as well as the geographic character of the prairie, might not have written as he does if *As For Me and My House* had not pioneered an elegiac yet

ironic kind of prairie writing, as far from the evangelical illusionism of Ralph Connor as it was from the turgid naturalism of F. P. Grove.

Perhaps in saying this I am to a great extent echoing what Roy Daniells said more than 20 years ago in the introduction he wrote for the 1957 New Canadian Library edition of *As For Me and My House*:

Analysis of the Canadian echoes of things must be regional or at least begin by being regional. Haliburton, Leacock, MacLennan, without further witness, suffice to convince us of this point. It is the prairie region, of which Saskatchewan forms the central expanse, that engrosses the whole effort of Sinclair Ross.

This is perhaps no longer true in a literal sense, since two of Ross's later novels, *The Well* (1958) and *Whirl of Gold* (1970), both of which appeared after Daniells wrote his introduction, do involve the interplay of urban and rural (prairie) ways of life.



Sinclair Ross

Chris Rowe, the central figure of *The Well*, comes out of the petty criminal background of a city slum, and reaches the prairie when he is in flight from the law after a shooting incident. Though in his new setting he is led to the verge of participating in a murder, he draws back because his experience of human relationships outside the city has subtly changed him, and as he turns to face the consequences of his past we are meant to recognize that he is a man regenerated.

Whirl of Gold reverses the pattern. Sonny McAlpine is a prairie boy with a flair for music who goes to the city in the hope of furthering his career as a clarinetist, but becomes corrupted by the environment of sleazy and small-time crooks. He is involved and wounded in a robbery, while his accomplice deserts him with the loot. As the novel ends with Sonny being nursed back to health by a good-hearted Nova Scotian girl, another waif in the city, there is a ray of hope, but one is left in no real doubt of the superiority of the prairie life that Sonny has lost and which is evoked in recollective flashes that form the most vivid sections of this novel.

The Well and *Whirl of Gold* have been neglected by both readers and critics, and indeed almost all of the attention so far given to Ross has been concentrated on *As For Me and My House*, though Margaret Laurence wrote a line, insightful introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of Ross's collection of short fiction, *The Lump at Noon and Other Stories*.

This lack of a thorough consideration of Ross's work as a whole is what gives Lorraine McMullen's *Sinclair Ross* its usefulness. It is in many ways a typical Twayne book, a guide of moderate length directed to the college market and beginning in the customary way with a chronology and a brief biographical introduction. There follows a chapter on the short stories, and then chapters on the four individual novels in which aspects of the books — characterization, themes, levels of discourse, and so forth — are systematically discussed. Finally there is a chapter on "Sinclair Ross's Fictional World," the microcosm he has created, the most striking feature of which, perhaps, is the extent and depth of the correspondences that — as Margaret Laurence has pointed out —

exist between inner and outer conditions, reflected in the relationship between the stormy and arid landscape of dust-ridden Saskatchewan and the arid existence of the Bentleys in *Horizon*, an existence only deep emotional storms can jolt to its end when they depart from the narrow, mentally famished community.

In *Sinclair Ross*, then, Lorraine McMullen conscientiously covers ground that other writers have largely neglected, and if her treatment tends to be expiatory rather than analytical, it shows enough critical perception to leave the reader with a fair sense of the relative qualities of the various works. However, I feel that her interpretation of *As For Me and My House*, which leans in a negative judgement of Mrs. Bentley, the narrator, as "too possessive" toward her husband, "too manipulative" in her actions, "too hypocritical" in her attitude toward *Horizon*, is greatly over-simplistic.

The great virtue of *As For Me and My House* is surely that it moves on so many levels without leading to any ultimate judgement, and in so far as we take sides between Mrs. Bentley and Philip it seems to me that we are going against Ross's intent. Bentley indeed has to carry the double burdens of his disbelief in the Christianity he preaches and of his frustration as an artist, but this does not mean that he is any less selfish in his desire to isolate himself than Mrs. Bentley is in her desire to regain his love. And it is finally, after all, through her determination — however manipulative it may seem — that he is liberated from a morally impassible situation and freed to discover whether after all he has more than the potentiality of being a fine artist, for up to now his drawings, as Ross describes them, are representations of the environment, dominated by its brooding indifference, rather than the products of original vision.

The true complexity of *As For Me and My House* emerges in its constant playing on the nature and truth of perception. How far is Mrs. Bentley, the diarist (and thus in one sense an artist also) caught in her perceptions of Bentley's motives and her own? How accurately does she transmit to us the limitations of Bentley's perceptions, both of his own moral situation and of his human and

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physical environment? How far do his frustration and his endured guilt mar and limit his perceptions of the world outside and hence his art?

In this context one cannot forget the time at which Ross was wiring, and the situation of the Canadian artist at that time — a situation of neglect and loneliness difficult to imagine 40 years later. The inturning solitude in which Bentley works is a matter of choice only in so far as he is making a virtue out of necessity; he has no public, and he stands alone-as Ross stood as a novelist — in trying to break through to an interpretation of the prairie life that surrounds and engulfs him, in terms that have creative validity and autonomy.

On the third level it is that prairie life itself which, in both its natural and its human aspects, thoroughly permeates *As For Me and My House*. The efforts of Grove (whom Ross has apparently never read) to evoke the intimate yet hostile relationship between nature and man on the great plains are crude in comparison with the effects Ross achieves, with an economy of prose that avoids grandiosity while it successfully evokes the often terrifying relationships that exist between the immense and elemental and the insignificant and human. As *For Me and My House* is studded with evocative sentences and paragraphs saying in a few lines what most Canadian novelists would struggle for pages to attain. There is this passage, near the beginning, setting the scene and scale:

It's an immense night out there, wheeling and windy. The lili on the street and in the houses are helpless against the black wetness, little unilluminating glints that might be painted on it. The town seems huddled together, cowering on a high, tiny perch, afraid to mow lest it topple into the wind. Close to the parsonage is the church, black even against the darkness, towering ominously up through the night and merging with it. There's a soft steady swish of rain on the roof, and a gurgle of eaves troughs running over. Above, in the high cold night, the wind goes swinging past, indifferent, liplessly mournful. It frightens me, makes me feel lost, dropped on this little perch of town and abandoned. I wish Philip would waken.

Or this, a little way on — a stark memento of the days when people watched as the land blew away from under them:

Philip and Paul and I stood on the school steps till the congregation were all gone. The horses pawed and stamped as if they, too, felt something ominous in the day. One after another the democrats and buggier rolled away with a whirl of wheels like pebbly thunder. From the top of Partridge Hill where the schoolhouse stands we could see the prairie smoking with dust as if it had just been swept by a fire. A frightened, wavering bum fled blind within the telephone wires. The wind struck in hard, clenched little blows; and even as we watched each other the dun formed in veins and wrinkles round our eyes. According to the signs, says Paul, it's going to be a dry and windy year all through.

Or this description of a farm-child's funeral, which evokes more poignantly than any other paragraph I know in Canadian literature the despair that can enter into man's relationship with nature when it cuts too near the bone of existence:

The cemetery is just a fenced-in acre or two on the prairie. There are dry, sulky weeds on the graves, and you can see where gophers and badgers have been burrowing. When the service was over and the others had gone Mrs. Lawson started crying again that she didn't want anyone belonging to her left in such a place. Lawson told her he would go to town tomorrow for chicken wire, and sink a fence of it all round the grave to the depth of the coffin. Philip led her back to the car then, and I waked a few minutes longer with Lawson. He stood staring across the hot burned fields, his lip clenched tight and the veins in his forehead standing out as he tried to steady himself. At last, almost bitterly, he said, "We aren't going to get even our seed this year. Maybe he's not missing such a lot."

Such passages suggest how right Roy Daniells in fact was to stress the feeling for region that is at the heart of Ross's best work, *As For Me and My House* and the stories he wrote up to 1942. He wrote them while he was still in the West, in close contact with its life. *The Well* and *Whir of Gold* were products of a time when, living and working as a bank clerk in Montreal, Ross was trying to reconcile his new urban environment with the rural past in which his feet were set, and their weaknesses can doubtless be attributed to the failure to resolve this dichotomy. Ross may have learnt how to live in the city, but he never understood the urban environment

and in his attempt to bring the two zones of experience into some significant relationship he resorted to melodrama, as in *The Well*, where the hero becomes involved with a scheming woman seeking to murder her husband, or to sentimentality, as in *Whir of Gold*, where the struggle between the good-hearted Mad and the evil Charlie over Sonny's soul is too formulaically romantic to convince one.

Unfortunately — with Lorraine McMullen as a welcome exception — critics and readers have allowed their disappointment with Ross's middle novels to blind them to the merits of his fourth, *Sawbones Memorial*, where Ross deliberately departs from the realistic and the romantic modes of Canadian fiction and adopts a foreign model. He has said that Claude Mauriac's *Diner en ville* gave him the idea for a structure that would allow a whole epoch to be condensed into a few hours of time and a short novel. He chose for his setting another little Saskatchewan town, Upward. In 1948 Doc Hunter (nicknamed "Sawbones") is retiring after 45 years of practice, and a celebration is being held in his honour at the new hospital. The scene reminds one not only of Claude Mauriac's novel, but also of the great scene of the Guermantes's party in the last volume of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. The past is miraculously reconstructed through a complex pattern of revelations as conversations, interior monologues, speeches, flashes of recollection, construct a panorama where time exists only by grace of memory, evoked by survivors meeting again in the present.

As well as an interesting experiment, *Sawbones Memorial* is a genuinely comic book, shot through though it is with elegiac echoes, and so it balances the essentially pathetic mood of *As For Me and My House*. Despite a pattern adapted from French novelists, *Sawbones Memorial* also is basically a regional novel, showing the triumph of human vitality in a setting where, as *As For Me and My House* declares, man survives on sufferance and only by virtue of a will to endure. Returning by his own act of recollection to the prairie of his childhood and youth, Ross was renewed as a novelist. □

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From the valley of the shadow...

by Silver Donald Cameron

The **Sacrament**, by Peter Gzowski, McClelland & Stewart. 204 pages. \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 3738 4).

FOR A LONG time, Peter Gzowski has been threatening to commit a book. Now he's done it. The question remaining is: Why?

A few years ago he was working on a book about Dow Chemical. *à la* Anthony Sampson. Dow is a monster at the frontier of technology, with tentacles everywhere. It's an interesting company, and we need to know more about it. But the book was never finished.

Then, after the election of René Lévesque, Gzowski was said to be writing a book about the disintegration of Canada — and, rumour reported, about the disintegration of marriages. That sounded like a book Gzowski needed to write. Despite being based on a lousy metaphor, it might also have been a book with enough passion.

pain, and ruthless thinking to be rewarding. But that one was never finished, either.

Since then, Gzowski's enormous national reputation as a TV and radio host has helped move two anthologies, *Peter Gzowski's Book About This Country in the Morning* and *Peter Gzowski's Spring Tonic*. But, until now, no book of his own.

The **Sacrament** is already extremely successful. It may become a gripping movie. It's an admirable job of reporting: lean, clear, fast. Gzowski is a friend of mine; a sophisticated and gifted man despite his aw-shucks manner. I'm pleased about his prospects. All the same, I'd trade this book for either of the ones he didn't finish.

The **Sacrament** is a story of two young people from Estevan, Sask., Brent Dyer and his sister-in-law Donna Johnson, who were passengers in a light plane that crashed in the mountains of Idaho in May, 1979. The pilot suffered brain injuries, wandered away, and died. The only other passenger was Donna's father Don, who froze the first night on the mountain, after coveting Donna with his coat. Brent and Donna survived in the plane for two weeks, and then walked out in live days. To keep alive, they ate Don Johnson's flesh.

I don't want to denigrate the suffering, the intelligence, or the determination of these two young people, nor do I want to overlook the kindness and love shown by practically everyone involved. But what exactly is the point Gzowski is making?

He is quite carefully not arguing that the affair shows the dog beneath the skin, the way human beings revert to savagery under stress. He isn't really exploring cannibalism in any depth: indeed, he only gives us five pages directly on the subject. He isn't bemoaning our failure to understand the necessities of survival. Nobody blamed Brent and Donna for eating Don Johnson's cast-off body. They chose "cannibalism over death," says Gzowski, and "society understands."

In the end, Gzowski seems to think his book is about love and God, and one central passage (as well as the title) makes this explicit:

Our refusal to eat human flesh is part of our humanity, part of what links us with what we call divine. And so, too, can be our exceptions to our own rule, as the taking of communion is an expression of a spiritual love of the flesh that is consumed. We can consume what we love because we love it: the consumption is a matter of the soul, and only the soul can understand it.

Gzowski may be right, but the vision doesn't stand up to its burden in the book. For one thing, Gzowski leaves almost all the religious thought and speculation in the minds and voices of his two young protagonists. But they see no visions, experience no mystic moments; they simply develop a strong feeling that the Lord is with them and will guide them out. It's easy to dismiss that feeling as a survival technique rather than a fresh insight into reality.

And Gzowski himself, by leaving the interpretation so completely to his characters, opens a strong doubt about his own commitment to the theme. Despite a few salient remarks, it is never clear exactly what Gzowski himself thinks. In our day, of course, strong belief is more often considered a clinical symptom than a valid intellectual position. Gzowski's uneasiness is hardly surprising. But if this is his theme, he has to wrestle with it. Brent and Donna may have experienced God, but it's Gzowski's job to make that convincing.

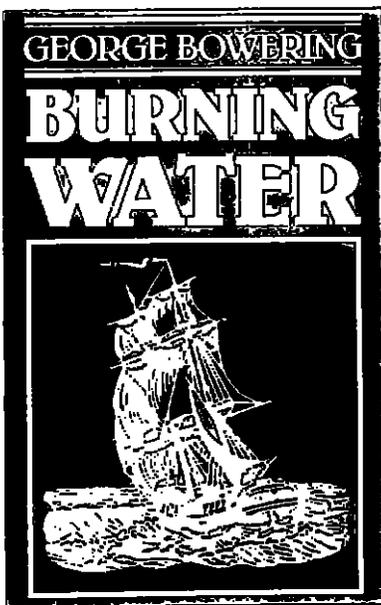
The book's conclusion doesn't help, either. Only Brent and Donna can really know how the experience changed them, but by Gzowski's account the effects seem subtle, to say the least. Did God really pot Brent Dyer through all that, simply to make him a more devoted family man, living in one of Estevan's better neighbourhoods, helping the family Ford dealership to prosper, carpeting his patio, and roaring about in his purple done buggy? Was Donna spared to advance the fortunes of her late father's Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise? Nothing wrong with those things — but if the experience was really profound, shouldn't there be some visible change in the structure of their lives? It's as though Saul had reached Damascus, bought a bungalow, and built up a business selling pizza to the centurions.

And if the experience wasn't profound, why is Gzowski telling us this story?

What's lacking, essentially, are perspective, narrative point of view, interpretation. The best journalism is instant historiography, which seizes on significant situations or events, explores their causes, and determines which causes are essential. That judgement of causes is the writer's interpretation — and without an interpretation, the facts themselves remain incoherent, disconnected, and meaningless.

Bpoks such as Noel Mostert's *Supership*, Anthony Sampson's *The Seven Sisters*, John McPhee's *The Curve of Binding Energy*, and the Woodward-Bernstein Watergate reports also speak to the future, and speak to us as citizens. By exploring the causes of past events, they demonstrate how we may discover the present causes of future events — and they imply that we have collective choices to make.

The **Sacrament** offers us no collective choices. Gzowski isn't concerned with the safety of light planes, their lack of survival equipment, the efficiency of search-and-rescue operations. He wants to discuss a private, internal revolution. But journalism



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is inescapably public, restricted to what can be seen, heard, smelled, measured. The only thoughts to which it has unrestricted access are the thoughts of the journalist himself. The internal dramas of the soul remain the territory of the novelist, the poet, the memoirist.

To reach that rich territory, Gzowski would have required a different vehicle. I understand the dilemma: it's the reason

Silver Donald Cameron published an ambivalent, flawed book of journalism in 1977 and a novel in 1980. *The Sacrament* is an honourable failure, the kind a writer learns from.

Next time out, I hope Gzowski finds the appropriate match of form and story right at the start. I'd still like to read that Dow Chemical book. And I'd like to teed hi novel, too. □

These episodes from Coulter's early life form the heart of the book, not necessarily because the author meant them to, but because they're the best parts. They are full of reality, and are told with feeling and with humour. Not only is the young Coulter convincing, but so are the people who surround him: his wayward father and sister, his dogged mother, and above all Howard Rimmington, the outcast intellectual who tutors Coulter in his early teens. Rimmington teaches him to write, to be curious about everything in the world, and to be sceptical. The relationship ends when Rimmington makes a pass at the boy, and shortly afterwards commits suicide. Whether Coulter's conversion to fundamentalist Christianity a few years later is to be taken as a reaction against this incident is not made clear, and the effect of Rimmington's influence remains obscure. Coulter is quoted as having said at the time he entered the ministry that Rimmington's "ideas are still with me today." As Coulter's conversion is clearly sincere, I don't quite know what to make of this.

Nevertheless, these early episodes are all solid and admirably told: we believe in the down-et-heel morning house his mother runs in the Parkdale district of Toronto, the atmosphere of the newspaper office where he is a sportswriter, and his early adventures in preaching. In contrast, the present-day episodes seem a little tinny. Coulter maintains some reality, but the people around him, especially his foul-mouthed narcissistic wife Helga (a former Miss America) and his long-term lover Arla Todd, are little more than (if you'll forgive the expression) lay figures. These episodes thus take on something of the quality of day-dramas. And perhaps that's what they are.

The ending toward which all this builds is disappointingly flat when it comes. Instead of getting inside Coulter's mind at the moment of his public exposure, we see him at a distance: he arrives at the stadium, the crowd voices its disapproval, he drives away. I found this anticlimactic.

In a book that most mean a great deal to its author, it's rather puzzling to find various pieces of carelessness. Coulter in the present day is a close friend of the American president, who is called Adam Scott and is hoping for re-election (that is, he's in his first term). Yet back in 1955 President Adam Scott had sent Coulter on a mission to flood victims in Italy. And there are two scriptural slips that I'd have thought impossible for an evangelist or even an ex-evangelist. Coulter reflects, not once but twice, on the difficulty of believing that Gideon made the sun stand still. Well, of course, he didn't: as every fundamentalist knows, it was Joshua. And Coulter's first invitation to preach, from a Methodist Episcopal minister in upstate New York, begins: "I am, in the words of the Psalmist, 'drawing a bow at a velure.'" As every Episcopal Methodist knows, those words come not from the Psalms but from the First Book of Kings. I can't help reflecting that errors of this sort

...to an exceeding high mountain

by I. M. Owen

The Third Temptation, by Charles Templeton, McClelland & Stewart, 288 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 8544 3).

THIS IS A good and interesting novel. More precisely, it's rather good and very interesting. Let me admit right off that I haven't read Charles Templeton's first two novels. But I've read enough about them to know that they are novels of incident, relying for their chief attraction on clever plot ideas. *The Third Temptation* goes beyond that: it's a novel about character and about a moral dilemma that is rooted in the author's experience.

To succeed with me, as it largely did, the book had to overcome a long-standing prejudice against Charles Templeton. When I was at the University of Toronto Templeton was an evangelist leading a movement called Youth for Christ. If I remember the newspaper pictures correctly, he preached in a white dinner-jacket, and his then wife sang hymns in a tight-fitting evening dress with deep décolletage. That was enough to create a prejudice by itself, but it was reinforced by the frequent allegation that Youth for Christ was fascist -- a canard, no doubt, but its quack was easy for any right-thinking left-wing undergraduate to accept. More recently, since Charles Templeton lost his faith and forsook evangelism, he has been associated with a number of institutions for which my enthusiasm is less than overwhelming -- *Macleod's*, private television, the Ontario Liberal Party, Pierre Berton -- so that my prejudice never quite left me. Hence it was a surprise to find so much to admire in this novel about an evangelist who lost his faith and chose not to forsake evangelism.

The book starts just three months before the end of the story. Jimmy Cooker, now over 60 and a world-class celebrity (even bigger than Billy Graham, we are to understand), is in Toronto in mid-March to lay the groundwork for a campaign at the CNE Stadium scheduled for the following June. He has an acrimonious conversation with

Hugh Hoffman, publisher of the Toronto *Tribune*, a paper very like the Toronto *Star* except that Hoffman has extended his empire until he owns a chain of two dozen American papers and is the most powerful publisher in the United States (an improbability clearly adopted so that most of the action can be placed in the States and the book fitted to the American market).

The consequence of this conversation is that Hoffman directs his minions to prepare a series of articles on Cooker to run concurrently with his Toronto campaign. A good deal of the book consists of draft articles, inter-office memoranda, and research reports in which we see the series gradually turning into an exposé of Coulter as an unbeliever and adulterer who has grown rich on the simple faith of his followers. In counterpoint we get scenes of Coulter at home in his elegant house in Malibu; and these two elements of present-day narrative are together in counterpoint with flashbacks to Cooker's early life: his boyhood in Saskatchewan, his young manhood in Toronto, his conversion and the beginnings of his ministry, and the events that led to his loss of faith.



probably wouldn't get past a good magazine's checking system. As a former book publisher and still a partisan of that side of the profession. I wonder — not for the first time — why a book publisher's editorial department, under much less pressure from deadlines than a magazine checker is, should be so much more fallible. It bothers me. □

The boys on the rebus

Here it has Rained, by Rafael Barreto-Rivera. Underwhich Editions (Coach House), 12 pages, \$3.00 paper.

shore lines. by Douglas Barbour, Turnstone Press, 56 pages, \$5.00 paper (ISBN 0 88801 025 7).

A Porcelain Cup Placed There. by Richard Truhlar. Coach House. 112 pages, \$5.75 paper (ISBN 0 88910 197 3).

right hemi sphere left ear, by Paul Dutton. Coach House. 96 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88910 197 3).

By MICHAEL THOMPSON

WHAT IS ESPECIALLY pathetic about these four books is the self-estimation reflected by the blurbs: "Volatile, impassioned, excitingly varied," says Paul Dutton's, while Barreto-Rivera's adolescent little "prose poem" toots itself as "a sensuous tapestry of language charged with prophetic fire and technical audacity."

Dutton and Barreto-Rivera are both members of the sound-poetry group The Four Horsemen. Truhlar of the ensemble called Own Sound, although much of their volumes, and in particular of the older and therefore more culpable Barbour's, consists of round and/or concrete effusions intermingled in some cases with bits of prose and efforts at more traditional poetry.

It may be that there was once something volatile and impassioned about concrete poetry. Once, a long time ago, poetry might really have been enriched by the shot in the arm from the reassessment of Gutenberg syntax, grammar, logic, and linearity. There is still creativity and excitement in Beaudelaire's theory of "correspondences," in Rimbaud's strange attempt to pair rounds and colours in "Voyelles," in the lunatic Skryabin flogging away his last doomed years at his omnisensual super pinball machine, which wedded colours to notes and chords, perfumes to harmonies, thrills to F sharp minors. Touchie-feelie-smellie-hearie-viddie-cummie. Des Esseintes rides again — a fifth whoresman?

Kinesthetics was the cant word 20 years ago, and it was a harmless enough affectation. Dom Sylvester Houédard (Benedictine habit deferentially plucked in Dutton's

preface) swished around the library at Prinknash, chain-smoking and constructing ever more elaborate Catholic poetry machines. Mike Horovitz transformed the Bear Lane Gallery into a seething far-out later-than-future jazz-and-poetry pit, fragrant with the lawless fumes of "tee," as the weed was then touchingly termed. Strange magic Brazilians, Germans, French, Lithuanians wrestled at government-sponsored international congresses to translate the untranslatable into one another's tongues. Allen Ginsberg was always the guest of honour.

But even then it was *déjà vu*, and *entendu*, end its recrudescence in Canada now is rather quaint. At least it would be quaint if its practitioners did not see themselves as volatile, impassioned, and all the rest of it. What they are in fact is unimaginative, imitative, occasionally cute, maybe opportunistic, tedious, pretentious, portentous, and finally a bit sad.

The worst two books here are Barbour's and Barreto-Rivera's, but it's a damn close-run thing. The latter is published (in a limited edition) by a new concern called Underwhich Editions, whose catalogue consists mostly of books by Steve McCaffery. For three bucks you get 12 stapled pages of inchoate prose, very, very reminiscent of the overrated Lautréamont, beginning, as you might hew wagered, in the middle of one sentence and ending in the middle of another. The chances are that if you heard B-R actually reciting it you wouldn't notice that it is vaguely death-sod-sexy gibberish, but the brutality of cold print really does for it.

Recitation, I doubt, would help Barbour. Considering that he's been at it for six books he might have done better than this, the second of 10 "moonwalks":

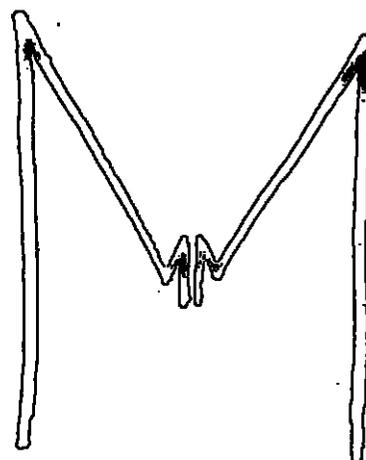
tonight rain windows
run streetlights gleam
tonight: no moon
outside I inside
breasts light in dark room

But then there's nothing else in *shore* lines to show that he might have done better, certainly not the one-dimensional concretes such as "2. Our lady of the slowly freezing lakeshore — november:", which makes elaborate typographical play with such words as "icy" and "i see" to form a pattern.

Having singled out Barbour and B-R for more kicks than pricks, I don't mean to suggest that Truhlar and Dutton are any good. Truhlar's book is the prettiest, a square little Coach House job with the intermittent motif of a dripping cup-print, typeset, by gosh, in Tromp, and with a crease across page 21 which may or may not (I'm betting not) be part of the prose poem thereon. Truhlar is given to such lucid section headings as "Monolithor Monographikos," and a mixture of relatively "straight" poems and Robbe-Grillet-like prose about vulvas and pubic hair and stuff. He likes the word "naked" a lot too, which es Graves once reminded us is much sexier

than "nude." and in fact the book is really quite likely to be something about sex or other when it isn't about the way that cops leave rings all over books if you slop them about. What make me say this are passages such as: ". always disappearing into the same woman the same women through a moment through a moment the moment her lips open wide whose member floods her thighs her belly as it slides out from the vulva falling slowly over the edge in a motion lasted through twitching through bent loins..." There is at least in Truhlar a faint sense of such things as rhythm, shape, and cadence.

Dutton's the intellectual of the *galère*, the theorest, the shit-slinger. "Similarly, if some ineffable emotion demands recourse to human sounds beyond the realm of conventional verbalization or if the communication of a particularly pleasing rhythm is hindered by the imposition of intellectual or verbal constructs..." As illustration, here is the whole of number three of "handoffs":



Not that the bard can't do better, as the opening of "sonnet 6" attests:

s s s s s s s s
o o o o o o o o
n n n n n n n n
s s s son n n n

Readers may also enjoy less verbal poems such as "mondrian boogie woogie," or "It is Spring Now," and (hello, look what I've jest found: a found poem) "the death of strindberg, andree and fraenkel on their arctic expedition."

It is not that the devices of concrete and sound (and found) poetry may contribute to the making of a good poem. The trouble is that one needs to be a good poet. Great poets (Apollinaire) have played with the arrangement in one dimension on the page, good ones (Michaux) have dickered with the freeing of sound patterns from syntactical logic. But when jokers such as these four (with the slightly possible exception of Truhlar) run before they can walk the result is, for the moment, barren, witless, and self-deluding, and in the longer view it does din on life, to use Lawrence's phrase, and on the real poets who wring their poetry so hard and long and costlily out of their various insides. □

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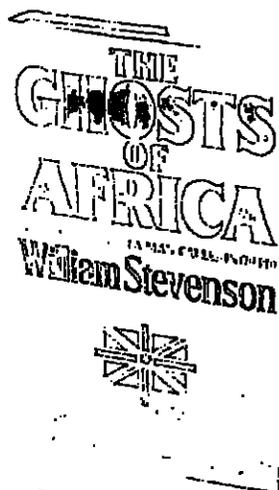


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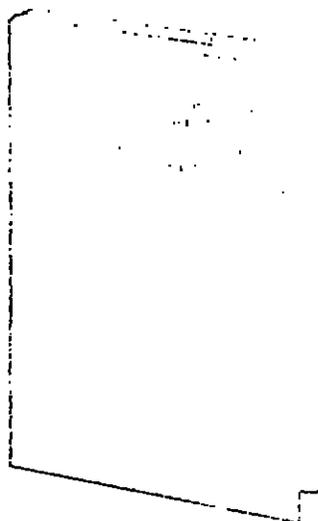
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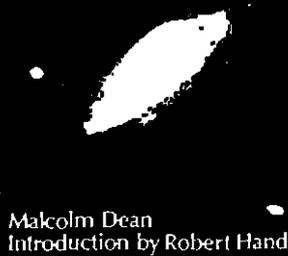
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By ROSALIND EVE CONWAY

BORN IN TORONTO in 1921, and an em-
ployee of the Canadian Imperial Bank of
Commerce on Bay Street most of his adult
life, Raymond Souster is well known for his
deep roots in Toronto. A champion of
modern Canadian poetry, Souster worked
on "little magazines" in the 1940s and
1950s, bringing the work of new writers
into print in *Direction* (1943-46) and
Contact (1952-54). With Louis Dudek and
Irving Layton, he founded Contact Press in
1952. In his basement, on a \$35 mimeo-
graph machine, he printed books, some
with a run of only 25 copies. Although this
was a true contribution to Canadian liter-
ature, as were the anthologies he later
edited, Souster's most lasting contribution
has been his own work.

In this tint of four volumes of the
Collected Poems the verse is arranged
chronologically: 1940 refers to the year in
which Souster received his first accep-
tances, although some poems were written
as early as 1938. The book spans *Unit of
Five* (1944) to *What Time Slays* (1955).
Although space limitations prohibited inclu-
sion of *Waking Death* (1955), which will
appear in the second volume. More than 50
poems never appeared before in book form
are included "to round out the collection."

The range of Souster's work is evident
here. Although his use of imagism is
apparent, his best, most delicate imagist
poems are omitted: they belong to the
1960s. And his longest, most ambitious
poems are not here, for they belong to the
1970s. Yet all the themes are present, the
love, the loneliness, nostalgia, delight, and
need for peace.

During the Second World War Souster
served with the RCAF in the Maritimes and
England. The war colours his work
throughout his career, and is a dominant
concern in his earlier verse. A pacifist at
heart, he was disturbed by the ravenous
slaughter. In "Death of the Dawn Patrol,"
set at Christmastime, he writes,

*When you were reaching for another drink
beside the comfortable fire.. the search
party found what they really hadn't ex-
pected -part of an arm. All the other pieces
were too small, too much like chewed-up
meat to look like pieces of boys.*

He records not only the dead but also, like
Wilfred Owen, the wounded. "Definition"

gives credit for war poems not to poets, but
to the bandaged young men: "Their voices
will be the poet in us speaking, and if we
should be great it is only because of them."

Souster's social conscience also extends
to the streets of Toronto. He notes the
different spheres in which men move, his
sympathies, like those of fellow Torontonian
Morley Callaghan, always resting
with the underdog. His portraits immortal-
ize the poor, suicides, drunks, whores,
newspaper hawkers, and even a waitress.
George Woodcock fittingly called him
"perhaps the most naturally populist of all
Canadian poets." Through his preoccu-
pation with Toronto's people and the streets
they walk, Souster shows his fascination
and disgust for "this graveyard city,"
which he cannot help but love. "Sleep
Toronto" is a lullaby of disappointment and
love:

*Sleep city sleep
push the last dead drunks into the cells of
oblivion,
chase the last chilled street-walker back to
her rooming house,
bed the last derelict in the overnight cot of
the mission;*

*then sleep from the putrid Don to the puny
Humber,
sleep from Hog's Hollow all the way to the
lake cold and dark,
sleep down in Cabbagetown, sleep up in
Forest Hill,
sleep soundly on the beds of gold, the bunks
of hunger.*

*Sleep city sleep
your Yonge Street narrow as the hearts that
own you.*

Reading Souster's poems is always a
pleasure. Most critics point to his realism:
he writes about real people, real problems.
Shunning obliqueness, he strives always for
greater clarity, finding an apt objective
correlative or ironic contrast in nature. An
essential of his technique is to "get the
poem outdoors." It seems remarkable that
poems set in Toronto could have so much
nature in them. Centre Island, birds, parks,
trees, spring, and the sun fill his work with
life. Inspire of his pessimism about war and
poverty, Souster celebrates this world, as he
states in "Not Wholly Lost":

*John warns me of nostalgia
and I suppose he's right,
but what the hell -*

*why are poems made but for celebration
of our time here on earth, the years behind
and ahead of us?*

His subjects are often such simple pleasures
as baseball, bowling, jazz, amusement
parks. In "Jazz Concert, Massey Hall" he
fantasizes that the loud "Manhattan mad-
ness" will damage the ceiling, yet he does
not want the exuberant music to end:

*So don't stop, horns, don't stop trombones,
bass keep thumping cleanly, piano tinkling,
and have another try at that roof.*

As always Souster writes about love and
young lovers. His better poems describe his
loneliness in seeing lovers entwined. But

those early poems clearly written by a young man suffering the pangs of temporary separation are less moving. These me, however, Souster's *Collected Poems*, and the many outstanding poems overshadow and excuse these.

Souster has gathered here and revised all the verse from 1940-55 he wishes to remain in print. In comparing literally dozens of poems with their versions in *Selected Poems* (1972) and *Rain Check* (1975). I found only one poem. "My Grandmother," that remains completely unchanged. Such a perfect poem begs to be quoted here:

*My grandmother on her bed
struggling for breath,
still sips at life
but would gulp down death.*

Souster seems to believe that few poems are ever finished. He changes the physical shapes of his poems, breaking up or joining stanzas, and shortening line lengths to suit speech. Sometimes he revises rides, lie pays attention to minutiae, changing punctuation to make poems more effective. He pares away, but he also embellishes where necessary, lie brings his language closer to impassioned speech, changing a word or altering the word order. One is reminded of Coleridge's famous dictum, "poetry = the best words in the best order." With Raymond Souster's zeal for constantly improving his work, I would not be surprised — though this purports to be a definitive edition — to see a second edition of the *Collected Poems*. His line craftsmanship makes me look forward to it, mc. □

Inside jokes, soporific vowels

Living on the Ground: Tom Wayman Country, by Tom Wayman, McClelland & Stewart, 119 pages. 58.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 8866 3).

The Sleeping Lady, by Rosenblatt, Exile Editions, 96 pages. \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 920428 10 Xi).

By DAVID MACFARLANE

AS I REMEMBER it, there is a Mavis Gallant story in which a young Italian girl, hired as a maid by an English family, looks down a street and out to the Mediterranean, and thinks to herself. "This is real." Such a moment, pinpointed with startling suddenness, is a risky sort of thing for an author to attempt. It is an instant of revelation that could so easily fall flat Gallant succeeds — as she usually does — because the story itself is so real and the characters are so detailed. We can believe in their revelations. Tom Wayman, on the other hand, stumbles on precisely the ground where Gallant moves with so much grace. The

comparison may not be entirely fair, but Wayman's poetry is considerably more prosaic than Gallant's prose.

In Wayman's latest collection there is a poem titled "Back" that can stand as an example of what is wrong with much of his work. After describing a baseball game in Fort Collins, Colorado — a town to which Wayman, the ever-present poet/protagonist of this collection, returns after more than five years absence — the poet concludes: "And I think: / one summer night / hen I am." If it is intended to be a moment of some significance: in one of those flashes of intuition or perception a man is seeing himself in context, in time. And yet, these last three lines don't make very much sense. The poem simply is not good enough to support the weight of its conclusion.

*It was Adamson who greeted us
with a note to us on his door saying where
they were
and an hour later we sat in the bleachers
of one of the baseball diamonds in City Park
watching Adamson and Lechner and some
others
play: Adamson on the mound in his Army
pants
and a T-shirt, his square chin
pointed at the catcher as he winds up
and throws: strike; ball; strike.*

Wayman has always had a casual approach to his poetry, and in the past it has proved refreshing and often amusing. He had a wonderful knack of taking neither his work nor his subjects too seriously — but seriously enough. However, in the present collection, a reader could be forgiven for complaining that Wayman's dedication to chummy informality is beginning to get in the way of what it is he is trying to say. Who, for instance, is Adamson? Who is Lechner? Why should we care? Do they have faces and voices, or only army pants and T-shirt? If this is a poem, why does Adamson greet us with a note to us?

All this might be neither here nor there were it not for the demands made by the poem's conclusion. If Wayman cannot communicate the essence of a one-and-two count, why should anyone bother trying to fathom the passing thoughts of his faceless characters? Certainly, the language itself is without much beauty. The narrative is like an inside joke. The reader is asked to bring a great deal of sympathy to very little effort. Even Saul's revelation on the mad to Damascus would mean precious little if the rest of the New Testament had been scribbled, without much care and without much art, between innings, on the back of a cigarette package.

Informality is not a characteristic of Joe Rosenblatt's newest collection of poems, *The Sleeping Lady*. This weave of sonnets — both complete and in fragments — has been written with obvious care. There is nothing casual about them. They are strange, to say the least. They are unpredictable, except in many of the rhymes, which are predictable enough to be heard coming two lines away. And they are luxuriously, sensuously erotic. They have



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their weaknesses, the most annoying of which is a penchant for seemingly intentional obscurity:

*Mystery, thank you for your neckties
I wear dangling to this country club
though it constricts at a supper show; sly
Nadine loops into my life for a slow rub*

But they also have their delights, and at his best Rosenblatt's soporific vowels flow over themselves like silk pulled across skin.

*More serpent than serpent in weaving
motion
she absorbs waves under flowing skin,
tiny complexes trapped in circuitous sin:
—feline stirrings in transformation—
shimmering dance, O she's Mystification
thru our lookingglass*

One is left wondering, nevertheless, what is at the heart of this puzzling and carefully constructed collection. It seems, in many respects, an exercise in writing verse. One has the sense that rhymes and metres — both of which, on occasion, are granted dictatorial powers — lead the poems to places they originally had no intention of going. The focus is soft, the furnishings ate intricate, and the subject redolent with sexuality, and yet there is not much centre to this collection. The poems are like elegant and carefully posed photographs — fascinating but never compelling. What they achieve in sophistication, they lose in their lack of spontaneity and life. □

"Ghostkeeper" and Beth Harvor's "Foreigners" is downright peculiar; his selection of Lawrence Garber's dire stow, "Visions Before Midnight," I find inexplicable.

The tones and themes of the collection often remain constant from story to story: a reflection of both our worried literature and its worried editor. Isolation, displacement, and family unrest ring down the nerves of Canadian shon fiction, darkening the work of Isabella Valancy Crawford and Duncan Campbell Scott as well as that of Dave Godfrey and Alice Munro. To judge by this anthology, we are a nation of outsiders, a people of little joy. The book's unity is more striking than its inevitable variety — and considering the virtual absence of politics, sex, Saskatchewan, industry, fantasy, Indians, crime, Newfoundland, celebration, and science fiction, the publisher's boast of "vast range" seems almost absurd.

Many readers will build up a personal short list of writers who should have been included and weren't: one of the hazards of editing such an anthology is that almost everyone wants to second-guess the editor. Besides the obvious omissions (Feron, Hébert, Metcalf, MacLeod, Joyce Marshall, Ethel Wilson), I wish that space had been found for Emily Carr, Loon Rooke, and W.P. Kinsella. Merely to play such a game suggests the treasures available to any anthologist. Although a dozen of Grady's stories were not published until the 1970s, no one under 38 gets a look in. I hope that by 1990 our writ&will have made this book into a period piece; there could be no happier evidence of the continuing wealth of words.

Stories of Quebec is a slighter collection, revealing in ways that its worthy editors may not fully realize. Working from the premise that the anglophone writers of the province "know and understand the Quebec experience as only an insider can," Oberon has issued a volume in which the Québécois play very little part. Only in the stories by Hugh Hood and Mavis Gallant do we find any insight into the aspirations and difficulties of the French-speaking majority. The dominant altitude is that of Norman Levine in "By the Richelieu": "The countryside is not exciting to look at. . . The farmers have small fields. They are all French Canadian. They grow wheat, corn, potatoes. Some have chickens and pigs." Ah yes, the Quebec experience.

Most of the stories, however, are well worth reading: I was especially taken with the work of lack Ludwig and Peter Behrens (whose first collection should be superb). But they're worth reading as imaginative literature, not as specimens of "Quebec fiction" or as contributions to cross-cultural understanding. The melancholy impression given off by several stories is of distance, silence, and fear, as in Clark Blaise's "Extractions and Contractions": "This is where my colleagues live; this is all they know of Montreal. . . None of them speaks a dozen words of French." Ghetto stories, blindness stories, indictments of a needless

The anthology editor as Cabinet-maker

by Mark Abley

The Penguin Book of Canadian Short Stories, edited by Wayne Grady. Penguin Books. 456 pages. 54.95 paper (ISBN 0 11005673 4).

Stories of Quebec, edited by Douglas Daymond and Leslie Monkman, Oberon Press, 184 pages. 515.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 338 1) and 56.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 340 3).

ANYONE COMING fresh to our fiction and buying Wayne Grady's *Penguin Book of Canadian Short Stories* could be forgiven for nourishing monstrous expectations. The cover of this, "the largest collection of Canadian short stories," promises "vast range," "rich diversity," and "something for every taste:" not to mention "the very best of Canadian writing." Does the book live up to such claims?

In a word, no. Yet it includes so much excellence, so much compassion and irony, so many masterly stories, that it deserves to sell like bread. Grady was, of course, faced with an impossible task: How could anyone compress the short fiction of Canada into a paperback? Twenty-five years ago the job might not have been too difficult, but since then the medium has been explored with such prolific grace that no single volume can hope to be comprehensive. As Grady notes in his terse, awkward preface, the short story is "Canada's healthiest and most versatile literary genre"; indeed, it could be argued that in the short story alone has English Canadian literature achieved international eminence. (He might have added that a vast debt of gratitude for the health and versatility is still owed to Robert Weaver and CBC-Radio.)

The art of making such a fat anthology

resembles the art of assembling a federal Cabinet, both activities demanding an acute sense of balance and sensitivity to the pressures of different regions, languages, ethnic groups, and convictions. Prime Minister Grady's earliest representative, Thomas Chandler Haliburton, was born in the 18th century, but the majority of his 28 titers ate alive and at work today. He has tried to offset famous and familiar stories with tales that will be new to most of us, and a few of his surprises are a delight: Jack Hodgins' "The Lepers' Squint" has not yet appeared in a Hodgins collection, and it stands among the finest pieces in the anthology. Malcolm Lowry's "Ghostkeeper" might also qualify as a novelty, as it remained in manuscript until *The American Review* printed it in 1973; unfortunately, "Ghostkeeper" is the longest and most turgid story in the book. It left me yearning for the cool, light touch of a Jacques Feron.

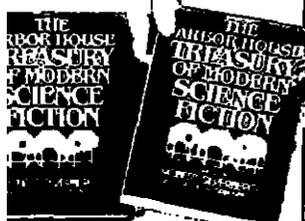
One could criticize minor faults at length (the ugly cover, the dismal proof-reading, the quirky introductions to each writer) but these matter little compared to the quality of the fiction. And many stories shine. It's especially interesting to read the newer writers in the light of a Canadian story-telling tradition, and to glimpse, for instance, how much Margaret Atwood's fiction owes to Mavis Gallant. Were it not for some grave lapses in Grady's taste, the *Penguin Book of Canadian Short Stories* would be cause for celebration. Still, it must be said that some of his selections look shabby and ill-at-ease in such distinguished company. His choice of work by Morley Callaghan, Roch Carrier, and Hugh Hood is highly questionable: his inclusion of Lowry's

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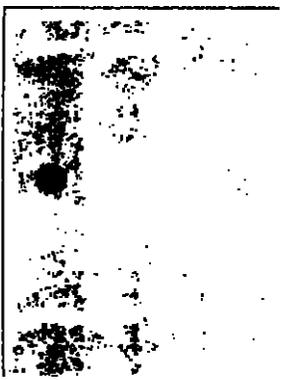


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failure: if "the Quebec experience" is one of non-communication, then the editors have chosen well. Or as Atwood observed in *Two-Headed Poems*, "Your language hangs around your neck, / a noose, a heavy necklace; / each word is empire, / each word is vampire and mother." The final irony is that *Stories of Quebec*, by excluding any translations (let alone any work in French!), sums up and defines its own distress: another brick in the wall. 0

Creative tic douloureux

Bellefleur, by Joyce Carol Oates, Clarke Irwin, 558 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 525 06302 1).

By DOUGLAS HILL

"BELLEFLEUR IS A region, state of the soul, and it does exist: and there, sacrosanct, its laws are utterly logical." Upon that premise Joyce Carol Oates has constructed a daring work of fiction, rich in its offerings, challenging in its demands, not wholly successful in either.

The novel rolls back and forth across six generations of the Bellefleur family, a flamboyant clan of New World French-American aristocrats ensconced in rugged splendour in a region of New York State similar to the Adirondacks. There Bellefleur Manor stands, on the shores of Lake Noir, and there occur the interlaced episodes that make up this self-consciously mythic saga. Two motions dominate the novel's structure: the progress of empire-building and destruction in the 1800s, and the heroic attempt to re-establish and rebuild that empire in this century. The rhythm of incidents is one of the book's most impressive features. What a character says of Bellefleur memories is true of Oates's story: "The living and the dead. Braided together. Woven together. An immense tapestry taking in centuries."

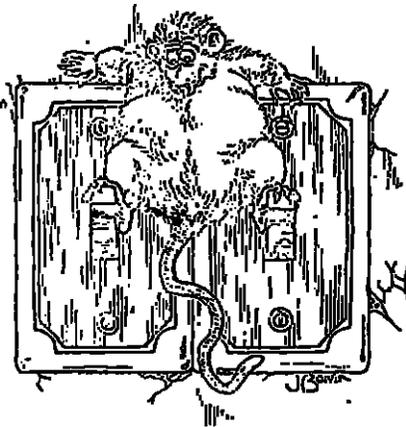
There is, as another character remarks, "a dizzying profusion of plots in this house — plots, calculations, aspirations, dreams — some of them, to my way of thinking, quite mad." There's also a profusion of Bellefleurs: entrepreneurs, schemers, a mass murderer, suicides, a vampire, a hermit, a scientific prodigy, a bad poet, a baby girl at the centre of it all. Some of these people and situations are brilliantly focused, with a hypnotic lushness of texture and detail. When Germaine Bellefleur, the baby, is on stage, or her mother Leah, who seeks to put the estate back together, or her father Gideon, or half a dozen more, the novel is almost overpowering. At other times, however, the strain attendant upon virtuosity shows. For me there were patches

— variously of description, incident, character — that seemed forced, over-elaborated, gratuitous. Oates is fond of such utterances as: "lie could not escape Bellefleur without escaping history itself; he might belong, then, to a world, but he could never belong to a nation." Sounds fine, but what does it mean?

What bothers me most are the excesses of Oates's style, especially her mock-Faulknerian extravagances. There's not a word to quote any of her paragraph- or page-long sentences, but I found them, after a while, to be an annoying mannerism. Oates seems nowhere to have edited herself tightly; there's a new sense that she's asked if all the adjectives and adverbs, the italics, the fleshy phrases, the slack lines, are really right — or just close to it. This is, by my count, Oates's 30th title. Obviously she has a talent for committing everything that passes through her mind to print, for swathing her slightest tic in a flood of prose, but sometimes the product suffers.

Still, when the whirling energy of her prose works, it can create some remarkable scenes. Her brand of mythic (and occasionally supernatural) realism is often brilliantly effective, and the myths she grasps for are important and poetic. She's chiefly concerned, I think, with attitudes towards belief: the innumerable possibilities for it in America, the ultimate insight that it is belief in belief that counts, and nothing else. Or call it passion, and call the last defence against ordinary life a passion for passion itself. This is fiery stuff, and when Oates catches the heat of her subject, her characters virtually glow with life.

Bellefleur has much of the grandeur of epic, some of the tedium of soap opera, and in fair measure the dubious rewards of both. It's at the least a lavish buffet of fictional riches: Oates's fluency of imagination and power of invention are new in question. She's able, with frequency, to perform that most magical feat—the creation of worlds and souls into which the reader can be drawn, and whose fictional integrity he can accept. If *Bellefleur* fails to realize all its ambitions, and I think it does so fail, through a lack of control or discretion, it's nonetheless marked — unevenly — by vitality, enthusiasm, and eloquence. □



From red domestic to Chateau-Gai

From *Russia With Luggage*, by Bella Bytensky, Annick Press, 176 pages. 36.95 paper (ISBN 9 920236 14 6).

By BARRY DICKIE

BELLA BYTENSKY emigrated from Russia in 1975. She had been a school teacher in Leningrad — a grandmother, a widow, and a Jew. Having endured the bureaucratic hell of becoming a non-Russian, she came to Canada via Rome with her son and his family. As of 1979 she was tenting her own apartment in a Toronto suburb and working in a nearby bakery. This book is her diary of those years.

And a diary it is: personal, honest, sometimes fascinating, sometimes boring. It is surprisingly well written. For someone who might not trust her English to haggle over a taxi fare, she can certainly write the language. Either that or she has a good editor.

When she is describing the everyday differences between Canada and Russia the book is a pleasure. I've always had a masochistic desire to live in Russia, and the author has only whetted my appetite. Her descriptions of Canadian life, though vivid enough, tend to be narrow and one-sided. She often gives the impression she will be deposed if she notices the dust on the table. Then again, it is a diary written by someone who is eternally grateful for being able to live here. If she wants to fill in love with Pierre Trudeau and stock her wine cellar with Chateau-Gai, that is her business.

She also has a tendency to be overly polite when she is talking about people she knows — family, friends, anyone whose name is mentioned. They are all wonderful people and the author is so eager to praise them she inadvertently chokes them to death. A character flaw can do wonders for the circulatory system.

But again, it is a diary and diaries are not supposed to be showpieces of literary skill. Bella Bytensky is perfectly correct in botching her characters: she is that sort of lady. When she has nothing good to say about a person she says exactly that — nothing. And this is the real story: the woman herself. So much of her personality comes through the writing that it's a question of whether the reader takes a liking to her.

Frankly, I found her hard to resist. She is a kind-hearted woman with an amazing tolerance for all of the world's stupidity and cruelty. She is intelligent, totally independent, naive in the best sense of the word, and something of an adventurer.

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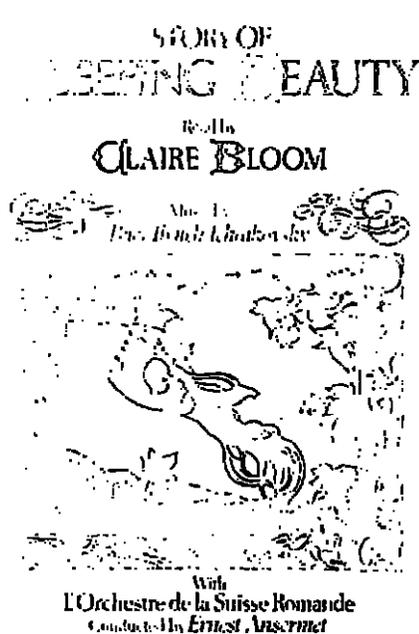
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getting fired from a job, struggling with a
dumb aptitude test, or reminiscing about
wartime Russia she is an engaging writer.
But when conditions become too comfort-
able, when she is surrounded by too many
nice people, the story loses its edge and the
heroine fades into the dull background.
Oliver Twist had the same problem when he
wandered too far from Fagin.

By book's end, the author has become
unrecognizable from any other successful,
middle-class Canadian citizen. She has her
own apartment and a decent job. Her son is
moving up in the company. She has been to
New York and seen Nijinsky dance. She is
all packed for her pilgrimage to Israel.
Congratulations are in order, and if anyone
deserves a vacation it is Bella Bytensky.

On the other hand, a nasty thought keeps
crossing my mind: what if this woman had
forsaken the soft life and devoted herself to
being a Toronto Street Lady-rubberboots
and a worn-out shopping bag, reading her
dog-eared Gorky to the bums in the park,
surviving off her wits and spreading her
compassion where it is needed most? Oh,
what a story!

But such is life. The lady did well for
herself and I can't say I didn't like the
book. □

The boobs on the other side of the tube

The Sound and the Fury: An Anec-
dotal History of Canadian Broadcasting,
by Warner Troyer, Personal Library (John
Wiley & Sons), illustrated, 224 pages,
\$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 47199872 9).

By DOUGLAS MARSHALL

WARNER TROYER's disarming introduction
makes it clear that he is not writing a
definitive history of Canadian broadcasting.
Rather, he says, "it is peripatetic, anecdotal
and, above all, subjective." Curious ad-
jectives, those, a trifle pretentious and more
than a trifle Fuzzy, and Troyer's choice of
them provides a telling clue to what follows.
What we have here are a couple of well-re-
searched magazine articles, the first on
radio and the second on television, padded
out with sonorous phrases and an abundance
of black-and-white photographs to give
them the outward form of a book—and a
E17 book at that. A competent index and a
half-decent bibliography complete the illu-
sion.

Troyer's general thesis rests on an appar-
ently immutable truth: public broadcasting,
which is to say the CBC, tends to be run by
short-sighted nincompoops, while the pri-
vate sector is largely controlled by oppor-
tunists who exploit the lowest common

denominator in audience tastes and have a long record for prevarication. Perhaps this truth can't be pointed out to an indifferent public too often. But it's so blindingly obvious to anyone who cares about the quality of radio and TV in this country, anyone who has been to Britain and has some dim notion of what sort of broadcast-in: system we might have built for ourselves had the gods been a little less mean. anyone in short who will likely read this book. that Troyer's sound and fury seem almost superfluous.

More sound than fury. actually. Where newscaster Peter Trueman quivered with anger in his recent book on TV journalism (*Smoke and Mirrors*, M&S), Troyer's predominant tone is elegiac - a lamentation for Canadian broadcasting's repeated failures to follow through on its own technical achievements or invest in its own creative talents. We began by ignoring Reginald Fessenden, the Canadian radio pioneer who was doing voice transmissions while Marconi was still fiddling around with Morse signals. Eighty years later we watch CBC-TV's *the fifth estate*, an honourable imitation of the CBS program *60 Minutes*, forgetting that *60 Minutes* itself was directly inspired by a brilliant program the CBC witlessly and spinelessly canned nearly 15 years ago — *Seven Days*. In Troyer's inimitable prose, "we've generally appeared chiefly as a procession of the bland leading the bland through out mindless acceptance of a catechism of misconceptions."

The extraordinary thing about that sentence is that the meaning somehow fights its way through. He is less lucky with a sentence that appears a few paragraphs later: "We've encouraged regional programming to die of attrition and disinterest, or worse, left it to add to the sum of encapsulated broadcast solitudes dividing our culture."

Fortunately the fog index drops considerably when Troyer abandons attempts at philosophical expression and sticks to straight historical reporting. His chronological narrative is peripatetic only in the sense that it keeps wandering away from his theme and back again. The promised anecdotes are there, but few are fresh and some have achieved the status of folk lore. And his account of the *Seven Days affair*, in which he was involved and about which there is still much to be told (presumably by Patrick Watson), reads like a censored report in an alumni bulletin. So much for "subjective" history.

Nowhere does Troyer demonstrate any real awareness of the fundamental problem in Canadian broadcasting: the CBC's persistent refusal to drop commercials (and the attitudes toward programming that commercials inculcate) from its television services and conduct itself as a responsible public broadcasting corporation. At a net cost of only some \$60 million a year (out of an annual budget of more than \$500 million) we could begin to create a BBC in this country despite the ludicrous policies of the

past. Moreover, if that ad revenue were diverted into private television, the owners might just become embarrassed enough to start keeping their promises and producing some substantial Canadian programming rather than growing ever fatter by the simple process of relaying U.S. signals.

Oh well. We have long been looking through this glass darkly and enlightenment can't-k expected to come at the push of a button. Troyer's book certainly won't harm the cause, even if it doesn't advance it by much. Meanwhile, for readers already familiar with his sad tale, there's a fascinating photograph of an all-purpose sound-effects door. circa 1931. One can almost hear opportunity knocking. However, the door opens onto a void. □

A tragedy of errors

Dieppe, 1941: *The Jubilee Disaster*, by Ronald Atkin, Gage, illustrated, 306 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 333 19187 0).

By GILBERT DROLET

IT WAS Senator Hiram Johnson who said in 1917 that the first casualty of war is truth. Certain historical events by their very nature defy complete definition. Because of its dimensions and barbarity, the Holocaust is the most obvious of these. Dieppe is another. With the benefit of perfect hindsight experts of all kinds have emerged since the Second World War to apportion blame and praise to goats and heroes. Among them is Ronald Atkin, whose *Dieppe, 1942: The Jubilee Disaster* is flawed, though not to the point of needless repetition of already-known and better-stated facts.

Tighter editing might have prevented Atkin's lapsing into irrelevancies, such as Churchill's unpopularity as a turn-of-the-century bather on the Dieppe beaches. On the other hand, more complete research would have given his work more depth and substance. In the last chapter there are some feeble attempts at assessing the blame, but nowhere does Atkin mention British archival material released in 1972 that showed Mountbatten stating on the day after the disastrous raid that it had gone off "very satisfactorily." The late Lord Louis insisted that planning had been excellent, air support flawless, and naval losses negligible. Nowhere in this shower of self-congratulation did he mention the terrible losses of Canadian lives.

Atkin's bibliography does not include the many books unavailable in English that detail the French Canadian role in Dieppe. Such material would have given more balance to his attempts to personalize the battle. This, in fact, is at once the strongest

and weakest point of his book. The personal interviews with survivors of the mid approach the truth more closely than any historian could hope to do, but Atkin could have been more thorough. An example of shallow research is his mentioning of several French Canadians who escaped their German captors. Lucien Dumais returned to France to help spirit Allied servicemen back to Britain, but reading of the regimental history of *Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal* shows that three others — Conrad Lafleur, Robert Vanier, and Guy Joly — also returned to France as agents. Atkin identifies them only, as escapees.

Though Atkin uses his sources effectively to sketch the background of the raid, and in the process is not always flattering to the "most exercised, untried army in the war," the eyewitness accounts save the book from mediocrity. It is clear that Dieppe was a tragedy of errors that compounded themselves in frightening proportions and incredible combinations from the moment on April 4, 1942, when Mountbatten wrote a note to Hughes-Hallett to say "It's on." What is saddest is that so many of the men were killed, wounded, or captured without ever having engaged the enemy. And as yet not enough has been written about the years of captivity. John Mellor tried to remedy that in *Forgotten Heroes* (Methuen, 1975), but in tragedies of such magnitude one wonders if enough can ever be said. □

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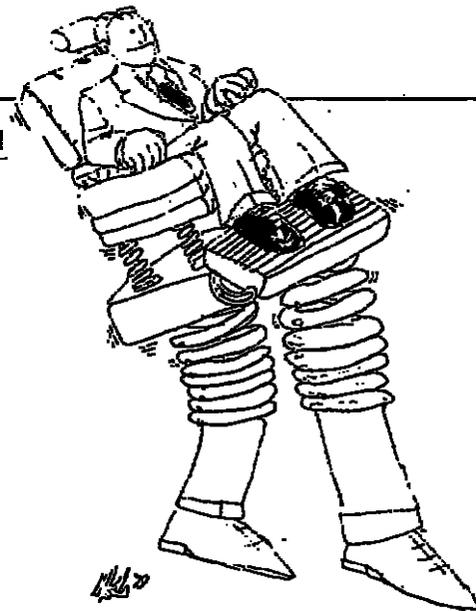
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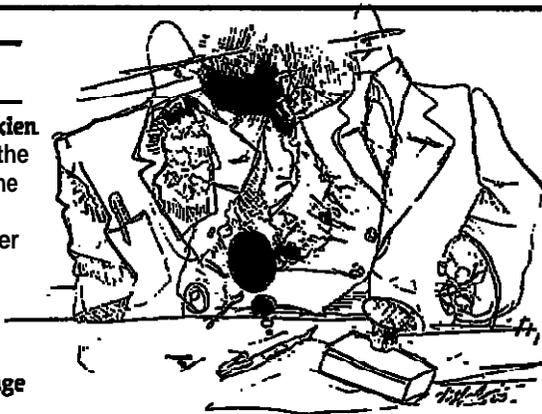
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FROM ZEE TO ZED

How Edgar Z. Friedenberg found there were more fundamental differences between the United States and Canada than the pronunciation of his middle initial

by Russell Hunt

Deference to Authority: The Case of Canada by Edger Z. Friedenberg, M.E. Sharpe, Inc. (Random House), 170 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 87332 167 71).

LIKE LESS PRIVILEGED refugees arriving in less favoured counties, Americans emigrating to Canada in the late 1960s and early 1970s were often far more vividly aware of what they were leaving behind than of what they were coming to. Visions of Canada as a sort of virginal America or an English-speaking Sweden or Switzerland were not uncommon, even among those who had lived along the border and listened to the CBC — and even taken vacations in the black-fly ridden wilderness of Northern Ontario.

I first met Edgar Friedenberg the day he arrived in Canada. He sported a haircut which left his head naked to an inch above his ears. (He had had it cut in Houlton, Maine, he said, as a panicky last-minute attempt to avoid hassles with border guards and immigration officials.) Crossing the border at Woodstock, he had driven to Fredericton to have a look at the alternative school we were building, where, over a cup of coffee, we talked about education and Canada and the United States. I was slightly awed at meeting the author of *Coming of Age in America*, a book I venerated, and I do not now remember the details of the conversation. But it is the only time in my life I have felt I knew more than Friedenberg about something having to do with society.

What I knew, back in 1970, was something about Canada: I had begun to see that Canadian officialdom, and Canadian society, are far different from American. His haircut, I thought, was a peculiarly American gesture in that it assumed an official eagerness for confrontation. But what we had found, in a year of operating an alternative school in New Brunswick, was almost the exact opposite: officialdom seemed eager to ignore our existence as far as possible. While "free schools" all over the U.S. were being harassed and persecuted by local boards of education, health departments, building safety branches, police, and fire marshals, we flourished in a blissful cocoon of official benign neglect. No hassle. (And no haircut.)

Just as I had two years earlier, Friedenberg had come to Canada unconsciously expecting pretty much what he had left behind. It did not take either of us long to discover that the differences between the two countries run deep and are nevertheless profound for being, often, only hairlines on the surface. In his exploration of those cracks over the next 10 years, Friedenberg has found, as I would have expected, unexpected depths of significance and pattern. *Deference to Authority: The Case of Canada* is the result of a decade of contemplating the differences, and it is a startling and illuminating and infuriating book, even for those of us who had a headstart on Friedenberg in understanding his subject.

In part, the book owes its effectiveness to Friedenberg's analytic technique. Derived, I imagine, from structuralist methods in

anthropology and French literary criticism, the technique involves standing back from an institution or situation that everyone takes for granted and looking at it as though one were a Martian. Not: "what does this institution say it's for?" Or even: "What do we all assume it's for?" But rather: "What does it really do?" This attitude permeates the book, and is perhaps most obvious in his chapter on *Canadian prisons*, entitled "The Punishment Industry." The chapter concludes on this ironic note:

Truly, crime contributes to the economy: it creates jobs, it even adds to the gross national product as this is customarily calculated. And all this rests on the backs of about 25,000 poor — mostly very poor — souls in Jail. Most of them are less than 30 years old and have never finished school; a disproportionate number are active people. In what other way could these few — these gallant if not happy few — impoverished in body and mind and often even in spirit, contribute so much to their country?

The tone of that raises an interesting question about the tone of the entire book. Any American in Canada (and, even more, any Canadian in America) will recognize the almost imperceptible chill that spreads through the room when he makes a disparaging remark about his host country. An unspoken, "Well, if you hate it so much here, why don't you go back where you came from?" hangs ominously in the air. Occasionally, it even gets spoken. "Of



Edgar Z. Friedenberg, a few months after arriving in Canada.

course, I despise my country from head to foot." Pushkin remarked in a letter, "but it makes me furious when a foreigner shares my feeling."

It seems clear that *Deference to Authority* will engender a good deal of that son of feeling. But whatever one's feelings, and whatever the ultimate judgement one may pass on the book's analysis, it is clearly a work with resonance, one that deals in a memorable way with a social phenomenon that's really there in the world around us. Within the first few days after reading the book, at least two things happened that, it seemed to me, could have been taken from Friedenberg's set of examples and which reading the book illuminated for me.

One was a group of New Brunswickers calling themselves the Health Defence League lying down in front of the provincial spruce budworm spray program's planes: another was the "loosening" — not lifting — of the Lieutenant-Governor's Warrant on which a citizen named Emmerson Bonnar has been held in various New Brunswick mental institutions for 16 years, because he is alleged to have been involved in a purse-snatching incident and was determined to be "unfit to stand trial."

Both incidents seemed to me, in a way they might not have before, quintessentially Canadian. The genteel and civilized comportment of both sides in the dispute over whether a dozen or so Grumman Avengers were to ascend into the New Brunswick sky with 62.5 gallons each of Fenitrothion solution to disperse to the four winds, for instance, was at least certainly not American. Nor was the calm assumption of almost everyone involved that Bonnar, having been "declared" unfit to stand trial 16 years ago, has no such thing as civil liberties. The incidents, and perhaps even more the lackadaisical attitude of the local newspaper and, as far as I could determine, the public et large, seem to me strong evidence that Friedenberg's basic argument — that Canadians defer to authority where Americans submit (with ill grace) to power — is not far off the mark.

There is an equally important reason why the book deserves to be taken seriously, if not solemnly: it is, in a peculiarly American way, a marvellously witty book. Friedenberg's style depends on the deadpan detonation of a sudden slang word or unexpected understatement or ironic juxtaposition in the midst of what seems a purely academic, discursive passage. Listening closely repays the effort.

But there is, or should be, nothing shocking about discovering that police have abused civil liberties and that their responsible superiors have helped them conceal their misdeeds. It is no more shocking than the discovery that the family dog has messed on the rug; it can't be permitted to continue, and you may have to smack the animal with a newspaper to teach it to quit, or get rid of it if it simply can't be mined. But the disclosure of the mess end of how it happened does not bring discredit on the household; indeed, this is the only way to get it cleaned up. Sweeping it under the rug and accepting it as evidence that the dog is zealous in defending the security of the home will, however, soon make the house uninhabitable. The householders may also help to forestall such domestic tragedies if they learn to detect, by its usually stiff and pompous gait, when the creature is really full of shit, and turn it out before it gets a chance to do further damage.

Admittedly, then, is not much new there in the way of political or social analysis of the workings of the Canadian system. But the reader who bewails that fact and does not laugh at the surprising precision and wit of that "stiff and pompous gait" will, I think, have missed the point and will almost certainly find the entire book not worth the effort involved in reading it. Those who do enjoy it will agree that, like the essays of Samuel Johnson (another writer I find myself reading passages from to friends) the value resides not in the novelty of what is being said but in the magisterially final way it is put. The trick is to find a new and striking way to phrase truths that people know so well they've forgotten them.

Authority is a powerful depressant and extremely addictive. Like other tranquilizers, authority is prescribed to solve problems that have been mistakenly diagnosed, and whose real roots it cannot touch and serves, in fact, to obscure.

Or, more domestically:

Canada's dependence on dominant American economic interests

leaves her in a position analogous to that of a wife in a marriage of convenience in a male-dominated society. The convenience is mutual, but unequal.

Friedenberg tends to use such analogies in reductive and debunking ways, comparing the highfalutin and abstract with the more domestic and contemptible, in order to promote certain kinds of attitudes. This creates a tone that, if it is not typically American, is un-Canadian, as in the comparison between the government and the dog who has messed on the rug. Or this:

Union activity in Canada takes on a peculiar tone. Protest is likely to be angrier and more shrill than in the United States, but also — and justifiably — less confident. Canadians, fighting their status superiors on occasions when this cannot be avoided, are likely to sound like defiant children who have every reason to believe that, whether they are right or wrong, they are going to get spanked for being uppity. This is not, generally speaking, the way American Teamsters, in any of their manifold operations, respond.

An equally characteristic & vice is to find hidden charges of meaning in common words or phrases. He refers, for instance, to "drug-crazed customs officials — crazed by ambition, not ingestion." In discussing the malleability of the BNA Act, he notes that the five-year maximum duration of Parliament "may be suspended with Parliament's own consent, in times of 'apprehended insurrection.'" No constitutional limits are set to the apprehensiveness of the Canadian government."

The offhanded, flippant (American, if you will) tone of this book, and the near arrogance with which generalizations are tossed off, will infuriate many readers, especially if they are experts on the prison system or constitutional law or the Canadian economy. I suspect Friedenberg will be pleased. In a way, it's too bad: had the book performed a serious analysis of the institutions Friedenberg discusses — as his *Coming of Age in America* did — the book might have been more effective in illuminating what is, after all, a pretty important issue, and might have been more useful to a country toward which his feelings are, at bottom, pretty warm.

Toward the end of the book he says this:

Despite the enormous potential for oppression the Canadian system affords, I have not been and do not feel oppressed here; and the years I have spent in this country have been the happiest I have known.

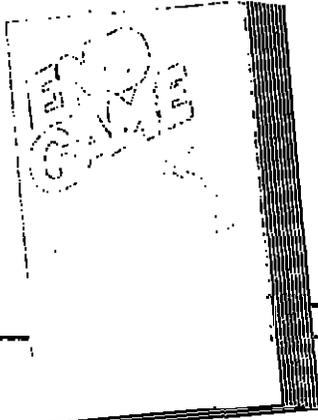
Like the 18th-century writers I am continually reminded of in reading him, Friedenberg will not let his theory seduce him into seeing what is not there. In theory, Canada should not be as free a society as America. In practice, however:

The ubiquitous Government of Canada does not merely restrict: it also establishes order, which is the fundamental precondition of freedom. You are not free to walk about the city if you have reason to fear being mugged or shot. You are not free to do anything much in your later years if you are continually dogged by threat of catastrophic illness. In these important respects Canadians enjoy far more freedom than Americans.

Deference to authority, then, is a two-sided coin. It is not a heroic ideal like the struggle for liberty; on the other bend it is preferable, as a way of holding a society together, to fear of power. Deference allows rather more dignity than fear; authority is rather more civilized than power. The school we were building the day I met Friedenberg was not persecuted because the Canadian authorities expected deference to their authority. And in fact they got it, even from the more confrontative Americans involved. On the other hand, in the U.S. officials didn't get any deference and were not often perceived as having authority. What they had, and were perceived to have, was power: and they exercised it. That distinction, which Friedenberg insists on, is fundamental to the contrast between the two policies on either side of what used to be called "the longest undefended border in the world."

In *Colombo's Canadian Quotations* Friedenberg is quoted as having written, in 1972: "Emigration does not greatly alter national character: if anything, it turns it to caricature. : Living in Canada for two years has already taught me how! American I am." After 10, perhaps he knows even better: certainly *Deference to Authority* is an American's view of Canada, and note Canadian's. Its author, however, does not appear to have become a caricature. □

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26 Books in Canada, October, 1980

Playing trump to the master's hand

by Paul Kennedy

The Idea File of **Harold Adams Innis**, edited by William Christian. University of Toronto Press, 287 pages, \$20.00 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 2350 9) and \$7.50 paper (ISBN 0 8020 6382 9).

HAROLD ADAMS INNIS had a mind of mythic proportions. In his day he was the single brightest light in all Canadian academia. Since that time, school buses full of scholars have undertaken analyses of his insights, and their findings have begun to overflow the shelves in college libraries. Some scholars even den to cell themselves disciples. They sing the master's praises as the greatest social scientist in our history, and fight over legitimacy as the heirs to his tradition. They even trip over one another's footnotes; gloatingly noting that the master had a tragic flaw.

Our brightest intellectual beacon, tbcy say, had the dullest academic style. Harold Innis couldn't write. His reading ton left much to be desired, or so say those who've tried to follow his citations. And his arithmetic often proved scandalously poor for an economist. Such weaknesses pose some problems for the myth-makers, though they give free rein to scholarly interpretation, and they allow diligent disciples to claim revealed knowledge of the flue Innis. Ultimately, everyone can et least agree that the master might have been another Newton — or perhaps a Canadian Copernicus — if only he had mastered the three Rs.

The three Cs of Innis scholarship — Creighton, Carey, and now Christian — must share most of the responsibility for the image of Innis as a bad writer. Donald Creighton first referred to the sense of "intellectual drunkenness" that one experienced when reading Innis. He meant the comment as a compliment, but the innuendo seemed to stick. And it never helped that Creighton himself expounded complex Innisian theories in his own profound and polished prose. Ten years later, from the ether side of a generation gap, Hugh Carey wrote about the "psychedelic delicatessen" in his master's work. He linked the teachings of Innis to the heresies of McLuhan, and he thus implied that both the medium and his message were not only illiterate but anti-literate. Now William Christian has clinched the cacographic case for all time. In collaboration with the scholarly press et Innis's own University of Toronto, Christ-

ian has executed an edition of *The Idea File of Harold Adams Innis*.

Execution seems an appropriate term. Innis kept these casual notes for personal reference, and there is little doubt that he never intended them for publication in this form. They were contained on 18 inches of white Ale cards, topically cross-referenced for easy access and instant use. Some time before he died in 1952, he arranged for these manuscript cards to be transcribed onto 339 typescript pages, and he used this more portable copy as a handy source for many of the ideas and concepts within his late lectures and articles.

But Christian has opted against simple publication of the idea file in the form that Innis used it. He claims in a preface that Innis himself would have approved this decision, and he cites as evidence a cryptic comment from the master that printed words should never be worshipped as graven images. Christian has further decided against presentation of the material in any topical arrangement that might approximate the cross-referenced index that Innis himself maintained. Once again, the ghost of the master is invoked to warn against the dangers of categorization.

Like Innis, we should all strive to understand the bias of print and try to overcome its limitations. So the material is presented here in Christian's idea of chronological order, which even he admits is "tentative at best. one among a mathematically very large number of random orderings." Although he is prepared to change the shape of the whole, he doesn't dare to tamper with any of the individual parts.

The result is a confusing hodge-podge of very uneven epigrams. Fully developed Innisian insights on politics, communication, and culture are scattered among ambiguous little fragments such as "Importance of Brebner report" and "Classes with flexible alphabet." Most of the good material will already be familiar to anyone who has read anything that Innis published during the final eight years of his life. But it is presented here in the convoluted point form that Innis used when writing for himself, and there is almost no interpretive guidance from the editor.

To be fair, Christian does make some concessions to those Philistine readers who might want to see the book as Innis left it, even though they can't get any help in

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understanding what he meant. He includes a confusing table comparing pagination here to pagination in the original, and he adds an even more confusing subject index with such all-inclusive topics as "Culture," "Law," and "Universities." But these are tossed in only grudgingly, in smaller print, and prefaced with the caution that "the inconvenience of using this index should serve as a warning to those tempted to do so."

In this context, it is interesting to note S. D. Clark's warning, more than 25 years

ago, that "there was clearly no way in which these notes could be prepared for publication." Clark was a personal friend of Innis. He might have used his friendship to become one of the big Cs in Innis scholarship. But he was apparently never willing to engage in full-scale promotion of the myth of the Innis mind. He believed that some of the unpublished Innis papers were brilliant, while the rest was merely fluff. And he was prepared to say so, rather than pretending that the master was illiterate. What, after all, are friends for? Or editors? □

Now you see him, now you don't

by J. L. Granatstein

The Northern Magus, by Richard Gwyn, McClelland & Stewart. 358 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0771037325).

"WHAT DO YOU call a great magician?" Richard Gwyn asks at the beginning of his study of Pierre Trudeau. The answer, from Robertson Davies' *World of Wonders*, is that he is "a man who can stand stark naked in the midst of a crowd and keep it gaping while he manipulates a few cards, or coins or billiard balls." That is a brilliant image, one that captures precisely what Trudeau — or any successful politician anywhere at any time — does so well. It's all manipulation and flummery, a skilled patter and a sleight of hand, and behind the illusion there is usually nothing very substantial.

Gwyn's book subjects Trudeau, our magician of the moment, and his record to a harsh scrutiny. It is clear from the first few pages that the Prime Minister is in for a drubbing, and a drubbing he gets. The record is poked and probed, prodded and pulled, and pronounced wanting in all but a few areas. Energy policy has been — and is still — a disaster. The October Crisis of 1970 is declared a government assault on the legitimate separatists (and convincingly, too), and Gwyn demonstrates, again quite effectively, that Trudeau knew what the RCMP were up to with their ditty tricks. The de-industrialization of the Canadian economy is also laid at Trudeau's door, and indeed the record in virtually every area is dismal. The exceptions are bilingualism and the defence of the federal principle, but even here Gwyn finds much to complain about. Bilingualism, he says, has had some success but the end result has been the creation of two unilingual parts, linked together only by a bilingual Ottawa. And federalism may have triumphed for now in Quebec, but Trudeau has simply failed to

comprehend the grievances of the West, and he has presided over the stripping away of federal powers to such an extent that Ottawa can no longer really steer the ship. Ten provincial helmsmen and a single federal one now wrestle for the wheel while the scow heads for the rocks. The indictment is damning, but it is soundly based, and it amounts to the toughest assault on the Trudeau record yet.

But this is a biography of the man we keep installing in power after rejecting or half-rejecting him. Here, too, Gwyn has done his homework, even unearthing for the first time a pair of early Trudeau fiancées (although he cops out and fails to name them) and some interesting material on Trudeau's relations with his parents. The dominant influence was his mother, a difficult woman clearly, and one whose effect on this curious and emotionally starved man was at least as pronounced on her other children. Trudeau comes across as a most unpleasant fellow indeed, for all his intellect, for all his rum-on, turn-off charm: he's the kind of man whose concentration on his work is so total that people disappear. That, includes his Cabinet, a group of nonentities for the most part, to be sure, but also men and women with feelings, with sick spouses and ill children. Not a word of comfort from the Prime Minister. And it includes his wife, of whom Gwyn paints a sympathetic picture. Margaret Trudeau may not be a mental giant and her consciousness may have been permanently altered by a succession of overdoses, but Trudeau married her, used her, and then ignored her. Is Gwyn's account the beginning of Maggie's rehabilitation?

And yet Trudeau is a good father to his children and he is loyal — most of the time — to his few close friends. Gerard Pelletier clearly stands as *primus inter pares* among

the cronies. equally loyal to the Rime Minister. while Jean Marchand, according to Gwyn, now feels shabbily treated and is becoming increasingly critical. Probably that means that Marchand will be tossed onto the ash-heap by Trudeau, who demands a loyalty he seldom reciprocates. The certainty is that if he wronged Marchand (or if he misled the people on an issue, as he did on price controls, for example) he will never apologise. That is not Trudeau's style. He is. Gwyn says, a man with monstrous *amour propre*, although we all should know that by now.

This book is a success. much harder in analysis than George Radwanski's *Trudeau* (Macmillan, 1978), which now seems almost a puff piece. But it is not the book it could have been. The prose is dreadful, the grammar wobbly, and Gwyn tends to repeat arguments and phrases in a way that suggests he has listened to political speeches for too long. Where he succeeds is in analysis and in a fertile imagination. Who else has compared Trudeau to Lord Curzon, that imperial pm-consul of nearly a century ago? And who else, having hit on that comparison, could forbear from employing in its support the old rhyme: "My name is George Nathaniel Curzon, I am a most superior person"? Not I certainly! □

How Hollywood treated Canada to 'The Sting'

Self Portrait: Essays on the Canadian and Quebec Cinemas, edited by Piers Handling, Canadian Film Institute, 257 pages, \$8.50 paper (ISBN 0 91909620 4).

By **MICHAEL DRACHE**

CANADIANS HAVE a habit of denigrating their culture. Unless cultural expression emanates from Britain (in the past) or the United States (in the present), it's ignored or regarded as inferior. Nowhere has this rule been applied more viciously than in our film industry. It has even been suggested that we have an invisible cinema, with as many as 31 per cent of all urban Canadians claiming never to have seen a Canadian feature film. Moreover, the problems we now face are the legacy of past mistakes. The first Canadian feature, *Evangeline*, was shot in 1913, yet we are no closer today to establishing an independent feature film industry that can compete in national and international markets.

As this collection of essays shows, one ever-present feature in the history of Canadian film is the overwhelming American presence. The American film lobby controls the largest theatre chains and dominates first-run films. It has turned Canada into its largest foreign market, and it has prevented

the establishment of a rival Canadian cinema.

Compliant Liberal governments in Ottawa have approved the most ludicrous schemes that Hollywood dared propose. In Kirwan Cox's essay, "Hollywood's Empire in Canada," we learn of the Canadian Co-operation Project, which began in 1948. In return for taking \$17 million in film rentals out of Canada, the Motion Picture Association of America suggested the following:

- A film on Canada's trade dollar problem;
- More complete newsreel coverage;
- Short films about Canada made in Hollywood;
- Release NFB films in the United States;
- Place Canadian sequences in Hollywood features;
- Make radio recordings by Hollywood stars extolling Canada;
- Make a more careful selection of films shown in Canada;
- Supply a staff man in Hollywood to coordinate the project with Ottawa.

The experiment lasted 10 years, and as Cox aptly states:

The project seemed to result in some shorts on Canada as a tourist playground, some Hollywood stars doing commercials for radio on Canada and some reference in Hollywood movies to this bird or that aunt coming from Canada. That is what Howe got for \$17 million per year plus. Finally in 1958 the Project was quietly terminated.

By 1974, American film rentals were taking over \$50 million out of the country with no end in sight. Canadian features remained marginal but in other important areas much has been accomplished. In animation and documentary film, Canada has attained international recognition. The essays on animation by Louise Beudet and the National Film Board by Piers Handling are excellent. The articles by Michel Euvrard and Pierre Veronneau convincingly illustrate the talent and promise of film-making from Quebec. At the end of the collection, there is an invaluable chronology of films from Canada and Quebec as well as a compilation of film-makers and films produced in Canada. □

Colour Canada bubble-gum pink

The *Imaginary Canadian*, by Tony Wilden, Pulp Press, 261 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 88978 090 0).

By **PAUL KENNEDY**

ARTISTS AND INTELLECTUALS in this country have made a national pastime of attempting to define the elusive Canadian identity. As a result, we have probably been subject to more speculation about the nature of our

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collective navel then any other country on earth, end in the process we have been, treated to some rather interesting observations on our national character. From the detached towers of the University of Toronto, Northrop Frye indicates that the real question is no, "Who are We?" but "Where is Here?" Any atlas puts us in the northern half of North America and paints us British pink, which has prompted many critics (and note few tourists from Buffalo) to call us Yanks in British clothing, or Brits with American accents.

Now we have a book that promises some son of solution to the dilemma of our national identity. Tony Wilden was born in London and grew up in England. He came to Canada to avoid the British draft, and took up Canadian citizenship in 1959. Now he teaches on the West Coast, in Simon Fraser University's Department of Communications. He has become leading English-language commentator on the convoluted writings of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. But his book ultimately tells us more about the idiosyncrasies of the author than it does about his adopted country.

Wilden starts out by suggesting that the very question of our national identity is a

figment of our imagination. He apparently spends much of his spare time sitting on Burnaby Mountain looking down upon the surface of our popular culture. His random explorations have taken him through Canadian newspapers and magazines to national radio, television, and film. Evidence is drawn from such diverse sources as Gallup Polls and gas station attendants, and Wilden quotes everyone from Lord Durham and William Lyon Mackenzie to Faye Dunaway and *Maclean's* magazine. The result is a map of an imaginary country called Canada, where everything is peaceful, quiet, and free: where RCMP officers act like Sherlock Holmes in a red tunic; where the Rocky Mountains are only a brief train ride from Niagara Falls; and where the major public complaint focuses on the weather. Wilden's explicit response to this imaginary country is to call it what it is: a colonial mentality. He goes on to label it as "collective insanity" and "national derangement," and he eventually diagnoses imaginary Canadians as "a country of amnesia victims."

Given Wilden's impressive background in psychoanalysis, this seems a logical direction for his book to take, and it allows him to score some interesting and valid

A reviewer's glossary

MONUMENTAL: Long and dull.

ADMIRABLE: Long and wrong.

CHARITABLE ACCOUNT: Biased the wrong way.

FLAT PRONOUNCEMENTS: I wish I could show he was wrong, be, alas he's probably right.

PASSIONATE: Biased in the right way but poorly argued and poorly documented.

INSTRUCTIVE: Boring with lots of statistics.

STIMULATING: (1) Probably wrong; (2) wrong.

LUCID: Short sentences.

TORTURED: Long sentences with too many pronouns.

ACCESSIBLE: (1) She., sentences, no pronouns, and I could work out the symbolism; (2) egghead trying to make a fast buck.

LYRICAL: Alliteration and nature metaphors.

MAGNIFICENT: Has colour pictures.

WISE: Generalizations about large themes without backing them up with evidence.

INSIGHTFUL: Generalization about small matters without backing them up with evidence.

ACUITY: No generalizations, be, lots of trivia.

LEARNED: Know-it-all.

ERUDITE: (1) Quotes in a foreign language and does not provide translations; (2) refers to any ancient Greek except Plato or Aristotle, or refers to any medieval text.

REALISTIC: Pessimistic.

SENSIBLE: (1) Admits he finds the same authors confusing as I do; (2) I agree with his platitudes.

SOBER: All-out, fanatic attack without benefit of exclamation points.

STRINGENT ATTACK: All-out fanatic attack with exclamation points, and I did.

IMITATABLE: Easily imitated (e.g. Hemingway).

DISTINCTIVE: Mannered, unfathomable, vaguely repellent, and easily imitated.

DEFT TONE: Not much happens.

TOUR DE FORCE: Hodge-podge of styles, mainly or entirely imitative.

WITTY: The book includes both puns and footnotes.

OUTRAGEOUS: Bad-taste humour without footnotes.

QUIET HUMOUR: No jokes.

EPIGRAMMATIC: Disjointed.

ENGAGING: First-person humble.

EVOCATIVE: Too many metaphors.

HIGHLY-STYLED: Too many metaphors and bad grammar.

EXTRAVAGANT: Undisciplined.

LUSH: Run-on sentences, metaphors, alliteration, and I didn't understand the symbolism.

IMPORTANT: Controversial and real experts may soon find it worthless.

REMARKABLE: Unusual, but I can't tell if it's good or bad.

HIGH-POWERED: Sex and violence.

A BIT CONFUSING: I can't believe the author as respected as this is writing this badly!

IMPRESSIVE: Tiny print and a blurb from someone at Oxford.

HIGHLY READABLE: I wasn't supposed to like this trashy book that much.

CAPTIVATING: Anecdotes about quirky little people we're supposed to admire.

CONTEMPORARY MASTER: Attacked in print by John Gardner.

MAJOR LITERARY EVENT: A book from Contemporary Master who hasn't published in at least five years.

SATISFYING: Happy Ending.

BEST SELLER: I could have written this book. □

— DAVID WEINBERGER

points along the way. But his conclusions unfortunately remain as banal as one might fear from someone whose bibliography includes six separate series of early 20th-century bubble-gum cards without once even mentioning Margaret Atwood or Northrop Frye.

The Imaginary Canadian gives way to pure academic delusion when its author abandons mass psychology for Marxist politics. There's an interesting chapter called "The First Canadian Civil War," in which Wilden talks almost as though he single-handedly discovered the rebellions of 1837. Bristling with pride in this discovery, he attacks Canadian historians in general for ruthlessly distorting their national past. He goes on to predict that an awareness of our left-wing tradition of resistance will provide the foundation for the national, anti-imperial revolution that is to come. For all its good intentions, the book suddenly begins to sound somewhat euphoric. And the closing chapter — a practical program for revolt with vague allusions to American blacks and Vietnamese communists — sounds positively ill-informed.

If Wilden had read more of his Canadian predecessors and fewer bubble-gum cards, he might have provided more innovative ideas about the left in Canadian history. And if he had read any of his contemporary comrades, he might not project the attitude of a voice in the wilderness. As it stands, *The Imaginary Canadian* is an interesting and insightful book. But it is neither so revolutionary nor so unique as its author would have us believe. □

Woman for all seasons

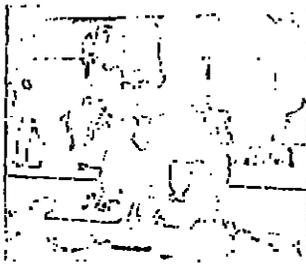
Supervoman in Action, by Shirley Conran, Penguin Books. 326 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 14 005487 1).

By JANE W. HILL

FIRST *Supervoman*, now *Supervoman in Action*. Shirley Conran is on to a good thing and knows it. For those of us in need of all-around makeovers, these books promise results. The first dealt with running a home successfully while the sequel tells us how to "make the most of what you've got. start your own business. renovate your home. decide on a new career, travel cheaply, juggle home and job. enjoy your family mot?. do what you want to do." What else is there, except perhaps how to lose 20 pounds and keep them lost?

But Shirley Conran is a cheerful, enthusiastic guide to all these self-improvements. Her own experience includes journalism,

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particularly as a writer and editor in the woman's field, textile design, and handling the publicity for the Women in Media campaign in Britain for legislation against sex discrimination. Somehow she has also managed to bring up two sons. Although she certainly seems the quintessential superwoman in action herself, the second volume is not as impressive as the first. Much of the material is familiar; we've been reading for years about how to get out of the house, how to avoid letting our children control our lives, how to save money, and so forth.

Shirley Conran's breezy and sensible style is attractive, and it is no doubt good to have all this advice and information available in one place. She discusses where to take courses to help one toward self-assessment and planning the future, how to use the political process to get day-care centres, how to use the Canada Manpower Training Program to learn a new skill and get (back) into the work force, how to set up one's own business or work from home. She is especially thorough and practical on the personal qualities necessary for success in running a small business, the best way to set up an office and filing system, how to deal with bankers, lawyers, and city hall. A study of this section of the book could well provide a woman with the stimulus to act on an idea that has until now stayed in the back of her mind.

The second section tells us how to renovate a house, how to work with architects, contractors, and labourers, how to "do it yourself" — be it insulating the attic, hanging wallpaper, or replacing a broken windowpane. Again, Conran seems to know how to do everything, although I can't quite believe that she really takes the time to do all those things herself rather than call in a professional.

The final part of the book is called "Superwoman Takes Off" and is concerned with family outings, cutting costs of holidays, the bow-tos of travel by bus, nil, and plane, and useful addresses and phone numbers. Information on camping and the national and provincial parks is mostly gleaned from government publications; it is worth having but chiefly as a compilation of material readily available for free elsewhere. In fact, one of the main features of the book is the listing of private and public agencies from British Columbia to Newfoundland that provide help and information to Canadians. Some of the more detailed sections, such as those on potential careers for women and descriptions of historic rites, are just reprinted from other sources. No doubt Toronto's Ruth Fremes, who helped Conran prepare the Canadian edition of this book, is chiefly responsible for these parts.

This second volume, although useful as a reference work, does not strike me as being as successful as the first; it's a bit of a cut-and-paste job. But you never know. Maybe the next volume will be *Superwoman in Ottawa*, care of 24 Sussex Drive. □

32 Books in Canada, October, 1980

on/off/set

by Wavne Gradv

Reflections on Fiddlehead at 35 and Fred Cogswell's effervescent necktie

LAYING THE GHOSTS of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman has been a long and arduous poetical task in New Brunswick. As Robett Gibbs and Robett Cockburn observed in their introduction to *Ninety Seasons: Modern Poems from the Maritimes* (McClelland & Stewart, 1974), "nearly all of the poets who came after Roberts and Carman (and who lacked their gifts) were themselves innocent, or unpersuaded of the merits, of the striking developments in poetry since the death of Edward VII," and it wasn't until after the Second World War that Eliot, Williams, Pound, and Auden began to replace Swinburne and Tennyson as models. The editors went on to rejoice that now the spirit of modernity has "moved in to stay" in the Maritimes, though it is still filtered through that region's unique loam. The main features of modern Maritimes poetry, they suggested, are (a) a cautious conservatism, slow to experiment in new forms and ideas; (b) an embracing of the past as a "source of myth, imagery, and perspective"; (c) a love of Nature raw in tooth and claw, though "peopled with ghosts or with the living"; and (d) a darkly rhythmical brooding about the sea.

How these four features divide modern Maritimes poetry from that of the Confeder-

Ninety Seasons is a very fine selection nevertheless, and an excellent tribute to most of the poets now working in the Maritime provinces. It is interesting to note as well the number of poets in the anthology who have had some editorial connection with *The Fiddlehead*: Gibbs and Cockburn themselves, A.G. Bailey, Elizabeth Brewster, William Bauer, Fred Cogswell, M. Travis Lane, Alden Nowlan, Peter Thomas, and Kent Thompson.

I was reminded of this by the recent arrival of *The Fiddlehead's* 35th anniversary issue, entitled *Reflections on a Hill Behind a Town* (*The Fiddlehead*, No. 125, \$2.50). The town is Fredericton, "the hill" is the local one assumes affectionate — term for the University of New Brunswick, which houses *The Fiddlehead*, and the reflections are those found in a poem by A.G. Bailey, one of the magazine's founding editors:

*At the college on the summit we bore
what learning we had
with not too heavy a heart and hand,
we knew many things
that had been known aforesimes,
What they had done who came here
at war's end
to make a gentle converse in the
timbered wastes...*

The Fiddlehead is not only Canada's oldest surviving literary magazine (having grown out of UNB's Bliss Carman Society, of which Bailey and Brewster were members, in 1945), it has also been a consistently mature and stabilizing voice during the often painful transference of our cultural allegiances from England to North America.

The present editors have dared to do what the editors of every other literary magazine have only dreamed of doing: they have put out an issue consisting entirely of poems by themselves. This time Robett Gibbs is the sole editor, and to the names cited above from *Ninety Seasons* have been added six other assorted poetry and fiction editors, past and present, to provide a virtual history of the magazine and of New Brunswick poetry since the war (excepting only those unfortunate enough to have died or been banished to Mount Allison or, like John Thompson, both). This has not made the new anthology merely regional or self-congratulatory, for these poets are among the best in the country, even if it seems at times that the *Preview* poets of Montreal — A.J.M. Smith, P.R. Scott, A.M. Klein — had been encased in a protective bubble at a



Fred Cogswell

action poets is not anywhere explained in the introduction, and the degree to which the modern spirit has invaded the region may be judged by this recent statement from Kent Thompson: "I don't like modern poetry because most modern poetry is written in free verse—which is very easy to fake, and very hard to do well." All too true. But

time when "modern poetry" meant Eliot and Williams and maybe Wallace Stevens and Theodore Roethke with a — of e.e. cummings), so that the dubious boon of Black Mountaineers is conspicuous here by its absence.

Along with Kent Thompson's blunt disavowal of free verse (followed, it most be said, by 11 quite good poems written unashamedly in that model, there is Alden Nowlan's reminiscence of his first encounter with Fred Cogswell:

The day Fred Cogswell and I introduced ourselves to one another he wore a belt six or eight inches too long for him. Instead of being tucked into a loop, the end of it swung free like a bull's pizzle. His necktie — I kiss the Book — bore a picture of a bubble dancer. Beneath this particular bubble dancer's picture, there was imprinted her name: Bubbles.

This seems as good a spring-board as any to a consideration of A Long Apprenticeship: Collected Poems by Fred Cogswell (Fiddlehead poetry Books, 225 pages, \$11.50 paper). Cogswell was editor of The Fiddlehead from 1952 to 1967, and is now stepping down as publisher of Fiddlehead Books, an off-shoot he established in 1967. A Long Apprenticeship is therefore a tribute to the past and, as the title suggests, a modest toast to the future: the poems have been culled from Cogswell's 11 out-of-print books— from The Stunted Strong (1954) to

Against Perspective (1977) — not including his translations from the French Canadian, for which the cover blurb says he is "perhaps best known."

What makes Cogswell such a fine poet is precisely that yoking together of inconsistencies that Alden Nowlan captures — the meticulously minded scholar in the bubble-dancer tie. In his poetry Cogswell combines tight control with vast range, the deliberately chosen word in a poem that seems thrown together by chance. This is true of such early sonnets as this one about the Kirkmichael family, which contains the quatrain:

*They farmed for years together till young Dan
Jumped in the deep pool that he used to fish in;
Pat cut his throat next in the farmhouse
kitchen,
And Lee went to the Asylum in a van.*

as well as of the later, more philosophical love poems, such as "Soliloquy," which begins:

*when you are here, my mind assembles
refracted light the eyes receive
from whatsoever place wherein
you stand or sit or lie or kneel
and closer and more delicate
nerve-fingers weave the subtle shape
of texture and of temperature
and the electric thrill of touch.*

There is a sense here of Eliot's revival of interest in the Metaphysical poets, and of

Wordsworth's emotion recollected in tranquillity — and in his prose statement from Reflections ("I am convinced that analytical tools cannot cope with the mystery of synthesis beyond the most rudimentary examination of anything. . .") we catch a modern echo of Keats's negative capability. (Speaking of which, we further catch a reference to Keats in A.G. Bailey's poem quoted earlier: his soldiers returning to Fredericton "to make a gentle converse in the timbered wastes" are very much following Keats's desire that "Man should not dispute or assert but whisper results to his neighbour, and thus by every germ of Spirit sucking Sap from mould ethereal every human might become great, and Humanity would become a grand democracy of Forest Trees.") Cogswell is a lyrical poet, and his best poems always take the form of a dialogue or an argument with himself — sonnet, soliloquy — in which the world is constantly held and turned in the hand, its apparent opposites reconciled: synthesis. His results are as rich and varied as the world itself, from the dark humour of "My dreams I enjoyed/Until I met Freud" to this simple statement of his own very complex creed:

*to illuminate
without distortion
the empty spaces
between and around
what is normally seen*

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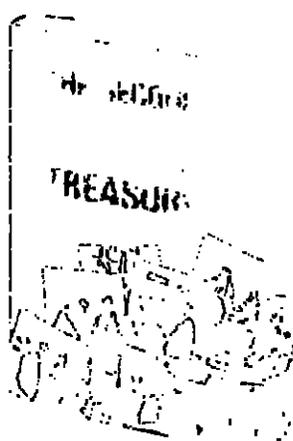
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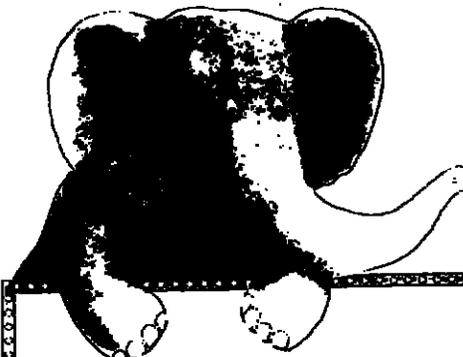
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From muddled oafs to doting dads, by way of naughty enigmas and impure trivia

YOU DON'T HAVE to be a Toronto Argonaut fan to know that Football — especially Canadian football — is intrinsically silly. So it's not surprising that, in *The Joy of Football* (Hurtig, illustrated, 160 pages, \$9.95 cloth), Eric Nicol builds a lot of his satire on two of the obvious inconsistencies of the game. One is the difference between Canadian and America's ways of doing it (a distinction some people seem to make about everything). The other is the suicidal necessity for the players to charge head-long into their opponents — an absurdity, considering the consequences, that gives Nicol some of his best lines ("Besides the moral implications, blocking from the rear can cause whiplash and jar the adrenal glands into giving buttermilk"). Meanwhile, his illustrator, Dave More, works the sidelines for their most obvious diversion: the scantily-costumed cheerleaders' juicy assets.

A" equally ludicrous, dangerous pastime — parenthood — gets cutesier treatment from Marvin Ross in *Daddy Dearest: A Guide For First-time Fathers* (Virgo Press, illustrated, 77 pages, \$5.95 paper). Actually, there probably is a market for

such a book — a counterpart to Doubleday's winy, practical *Mother's Almanac* — but this one contains less useful information than the helpful pamphlet handed out by a paternalistic baby-products company when my first child was born. *Daddy Dearest* isn't much more than an elongated, mildly amusing, overpriced magazine article. Ross's sagest piece of advice is what to expect from the first-time grandparents: once Grandma and Grandpa set eyes on your darling offspring, you pretty well cease to exist. How true.

The Enigma Page is a weekly feature in the *Toronto Star* that somewhat resembles Books in Canada's CanWit and similar contests in some British publications. But unlike, for example, the *New Statesman's* Weekend Competitions — which encourage the contestants' raunchiest compositions — Enigma's creator, Stan Fisher, is regularly censored by the community guardians who command the helm at the Star. As a result, the best parts of Fisher's collected columns, *The Best of the Enigma Page* (Bestsellers, Inc., 127 pages, \$3.95 paper), are the entries his readers never got to see. Among others, this Tom Swifty:

"'She really gets me excited,' he said pointedly."

Somehow *Trivia: Inconsequential but Irresistible Facts About Canada*, edited by Paul Russell ("d Robert Jeffrey (Gage, illustrated, 278 pages, 5495 paper) does"?) quite live up to the promise of its title. For one thing, the trivialities in this Colombo-style book of lists aren't always obscure enough to satisfy real trivia buffs. The section on CanLit, for instance, tell us which Canadian author once decked Ernest Hemingway in a boxing match, which Canadian poet works in a Toronto bank, and when the real Manawaka is. But we all knew that before, didn't we? On the other hand, I did learn that the Ski-Doo, that pernicious Canadian invention, was originally dubbed the Ski-Dog. Apparently the name just didn't catch on.

After so much coyness, it's refreshing to discover a book with the unpretentious title, *A Lot of Nonsense: Jokes and Humorous Stories* by D. B. Wright (Lancelot Press, 50 pages, \$2.00 paper). Wright, 82, combines personal reminiscences with jokes so old that they trade in such contemporary taboos as a "100-year-old coloured lady" and a fishmonger named "Ikey." Also from Lancelot Press: *Sagas of the Land and Sea* (illustrated, 100 pages, \$2.95 paper). Maritime legends and history re-told in rather redundant style by Roland H. Sherwood, a self-styled "master story-teller": and *Catch As Catch Can* (115 pages, \$3.95 paper), a collection of self-disparaging fishing stories by Do" Flick, of which the most interesting are his adventures as a" adolescent in small-town Non Scotia.

Adolescent adventures are also the subject of Howard Dundas's *Wrinkled Arrows: Good Old Days in Winnipeg* (Queenston House, illustrated, 111 pages, \$14.95 cloth and \$6.50 paper). These interrelated, autobiographical stories usually involve the narrator's youthful observations of adults during the early 1900s, on topics ranging from remittance me" to prohibition. The characters include his Father, a man who "worshipped the horse, adored his wife, loved Canada, admired the CPR, and was very fond of Scotch whiskey," and a" eccentric grandfather who periodically heats marauding India" hoofbeats in the clanking of heating pipes at night. Dundas writes in a discursive, folksy, conversational style that sometimes overly intrudes.

Winnipeg, which grew to have the third largest Jewish population in Canada (after Montreal and Toronto), figures prominently in *Journey Into Our Heritage: The Story of the Jewish People in the Canadian West* by Harry Gulki" (Lester & Orpen Dennys, illustrated, 264 pages, \$24.95 cloth). Gutkin's large-format history traces Jewish immigration from the 19th-century pogroms to the Holocaust, with plenty of personal testimony both in photographs and — From more recent refugees — first-person accounts of conditions in Europe and Canada. The best-known

men and their libraries: 8

by Foo



contributor of these is the theatre director John Hirsch, who came to Canada as "a rather anemic Jewish orphan from Hungary" after his family were murdered in Auschwitz.

Inalienable Rice: A Chinese and Japanese Canadian Anthology (illustrated, 53 pages, paper), prepared by the Powell Street Revue and Chinese Canadian Writers Workshop in Vancouver, is a less elaborate cultural document that combines interviews, articles, photographs, and poetry predominantly by third- and fourth-

generation Asian Canadians. Many of the Japanese Canadians are from families who lost their property and were interned by the government during the Second World War. Not surprisingly, they are among the loudest critics of more recent misuse of the War Measures Act — when the Criminal Code would have provided adequate legal authority — during the October Crisis 10 years ago. An essay by Art Shimizu argues persuasively for the abolition of the act as partial retribution, however late, to the persecuted Japanese. □

first impressions

by Douglas Hill

Where the fast action is: New York now, Saigon then, and Montreal in the 1930s

WITH *Suspicious* (Academic Press, 410 pages, \$14.50 cloth). Barbara Betcherman apprentices herself to that remarkable North American growth industry, commercial Action. And she doesn't do badly. This adventure novel moves well, and the main character — Sylvia West, a tall, tough, talented, scared New York lawyer whose husband has gone missing — is convincing.

Betcherman's style and settings are routine, but there's a nice sardonic edge to her presentation of Sylvia. It's the usual story of the innocent bystander caught up in an increasingly dangerous conspiracy. Sylvia is energetic and competent, but she's often self-deprecating, occasionally foolish, and seldom too cool or glib. The book's success will be measured by the reader's response to the heroine, and I'd expect it to be positive.

The plot is pretty intricate, having to do with the husband's shadowy past and present connection to a world-wide underground political conspiracy. Betcherman keeps it all clear, without strained explanations, but it's still a lot to swallow. Coincidences end improbabilities, hairbreadth escapes and rescues abound. It's the sort of book you can't put down because you'll lose your place. *Suspicious* is far from dazzling, and a bit too long, but it's a solid, serviceable thriller.

THE VIETNAM WAR has inspired a couple of dozen works of serious fiction and personal narrative in the past 10 years, and a handful of controversial movies. Martyn Burke, a film-maker recently praised for *Connections*, his CBC documentary on the Mafia, has combined his talents and tint-hand experience (as a photo-journalist) in *Laughing War* (Doubleday, 312 pages, \$12.95 cloth). He's found a savage and comic Canadian perspective on events in and around Saigon just before the Tet Offensive.

Burke's hero is a comedian named Barney, working troop shows out of Saigon. The large cast includes an American colonel who lusts after military immortality, a young woman singer who seeks revenge on him, and a Canadian peace-keeping teen led by a patrician brigadier who owns whorehouses and a huge, belligerent captain who wears shorts, drinks Molson's by the case, and has a chronic identity crisis. There's a love story, a sub-plot involving multiple knife-murders, a good deal of Barney's youth in Montreal and New York, and surrounding and distorting everything, the War. It's on display here in all its absurd and violent horror, a war "fought with the latest theories of Leisure Time," a war "that people are gonna forget."

The narrative voice is the book's strength, considerably more effective than the dialogue or the philosophizing, intelligent though they are. Burke's style leaks polish, but he has a cinematic sense of structure and pace and a rampaging energy that keeps his story humming. Sheer force lets him cow his lapses into cliché and preaching. The characters are sharply defined and the atmosphere explosive. Burke has confronted a difficult, ambiguous subject. What he has to say about the relation between laughter and war, and how he contrives to have the contradictions therein control his method and form, make a powerful, unsettling book.

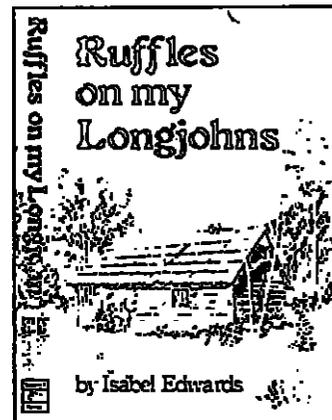
OSCAR RYAN WAS born in 1904, and has had a long career in radical journalism as theatre critic, writer and editor for the labour press, and biographer of Tim Buck. In *Soon to be Born* (New Star Books, 329 pages, \$13.95 cloth and \$5.95 paper), 25 years in the making, he distills his experiences into a book that's more satisfying as social history than as fiction.

The plot is panoramic. It's September, 1939; the Montreal Red Squad has broken



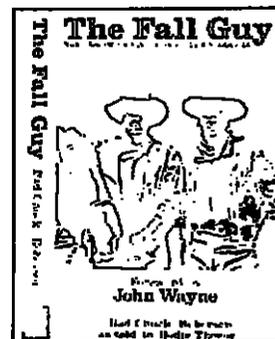
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up a small left-wing anti-war meeting end shot a young man. Arthur Meller. As Arthur lies dying in his hospital bed, Ryan, with an astonishing array of narrative devices — flashbacks, choruses, multiple voices, dreams, fables — chronicles the lives of half a dozen members of the radical scene and their families over four decades. The book nearly suffocates from this structure, I think, and becomes an anthology of the characteristics (and excesses) of proletarian end immigrant fiction. It's as if Ryan has thrown Dos Passos, Dreiser, Steinbeck (*In Dubious Battle*, *Grapes of Wrath*), Woody Guthrie, Hugh MacLennan, and Clifford Odets into a long-playing Cuisinart and tried to make art of the goo that results.

interview

by Judy Margolis

Why boys and girls won't need to know about Perrier to love Saturday Night

MARCH, 1980. Norman Webster, London (England) correspondent for *the Toronto Globe and Mail* and independently wealthy, buys *Saturday Night* magazine and appoints John Macfarlane, 37, former editor of the defunct *Weekend Magazine*, as publisher. Canada's magazine world is agog. Rumours circulate about the possible future of Robert Fulford, 48, editor of *Saturday Night* since 1968. Speculation is rife about sweeping changes in format and design. What will the new, new *Saturday Night* look like and in what direction will it head? The answer to the first part of that question came last month with the magazine's September issue. For answers to the second part, Judy Margolis talked to John Macfarlane in his office:

Books in Canada: Assuming that this is the new Saturday Night, what would you say were the problems with the old Saturday Night?

Macfarlane: We don't say it's the "new" *Saturday Night*. We think of it as the next step, if you like, or we think that we have made some changes, but it is not a recast of *Saturday Night*. Maybe I should start with who it's for and what it's about; those things haven't changed. It is as it has been through the years, except for a few periods when it began to lose its course. It is a magazine for thoughtful Canadians, and it is a magazine about the people and ideas that are influencing Canadian affairs. That's its role. I think we'd be silly to make any effort to change that role because given the historical baggage this magazine carries, if you wanted to do another kind of magazine, you'd be better to fold this one up and start something new.

BiC: Will Saturday Night lead thoughtful readers or merely reflect them?

There's plenty of technique at hand, and a wealth of information, but also too much florid prose, phoney poetry, predictable sentiments, comic-book situations. Ryan likes lists and catalogues, alliteration, repetition, oratory in general, and overwriting. On every page he strains to be literary, and the book moves far too slowly toward its foregone conclusions.

I happen to be sympathetic to the book's political stance, and so wished it well, but I must report that all the stereotypes of style and substance make it tedious, lifeless reading. Oscar Ryan deserves honour for his dedicated life and a rich store of memories, but not for his novelist's imagination. □

Macfarlane: It's going to take positions, perhaps more often than it has in the last decade. It may have a little more edge; it may come out with its gloves on a little more often. It will be a magazine for thinking people, for thoughtful people, but it won't be a magazine exclusively about ideas. I think there's a line that we're going to be using underneath the logo in certain newsstand locations, and it will say, "*Saturday Night*, the leading Canadian magazine," and the word "leading" there is used as a



John Macfarlane

double entendre, meaning not only that it is a leading Canadian magazine, but it is a magazine that leads. We are looking to be a place where one finds issues and ideas discussed before one finds them elsewhere.

BiC: Is Saturday Night trying to reach Be academic community or a wider audience?

Macfarlane: I think it's a mistake to confuse education and sophistication with intelligence. There are many intelligent people in this country who do not have graduate degrees, who have not read the great literature of the world, who do not go

to art films and who don't know what a bottle of Perrier is, but that doesn't mean that they're unintelligent. It's a magazine for intelligent people.

BiC: What magazine outside of this country would you consider Saturday Night's closest counterpart: Esquire, New Statesmen, Harper's, The Atlantic? Or does the magazine aspire to be like anything else?

Macfarlane: I think *Saturday Night* aspires to be something of a hybrid of all those magazines. Yes, there's some rhetoric that we are developing here to try to position the magazine. "State-of-the-art" is one of the components of that rhetoric; "the magazine by which other magazines are measured" is another component of that rhetoric. Well, we can smile at that, that's quite an earnest ambition. I mean, I earnestly believe that that is what we have to become. This magazine has to be the best magazine in this country, in whatever way you want to judge it. That is not to say that it has to be a magazine that everyone likes; it's not meant to be a magazine with mass appeal.

BiC: What governed your decision to expand and add new columns? Are they meant to be broader in their appeal?

Macfarlane: At the front of the book you have Politics, Academe, Media, and Fulford's Notebook. The two new additions really being Politics and Academe, and they are there because they are fields of influence. And if the magazine's role is to look at Canadian affairs then it seems to us that it's important to look at the university world and the media, because they are spheres of influence that to a large extent go unlooked at elsewhere.

BiC: Why did you introduce Sport as a column? Isn't that subject given enough coverage in other media?

Macfarlane: The beck of the magazine is largely unchanged, and it deals with culture. Sport has been added because we believe that sport is a part of culture. It is incumbent upon us, however, to write about sport in a way that sport is not written about anywhere else in the country. It ought not to be simply the same kind of sports writing you can get in the pages of the *Globe and Mail* or other popular publications. It ought to have its own character, and it has to be compatible with the way we write about theatre, books, and film. It's got to be, if you like, a more literate and intellectual approach to sport than one would likely find elsewhere.

BiC: Are you planning a big circulation drive or any surveys based on this issue?

Macfarlane: We don't expect a dramatic increase in circulation. We expect continued steady growth. We're at about 120,000 right now, and expect to be 150,000 within a couple of years. If it were 200,000 within a couple of years, that would be just fine. I can't conceive of it being more than 200,000, given the kind of magazine it is and the role it plays.

BiC: How do you see your role as publisher? Are you a publisher in the conventional sense or an editor-in-chief?

MARGARET ATWOOD

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Macfarlane: My role as publisher is much like the role that the publisher plays at any magazine in this country, with certain subtle differences, given the fact that I am an editorial person, and there aren't any others like me of whom I would speak. But I am not editor-in-chief. We have an editor and he edits the magazine and I publish the magazine. Now our relationship is different obviously than the relationship that normally exists between editor and publisher. And it's certainly true that I will have more involvement in the editorial process than is probably the case with any other magazine.

BiC: *How have you influenced editorial direction?*

Macfarlane: I don't want to say this is mine and this is someone else's and this is someone else's. There's a team of people working here. The more important question is what works and what doesn't work.

BiC: *Why is Gary Ross's first short story published in the same issue in which he is introduced as senior editor?*

Macfarlane: Well, you have to ask Robert Fulford that. I certainly had nothing to do with that. One thing I do know for sure, that short story was bought before Gary Ross was on staff here.

BiC: *You have hired two of your old colleagues from Weekend, your new art director, who was formerly the associate*

director there, and Gary Ross. Will Saturday Night look like Weekend in a few months time?

Macfarlane: Let me tell you how it's the same as *Weekend*, because that's a shorter answer. It's the same only insofar as it aspires to be a world-class magazine. But that's the beginning and end of the similarity. *Weekend* was a mass magazine. *Weekend* had to appeal to people of every demographic and psychographic description. *Saturday Night* does not have to do that. *Saturday Night* can be targeted at a much more specific group of people. The kinds of things that are being published in *Saturday Night* are not the kinds of things that could have been or would have been published in *Weekend Magazine*.

BiC: *You certainly seem to know how to play the politics of publishing.*

Macfarlane: Believe me. I don't know what the politics of publishing are. I would say that if you looked at it. I have no special expertise in the politics of publishing. Certainly we didn't win at *Weekend*, you know; that was a political loss of monstrous proportions. There really are no politics here. I mean we're very fortunate in having an owner who's a journalist, who's sympathetic to what's being attempted here, who encourages it, and has the courage to see it through. □

grounds that he is speaking extemporaneously. But if we are to be this stem with him, what are we to say to the TV news reporters who write a script before they or their on-camera surrogates read it aloud on the air? It should be noted that such writers are not required to be able to spell or use punctuation correctly, and it does not seem unreasonable in view of this to ask that they at least choose and combine their words for accurate communication.

At the time of the unsuccessful attempt to rescue the American hostages in Iran, a CFTO-TV newsman told us that "Canada was not told of the abortive rescue attempt in advance." Was he supposing that the U.S. knew in advance that the mission would prove abortive?

Referring to the investigation of a terrible explosion in Texas, an NBC newsman told us that "officials are attempting to recreate the disaster," inspiring in us the fervent hope that the characteristic inefficiency of officialdom would prevail.

A reporter for Ontario's Global-TV network informed us the other day that something had been "eroded away," leaving us to hope that, with any luck, it might someday be eroded back again.

When salary negotiations broke down, a Toronto radio announcer told us recently, Metropolitan Toronto police had voted "to carry out their promised threat of a work-to-rule campaign." Well, of course, you can promise to make a threat, but you can't carry out the threat until you've kept your promise, and, anyway, that one is too ridiculous to even play with.

This is not nitpicking. I doubt that there has ever been an entire news program, local or network, & void of such gaffes, and whether they are caused by carelessness or ignorance doesn't matter. They are all detrimental to the usefulness of the English language.

In fairness to broadcast journalists, it must be admitted that while they are not required to spell or punctuate, they are required to be able to pronounce and to blow-dry their hair, skills that are not demanded of print journalists. All this is just to suggest that they be held as accountable for their sins as are print journalists for their unfortunately less ephemeral ones.

There is no difficulty in finding examples of the latter, either. Recently I was scanning an article in *Today*, which bills itself "Canada's largest-circulation magazine" (awkward phrase, that), when a most egregious pleonasm leapt from the page to offend my sensibilities. The writer had used the phrase "flaying the hide off someone." As we all know, to flay means to strip off the skin or hide of.

The offending writer was I. The example is cited to make the point that the author of all the above criticism is acutely aware that he lives in a glass house; however, he has never minded being stoned. 0

Editor's note: Readers who care about the declining standards of English are invited to provide examples of errors drawn from

english, our english

by Bob Blackburn

Why Johnny should read Fowler before laying down in his own little room again

UNDER NO circumstances, save those of extreme deadline pressures, is there any excuse for errors in English appearing on the printed page. The writer has time to reflect and correct; the editor to emend.

In radio and television broadcasting, the standards must be less rigorous. It would be unfair and useless to pounce on the occasional slip of the tongue made by the commentator speaking extemporaneously. When NBC's Tom Brokaw stumbles between symbolic and emblematic and says that "The Heisman Trophy is emblematic of excellence in college football," sympathetic amusement is called for. However, we have developed a far too lenient attitude toward these communicators. When CBC Toronto television interviewer Barbara McLeod asks her guest to give the viewers some "tangible advice," her use of "tangible" may be marginally defensible, but if smacks of sloppiness and calls for a condign slap on some tangible part of her person.

When a witness to a riot at a rock concert tells a Toronto TV newsman that "I seen

this bunch of people laying them," we merely assume the young man to be the unfortunate product of the Ontario school system. But when the newsman replies, "They must've ran out of things to throw," we might change our minds and decide that the young man's problem is that he has been listening too closely to TV newsmen.

Perhaps, too, the witness is a Johnny Carson fan. The world's most highly paid TV host, a college graduate, evidently has never grasped the distinction between the transitive verb to lay and the intransitive to lie. He has a couch in his dressing-room, where he frequently goes "to lay down." To lay down what? The law? He may be confused by the fact that lay is also the past tense of lie, but the distinction is not a difficult one, and anyone who is paid millions of dollars to talk to millions of people could and should invest in a copy of Fowler. Well, at least he doesn't lay about his age.

Carson has been repeating this offence for years, and cannot be excused on the

CanWit No. 56

Thou shalt nor take the names of Irving Layton and John Robert Colombo in vain.

Honour the Canada Council, that thy writing days may be long upon the land.

GIVES THE RELIGIOUS tinge to TWO of the major books under review this month (see pages 10 and 11), perhaps the lime is ripe to frame a set of commandments on the Exodus model for CanLit. No more than 10, please, and not on stone. The winner will receive \$25. Address: CanWit No. 56, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is Nov. 1.

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 54

ROCK FANS WERE asked to come to the aid of the political parties, domestic or foreign, by suggesting names that would gain mass appeal for the leaders of those square-sounding groups. The winner is Barry Baldwin of Calgary, who receives \$25 for this concert of international headliners:

- Pol Pot and the Pillage People
- The Twenty-Four Sussex Pistols
- 3 NDP and the Grateful Ed
- Tories and Clash
- Brezhnev and the Afghan Hounds
- Giscard and De Sling
- Michael Manley and the Kingston Brio

Honourable mentions:

- Romping Ronnie R. and the Hawks
 - Atilla the Hen and the Thatcher Scratchers
 - Eddie Broadbent and the Strolling Drones
 - Joey Clark in Dire Straits
- Ian C. Johnston, Nanaimo, B.C.

- The Nitty Grits
- René and the Jeepers Oupiers

CLASSIFIED

Classified rates: \$6 per line (40 characters to the line). Deadline: first of the month for issue dated following month. Address: *Books in Canada Classified*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. Phone: (416) 363-5426.

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- The Grateful Feds
- Le Vex Pistols
- The Tory Tellers

— Maridon Miller, London, Ont.

- Stuart Smith and the Shrinks
- Dimples Davis and the Gong Show
- Peanuts Carter and the Gooberboys

— Orlo Miller, London, Ont.

- Billy Davis and the Tin Drum Revue

— Michael Paul, Montreal

- The Supreme, featuring the Ayatollah Khomeini
- The Rolling Tomes, with Stanley Knowles

— L. Brown, Erikson, Man.

- The GGs, with Ed Schreyer and Family

— Sandra Burrows, Ottawa

- The Persian Persuasion
- Jimmy Chrysler Overdrive: JCO
- Queen II

— Peat O'Neil, Toronto

- Country Joe Who and the Fish
- Nixon and the Mothers of Invention
- Teddy and the Tides

— John McQueen, Saskatoon

The editors recommend

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

FICTION

Voices in Time, by Hugh MacLennan, Macmillan. With his first novel in 13 years, MacLennan reviews Canada's passage through the 20th century and finds that we still haven't learned the lessons of history.

Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa, by W. P. Kinsella, Oberon Press. A "often exciting collection of short stories in which loony characters manage to warp the world into their own personal patterns."

NON-FICTION

The Invasion of Canada, 1812-13, by Pierre Berton, McClelland & Stewart. Academic historians may quibble (as our reviewer did), but laymen will be entertained by Berton's highly anecdotal account of an absurd war.

Confessions, by Barbara Amiel, Macmillan. Amiel's attack on the left-liberal bias in our media may win few converts but does raise some important questions about the meaning of Freedom.

Havelock Ellis: A Biography, by Phyllis Grosskunh, McClelland & Stewart. A model biography about the seminal cult figure of sexual enlightenment.

Books received

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

An All-Season Guide to Easy Hiking Around Vancouver, by Jean Cousins and Heather Robinson, Douglas & McIntyre.

The Ancient Jews, by Linda Matchan, illustrated by Ian Bateson, Douglas & McIntyre.

Aristocratic Toronto, by Lucy Booth Martyn, Gage Publishing.

Autobiography, by Ken Norris, Cross-Country Press.

Bad Glamour, by Stuart Ross, Proper Tales Press.

The Beauty of It, by Ted Colson, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.

Below the Bridge, by Helen Porter, Breakwater.

Burning Water, by George Bowering, Mosaic.

Canada Video, by Bruce Ferguson, National Museums of Canada.

Common Sense for Hard Times, by Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello, Black Rose Books.

The Complete Canadian Home Astrologer, by Gwyn Turner, Nelson/Canada.

Contract with the World, by Jane Rule, Academic Press.

Country Bed and Breakfast Places in Canada, 1980-81 Edition, by John Thompson, Deneau & Greenberg.

Creativity and Recreation, by Norbrop Frye, U of T Press.

Critical Teaching and Everyday Life, by Ira Shor, Black Rose Books.

Cutout Moons, by LeRoy Garman, High/Coo Press (U.S.).

Did the Earth Move?, by Aislin, M & S.

Disinuous, by M. Travis Lane, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.

Don't Just Stand There — Jiggle!, by Betty Jane Wylie, Black Moss Press.

Edward S. Curtis in the Land of the War Canoes, by Bill Holm and George Irving Quimby, Douglas & McIntyre.

Evergreen Islands, by Doris Andersen, Gray's Publishing.

Everywoman's Almanac 1981, The Women's Press.

Exploring the Southern Selkirk, by John Carter and Doug Leighton, Douglas & McIntyre.

Favoured by Romance, by Cindy Sparac, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.

Graphically Speaking, The Women's Press.

The Grey Nuns and the Red River Settlement, by Dennis King, Book Society of Canada.

Guy Carleton: A Biography, by Paul R. Reynolds, Gage.

Hole, by Kenneth McRobbie, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.

I Want to Tell You Lies, by John Lane, Turnstone Press.

Labouring Children, by Joy Parr, McGill-Queen's University Press.

Legumes savages du Canada, by Adam F. Szezwinski and Nancy J. Turner, National Museums of Canada.

The Mad Trapper, by Rudy Wiebe, M & S.

Mazinaw, by Stuart MacKinnon, M & S.

The Measure, by Patrick Lane, Black Moss Press.

Needlepoint, by Brenda Fleet, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.

Needles, by William Deverell, Seal Books.

October Winds, by Liliane Welch, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.

The Old Kingston Road, by Paul Von Baich, Oxford University Press.

\$1. each.

The Art of Emily Carr, 223 pages, 170 colour plates. Retail \$45.00



Karsh Canadians. 175 pages, more than 80 plates. Retail \$29.95

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