

BOOKS

**THE TEENAGE
WORLD OF
MYRNA KOSTASH**

Fiction by
Joy Kogawa

New books by
Charles Ritchie,
Carol Shields,
Brian Moore, and
Paul Quarrington

And an interview
with SF novelist
Andrew Weiner



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BOOKS
IN CANADA

Daddy's girl

Retrieved from the repressed memories of childhood, Sylvia Fraser's autobiography is a compelling dialogue between the Girl Who Knows and the Girl Who Doesn't Know

INCEST IS A closeted crime. The silent young victims often feel complicit. For Toronto novelist Sylvia Fraser, now 52, her childhood relationship with her father was a secret even to herself — silenced from her conscious mind by amnesia. Three years ago, following her father's death, the truth slowly began to emerge from her unconscious: from the age of six into her teenage years Fraser was sexually abused by her father.

Fraser's autobiography, *My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and Healing* (Doubleday), is told with compassion and honesty and, surprisingly, without the blind rage one might expect. On the surface it is a story of middle-class life in Hamilton, Ont., in the 1940s — a church-going family, father working shifts at the steel company and mother a hard-working housewife — but the undercurrent is an ugly, half-hidden family secret of sexual abuse. When the memories of her childhood started to become conscious, Fraser felt compelled to write about it. "I wanted to get rid of it. I wanted to get it out of my system, after all these years of hypocrisy and secrecy and deception and harbouring this."

When Fraser's first novel *Pandora*, a fictionalized account of her childhood, was published in 1972, she surprised herself and her friends with her detailed

Sylvia Fraser



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN REEVES

recollection of classmates and teachers, names and incidents. But Fraser says her phenomenally "faultless" memory about childhood events has become a bad joke. Since her mother's death in July, even more childhood memories have returned to her and Fraser now realizes that her mother and the entire neighbourhood knew much more about her sexual abuse than she originally suspected.

Fraser's amnesia is one of the features that make her story unusual. To deal with her frightening ordeal the young Fraser split into two personalities, which she refers to as the Girl Who Knows and the Girl Who Doesn't Know. Whenever her father approached her sexually, the Knowing Girl would take over and protect her from any conscious knowledge of the experience. But despite this psychic protection, clues about her relationship still seeped to the surface.

She had physical fits in her childhood, for which there was "no reasonable explanation; she had a seemingly irrational hatred for her father, a terror of her own home, a driving anxiety that accompanied roller-coaster changes in mood, and a strong feeling of being the bad girl, compared with the good girl, her sister. Her sister Helen received more maternal praise than Sylvia did, but Helen also suffered from a feeling of rejection because of her little sister's sense of privilege as Daddy's favoured fairy-tale princess.

Once she had decided to tell her story, Fraser also faced technical problems. It was easier to understand when it was told chronologically, but she wasn't sure how to make clear the dual existence of her childhood. In the book, to convey the importance of her memory block, she inserts italicized passages to mark recently recovered memories and knowledge that was unconscious at the time. These passages also provide a sense of the secrecy of incest.

To distance herself from her memories Fraser began her work — in California about two years ago — as if it were another novel. Even after she realized she had to write an autobiography, her approach relied too heavily on the critical and distanced eye of her older, wiser consciousness. It became obvious that she was trying to write two books at the same time — an analytic one and an emotional one. "I decided to go for the personal book," Fraser says.

It was a good choice. Her adult analysis

is infrequent, most often a paragraph or two at the opening of a chapter, and it doesn't overwhelm the tone of the book. The analytic passages are insightful and honest, offering keen perceptions about the less obvious effects of her experience on her and her entire family.

"Coming to grips with this has to involve acceptance and forgiveness," Fraser says. "I feel very deeply sorry for my parents, especially my mother. Perhaps if I had not been an angry child, if my survival had been on other terms, I would have had to go through anger. But I was so angry as a child in my conscious personality, so angry without understanding the cause, that it was really a relief to let that fly out the window."

Now that she has finished her autobiography, it's questionable whether Fraser will continue writing. In some ways her new book is the most bald telling of a tale she has been writing in different disguises with different plots and characters for years. For example, her 1980 novel, *The Emperor's Virgin*, is about a vestal virgin buried alive by a king for breaking her vow of chastity.

"I've always had a lot of sexual violence in my work," Fraser says. "This disturbed a lot of critics. I was accused of exploiting sex for profit. It didn't feel that way to me — it seemed like it was coming from somewhere very deep. I wasn't deliberately setting out to write books full of sexual violence, but that's the way they would end up."

— BARBARA MACKAY

Kanada made me

WHEN ADDRESSING an East German audience in 1979, Norman Levine, who flew with the RCAP in the Second World War, said: "I have been in Leipzig once before — but the I was above it." Levine is still "taking spectacular appearances in Germany, both East and West, seemingly coming out of nowhere. Or is he? This year, his fifth book will be published in the German language, a collection of stories entitled *Django, Karfunkelstein und Rosen*, some of which will appear in German translation before they come out in the original, or is the German translation the original? At times it seems his calm and soothing voice speaks directly to the German soul, "not the brash one whose excesses he had helped defeat in the war but the hesitant one that was



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METHUEN

threatened to be suffocated by the strident patriotism of the day.

What is it about the stories of this homeless Canadian miter, this gentle and reluctant patriot without a *Heimat*, who has spent most of his creative life in England in search of his Canadian identity, that makes them so attractive to Germans on both sides of the Iron Curtain, as well as to the inhabitants of that extra-territorial Germany of the spirit that seems the true centre of its identity? Is it the melancholy, the bittersweet realization of the ambivalence of belonging, of which the Austria poet Rainer Maria Rilke said: "Many of us forever live in Foreign lands, all homelands stand empty"? Is it the experience of the outsider, the visitor, who stays only briefly, which, brilliantly varied, appears in ever new disguised in Levine's prose? Is it that most of his stories deal with parting, with going away, with farewells and the need to part, the joy of being able to leave (in one story the mailman calls the narrator's wife "Mrs. Leaving," confirming metaphorically that the protagonists are just passing through), that strikes the German reader as being so comfortably familiar?

Rilke and Levine, despite all differences, share another trait: the urge and urgency as writers to transform visible and experienced reality, especially childhood, into language, into fictional reality that will last, that will preserve, and thus stem the merciless forces of time, rescuing life from oblivion. Or is it perhaps the familiar manner in which the existential experience of the assimilated Jew manifests itself, which, again, has to do with belonging and the yearning to belong, with being a "outsider and a" insider at the same time, with being more and less at once?

Doesn't Levine's fictionalized autobiography, which his writing is, mirror the condition of the great assimilated Jews of German culture, who, from Heine to Hofmannsthal, from Mendelssohn to Mahler, from Kafka to Krauss, from Celan to Canetti, had become the representatives of what was modern, innovative, and characteristically German from the 19th century on, whose expulsion or extirpation or expatriation had deprived Germany of her cultural identity? Isn't this man feeling and speaking like a brother who has come back home, refusing to disturb and accuse, who, on the contrary, is gentle and wise, who shows that Germany is not alone with her burden of intolerance and insensitivity and who, therefore, really understands?

Could another reason for this love affair be that Levine's fiction, like much of modern German literature, constitutes a "unending inquiry into the nature of writing itself, that his literature has itself as its main topic, that behind the tangi-

ble concreteness of his fiction there is actually hidden a theory of literature? That it explores the dilemma of being a writer in a world that "either appreciates "or understands writers? And don't we find in Levine's unique fictional universe echoes of another "German" theme, that of the writer as trickster, as imposter, the writer as swindler, as magician who juggles words but who cannot be trusted, the writer as a "inventor of truth, committing the ultimate confidence trick by turning the stuff of life into raw material in a process of fictionalization?

Levine's fiction, like all fiction, is a confidence act beckoning the reader to take the magic leap into a world where the invented truth of transformed objective reality is the actual truth whose essence can only be conveyed this way — through art. It is his gentle irony, however, calling all this into question, that seems to evoke the German dimension.

Perhaps it is all much less complicated than that. Perhaps the German reader simply recognizes the world of Levine's stories as his own and believes this "magic conjurer of the imperfect," as Thomas Mann called the writer, when he seems to suggest, almost helplessly: this is how life is, I am only observing it, don't blame me! This is perhaps also what Heinrich Böll, the most compassionate and committed of Germany's post-war writers thought when, together with his wife Annemarie, he decided to become Norma Levine's first translator into German. Two of their translations appear in Levine's latest German book, which is as much a tribute to the late Nobel Prize-winner as it is a confirmation of Böll's extraordinary judgement as well as his enormous success in introducing some of the great contemporary writers to his German audience. — HORST WITTMANN

Colonial imperative

I JUST GOT developed a roll of film from last winter, and one of my favourite shots is of a sign stuck in a snowbank beside a "unpaved road in the middle" of nowhere. All the sign says, in huge red block letters, is AUDREY THOMAS. She was reading and doing a day-long workshop that weekend at Ruth Clarke's house, Atelier North, "near Bailieboro, north of Cobourg, Ont.

Bringing Thomas's name to a sideroad snowbank is the essence of the Ganaraska Writers' Colony, held in Port Hope every summer. Clarke, the colony's director, has always been trying to bring together the rural and urban writing communities. She helped found Cannon Books, the first distributors to put Canadian titles throughout cottage country; she has been a National Book Festival representative for British Columbia and the Yukon; and

during the **winters** now, between colonies, she hosts a reading series. Thus Audrey Thomas. Thus my photo.

For the Colony's **first two years**, I have bee" doing poetry workshops. Last week of June, first week of July, we meet at the off-season **campus** of Trinity College School. Private. Catholic. Boys. Archibald **Lampman went** there. The stone **doorsills are hollowed** away by **well-to-do lads running** late for the field. A Flanders **cross** hangs above a" **archway**, and the auditorium smells of bat-dung. There is a" insular, last-century calm about the place. **Thankfully**, from its leaded **windows you cannot see Eldorado** nuclear plant in the **harbour**.

When all the **writers** are there, the **site** loses some of its Victorian placency. And **sharing** the facilities with as, lest we begin to revert to **Tennysonian** themes,

are a hockey school **and** a group of French-immersion students. New hormones **are** so enviably **rambunctious** compared to the noise of a typewriter.

This past summer the staff included Jane **Urquhart (short fiction)**, Leon **Rooke** (long fiction), Joan **Finnigan MacKenzie** (oral **history**), **Joe Rosenblatt** (poetry), Robert Priest (writing for children), Susan **Crean** (non-fiction), and Paul **Ledoux** (drama). We had students from **Wasaga Beach**, North Carolina. Montreal, **Bewdley** (which, they say, is in the eye of the **beholder**), Vancouver. **Ottawa. . . .**

reakfast in the **main** dining hall, **facing** oak **walls** coated with lists of past Head Boys and under **the** robed portraits of Head Masters (one of them, surprisingly, a woman), is like **eating** eggs in church. A somehow appropriate start to

a day of writing and talking of writing.

In the evenings **there** are readings by staff and students. (**This year** my **memory** award goes to **Leon Rooke** for the best solo **prose** reading I've **ever** heard.) The seminars and workshop discussions spill **over** into the buffet chats and the parties after the readings. One **morning** after a **particularly** late **night** of Ethel **Merman singalongs**, **Joe Rosenblatt could be heard bearwalking** the hallways, calling for his lost shoelaces, as if for a pair of **pet snakes**.

What ties **this all** together-snowbank and cricket **pitch/manuscript** and beer stein? Our **need for a sense** of community that encompasses this isolation of **putting** words down.

My snapshot, stuck above my desk, will remind me of all my cohorts till next par. — PHIL HALL

ENGLISH, OUR ENGLISH

Fludged again

Computer jargon hag made only minor inroads so far, but its praotitloners seem hell-bent on destroying the English language

By Bob Blackburn

FIVE YEARS AGO **this month**, I broke my oath never to use **access** as a verb. I bought a **computer**. **Almost** overnight. I stopped making **derivative references** to **computer jargon** and began respectfully **calling** it **terminology**, which, of **course**, is what it is. Jargon is what **others speak**.

Computer **terminology** is also called **computerese**, particularly by those who don't speak it, and that term **will serve us** here. Whatever you call it, it is a young and imperfect language. This is not **surprising**, considering that the generation that is developing it is also hell-bent on destroying English. Computer enthusiasts **will** tell you, rightly, that they must **use** computerese in order to understand one **another**. In **view** of this, it seems odd that many of them show no sign of having the **same** feeling about **English**. Few of them **worry** about whether **presently means now** or **means soon**. Few **care** that **there** is a distinction between **incredible** and **incredulous**. **It is inevitable** that a technical vocabulary created by people with no regard for precise diction in their **use** of the mother tongue will be a mess.

The computerese verb **access** is one of the least offensive **neologisms**. It simply means to gain access to. A computer **user** might ask **you** if he may access **your** bathroom (you should refuse), but he is unlikely to. When he is using his **computer**, however, he does so dam" much

accessing that a **short verb** is essential. **Access serves** the purpose well, and such use is **harmless** if it is not permitted to escape to the outside world.

Not so pardonable is the computerese **corruption** of **clone**. I have what is commonly (and unfortunately) called a" IBM clone. **This** is a misnomer. In English, a clone is a" organism that is genetically identical to its forebear, and the word is not a good choice to describe a" imitation. **Before** done gained currency in **computerese**, some manufacturers used **workalike** for this purpose. That made more sense, but I suppose **three** syllables was a bit much for some people.

My **new** printer. the manual **tells** me. emulates two standard makes of printer. It may, indeed, do so, **since emulate means rival**, but for years **writers of computerese** have bee" misusing **emulate** to mean **simulate**, and I ant **certain** the **writer** of this manual **meant simulate**.

One of the **main action keys** on a computer keyboard is **labelled** either **ENTER** or **RETURN**. What it **does** is enter what you've just typed into the innards of the beast. It doesn't return anything. **Somewhere** along the way, some **bigbrain** had the idea that, because in some circumstances the ENTER key does something that resembles the function performed by the carriage **return** key on a" **electric typewriter**, people **new** to computers **would find** the keyboard friendlier if the **key were labelled RETURN**. Millions

of computers, including the Apple, included that aberration, and the **resultant** confusion during conversations between **users** 'of different brands was **terrible** to behold. **It almost destroyed one** of my **oldest** friendships.

Computerese is as much abused as is **English**. Many, **perhaps most**, who try to **speak** it fail to grasp the **distinction** between **bug** and **glitch**, or between **upload** and **download**. Like English, it is graced by vigorous slang. I love **farkled** and **fludged** and **munged**.

I **am** not fluent in computerese. I **came** to it late in life, and **am** still too **preoccupied** with my effort to learn English (something I have **been** trying to do for more than 60 **years**) to do **well** with a second language. but I **have observed** that the people who speak **it well are** those who speak English well. The personal **computer** is only a **decade** old, and the **lingo** it spawned has **made** only minor inroads in English. but this will change. What it has done so far is **surely** less frightening than the fact that we now have a suffix — **gate** — that means scandal. Computerese, which is **being created** by people whose lack of **regard** for **English** is **exceeded** only by their **ignorance** of it, has, so far, done **nothing** as bloody awful **as** that to us, but it **will**, it will.

Now, if you will excuse me, I **shall** do what **I usually** do on completing a column: I shall go to the kitchen and access a cold beer. □

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The examined life

It is one thing to be committed to the moral imperatives of collective life, says feminist journalist Myrna Kostash, but another to be blinded by them

By Brian Fawcett

MYRNA KOSTASH has just changed out of a bright yellow blouse into a black sweater covered with flamboyant gold designs. While the photographer changes film, she and a young Vancouver woman who has been working with teenaged street prostitutes discuss which earrings Kostash should wear for the last shots. On a sudden instinct, I close my eyes and listen.

Bingo! Gone is Myrna Kostash, Ukrainian Canadian, feminist, socialist, and "New Journalist," former *Maclean's* columnist, writer of innumerable articles and two highly controversial hooks. In her place is a girl about 15 years old, giggling, uncertain which earrings to wear.

"Do you think these are OK? Oh, no! Oh, really? These ones then? They're too big, aren't they? Do you really think so?"

Then, just as quickly, she's back. Within 90 seconds, the fashion problem is solved, and Kostash is pumping the young woman for information about teenaged hookers. Asking her to respond to the feminist argument that contends that prostitution is a job like any other in a male-dominated society. The questions are incisive and knowledgeable: and the answers short

and factual. The young woman has already learned that anything more will be interrupted by further questions.

Kostash is in Vancouver as a writing-workshop leader at the University of British Columbia. The workshop is finished, and she's taking a few days to visit with friends and to do some early publicity for her new book. The phone has been ringing constantly, and several magazine photographers have been around to shoot pictures of her. In the gaps, I've been interviewing her.

The workshops—under the title *Women and Words*—were four in number, one each in poetry, drama, fiction, and something called "creative documentary." The last one was hers, and she notes with a wry smile that at the beginning of the conference nobody knew what a "creative documentary" was. When I ask her what it is, she becomes instantly serious.

"These days," she says, "most writing begins with the self and with the phenomenon of expression — the private need for expression, with the individual need to be whole and articulate in an atomized world. Creative documentary doesn't deny those things, but it begins with external facts and shapes a story

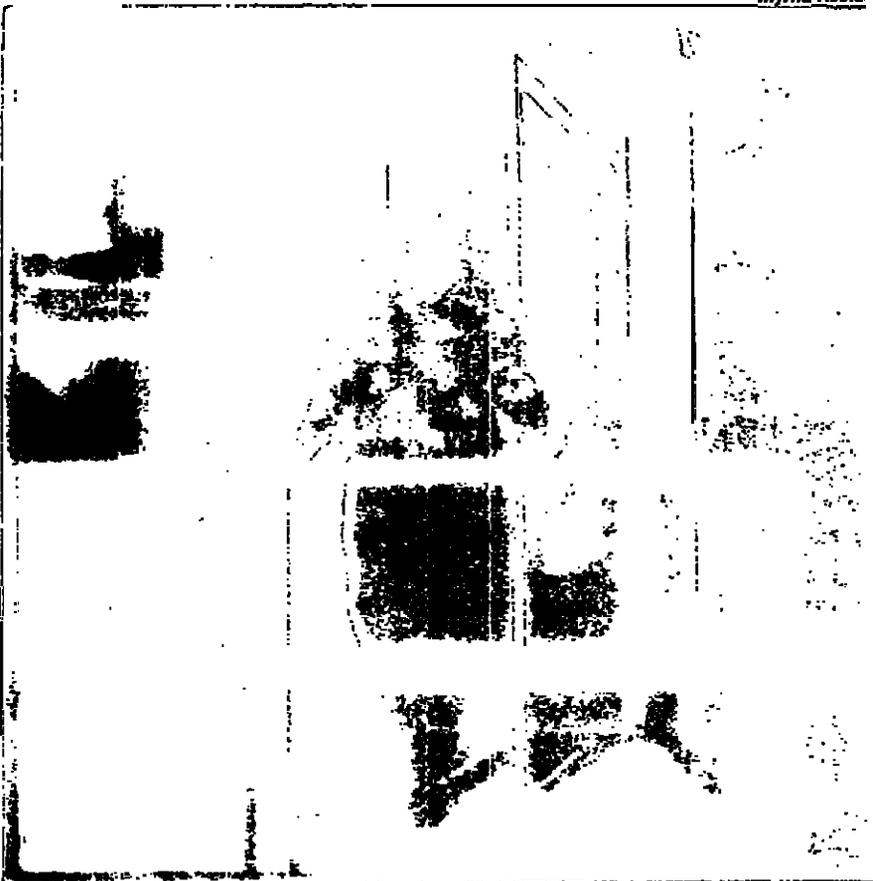
around those facts instead of the self, employing self-knowledge as one of a number of other thinking and writing skills. It's not like conventional journalism, either, because it gives away the journalistic pretence of objectivity—it doesn't try to bide the presence of a writer thinking her way through the facts, trying to present a subject in a communal format rather than merely explaining its relationship to the self or to language."

To help her students, Kostash brought in a documentary grab-bag — newspaper clippings, photographs, a used airline ticker, a bus transfer. The students used these as their departure point instead of the conventional blank page. After a day or so, the students were bringing in their own documentary icons to add to the collection.

"Creative documentary is what you do," I say. Her answer carries traces of both uncertainty and sternness. "Of course. What do you expect me to teach?" Then she giggles again, a self-deprecating but utterly infectious giggle. "I've ever had to face the problem of the blank page. I could never see any reason to, when there's so much to write about."

Katherine Govier describes Kostash's method of writing as "the intervention by the writer's voice into the consciousness of a community which has been speechless, . . . a kind of illuminated oral history. . . ." Readers who missed her first two books, *All of Baba's Children* (1977) and *Long Way from Home* (1980), missed the work of one of Canada's

Myrna Kostash



PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL ORSICENT

most intelligent and conscientious writers.

MYRNA KOSTASH was born and raised in Edmonton. In 1965 she left to attend a summer school session at the University of Washington in Seattle, and stayed on to do graduate work in Russian and Russian literature, finally completing her degree in 1968 at the University of Toronto.

Mentally exhausted by the vicissitudes of academe, and

'I knew I wasn't going to be very good at political work or syllogizing or organizing the masses. I wouldn't be very good as a single-minded activist. I am good at writing and refuse to feel guilty about it'

attracted by the political ferment the" reaching its peak in a number of European cities, she gathered together what she called her "pitiable savings" and left for Europe. She managed to stay for two and a half years. While there she sent an article to *Saturday Night* about what it was like to discover that as a woman and as a Canadian she was neither European nor American nor inferior. To her surprise, the article was accepted for publication.

When she returned to Canada in 1971, she embarked on a career as a freelance writer. "*Saturday Night* was a wonderful place to start in the early 1970s," she recalled recently. "But once I settled into the scene in Toronto. I started writing extensively for *Miss Chatelaine*, and it was there that I really developed my writing skills. Mildred Istone was the editor, and she gave me carte blanche to write whatever I wanted. Not surprisingly, I wrote a lot about the women's movement and women's writing."

In her modest telling, that period in Kostash's career sounds like a series of lucky accidents, but the truth is that the writing she was doing was good, and her thinking was timely. In 1975, the International Women's Year, she had a feminist column in *Macleans*. When she left Toronto late in 1975, she was at the Canadian forefront of the "New Journalism," and carried with her a startlingly large audience of young, progressive women.

The reason she left was to return to Edmonton, where she began research for a book on Ukrainian Canadians. At first, she intended to stay there only until the research was completed. At the time, Kostash was not deeply committed to her ethnic background and never had been — witness the irony of a Ukrainian Canadian with a university degree in Russian literature. But the research she did carried its own set of private revelations, which culminated with the publication of *All of Baba's Children*.

The response to that book, she says, made her accept her Ukrainian-Canadian heritage. "I began to live a Ukrainian Canadian life for the first time since I was a child. And I felt no desire to leave Edmonton, because I knew I couldn't live that life anywhere else, except maybe in Winnipeg. If I'd lived in Vancouver, I'd have led a feminist life, or in Toronto I would have lived a left-wing life. But in Edmonton I can live a Ukrainian-Canadian life — and I have family and a community that is also feminist and socialist. That's been enormously satisfying — living all of a piece. If I lived anywhere else, I'd have to let one or more of those go."

Kostash's most important commitments, aside from the Ukrainian-Canadian one, are to feminism and the New Left, but she is not an ideologist, as those who have read her know. One of the duties of travelling in company, in her view, is to do so with her eyes wide open. It is one thing to be committed to collective life and the moral imperatives of the collective,

another to be blinded by them.

"I'm just not convinced enough that any particular position is a wholly true one," she says, almost ruefully. "Thirty years of conscious life have taught me that the things I've held to be immutably true can be undermined or added to or modified. I mean, the kinds of experience I've had just being female have undercut a lot of things I once thought were true — although I've yet to come across anything that undermines feminism."

She believes that writing carries its own form of intellectual protectiveness. "I became a writer when I wrote the last sentence of my thesis on Dostoyevsky. I discovered that I was less interested in the mechanics of closing an argument than I was in how I was going to say it. I'd really struggled with the concluding paragraphs of that thesis, trying to find a heightened, intense, dramatic way of saying it. And that was when I learned the pleasure of finding the right word, or getting it across right — as opposed to concluding a logical structure."

Certainly Kostash is comfortable with the demands her brand of fact-based writing makes. "I'm doing what I started doing in 1971 — writing things and getting bits of money for it," she says. "Once I made my peace with the idea that I'd never be wealthy, I began to see all the things it does give me: relative intellectual independence, the opportunity to travel. At some point too, I came to terms with the idea that writing was going to be my chief form of political action. I knew I wasn't going to be very good at political work or syllogizing or organizing masses. I just wouldn't be very good as a single-minded activist. I am good at writing, so that's how I act, and I refuse to feel guilty about it."

She takes a fair amount of flak for staying in Edmonton, where she lives in a Ukrainian-Canadian feminist housing cooperative in the old Strathcona district. (She spends part of her summers on a small farm she bought outside the city, and has a five-year relationship with the concrete poet, Jars Balan.) "People now see me as a regional writer," she explains, "or at least as a writer based in a specific region — West/Prairie. They're amazed that I've been able to make a career as a professional writer there. The fact is, when I went back to Edmonton I had a base in Toronto — and a" audience. So I didn't have to think too much from a financial point of view when I decided to stay. I still get condescending queries from friends elsewhere — "Are you still there? What are you doing there?"

It is the Ukrainian-Canadian identity that provides her with the odd sort of "centred" confidence she has. And, oddly, it was the publication of *All of Baba's Children*, not the essentially private research, that gave her that feeling. "Until the day of publication," Kostash says, "I thought I was merely doing a journalistic exercise — you know, where the intrepid, detached journalist goes forth and investigates something and comes back and reports on it." But the response to the book from Ukrainian Canadians across Canada — and particularly in the prairie provinces — affected her profoundly. Typically, she did not shrink from it. Communal and private identity fused, becoming both centre and connecting tissue for the complex of social concerns she juggles.

In 1980 James Lorimer published her second book, *Long Way from Home*, an idiosyncratic but generous meditation on the social, political, and emotional milieu of the 1960s. The book was brutally thumped by the mainstream critics, who said it was politically bombastic, naive, and romantic. But in the quarters where Kostash expected the book to have a more sympathetic hearing, the social democratic/feminist network, the response was almost total silence.

More stung by the silence than by the attacks, Kostash withdrew for a lengthy reevaluation. Today she acknowledges that her own nerve failed with *Long Way from Home*: she tried to write an ideologically coherent book in the period when the ideological structure of the entire left was itself collapsing. Right book, wrong time. Typically hard on herself, she says that a

thorough evaluation of why the promise of the 1960s didn't blossom **still** needs to be done for Canada.

"It doesn't matter where one is," she says. "The collapse of the left has had to be faced. In most countries, this has been done. But because the Americans or British or French are part of imperial cultures, the political **failure of a generation just doesn't carry** the same psychological penalties as it does here. Apparently, the psychological penalty of having been **naïve** if you're a colonial is the one **price** we aren't willing to pay in Canada."

In the past few years **Kostash** has **travelled** extensively in **Eastern Europe** — chiefly Greece, Poland, and the Ukraine. The **experience was** enriching, but it also made her feel left out. "For all my sentimentality about the **Slavic** people and my own Slavic identity — **discovering** the overlapping **histories** of Poland and the **Ukraine**, and **finding** Ukrainians everywhere in **these** places — **it is very** lonely because a person of my political consciousness couldn't have been produced there.

"I **grew up** next to the United States, and they grew up next to the Soviet Union — **I think** it's really as simple as that. And I've had the benefit of an alternate education to the **conventional** one in North America—a **critical** education. Very few people have access to that over there. Mostly they **just** have all these inchoate feelings of resentment and **despair** and anger."

NO KIDDING, just released by the Douglas Gibson division of McClelland & Stewart, is **Myrna Kostash** at her best: **well-researched**, non-sectarian, and unacademic. The prose has the **élan** of a **writer** comfortable with her subject matter **and utterly** sure of her values and skills. Based on interviews with young girls of different background across Canada, the book's subtitle, "Inside the World of Teenage Girls," is no idle claim. **Kostash** carries her multiple identities to her subjects with a touch that **is** so generous and sure that one gets the **sense that**

to **her** those girls **were** never merely "subject matter," the occasion for the application of professional skills. The result is a book that is eminently readable and useful.

It is likely to be controversial as well, given the extraordinary **candour** — often unintentional — of the girls she has interviewed. The world of teenage girls is pretty **bizarre**, and the messages delivered by the book are not going to be welcomed in some circles. **Kostash** and her **girls** make it abundantly clear

'The collapse of the left has to be faced. But because the Americans or British are part of imperial cultures, the political failure of a generation doesn't carry the psychological penalties that it does here'

that to be young and female in contemporary society is to be alternately **misinformed**, miseducated, ensnared by manipulative consumer systems, exploited by the **spectrum** of adult insensitivities, **ignorances**, and malevolences, and **finally, ignored** when **in trouble**.

What **Kostash's young girls** have to tell her, and us, is **frequently depressing**, and it is not very **complimentary** to either the **parental** or the professional authorities that **are** supposed to be **transforming** them into productive, **self-confident women**. **The statistical research** **Kostash** adds to **the** brew overwhelmingly backs up **the young girls**.

But **No Kidding** is also an exhilarating book, because of the way **Kostash** has handled the interviews. It's clear **that** she likes the girls she's talked to, **and** that she established rare **rapprochement** with almost all of them. On the whole, they're an admirable bunch, trying to **figure** out a world that is **unjust**, confusing,

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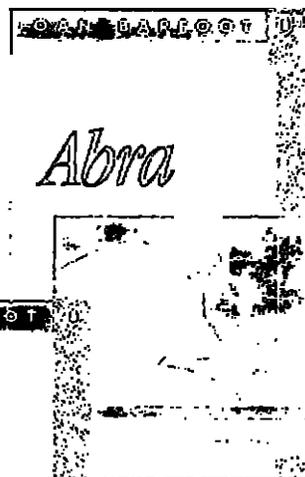
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and fouled up. More than a few confused young girls will probably end up reading the book and, once they get over being offended, so will the professionals in the field. Both will be helped by it.

No Kidding is the end of a certain kind of writing for Kostash. She's written books on behalf of the three elements of her collectivist identity that matter most to her: *All of Baba's Children* for the Ukrainian Canadian commitment, *Long Way from*

'Once you understand and know something, it isn't private any longer. To write is to pass on what you've seen and observed and understood. You didn't understand it by yourself. Someone passed it on to you, and your job is to keep it going'

Home for the New Left, and *No Kidding* — about women at their most vulnerable — in defence of feminism. Now she's working on several pieces she calls "autofictions," a term borrowed from fellow westerner Patrick Friesen.

"I've been wanting to figure out how to write from a more experimental perspective, as a specific but not isolated person lodged in history," she says. "I want to write pieces that use the materials of my own life much as I've used materials from others people's lives. The technical question the 'autofictions' will try to solve is how one can write about oneself as an historical and cultural entanglement and not as a" ego out to experience or subjugate reality in order to satisfy personal or psychological needs.

"Where I'm going isn't so mysterious. Look at where I got my training — writing magazine articles, albeit under the in-

fluence of the New Journalism. What I'm going to write will still be grounded in other people's lives. It'll simply try to make the connections between a specific private and psychological life — mine — and the social and political contexts I've gone after. And along the way, I want to ask impertinent questions about myself. Things won't be so much invented as reconsidered in the light of a person who is asking difficult questions on both the private and public side. I hope it will be inventive of connections.

"I don't know anyone else, at this point, who is trying to make connections between Byzantine history, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Warsaw Pact powers in 1968, Serbia" glasnost, and Ukrainian nationalism. My earlier, journalistic self would have tried to create some sweeping and emotionally charged overview of things that explains individual consciousness along the way. That's the old way. Now I'm going to test and reveal those large structures in a more direct relation to specific persons and events, including myself."

Kostash was once asked by a friend in Edmonton what she thought the purpose of life was. Her answer was instantaneous and unqualified: "To figure out what's going on." The writer and the collectivist meet at this point. "Once you understand and know something," she says, "it isn't private any longer. To write is to pass on what you've seen and observed and understood. You didn't understand it by yourself — someone passed it on to you, and your job is to keep it going."

Where does she want us to go? I keep thinking of a passage from *Long Way from Home*, in which Kostash was writing of the goals of the '60s generation: "That all human relations be transacted with love, compassion and tenderness; that, in the morality and process of democracy and participation, powerlessness, meaninglessness and alienation be overcome; and the split between the person and society, between personal and political values, be healed." □

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The rebirth of Baby Anna

'Every one night's visiting evangelist in the world must have had his brief hour in Granton, sowing the holy seeds of God's word in our hearts'

By Joy Kogawa

THese days when I think of Granton, I think of blackflies, heavy bodied multi-goggled little buzzards busily filling the summer air and buzzing around the cow pies. Flies, flies — the slightly curled, lightly sticky tips of their black thread legs. Their brown goggle eyes. They pillage the world of sleep. They invade the dreams. I rage upon them with my hands. The yellow ones can be killed. But the black nightmare ones, the weight of the village conscience, are utterly indestructible. I try to squeeze them with my fingernails, pushing so hard that I cut right into their bodies, flattening, folding, twisting them — but they live on, impervious creatures of flexible metal.

The world of Granton was policed by a godly army of black-winged soldiers marching as to war. King Righteousness ruled with dark Queen Piety at his side, her dense gown billowing, her heavy per-

fume wafting through the scent of alfalfa and the new-mown hay. The camphor-laden odour of the sick room settled on us all, the faithful, the fallen and the unconvicted.

For Pastor Jim, there were only two categories, the saved and the lost. His mandate was to rescue the perishing and it was to the lost that he directed his most fervent efforts. As fringe dwellers, Obasan and Uncle, the Makinos, the Sagas, the Takasakis, the Sonodas, the Tamagis, and their bachelor friend Taira-san were a significant challenge. But Pastor Jim was unable to penetrate the sound barrier behind which the Issei moved, politely attentive and nodding.

"Mornin'," he'd shout heartily, standing at the back door. His Bible open in his hands. "This is the day which the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Obasan always nodded and smiled.

"Sister, are you saved?"

"Thank you," Obasan said politely.

Undaunted, Pastor Jim moved on to the English-speaking generation and won not only my soul but the souls of the Makino sisters, Marion and Suzy. They both worked in town — one at the post office and one at the bank, and with Tina they became Tina and the Mak-duo, a singing trio, two trim black-haired altos in black flared skirts and white blouses and bobby sox with Tina in the middle, her hands folded to her chest as she swayed gently. Pastor Jim declared that the Anglican faith, from which we and the Mak-duo came, was not Biblical. Creeds, he said, were not necessary. Prayers belonged not in prayer books but in the heart. It wasn't enough that we drove the 70 miles to Coaldale for Christmas or for funerals or weddings or farewell parties to meet the others like us from Raymond and Vauxhall and Cecil and Taber. It wasn't enough or even right that the Makino baby, Anna, had been baptized.

The Makinos, who lived out on a beet farm, came all the way in to discuss the worrisome matter with Uncle and Obasan. It was at least as important to discuss the problem as to solve it.

Plump Mrs. Makino was an ancient 50 when her baby was born. Apparently she hadn't known all the way to the birth that she was pregnant. She thought she'd entered menopause and was getting overweight and went to the hospital for stomach pains one night. Uncle said it was a good joke. A grandchild come so soon.

Mr. Makino had wanted to name his surprise child Sachiko but Mrs. Makino felt it should be left up to their two grown-up daughters to decide because they knew English ways better.

"Her name will be Anne," said Marion and Suzy, "spelled with an 'e.' And no Japanese name." They both loved the L.M. Montgomery "Anne" books.

It seemed a shame not to give the baby a second name even if it wasn't Japanese. An extra name was an extra blanket. A comforting weight at the foot of the bed. But I didn't say anything.

The parents couldn't pronounce Anne and say "Annu." The minister from Coaldale, Nakayama-sensei, said Anna would be easier, and that's what was written on the baptism certificate, to the great disgruntlement of the Mak-duo. As it was, the Issei all called her "Annu-chan" anyway.

"Anna." Pastor Jim pronounced when he saw Mrs. Makino



ILLUSTRATION BY JAY BELLORE

in town with the baby, "Anna was a holy woman. A very good name. But she should not have been baptized. God's word says that you must believe in your heart and confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus. And then be baptized."

"A worry," Mrs. Makino said, relating the incident to Uncle and Obasan.

"Muzukashi," Uncle said. "A difficulty."

Suzy said that Pastor Jim knew better than Nakayama-sensei,

'Anna,' Pastor Jim said, 'should be rebaptized, God willing, when she makes her decision for the Lord.' Several years later, at the age of seven, Anna Makino was officially born again

the priest from Coaldale. Uncle nodded his head slightly, indicating hesitation, and wondered if that might be so, though it was understood he was making no judgement. It was also understood, without anything further being said, that the matter would be left to the Makino daughters who would take their directions from Pastor Jim.

"Anna," Pastor Jim said, "should be re-baptized, God willing, when she makes her decision for the Lord." And several years later, when she reached "the age of understanding" little Anna Makino was officially, at the age of seven, born again, to the great rejoicing of her sisters and Pastor Jim.

In the fall of 1952, immediately after Ids last year of high school, Stephen made his escape from the world of Uncle and Obasan, the Mak-duo, Pastor Jim, sugar beets, et al. I missed him. I missed his music. The standards that Tina and Stephen set were never again reached in Granton school. I wished them back together on stage but Tina said that wasn't in God's plan.

She eventually went to Bible school in Winnipeg. That year, 1954, I took a temporary licence teacher training course in Calgary and returned the following year to teach school in Granton. Once in a rare blue moon, Stephen would come roaring home for a week or so. "Just like Emiri-san," Uncle remarked on the brevity of his visits. He'd be with us for a brief hello, and then he'd be gone, returning to Toronto and Montreal, and later to New York and Paris, leaving Obasan, Uncle and me waving at the edge of the road. Our eyes filled with the dust of his departures. Over the years, it became a game of musical chairs with Aunt Emily and Stephen alternately popping in and popping out.

News of Stephen's successes in the world of music came via the pages of the Lethbridge Herald. GRANTON'S NAKANE WINS. Many townsfolk were proud of their own local boy becoming a minor musical celebrity. But Pastor Jim was steadfastly unimpressed. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last," he said. And in Granton, the steadfast singular life of the faithful remained unchanged.

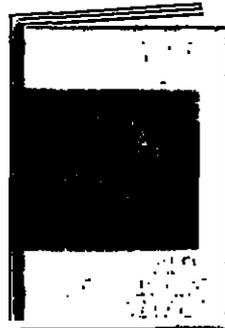
It was on a Saturday night in June, when Tina was home from Winnipeg for the summer, that Anna Makino's salvation was secured.

Saturday nights were when evangelistic meetings, crusades, rallies, healing services, and bouncy congregational hymn sings were held in the community hall. Granton's voices could dance, though our forbidden feet could not. Barlier in the year, some daring newcomer to Granton had started showing movies in the hall, but the local onward army of Christian soldiers swiftly closed it down.

"Praise God," Pastor Jii said. "The devil's own lair is overturned and a place of prayer has been restored unto us."

Granton barely had the chance to become infected by the evils of Hollywood. However every one night's visiting evangelist

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in the world must **have** had his brief hour *in Granton*, sowing the holy seeds of God's word in our hearts.

That particular Saturday night Tina was full of zeal, end eager to hear Brother Leroy Sage, the missionary who was on furlough from Africa. Brother Leroy's account of his first-hand encounter with Satan in Africa was mesmerizing.

"Oh, yes," he thundered, "don't let anyone lead you astray. Satan is alive and binding the hearts of the heathen to a living hell. Oh, yes, fear rules in the heart of dark Africa. I have seen him take a laughing child and in minutes, murder that precious child with a sudden sickness. And I have seen Satan flinch end flee et the name of Jesus! that very hut, when the Lord commanded him to be gone, Satan fled, for Satan cannot bear that holy name of the Son of God. Hallelujah."

Tine was tense. a damp handkerchief held tight in her hand. "But Sate" is not just in Africa," Brother Leroy continued. "He's here tonight, hungry es a roaring lion, seeking whom to devour, spreading doubt in this great auditorium. Doubt. The devil's weapon. Doubt. The killer of faith. 'Have faith end doubt not; saith Holy Scripture. But here tonight, Satan is creeping through the aisles looking for smell cracks of doubt so that he can step into your minds. But, praise God, friends, this," he shouted, holding his Bible high over his heed, "this is God's holy unchanging Word, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing bone from marrow, and with God's word we can banish all doubt, my friends. But do yo' know" — end here Brother Leroy lowered his voice and held the Bible to his heart - "do you know there are me" today, in the guise of God's servants, doing Satan's work end planting doubt into this precious book. Make no mistake. The modernists belong to Satan, my friends. Is there anyone here tonight who doubts that Jesus was born of the Viin May?"

A general murmur rose from the crowd. "No. No." One men stood up end waved his Bible. The woman directly in front of us moaned. "Precious Jesus."

"Oh I'm so happy tonight," Brother Leroy continued. "for I know end do not doubt God's word, and I know as you know that Jesus was born of a virgin. But what do the modernists tell us? They take the pure word 'virgin' and change it to reed 'young woman' as if God, the all powerful, who made all things, had no power to bring forth his Only Begotten Son from a virgin's womb. Now isn't that foolish. Oh, what a great folly it is to put our trust in men's puny wisdom. What does Holy Scripture tell us? The wisdom of man is folly to God. Yes, dear friends, the Revised Standard Version of the Bible is the handiwork of Satan. Oh, yes. Satan is everywhere. In Africa, in that mighty two-headed beast, the World Council of Churches, and he is here in Granton. Yes, he is. Do you have any drunkards in your midst? Pray for them es they struggle in the grip of Satan. And say, all together with me, the words that our Lord said. 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Can you say it with me now?"

"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN," we roared.

"Say it again! Say it till it shakes the very gates of hell! Say it till the power of alcohol is gone forever from Granton!"

"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATANI!"

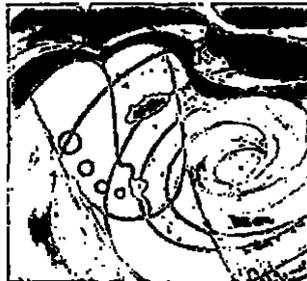
I shivered end looked behind my shoulder as the shout disappeared, end I could hear a moan in my ear. Crazy Alex was holding himself up by the beck of my folding chair end gasping the chant over and over.

Tine turned end put her hands over his. Nodding gently, with tears streaming down her face, she repeated the words with him. His eyes were fixed on her with a look of utter anguish. Finally he sat down, heavy with sobs, and Tina put her already wet handkerchief to hi eyes.

"You know what it's like." the evangelist was shouting, waving his index finger. "You know what it's like when one little finger like this is held in a candle flame. You know the pain, the searing tormented flesh of one Little finger. And do you know what it will be like, dear friends, when your entire

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body is in **hell?** Not **just** your finger. but your whole arm, **your** shoulders, **your** body. your entire body will burn. And not just **for an hour**, not just for a **day; or a week**. No, sir. What **does** God's holy book tell **us** in Revelations? There is everlasting torment in the **lake** of fire for **those** who do not confess that Jesus, the **sinless** Lamb of God. is Lord."

The rounded **ceiling** of the windowless hall had a **string** of **lightbulbs** strong **down** the middle. "Will **you** be a **light** to **lighten** the darkness in this sinful world?" he shouted **pointing upwards**. "If you have never known the joy of the Lord; **friends**, let **this** be the **night**. Let this be your hour of decision. Let **this** be your night of repentance when you torn from your old ways **and** become a new being. A **being** born of the spirit of God's eternal love. Hallelujah. All the saints and the heavenly host rejoice to **see** your hand there, brother. Come to the **Saviour** all ye that **thirst** and are heavy laden. Rise now fmm **your** seats all over this great auditorium wherever you are — you there in the blue jacket, I can see the struggle Satan is waging with you. Rise up and come to the **Lord** — praise God."

The room filled **with a chorus** of hallelujahs as one by one people stood, some resolutely, some with their **heads** hanging down. From somewhere a quartet was singing "Softly and tenderly **Jesus is calling**" and as if by **some** force beyond the room people were pulled trembling to their feet. My heart was **beating** wildly as it usually did around this time. A **grey-haired** woman **a** few rows in front lifted her arms to heaven, crying "**Jesus! Saviour!**" and suddenly there was little Anna in the **aisle** with Crazy **Alex** behind her walking **unsteadily** toward the **front**, the eyes of the singing praying **moaning** crowd on their backs.

"God bless you, God bless you." the evangelist was saying to the suddenly born-again believers, shivering like newly shorn lambs at the **front**. I realized with a start that **Tina** was nudging me to go to the front as well. And **without** another thought, I was **walking** arm in arm with **Tina**, down the aisle where we stood on **either** side of Crazy Alex and Baby Anna, **our** hands linked behind **them**.

And that was the beginning of the new **life** for Baby Anna **Makino** and Crazy Alex in the community hall in the summer of 1958, their trembling hands in **Tina's** and mine. The **Makino** parents came after a **few** days to report that Baby Anna was **having** terrible nightmares and was afraid to **come out** of the covers, and perhaps if we let her have Gaby for a week, she might **feel** better. Uncle and I drove over with **Gaby** whose ears seemed permanently glued back throughout the **drive** and whose **trust level** fell several **notches** that night.

But if it was the beginning of new nightmares for Baby **Anna**, it was the release fmm old nightmares for Crazy Alex. The seed of the fear **and** love of God fell into his rocky, weed-choked life and took **root**. The transformation, everyone **agreed**, was **a** miracle. Alex, no longer crazy, no **longer sat** on the **sidewalk** outside the **pool** hall. The following Sunday **morning**, we saw a new, **clean-shaven**, well dressed Al&. **walking down the street** to the United Church with **Tina** on one side and **his** old mother in **a** flowery hat on the other. Even Dog looked better. For a while Dog walked around with **a** red-and-white handkerchief **tied** around **a** splint. **Eventually** he bit the splint off and started to walk **like** a regular dog, which was just as **astonishing** as the miracle of Alex's sobriety.

As for Gaby, he was **returned** to **us** in a potato sack, and emerged with what **I** thought was a slight look of **irritation**. He licked my ears intensely for **a** week. I found it mildly disgusting. □

Poet Joy Kogawa's novel, Obasan (Lester & Orpen Dennys), won the Books in Canada First Novel Award in 1982. She now is at work on a sequel, of which the accompanying excerpt is a chapter.

Lives of girls and women

By Barbara Carey

No Kidding: Inside the World of Teenage Girls. by Myrna Kostash, McClelland & Stewart, 319 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 4539 5).

FLANNERY O'CONNOR once said that anyone who survives childhood is equipped to handle anything, or words to that effect. The same might be said of adolescence. There probably isn't an adult woman alive who can look back at herself as a teenager without recalling some situation fraught with the miseries of insecurity and humiliation. On the other hand, it's also a time of great possibilities, since — though it's banal, it's also true — all the major choices in life still lie ahead. And so when a book appears that offers us "the world of teenage girls," it's appealing — partly because this is the next generation, after all, and it's worth getting to know these kids using Walkmans and hanging out at shopping malls or working behind the counter at fast-food joints, just to get a sense of where the world may be heading, and partly because it touches on our own experience, and we want to know, with a mixture of nostalgia and dread, how different is it from when I was growing up?

Myrna Kostash has fashioned a lively and insightful book on the world of today's girls, long on the substance of her subjects' lives and short (thank heavens) on sociological pontificating. Not that she ignores statistics altogether. Kostash quotes from studies and adult "authorities" quite often, but she uses the data to enhance her more personal material, rather than the other way round. Her book is based mainly on in-depth interviews with 50 teenagers in Edmonton, Vancouver, and Toronto, as well as what Kostash describes as her "field studies" — trips to discos, high-school spotting events, drop-in centres, group homes, and so on.

She can't argue that her study is scientific (she started off by asking co-workers if they knew any teenage girls) but she's certainly thorough. She profiles 12 individuals, from the ambitious "princess" from an affluent family to the street kid determined to get ahead on her own terms to the politically conscious teenager frustrated by what she sees as her classmates' apathetic self-absorption. She includes adolescents from various races

and class backgrounds. And to a great extent she lets all of these girls speak for themselves, on topics ranging from school and jobs to pregnancy and boys. Ah, boys. . . .

Kostash acknowledges that, as a child of the 1960s counter-culture and the consciousness-raising of feminism in the '70s, she began her research curious about how things might differ for the girl growing up in the '80s — especially how they see themselves and how they relate to the male of the species. Well, *Ms* magazine, Germaine Greer, and Kate Millett notwithstanding, in some respects not much has changed. Adolescents are becoming sexually active at an earlier age on average, but boys are still the exasperating "Other."

"My conversation with girls about their boyfriends yielded virtually nothing but complaints," Kostash notes, and there's a ferocious (and familiar) sexual double standard to which the girls subscribe: "I counted the guys around Penny's table — eight guys. She's a slut, man, a real easy rider." In these girls' candid discussions about sex and dating, then is still the underlying notion that males can't control their hormones, and so sexual responsibility — for contraception, for example — lies with the female. Moreover, girls still have their vision of romantic bliss ("I want a guy who's soft but he's got to be able to take control, too") to steer them through what Kostash terms love's "culture of afflictions: shyness, self-doubt, discomposure, heartache."

What emerges from this enjoyable mixture of documentary and documentation is a portrait of a teen world whose values, deep down, don't differ greatly from those of mainstream, adult society. Most of the girls implicitly endorse the values of the status quo. Coming from a generation that championed social change and believed that the power of transformation lay with youth, Kostash is sometimes troubled by this apparent complacency. And yet, if you listen to individual voices, there is a sense of direction — and hope. And what is a group, a generation, if not an aggregation of individuals?

There's a tough and inextinguishable vein of optimism running through *No Kidding*; it pays tribute to a resilience and purposefulness that is far from naive. Indeed, the acuteness of many of these teens' hardships (spending seven months looking for a minimum-wage job that lasts a month, fleeing the family home because of sexual abuse) makes naivety an impossibility. Take Frankie, for instance, a black girl who grew up bouncing from mother to father, temporarily in a group home because her boy-friend has kicked her out:

Sitting at a picnic table behind the house, jabbing her bare toes into the long grass

and laughing low, slow, throaty laughs. It's the future she wants to talk about. Get a job and get out of here. Back into an apartment of her own with her teapots and her books. Finish school. Maybe work and go to school at nights. Pondering what she wants to be: a lawyer, a cop, an accountant.

She wants to travel. She wants her own bed.

It's to Kostash's credit that she tries to present these teenagers as they see themselves. If their ideals seem somehow romantic and old-fashioned, they are at least not unexamined. These teenagers are thinking, looking at the world around them and questioning the place they will make in it. No kidding. □

REVIEW

Poetic justice

By Brent Ledger

Swann: A Mystery, by Carol Shields, Stoddart, 304 pages. \$22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7737 2092 8).

IN ONE POIGNANT scene in the film *Prick Up Your Ears*, Joe Orton's lover alms his despair-filled eyes at the camera and complains about his unfulfilled promise as a writer. Bright, educated, neurotic, orphaned, and gay, he should by rights have been an artist. All he lacked was the talent. What had he done wrong? His bewildered, self-mocking restatement of an old cliché draws laughter from the audience but his question remains, serious, intractable, and unanswered — whence and why comes art?

Carol Shields tackles the problem in *Swann: A Mystery*, her fifth and latest novel. Her answers are as elusive as butterflies fleeing a net, but her wicked, lightly satirical restatement of the question makes for a fascinating story.

The novel revolves around Mary Swann, a *poète naïve*, murdered just before the publication of her first and only book. But *Swann* is more an off-stage presence than a character and the title mystery is not a matter of whodunit or why. The murder case was open and shut — Swann's husband killed her, then shot himself — and Shields has no interest in either the gory details or the psychology of the male. What holds her attention are the arbitrary advents of love and art. *Swann* lived her entire life on a farm in eastern Ontario. She was abused, impoverished, ill-educated, and cut off from the larger cultural tradition (the local library had little poetry, no T.S. Eliot). But somehow she managed to write poetry of genius.

Her life, in short, is a puzzle, baffling the four characters whose lives she

touched: her biographer, Morton Jimmy; her publisher, Frederic **Cruzi**; her **discoverer** and critic, Sarah Maloney; and her **friend**, Rose Hindmarch. Baffled by banality, all four **end up** creating **Swann** anew. Their efforts amount to a **good-natured** ribbing of myth-making in literature, in and out of **academe**. Like a corpse that will not fit its **coffin**, **Swann** is **chopped and prodded** to fit a **pre-conceived notion** of the artist. Jimmy adduces influences that don't exist, citing Emily Dickinson and Jane **Austen** when **he** knows the poet **favoured Bess Streeter Aldrich** and Edna Ferber. Sarah simply **jettisons anything that contradicts her romantic image** of the artist: she **throws out Swann's** rhyming dictionary and refuses to publish a notebook that contains nothing but shopping lists and **notes** on the commonplace: "door latch broken" ... "cut hand on pump" ... "radishes poor." "sun scorching."

In flitting over the **surface** of **Swann's** life Sarah **misses** Shields's point: art doesn't fly out of a **storm** on the mountain or speak from a fire on the plain; it emerges arbitrarily and unannounced **from our** daily lives. Certainly Shields's **own** work is a tribute to that point of view. More than her way with structure.. or her mastery of literary **forms** (from the Victorian **novel** to the modern film in a single bound), it's Shields's portrayal of her characters that **makes the book**. Each has a voice of his or her own and a life radiant with habits, quirks, and tastes. Shields **moves** effortlessly from **28-year-old Sarah**, an English professor with withered feminist ideals and a taste for **silk**, to Rose, a small-town spinster whose Friday-night treat is a small **rye** and ginger, a **warm** bed, and a good thriller.

The characters **are** joined by **their** interest in **Swann** and a cutting **sense** of the inevitability of loss. Each has known loneliness and the teasing intimations of **love**. Rose has never had a **lover**, while **Cruzi** has just lost his wife. The divorced Jimmy falls in love with Sarah long before he has even met her (with **predictable** results), while Sarah has a habit of **trading in lovers at regular intervals**. The four finally meet at a **Swann** symposium in Toronto, and though none is engaged in **anything** quite so banal as "looking for **love**," **there** is a sense, by the **end** of the novel, that the making of poetry and the quest for **love** have become one. **Aptly** enough, the most **eagerly** awaited event at the symposium is the **unveiling** of Mary Swann's last piece of unpublished verse, a set of love poems.

Shields brings her novel to a close with **great** panache, **seamlessly** melding plot with theme. She tips her hat to genre fiction and solves the one mystery that Agatha Christie might recognize — the gradual disappearance of all 250 copies

of **Swann's one book**. But the solution is less important than the **puzzle** that amplifies the **larger** mystery of **art**, its **miraculous birth** and fragile existence. As **Swann's** delicate verse undergoes academic exegesis at the symposium the poetry itself disappears, only to be **reborn** at the end of the book as a group of friends and scholars, in an act of love. **piece together one of the lost poems**. It is a moment of high **ambiguity**, leaving the reader with a **scent of real art**, intense and evanescent all at once, like wood-smoke on the evening air. □

REVIEW

Undiplomatic relations

By I.M. Owen

My Grandfather's House: Scenes of Childhood and Youth, by Charles Ritchie, Macmillan, 181 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9512 3).

CHARLES **RITCHIE'S** published diaries begin in 1937, **three** years after he joined External Affairs and when he was in the midst of **his first** posting abroad, at the legation in Washington. **My Grandfather's House** deals with the years before that, but in a different way. **It's** a collection of **13** essays, only two of which are primarily autobiographical; each of the others is **centred** on a relation, a friend, or an acquaintance of his first 30 years. Only one of them — Elizabeth Smart — is anything of a celebrity.

For the most **part** they are long forgotten, like old photographs **thrown out in a rummage sale**, to which **no one** can now attach an identity. **From** this oblivion I have **sought** to rescue them, for **why** should the famous be the **only ones** to be remembered?

The essays about **relations** (always his mother's relations, the **Stewarts**; there isn't a Ritchie in the bunch) are **particularly** interesting in the way they portray the vanished world of the **Haligonian**



upper crust, for whom "Colonial" was a title to be **worn in honour**, and whose **metropolis** was London — not Montreal; emphatically not Toronto, and not even Boston, the lodestone of the Nova **Scotian lower** orders, as Ritchie noticed when he was at **Harvard**:

The professor **raided** that his mother had a **wonderful cook** from Nova Scotia. "quite **indispensable**." This was my **first** introduction to the indispensability of Nova **Scotians** in cultured Bostonian households. "A Nova **Scotian** maid — so **honest** and clean." "Our gardener from Nova **Scotia** — so **reliable**." I did not relish this **relegation to the helot** status. **the more so as I had grown up in the counter-snobbery** of **Garrison Halifax**, where **all** outside the British Empire, including Americans, were looked upon as a lesser brad.

Ritchie's grandfather died **10** days short of his hundredth birthday, and then not of illness but because he stumbled while putting **coals** on the **fire** and hit his head on the marble mantelpiece. "Never in the **course** of nearly a century had my grandfather done a day's work. This, and his heavy drinking, may have accounted for his **healthy** old age." A characteristic Ritchie **remark**, which tempts the reader to ask **what** accounts for the healthy old age on which the author seems to have entered — he's 81. Perhaps it's the enthusiasm for **sex** that's so apparent in the **diaries**. It made its appearance **early**. Here's **an** incident in the grandfather's house, which would have occurred between the ages of six and 11:

A marble **group** of the Three **Graces** stood on a red velvet pedestal under a **glass case**. Once when **alone** in the drawing-room I **lifted** the **glass case** with guiltily trembling hands and **ran my fingers over the cold breasts of the Graces**. I knew that I was committing sacrilege, but the **desire** for the **unattainable** was **too strong** for me to resist.

Such a family as the **Stewarts** would typically have some sons who were **successful** only in love and **war**. Ritchie's mother's **favourite** brother, Uncle Charlie, was

expelled from the Royal Military College for gambling, dismissed from the Mounted Police for striking a **bullying** corporal, **disappearing** for months into the Yukon, drifting into jobs and bars in **Calgary or Edmonton**, **eking** out his earnings by his gains at poker

— but died a lieutenant-colonel and a DSO, leading his battalion at **Bourlon Wood** in 1918. And there was **Uncle Harry**, whom Ritchie **never** met — **the dashing "Bimbash" Stewart** of the Gordon Highlanders, the **Egyptian** army, and the South African **Light Horse**, who between campaigns lived beyond his means as one of Edward VII's **fast set**. Then there was Gerald **Branscombe**, a

cousin from England, whose marked eccentricity gradually shifted into insanity. The

mental specialists .. were infuriatingly indecisive about the nature of his illness. whether it was of the mind or of body or both. AU agreed, however, that he had new contracted syphilis. Meanwhile his condition grew rapidly worse. He began to hear voices and, in particular, the voice of the Holy Ghost. The mention of the Holy Ghost seemed to decide the specialists that he must be put in an institution.

No doubt with some help from the diaries that he started in his teens, Ritchie gives an impression of an almost infallible memory. Only once does he betray having run two different recollections together. He goes with his friend Julian Barrington, a recent convert to Marxism, to a party in Montreal where everyone is drinking red wine and talking about the Spanish Civil War. Norman Bethune comes in and they all turn to him for enlightenment, but he demands whisky and refuses to talk politics. Later, Barrington and Ritchie leave the party and go to a night-club, which is "packed, mainly with Americans in Montreal to escape the rigours of Prohibition." But Prohibition ended three years before the Spanish War began, and four years before Bethune returned from it.

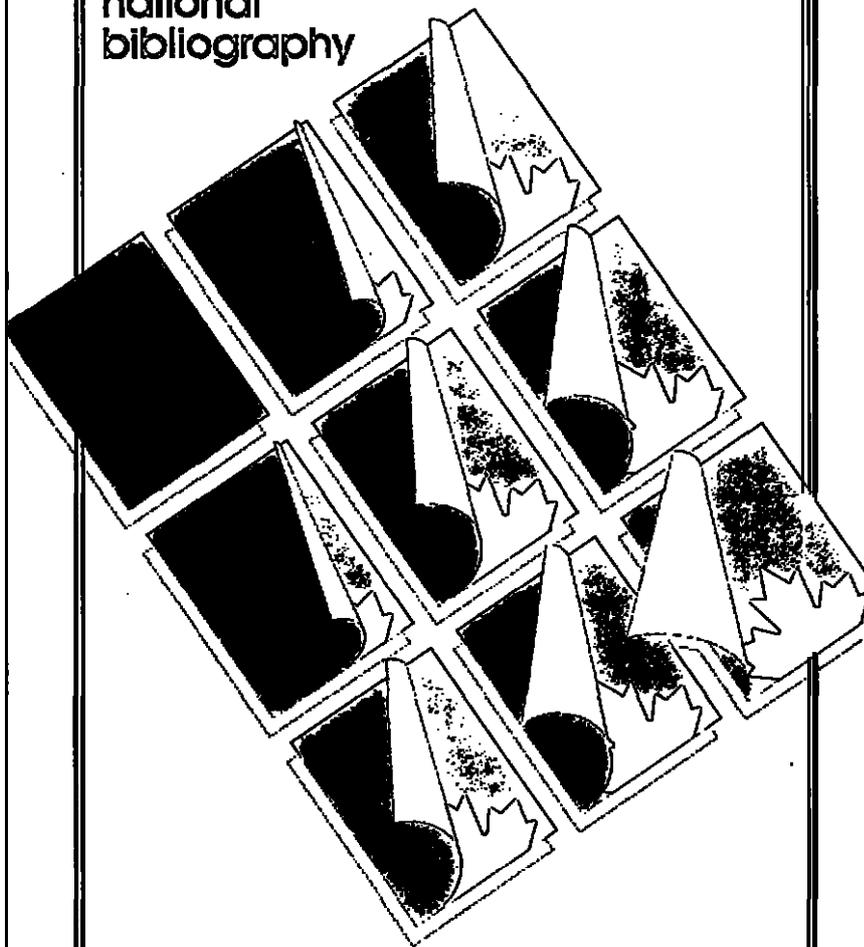
"Fertility Rites," the essay about Elizabeth Smart in her exuberant youth, is interesting especially because it shows her in the context of her family in their house at Kingsmere, and gives a totally different impression from the one I have gathered from accounts of her life, of the Smart parents as narrow-minded puritans.

The quiet centre of the Smart household was Betty's father, Russell Smart. ... Not a great talker himself, he enjoyed the play of discussion around him, smiling tolerantly at outrageous opinions but without condescension, for he was one of those older men to whom the young could talk without censoring their sentiments. In contrast and complement to him was his wife. A tall, pretty-faced woman with an engaging warmth of manner. she enlivened the scene with a touch of the dramatic. She expected people to play up and was impatient of slowness of response. ... Here at Kingsmere unorthodox opinions flourished. We could discuss books that shocked, pictures that were criticized, politics that were disapproved.

The most recent events recorded in this book happened half a century ago; the author's memories go back three-quarters of a century, and his researches into the life of his uncle Bimbash take us back well over a century. Yet it is all presented with a shining clarity and immediacy. The reader's one regret is that it is such a short book. Could we have more, please? □

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For God's sake

By Douglas Glover

The Colour of Blood, by Brian Moore, McClelland & Stewart, 192 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 6448 9).

BRIAN MOORE is a Belfast boy who, in many ways, has never shaken the Irish peat from his travelling shoes. The world of his novels is Catholic, conservative, and faintly medieval. In thematic terms, his pre-eminent interest is in the conflict between authority (father, family, Church) and the unruly human imagination (which he tends to represent in negative terms as fantasy, childishness, dream, sea). His characters are forever straying from the Word and the Law and ending up punished, spiritually thrashed, for their temerity.

In his earlier novels — say, up until *An Answer from Limbo* — Moore fleshed out his cautionary tales with a shrewd psychological realism. In *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*, for example, the authority/imagination conflict is represented as an alcoholic spinster's inner struggle with uncontrollable and destructive erotic fantasies.

Latterly, however, Moore has tended to abandon realism, exteriorizing the conflict and substituting miracles and magic for character and plot. In *The Great Victorian Collection*, a young academic's dream actually comes true in the parking lot outside his motel room, and the dream enslaves and destroys him. In *Cold Heaven*, God actually gives the heroine migraine headaches and intermittently kills her husband in order to force her to tell the world she has seen a vision on the Pacific coast near Carmel. This is really a kind of Catholic horror story, closer to Stephen King than to Graham Greene or Flannery O'Connor.

In his newest book, *The Colour of Blood*, Moore reiterates his old themes but grafts them onto yet another popular genre, the thriller. *The Colour of Blood* is set in an unnamed East Bloc country (not Poland but otherwise very much like Poland, complete with an army general as head of government and a Lech Walesa-like labour leader). Its hero is Cardinal Stephen Bern, a cross between Pope Jean Paul II and John Le Carré's George Smiley.

After narrowly escaping a mysterious assassination attempt, Cardinal Bern discovers that one of his bishops plans to issue a call for national protest at a religious festival honouring the country's martyrs. a call that could plunge the

country into violent revolt and bring on a Soviet invasion. Hard upon the heels of this discovery, Bem is taken into protective custody by the state security police. He escapes, finds out that his captors were really Catholic anti-Communists, flees through the country to disguise, is captured by the real security police, meets the general who runs the country, and agrees to do his best to head off his dissident co-religionists — that is, he cooperates with the Communists.

What is surprising for Western readers who don't closely follow the Byzantine politics of the Church in Communist Europe is that the villains of *The Colour of Blood* are not the Stalinist secret police but the Catholic anti-Communists. Bem's motivation, his idea of God's will, is to see that the Catholic Church survives as a kind of shadow state within the communist state. In the novel (as seems to be true also in Poland), the cardinal accommodates the state apparatus, using the Church to help maintain social order, in return for the state's tacit recognition of Church rights.

Moore seems to be saying that the Church and the Communist state, though philosophically at odds, are alike in that they share a profound interest in the maintenance of authority. He draws a clear parallel between Cardinal Bem and his country's military ruler, General Urban. (Both are celibate, own dogs, went to Jesuit school, etc.) Bem finds himself praising the Communists for much that they have done in his country. Walking through a slum, he thinks, "This is the underside of our state. And yet, I must remember that this misery is now less prevalent than in those days we speak of with false nostalgia. . . . we must recognize that there has been much good in this social change." As an afterthought, he adds, "Of course, we want our freedom."

Reading Moore, one is often reminded of Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, who banishes Jesus so as to maintain the authority of the Church and temporal order — a cold heaven, indeed. — (The discourse of *The Colour of Blood* seems to identify the pathetic would-be assassin with a picture of Christ on Rem's bedroom wall.) In both instances, the Church operates on its communicants as a stern and somewhat distant parent upon a group of fractious and undisciplined children.

The Colour of Blood is not a particularly good thriller. It has a certain structural efficiency that one has come to expect from Moore, but its characters are neither believable nor engaging. (Moore borrows gimmicks from his previous books — photographs that seem to come alive, religious statues that seem to give advice, those migraine headaches — to try

to bring Stephen Bem to life: but where it seemed all right for Judith Hearne to talk to the Sacred Heart, it's a bit weird for a sophisticated prelate to do so.) It is thin on detail. (Moore's decision to invent an imaginary country seems bizarre to say the least.) And its plot devices creak. (Bem keeps walking away from his kidnappers — how stupid can these Catholic zealots be?)

One gas the strange feeling that Moore simply became bored with the idea of saving the Church in Eastern Europe from Russian tanks and wild-eyed democrats. □

REVIEW

Blind faith

By David Stafford

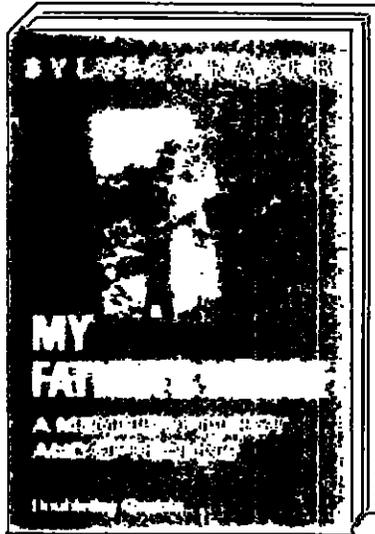
Spycatcher: The Candid Autobiography of a Senior Intelligence Officer, by Peter Wright, Stoddart, 392 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7737 2168 1).

BEFORE READING FURTHER, contemplate this. If *Books in Canada* were a British publication and you were reading this review in Britain, you could receive up to two years in prison under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, which makes the receipt of any unauthorized information communicated by a state employee (or ex-employee, as Peter Wright is) an offence. And *Books in Canada* would be in contempt of the highest court in the land, the Law Lords, which early in August upheld an injunction barring the press in England and Wales (although not in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Channel Islands) from reporting any of the contents of Wright's book.

The risk to the reader is clearly one in theory only. For short of declaring all of England and Wales an official Gulag, it is hard to see how the state could effectively prosecute the thousands of its subjects who have already read copies of the book imported from abroad. And that the Iron Lady has yielded on this front is apparent. She has not attempted to ban the book's import and has also turned a blind eye, it might be noted, to the well-thumbed copy quickly ordered for the House of Commons library. To the press, however, the Law Lords' judgement in the *Spycatcher* case is tangible threat. The latest battle in a campaign that has been waged for more than a year to muzzle Wright. The ex-MI5 man, subsisting until now on his meagre state pension in the safety of Australia, has thus been cast in the role of impoverished and victimized David to the state's determined and enraged Goliath.

Yet, as his book starkly reveals, Wright

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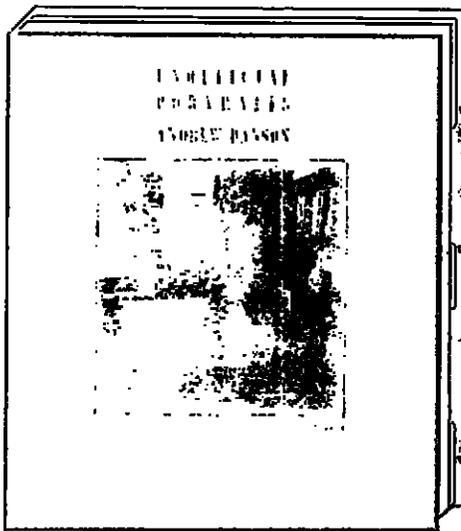
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is ludicrously miscast as a victim of state persecution. On the contrary. For most of his career in MIS, which began in 1955 and ended in 1976. Wright placed his considerable technical expertise as a spy-catcher unreservedly at the service of the state.. That for much of the time he was breaking the law, subverting democracy, and often wrecking people's lives in the process appears to concern him very little even now. True, he sheds occasional crocodile tears over some victim of mistaken identity caught up in a bungled operation or two, but of genuine remorse or even second thoughts about the consistent abuse of state authority he so willingly indulged in, and the havoc caused by his ruthless pursuit of other Davids, there is none. And now that he has made a million on his book, it is clear that here is a man who has unapologetically profited from his amoral service to the state. Shed no tears for Mr. Wright.

That he has become a *cause célèbre* in the struggle for press freedom and a more open society is only one of many paradoxes revealed by *Spycatcher*. Much of this book, it should be said, is by now familiar, and there is very little new for those who have read about the hunt for Soviet moles in MIS and elsewhere in books by Chapman Pincher, Nigel West, and others. Nor, for that matter, is there much new about MIS plots against Harold Wilson's government, allegations that have already been discussed extensively in the press. The story is amplified, but that's all, and after all the hoopla the promised exposé falls flat.

Yet the book proves compulsive reading because it reveals, as no other book has done, the seemingly absurd, as well as the truly absurd, things that happen in the world of counter-intelligence. Although Wright was never quite so important in MIS as publicity leads us to believe — he was never even head of a division — he played a key role in the technical conduct of counter-intelligence, and has a lot to reveal about the intricate and arcane tradecraft of spycatchers. This is not merely technical, although there is plenty about the tricks of installing secret microphones, tapping telephones, and intercepting legal and clandestine radio communications. There is also a great deal of fascinating and instructive discussion about the planning and conduct of operations, the difficult tasks of evaluating results, and the Byzantine politics and rivalries that haunt the corridors of the secret world. It's a tale with all the hallmarks of a good detective story, and the book adds valuable new perspectives on some well-known espionage cases where Wright's expertise played a critical role. For that alone it's worth the price.

Inevitably, however, the book is

dominated by his central role in the search for a Soviet mole in MIS, a hunt that eventually made him so many enemies that it tarnished his career. The evidence Wright presents here for his case against the head of MIS, Sir Roger Hollis, is unlikely to change anyone's mind. What it does do is confirm once again that the world of counter-intelligence is a wilderness of mirrors, a barren and treacherous land where paradox reigns supreme.

Wright, a scientist by training-prior to MIS he worked, like his father, for Marconi — dedicated himself to the search for objective and irrefutable proof of enemy penetration of MIS. For that, he spent thousands of hours poring over the evidence, checking and re-checking the files in the registry, running endless computer checks, and remorselessly and painstakingly analysing intercepted communications, often going 'back to the 1930s, plucked from the ether by the powers of modern technology.

Yet at every crucial twist and turn in Wright's abortive hunt it is clear that, far from being guided by pure science, he was — and remains — deeply influenced by subjective feeling and prejudice. His frequent and uninhibited *ad hominem* judgements on colleagues reveal a man of narrow horizons deeply scarred by youthful bitterness over the Depression, which ruined his family and deprived him of a university education, and often resentful of his more socially successful superiors. Wright's perception of an all-too-complacent and powerful Establishment clearly warped his judgement, deepened his obsession, and drove him to ever more frantic efforts that clearly rested on a bedrock of visceral conviction.

"Espionage," Wright says, "is a crime almost devoid of evidence, which is why intuition, for better or worse, always has a large part to play in its successful detection." Wright's intuition, however, was fickle. When it failed to nail one victim, it rapidly transferred its conviction of guilt to another — with an almost promiscuous abandon. What counted to Wright was not evidence, but faith.

And here is the supreme paradox about the world of counter-intelligence revealed so graphically and unself-consciously by *Spycatcher*, which makes it so compulsively readable.

For what it shows is a world in which teamwork is vital, yet where every colleague is suspect, and every friend a secret enemy. And in this world without trust, where the evidence is always elusive, faith is all. There is certainly no hope, and as for charity, *Spycatcher's* vivid catalogue of the chill imperatives of the state makes graphically clear why its once loyal and faithful servant has been pursued, even beyond absurdity, with such cold determination. □

BRIEF REVIEWS

BELLES LETTRES

Masques of Morality: Females in Fiction. by Johan Lyall Aitken, Women's Press, 190 pages, \$14.95 paper (ISBN 0 88961113 0).

IT HAS ALWAYS been recognized that the fiction a society produces is descriptive of its manners, morals, and attitudes about its members. But the stories we read are also prescriptive as each text becomes a part of our makeup and influences how we perceive ourselves. In *Masques of Morality* Johan Aitken looks at women's sense of identity and morality within today's society as it has been affected by the women in our literary heritage. Aitken emphasizes the need for women to define who they are through the reading and writing of stories just as Canada, a colonial nation, needs its writers to tell the story of its identity.

In this well-documented and thoroughly researched look at 25 women in fiction Aitken is very careful to observe the characters within their historical and social contexts. For example, she does not fall into the trap of bringing 1980s expectations about the roles of women to a discussion of an 18th-century novel. Aitken views the women in each text in terms of "the moral framework that surrounds them, and their individual morality within it." This approach illustrates that within circumstances that are demeaning or limiting to women various responses are possible. Some of the female characters examined are driven to despair, some find a way of titting into their social order with a degree of grace, others rebel against a system that does not allow their personal growth, and yet another kind of woman tries to change the system itself through her actions.

The problem with *Masques of Morality* is that it covers such a wide range of fiction that the reader is likely to be unfamiliar with some of the works in question. This makes for slow and confusing reading at times. But what is most interesting about this book is not so much Aitken's analysis of the works of fiction as her choice of the texts themselves. The selection ranges from notable literary works such as *Emma*, *The Diviners*, and *Portrait of a Lady* to the more popular fiction of *Gone With the Wind* and *Anne of Green Gables* and even includes children's stories like *The Country Bunny* and *Hansel and Gretel*. Aitken admits that the choices are idiosyncratic, but suggests that the standards of "great" literature have been set largely by men,

and many teats (*Anne of Green Gables* being a good example), though not considered literary, have nevertheless had a profound effect on how women perceive themselves.

To accommodate the varied literary pasta of her readers, 10 alternative teats for each chapter are suggested and readers are encouraged to develop their own personal version of this critical work. This emphasis on a subjective kind of criticism, which allows a person to rely on her own responses to a book, is distinctly feminine. *Masques of Morality* begins with a discussion of critical theory in general and feminist criticism in particular in which Aitken says "we may find that the methodology conceived by the female imagination is every bit as significant as the content." This is certainly true of *Masques of Morality*.

— TRACY SHEPHERD MATHESON

North of Intention: Critical Writings 1973-1986, by Steve McCaffery, Nightwood Editions, 239 pages, \$14.95 paper (ISBN 0 88971 107 0).

THIS BOOK collects 21 of Steve McCaffery's theoretical and critical essays from the past 13 years, and in many ways it is an important book. The kind of writing on which McCaffery brings to bear his line mind and wide reading is comparatively little known in Canada: the language-centred or non-referentialist American poets who began to publish in the late '60s and early '70s. And although McCaffery's sources (Barthes, Derrida, Kristeva, Bakhtin et al.) have become distressingly fashionable in Canadian academic (and poetic) circles in the past few years, he mostly manages to avoid the monster of incestuous citing and genuflecting into which the contemporary academic paper has been transformed (although his footnotes, admittedly, can be formidable enough).

The book contains interesting readings



of George Bowering, bp Nichol, Fred Wah, and Christopher Dewdney among others, as well as Michael Palmer, Jackson Mac Low, and some further poets who gathered around the magazine *L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E*. McCaffery's central concern in all of these texts is the profound ambiguity of the idea of the Subject, and his theoretical approach is to see writing as what he calls a general economy, rather than as an intentional structure. Though one may disagree with some of his assumptions and arguments, the theory yields sometimes fascinating readings of individual writers.

If I have an argument with this book, it is not with its assumptions but its style. Nichol once remarked in an interview that McCaffery would never use a one-dollar word if he could find a ten-dollar word, and *North of Intention* bears him out. I like ten-dollar words too, but there are sentences and whole paragraphs in this book that could well go unaltered into an updated edition of *The Pooh Perplex*: "The masses, to whom this narrative environment is directed and from whose conceptual complementarity it gains its definition as media, is a nebulous, a-social abstraction, serialized into atomistic simulacrities (the 'privatism' of the family television receiving identical content as millions of other homes, simulates individuality and laminates this upon the actual un-differentiation of the masse-s)."

The inelegance of McCaffery's prose irresistibly suggests intellectual posturing, which is untrue in his case and thus regrettable. It will also reduce the audience for this book, and that is a shame.

— BRUCE WHITEMAN

BIOGRAPHY

Hard Choices A Life of Tom Berger, by Caroline Swayze, Douglas & McIntyre, illustrated, 256 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88894 522 1).

IT WAS AS commissioner for the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry (1975-77) that Tom Berger first became a noted international figure. This "inquiry without walls" and the Alaska Native Review Commission in 1983-85 were designed to educate mainstream North America and the world about native peoples and give others a chance to "walk in their moccasins," so to speak. Berger wanted to know what went on in the hearts and minds of native peoples. As he put it, these people were the experts, not the

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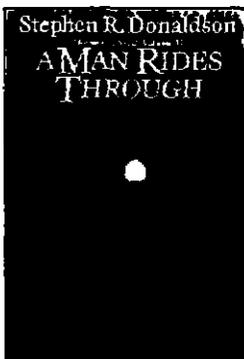
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anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and geographers. "You are writing a new scroll of history," he told the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in 1985.

Carolyn Swayze traces the highlights of Berger's career, beginning with his early days as a lawyer for the Nishga and other native people in B.C., oppressed workers, and accused criminals. We see clearly that, like native people, Berger is determined to remain himself; thus the reason for some of his "hard choices."

Lawyer, politician, judge, commissioner, teacher, author, director, lawyer — how could any man accomplish so much in a mere 25 years? Each chapter of Swayze's book is as interesting as the last. The book is well researched, documented, and indexed, and for the most part the writing is unobtrusive.

Berger plays an important part in heralding the "new scroll" of the Inuit and other native groups, and he may very well be writing one himself. To paraphrase an old Ojibway saying, I wonder what his future will do to him.

— LENORE KEESHIG-TOBIAS

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

King of the Mob: Rocco Perri and the 'Women Who Ran His Rackets, by James Dubro and Robin F. Rowland. Viking (Penguin), illustrated, 336 pages. \$22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 670 81533 0).

THE AUTHORS OF *King of the Mob: Rocco Perri and the Women Who Ran His Rackets* state that "organized crime is not glamorous." True, being blasted apart by a shotgun (the fate of Bessie Starkman, Perri's first wife) is not particularly enchanting. Yet there is something about those archetypal American desperadoes, men such as Al Capone or Jesse James, that stirs our imaginations and makes our Canadian counterparts seem rather wimpy in comparison. The Americans, when it comes to organized violence, will always produce the bigger pile of skulls and thus inflame the imagination of Hollywood in a way no Canadian outlaw can hope to do.

In *King of the Mob* James Dubro and Robin Rowland do not fall into the trap of portraying Perri as a Canadian-content rival to Capone. Instead, through impressive research, they demonstrate how Canada's bizarre prohibition laws paradoxically made mobsters and the government partners in the bootlegging trade, creating a perfect environment for the growth of Perri's operations. Ultimately, Perri became the undisputed head of organized crime in the Niagara-Buffalo region, and established Hamilton as the mob capital of Canada.

Yet what made Perri unique was his choice of common-law wives. Defying the

Italian Catholic, patriarchal bias of his organization, Perri formed consecutive liaisons with Bessie Starkman and Annie Newman, Polish Jews who originally settled in Toronto. Furthermore, he allowed them to play an enormous role in the running of his gang; Perri, in effect, established Starkman and Newman as the



two most powerful female mobsters in North American history.

King of the Mob is an engrossing study of Rocco Perri, yet the most intriguing sections of this book, deal with "the women who ran his rackets." Anomalies within the world of organized crime. Starkman and Newman prevent *King of the Mob* from becoming just another book about the Mafia. Perhaps this book would have been better titled: *Queens of the Mob: The Women Who Ran Rocco Perri*.

— TIMOTHY CHAMBERLAIN

Cage, by George McWhirter, Oberon Press, 216 pages, \$29.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 659 3) and \$14.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 660 7).

BEN CARRAGHER, a Canadian priest posted to Mexico, establishes a bird-cage factory in the economically depressed town of Tetelcingo. The choice of cages is not accidental, for Carragher is fascinated with images of incarceration, a reflection of the extent to which he is limited and confined by his obsession with his origins, his illegitimacy, the mystery surrounding his mother's identity, and the ties that bind him to a father he repudiates. He experiences love as a cage in which the prisoner sickens and dies, yet in actuality he is captive to a personal mythology that acts as a distorting lens through which all perception is filtered. When his parishioners lock him in the church to prevent his departure, Carragher undergoes a spiritual crisis.

Unfortunately, George McWhirter fails to make this priest convincing or interesting. The Mexican villagers are full of life, their conversation pungent and droll, except when they enter into the inner world of the Father and become as

wooden as he. The heavy-handedness of delineation of Carragher also characterizes the elaborate structuring of events to mirror his preoccupations, as well as the endless use of symbols and imagery to chart his spiritual travail. This material is laboured and overwrought. The lively and entertaining elements of the novel succeed despite the dreariness of the central theme.

The young girl nursing the priest during his nervous collapse becomes pregnant, apparently a case of immaculate conception. Carragher refuses to believe that he is the unwitting agent of this miracle, which seems a mockery of his fantasies about his own conception. At the very last moment, during a baptismal plunge into the gorge, he accepts the divine nature of the event and looks forward to the birth of the child. He is freed from the sin of attempting to be his own creator. This is too little too late for the reader, however, who has spent what seems an eternity closeted with this man's *idée fixe*.

— SHELAGH GARLAND

Rue du Bac, by Tony Foster, Methuen, 296 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 458 99860 5).

IN RECENT YEARS Tony Foster has made quite a name for himself in Canadian publishing. His *Meeting of Generals* was an unexpected critical success. While his new thriller, *Rue du Bac*, won't push Forsyth or Follett off the airport book racks, it shows that he has learned a trick or two about his craft.

Rue du Bac is a textbook thriller, and our heads spin with complicated, if forced subplots. International intrigue, with the usual dire consequences for world security, abounds: a tragic, but shrewd old Parisian homicide investigator searches for the solution to puzzling murders; scandal wafts through the French government; flashbacks carry us back to the world wars; and two innocents, one a Montreal businessman with FLQ friends, the other a young woman soon to find out some shocking news about her family tree, fall in love as they are chased across Paris and France.

The cause of all the fuss is revealed: portraits in a Rue du Bac shop have brought into the open some unsavoury events that must be covered up. The revelation may not be strong enough to carry the weight of the novel, but it does pull it together.

Rue du Bac is inventive and carefully constructed, and once in a while the action clicks in that magical way a first-rate thriller must. The last third of the novel reassures us of Foster's talents, enough to keep us interested in what he will give us next.

— B.K. ADAMS

MIXED MEDIA

Wars Without End: A Personal Adventure, by Eric Downton, Stoddart, 368 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 07737 2091 X).

IF THERE WERE a rule that no one could publish memoirs **less eventful** than Eric Downton's, the autobiography business would go into a sharp decline. Hardly a household name **among** most of his fellow Canadians, the Vancouver Sun's former foreign editor (**he retired in 1982**) was a "eyewitness to most of the wars and kindred tragedies of our time. The *Daily Worker* sent the **20-year-old Ottawa** youth to cover the Spanish Civil War, but it was Reuters, the powerful British news agency, that sent him most of the rest of the way from Shanghai in 1940 to Beirut in the 1970s.

Eric Downton floated on a manure barge with Chinese communists, rode with General George Patton, and flew over Germany with the RAF. He was in Jerusalem for the birth of Israel, in Seoul when the Chinese arrived in 1951, and in Elizabethville when Patrice Lumumba declared war on Katanga. He trudged through Indochina with the French Foreign Legion and came back when Americans had helped create the Vietnam War. From Aden to Zweibrücken, Eric Downton was there to see the shooting and, sooner or later, to be shot at.

The result is a fast-paced history of our violent times, full of famous names, wisdom before the event and enough excitement to entertain the stay-at-home citizens of our peaceable kingdom. Eric Downton is no philosopher, but it is hard to argue with his theme: give" human nature, war correspondents will never be out of work. — DESMOND MORTON

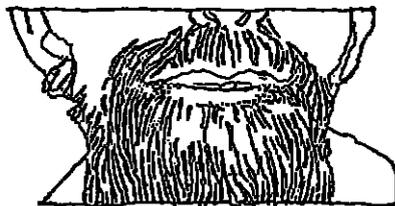
The **New Morningside Papers**, by Peter Gzowski, McClelland & Stewart, 432 pages, \$16.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 3745 7).

IMAGINE THIS. A restaurant critic visits his grandmother for Sunday dinner. In Monday's paper he publishes a review in which he points out that the old lady overcooks her roast, undercooks her spuds, and gets her soup out of a can. Would this be fair?

In some ways, reviewing Peter Gzowski's *New Morningside Papers* is a bit like that. For one thing, to the numberless CBC listeners who, like me, think he's the best radio interviewer on the planet, Peter is just like family. We never explain him to our friends. We say, "I heard it on Gzowski" as we might say, "Aunt Edna told me."

For another thing, *The New Morningside Papers* is to literature as minute steak is to haute cuisine. But that's OK. This

book isn't meant to be literature. It's really a mnemonic device, a collection of essays ranging from the short to the extremely short, culled largely from letters written to (and read on) CBC's Morning side. Its real purpose is to recall Gzowski's toast-and-honey voice, to remind you of all those wonderful people you've heard from on the show, the sort of people who live thousands of miles from the nearest electric lightbulb, the sort who come on the air to tell about their most memorable pair of socks.



The eye, however, is a less forgiving organ than the ear. My guess is that a lot of these pieces made terrific radio. Far too many of them make less than terrific reading. Quite a few are just too short. Too many are by writers who, however sincere or passionate about their subjects, simply don't have the craft to make the reader care. Sometimes the editor is insufficiently ruthless: he prints, for instance, 16 letters on the origin of the Great Canadian Keep-Your-Fork Joke.

There's simply too much here: too many voices, topics, moods, a vast surface with almost no depth. Longer works from fewer contributors would, I think, have made this a better read; but then it wouldn't have been such a hot listen. There are also, along the way, some splendid little pieces, ranging from Timothy Findley's moving elegy for Margaret Laurence to Art Hester's delightful autobiodoggerel. Taken together, I don't think they add up to a very good book. I also don't think that will stop many Morningside listeners from buying it. Would you quit eating at your grandmother's on account of an underdone potato? — GARY DRAPER

THE PAST

Canada 1900-1945, by Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, University of Toronto Press, 427 pages, \$27.50 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 5690 3).

ONE WOULD BE hard pressed to point to a more convincing argument for the notion of circular history than *Canada 1900-1945*, the authors' follow-up to *Canada Since 1945*, published in 1981. It is perhaps their good fortune that many contemporary issues in Canada had their genesis in the opening decades of this century. Free trade? The Reciprocity election of 1911 pitted Ontario against the West.

Immigration? By terms of the 1906 Act, "Immigrants were obliged to come by direct continuous journey from their homeland." Even the high cost of housing in the midst of a construction boom is a phenomenon that urbanites of the 1910s and the 1980s have in common.

However Bothwell et al. do not promote a "presentist" view in this hook. Depending largely on economic data and political developments, they present a synthetic portrait of the years in which Canada became an independent urban nation. The fall of Laurier, the rise of Mackenzie King, and the antics of politicians like Bible Bill Aberhart and Mitch Hepburn are duly noted. Feminism, prohibition, western settlement, the Depression, and Canadian participation in the wars receive treatment that is academically sound and clearly written.

In a 400-page book the authors devote only 30 pages to culture. Though they give adequate coverage to radio, the CBC, and the NFB, literature gets only passing attention and publishing next to none. The Group of Seven arc trotted out, while sport is confined to hockey. The formation of the United Church — the most important religious event in the period — passes unmentioned.

Canada 1900-1945 is a flawed success. Where it is strongest it is well written and authoritative, but in framing their portrait the professors reduce the margins.

— PETER D. JAMES

New France 1701-1744: A Supplement to Europe, by Dale Miquelon, McClelland & Stewart, 346 pages, \$39.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 1533 X).

CANADIAN HISTORIANS have tended lately to tame the fur-trading habitant of New France, portraying him as a sober peasant rather than the carousing voyageur who once splashed his way through Parkman's pages. The roistering image was based on observation, such as that of the 18th-century French missionary Charleboix, who commented that Canadian youth contracted from the fur trade "a habitual libertinism of which they can never completely rid themselves" while a" intendant of the colony summed up the fur trade's attractions as "idleness, independence and debauchery." This view has been revised by historians such as Louise Dechêne and Sylvia van Kirk who suggest, respectively, that only a small proportion of French-Canadian men actually went west, and that even those who did had incentives to enter into Indian forms of marriage, relatively monogamous relationships that consolidated fur-trade alliances with the bride's family or tribe.

Dale Miquelon's latest addition to the Canadian Centenary Series, *New France*

1701-1744, weighs in on the side of the fur trade as a **major liberating influence** on French-Canadian society. He points out that there were many **more voyageurs than fur-trading contracts suggest**, since myriad **government restrictions and a large illegal trade** (as many as **one-third** of the furs **were** smuggled out via the English settlement at Albany) gave every incentive to **clandestine** activity. Miquelon estimates that perhaps 25 per cent of the male population of New France was involved in the trade: mostly unmarried farm lads attracted, he believed, by the prospect of **sowing wild oats**. While the fur trade may have served as a safety valve in an otherwise conservative and **hierarchical** society, it also opened an avenue to Canadian wealth in a colony whose top **officials** and entrepreneurs tended to be **French** rather than French Canadian.

The book's strength lies not in portraying this **society** (women and children scarcely inhabit these pages) but its analysis of **Canadian** development in the context of shifting **policies** and economic trends in the mother **country** — an **important but arduous task** that Canadian historians have tended to neglect. We are told that the colony's troubled early history unfolded in the **context** of a long French depression and we see its fortunes **rise with the growth** of a **French commercial** empire after the depression lifted around 1720.

With the revival of **French** trade came heightened **Anglo-French** rivalry. The **never-quite-profitable** colony was increasingly valued as a strategic area, its Far-Flung posts and Indian allies serving to hem in the British colonists on the seaboard and tie down large numbers of British redcoats **while France** chalked up victories in Europe and the Indies. A pawn on **this** grand chessboard, New France **merited** little more than a glance from Versailles when General Wolfe knocked it from the game in 1759.

— JAN NOEL

The **Russian Album**, by Michael Ignatieff. **Viking** (Penguin), illustrated, 191 pages, gX.95 cloth (ISBN 0 670 81057 6).

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF'S paternal grandparents, Paul and **Natasha**, who are the main **protagonists** of *The Russian Album*, both died just two years before his birth. But both had produced idiosyncratic, unpublished memoirs, as well as five sons who carried vivid, if **sometimes contradictory**, **recollections** of their turbulent childhoods into old age. They also bore into **exile** a **collection** of family photographs and a few precious objects that would be **"vital emblems of continuity"**

in their Canadian grandson's **own** peripatetic childhood. From these legacies, Michael Ignatieff has fashioned a gracefully written saga that tells of his grandparents' achievements (he **was** minister of education under the doomed Nicholas II, she a noblewoman of distinguished lineage), as well as their **dispossession** and **exile**.

As its title **suggests**, the book drew part of its inspiration from the **Ignatieff** family album, and the **author makes** frequent references to **specific images** that seem to crystallize otherwise inaccessible moments, even describing how he scrutinized some of them with a magnifying glass, as if **searching** for the clue that might close the chasm between his grandparents' world and his own. Mad-denyingly, only a few of these are **reproduced**, badly, in the book. Although Ignatieff maintains that the project was not a "voyage of self-discovery" but rather an attempt to **"preserve memory"** for future generations, the **opening** and closing chapters telling of his own ambivalence toward the claims of illustrious **ancestry** and his dealings with his Father and uncles — the last surviving generation to have lived **through** the Revolution — are in many ways more compelling than the **respectful**, seamless narrative he has created from the drama and chaos of his ancestors' lives. — ANNE DENOON

POETRY

The Northern Red Oak: Poems for and About Milton Acorn. edited by James Deahl. **Unfinished Monument Press**, 74 pages, \$10.00 paper (ISBN 0 920976 35 2).

SINCE HIS DEATH just over a year ago, **four books** by or about Milton **Acorn** have been published, all but one of them through the efforts of James **Deahl**, a **friend** and disciple in Acorn's last years. We owe to Deahl the Aya Press reissue of Acorn's **first** three books (*I Shout Low and Other Poems*), a volume of poems **gathered from magazines and not hitherto printed in book form** (The *Uncollected Acorn*), and **this slim festschrift** of poems written for or in memory of "The People's Poet."

Deahl's tirelessness arises out of reverence, debts owed, and a genuine admiration for **Acorn's** work. **Even** those — and they are legion — who **were** the



targets of the **Island** poet's ill **will**, scorn, and simple **craziness** while he was **alive** are united in agreement that he wrote a number of poems that **are** deservedly among the canon. Deahl's admiration is a bit uncritical, it seems to me, at least insofar as he inflates Acorn's **central** role in the various poetry **scenes** of which he was a part or an observer. Acorn did always gather other poets around him, but they were not always or even usually the major poets: and to sketch Acorn's **Vancouver years** without mentioning the equally (or more) important poets who **clustered around Tish** — whatever Acorn himself felt about them (and much of what he felt was unprintable) — **distorts literary** history. Acorn has no need whatsoever of the half-truths of mythology, to say nothing of a push toward **canonization**.

The poems Deahl has collected **here** vary a good deal, as such an anthology is bound to. It is nice that some of them are not **memorials** but **variously** poems that Acorn particularly liked, or **concerned** with things that **were important** to him. A few are well-meaning but bad, which is to say that the poet's heart was in the **right** place, but was not necessarily connected **with** his or her **pen**. I particularly enjoyed Ralph **Gustafson's** "The **Minotaur** Comes to Montreal." I don't agree **with** Deahl's assertion that Acorn was "the **finest** poet ever to write in Canada," but it is obvious from this **selection** that he moved and affected an **extraordinary** number of people. **Chris Faiers** puts it wryly: "*More Poems For People* is still/the only book I read often enough/to hide my money in."

— BRUCE WHITEMAN

Southeasterly, by Andrew **Wreggitt**, Thistle-down Press, 63 pages, 820.00 cloth (ISBN 0 920633 24 2), 88.95 paper (ISBN 0 920633 25 0).

THERE ARE COMMONLY said to be two sides to the psyche — the subjective and the objective, or as they are also **frequently called**, the emotional and the physical or the inner and the outer. But no matter what labels get **marched out**, they all **describe a split** that has haunted mankind since it **first** clambered out of the trees forgotten millennia ago.

I know of only three remedies for **this** rupture: love, which is hard to learn; religious **experience**, which is dangerous and rare; and poetry, which **combines** a little of both; and, despite the torrent of **publications** spewing forth from the **great** and small presses of this country, is as hard to **find** as either. But in its genuine **form** (no matter what form that takes) poetry cures, however momentarily, the split: it gives the exterior world **such**

vivacity, the inner world such concrete relevance, that it's **no longer** possible to tell them apart.

Looked at **this** way, *Southeasterly*, a third collection by the young B.C. poet Andrew Wreggitt, is heavily **weighted** on the objective or factual side of things. **Much** of his poetry is of **the** plaid-shirt school: it treats of the usual **loggers**, **fishermen**, and **labourers** who **earn** their **living** in the usual harsh places. Wreggitt **also** has a passionate historical interest **which** manifests itself in poems about missionaries, **early** B.C. settlers, and Indians. He writes quite well on all these subjects, with a **convincing** muscularity and a comprehensive eye. But much of this **work** has a documentary **feel**, a too plodding dependence on the concrete **reality** that **lies** behind the **work**. One gets a little starved for **that** sense of sodden uplift, of objects made translucent by paradox or **some** unexpected emotion.

Wreggitt's most satisfying poems are often his more **private** ones. In the simple poem "Kindling," the narrator **lays** a tire **while** his lover sleeps in a nearby tent. The language proceeds quietly, almost delicately, and with the final **perfect** line is suddenly shot through (**as** the reader is too) **with** the presence of **love**. "The Man Who Fe!! From Heaven," **perhaps** Wreggitt's best, looks at an ancient **figure** of a man carved in a rock and **filled** with rainwater. It ends:

His **body** is water, his **skin** is rock
Someone has left a penny
fallen through his heart

The poem does what the penny does and for an instant one is not **simply** reading good **writing** — which after all is available in **novels** and the better **magazines** — but **touching** that **lost** world which is poetry's special and only providence.

— JOHN BEMROSE

SPORTS & ADVENTURE

Mean Business: The Creation of Shawn O'Sullivan, by Stephen Brunt, Viking (Penguin), illustrated, 271 pages, \$22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 670 81679 5).

SHAWN O'SULLIVAN — the soft-spoken, clean-cut lad who pummels opponents in the **ring** and **mugs** **boyishly** in those restaurant **commercials** — is a Canadian "hero." **While** his career has faltered and may **fizzle**, his **success** as a **celebrity** endures. But *Globe and Mail* reporter Stephen Brunt paints no haloes in *Mean Business*. It is instead a cool, **intelligent** dissection of the **career** and **marketing** of Shawn O'Sullivan.

Brunt gives a sensitive portrait of the "boy from Leaside," and depicts with **gritty** realism the **Cabbagetown** Kid's **trials** as an amateur and **Olympic** boxer. *Mean Business* catches the excitement of

the early days, but probes the dark side of this violent sport, its promotion and its viscera! popularity.

In turning pro after his Olympic **silver** medal in 1984, O'Sullivan became a **commodity**, carefully packaged for a Canadian audience and for entry into the U.S. market. **where** the **big** bucks could be made. To be **sure**, O'Sullivan and his **handlers** had more **integrity** than most in boxing. But the **marketing** of O'Sullivan was not without complicity in the seamy side of the business. Behind the strategy was a simple premise: in a still **implicitly** racist sport, a clean-cut, white boxer could become the darling of an affluent, white audience — a lodestone for tight promoters, network moguls, and ad agencies.

The **critical** perspective gives a crisp and **compelling** intelligence to *Mean Business*, and it deserves to endure as a penetrating **commentary** on professional sport long after O'Sullivan has fought his last.

— B.K. ADAMS

REVIEW

Smooth skating

By Douglas Malcolm

King Leary, by Paul Quarrington, Doubleday, 288 pages, \$21.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 2.5138 6).

It's *DE RIGUEUR* these days for hockey players, whether of Wayne Gretzky's **calibre** or mere journeymen like Tiger Williams, to **publish** their ghosted **auto**-biographies. These tomes follow a **predictable** pattern that begins with **playing** **skinny** on an archetypal frozen pond and ends with **glory** at the Stanley Cop. Usually they are plodding affairs that only the most fervent fan could **enjoy**. Even Ken Dryden's acclaimed *The Game* reeks of earnestness. Paul Quarrington provides much-needed relief from this dreary tradition in his new novel, *King Leary*.

The nickname of Quarrington's eponymous hero, the hockey legend Percival "King" L&y, is a **not-too-subtle** clue to his **resemblance** to the late King Clancy. The fictional Leary played and coached in the same era as Clancy and (as was Clancy) is Irish and feisty & hell. As the **novel** opens he is living in a nursing home in South Grouse, Ont., where he is **approached** by a Tomnto ad man who, **having** **discovered** that Leary's only tipple is **ginger** ale, offers him \$10,000 to do a TV commercial **with** the latest hockey sensation, Wayne — oops! — Duane Killebrew. As a bonus, he **arranges** for a

special King Leary night at the Toronto Gardens. AU this excitement triggers Percy's **memory** of the past, **especially** of two former cronies, Clay Clinton and Manny Ozikean — the one a **smooth**-talking patrician in the **Conn Smythe** mould who made his mark as a hockey builder, the other Leary's **chief** rival who died young, ravaged by alcohol. With **these** two **making** frequent appearances, King Leary follows Percy as he skates on Ottawa's **frozen** canal, attends a **bizarre** reform **school** run by hockey-mad monks, takes part in the **attack** on Vimy Ridge and, of course, plays superb hockey.

His memory churning, by the time Leary arrives in Toronto — with a male nurse and his room-mate, Edmund "Blue" Hermann, in tow — his two dead friends have **begun** to appear in the **flesh**, reminding him of events he would sooner forget. In **keeping** with the title's Shake spearean take-off, Quarrington piles up the evidence against his **cocky** hero. It's not just coincidence that his wife Chloe becomes an invalid, that his sons fail to **live** up to his **expectations**, that his friends sink into **alcoholism** while Leary remains hearty well into old age. As past and **present** merge, *King Leary* lurches toward a macabre conclusion that sees Leary trying to atone for the sins of a lifetime.

Leary tells his story in a **breezy**, folksy, **engaging** manner, even when he crows about his prowess on the ice. Included are his **colourful** observations on incontinence in the elderly ("Unless you know exactly what God's got in store for you, don't laugh"); on why people pay to watch Toronto play hockey ("for the same reason that some people watch automobile races, the possibility of a great catastrophe"); on a man so old that "if hi life flashed in front of his eyes there'd have to be an intermission"; and on Toronto during the First World War fit "looked as if it had been **designed** and **built** by a committee of Sunday School teachers").

Quarrington's invention of the **King** **single-handedly** sustains the story through thin patches — though Leary's effervescent personality occasionally **pulls** the novel off the course Quarrington has set for it — and his **quasi-mystical** rendering of hockey should **appeal** to most fans. Leary describes such techniques as "the St. Louis Whirlygig," which he used to **bedazzle** his opponents, as though he were a **Zen** master passing on **arcane** lore.

Despite an **undertone** of incongruous **darkness**, *King Leary* is unflaggingly entertaining and for this achievement alone a welcome addition to the **literature** of Canada's most beloved sport. **Future** writers of hockey autobiographies would be **well** advised to read it. Perhaps as a public gesture its publishers should donate a few copies to the NHL. □

Tuppence Ha'Penny is a Nickel

by
Francis X. Atherton



"A lovingly fictionalized account of [the author's] parents' early years in England and their eventual immigration to Canada in the eventful years between 1889 and 1909. This is storytelling of the kind that leaves the reader avid for another installment, lighted by a warm and delightful sense of humour, and a keen eye for the endearingly ridiculous." —Toronto Star

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REVIEW

Skin deep

By Ray Filip

Other Voices: Writings by Blacks In Canada, edited by Lorris Elliott, Williams-Wallace, 188 pages, \$19.95 cloth QSBN 0 88793 048 5) and 39.93 paper (ISBN 0 88795 038 8).

EUROPEAN LITERATURE has benefited from black writers such as Aesop, Pushkin, and Dumas. American culture has incorporated the voices of Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Alice Walker, Marge Piercy, or Imamu Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones). But Canadian blacks, like Canadian whites, still do not know if they are coming or going with their identity problems. **Other Voices: Writings by Black in Canada**, edited by Lorris Elliott, is a collection of poetry, prose, and drama without any direction beyond had instinct.

The very word "other" in the title is a dim bulb in regard to visible minorities. It cues the reader (black, white, or other) to expect stereotypes. That is exactly what follows. "Nigger," "fight," "pain," "passion," "cause," "rage," "tears": the language falls predictably flat — though the suffering motivating the outpouring is very real. A few entries break through the barrier of boredom to move a heart and mind willing to open this anthology, which could have been an important book.

Discovering new authors saves the volume from being another booby job. "Market in the Tropics," by Theresa Lewis, evokes the sounds, smells, and spirit of the place: "Mangoes/Tamarinds/home-made baskets with locks fitted/Wild meat on hooks/herbs and peppers exhibited/Stalls of watercress — /darkest green/Bananas/eggs and ochroses — /largest ever seen ... and fish/fresh from the sea/The smell of spices/mingle/with hot raisin bread/incense/and camphor/for dressing the dead."

"The Profile of Africa," by Maxine Tynes, expresses the sensuous beauty of blackness: "brown black tan coffee coffee cream ebony/beautiful, strong, exotic in profile/flowering lips/silhouette obsidian planes, curves, structure/like a many-shaded mosaic/ we wear our skin like a flag/we share our colour like a blanket ... /my face/my skin/the dark flash of eye/the profile of Africa."

A good poet such as George Elliott Cl& is demeaned by embarrassing publication acknowledgements after each of his five poems. And even more amateurish than that, a poem by Win-

nifred Davis and Ebonie Rowe comes annotated with the postscript in brackets: "written at age 15." Apology? Or girl wonders?

Beulah Bland is as bland as a greeting card: "... And the nicest sound of all/That of a baby's cry in the hall/This sorely makes a joyful street/A place where heats should meet and greet."

The prose doesn't get any better. Here is an excerpt from Enid D'Oyley's short story "Imprimatur-Imprint," about a black woman who falls in love with a white man:

"Marriage," she heard him say between kisses, "ha bourgeois institution. Not for us; you know that. of course."

"Oh!" Her heart cringed at the hurt, for so she considered it to be, undoubtedly reinforced by the shades of all those who through the ages had been bedded, but never wed. To share his bed, but never his name; that right reserved only for his .. kind."

A black Harlequin romance?

"The Plymouth," by Ernesto Cuevas, is an endearing exhaust-pipe dream. An upwardly mobile fellow by the name of Morris fantasizes about owning a Mark IX Jaguar. His wishful thinking eventually settles for a Plymouth, which runs on in his empty reveries as an unobtainable status symbol.

Lorris Elliott upholds the traditional editorial bias of over-representing his work — one whole play and the final act of another, which take up 21 pages. "The Trial of Marie-Joseph Angelique/Negress and Slave" is a potentially powerful story about a female slave executed in 1734 for burning the town of Montreal after being jilted by her white lover, Claude. In Elliott's professorial hands, Marie-Joseph Angelique dies a second death. No slave ever talked this way:

Le Code Noir, indeed ... the law by which the privilege to own slaves was preserved For the moneyed man ... the law which sealed our fate forever ... for if a so-called fugitive slave should stay away a month after his escape, his ears were cut off and a fleur de lys branded on his shoulder ... after two months, should he not return, another fleur de lys upon his other shoulder and the tendons of his knees were cut but should he, tasting of his God-given freedom, refuse to give himself up any longer, he would be condemned to death. This, mon amie Marie, is the liberté de choix that I enjoyed au dix-huitième siècle in the eighteenth century in Montreal, Quebec, New France .. here in Canada.

It is a crime that Fred Ward, one of the most inventive playwrights, novelists, musicians, and poets in North America, is allotted a scant five pages to deliver his gentle jive. Major voices such as Austin Clarke, Neil Bissoondath, Harold Head, Mohamud Togane, and the legendary Harold Sonny Ladoo are completely

excluded. Tribal justice?

The reader is given half a loaf. Enough to make you want to put on Paul Simon's *Graceland* album for a taste of equality in excellence and harmony. Instead of self-pity.

Other Voices forms a yaw". □

REVIEW

Past imperfect

By Jennifer S.H. Brown

The *Illustrated History of Canada*, edited by Craig Brown, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 574 pages, \$39.95 cloth (ISBN 0 68619 147 5).

THIS BOOK HELPS to refute the idea that scholarly historians are unwilling or unable to write popular history. If publishers, book stores, and (presumably) university employers afford the requisite encouragement and support, historians gladly take up the challenge to synthesize the results of their research and teaching in forms that are attractive and widely accessible.

The cooperative energy and enterprise that this volume represents are impressive. General editor Craig Brown and picture editor Robert Stacey have collaborated with six chapter authors to integrate a wealth of diverse materials into a largely harmonious whole. Arthur Ray's far-reaching chapter, "When Two Worlds Met," on early native history and the fur trade, leads into Christopher Moore's survey of New France and its rivals, 1600-1760. Graeme Wynne takes up the story in "On the Margins of Empire (1760-1840)," followed by Peter Waite on the "Challenges of a Continental Destiny (1840-1900)." Finally, Ramsay Cook and Desmond Morton bring us to the present with chapters on the periods from 1900 to 1945 and from 1945 to 1987.

This book for the most part escapes the usual pitfalls of national histories: ethnocentrism and a present-oriented mythologizing of progress, extolling the great virtues, acts, and individuals (usually me") who have led us to our place in the sun. It conveys much of the spirit and content of current historical endeavours and outlooks. It demonstrates that "mainstream" Canadian history increasingly recognizes the breadth, depth, and eddying complexities of its currents and acknowledges the multifarious tributaries that have watered its growth. The mainstream now reaches to the backwaters and marshes to which women, native people, and other invisibles have

usually been consigned. Even if still submerging them in its own purposes and interests, its narrative flow gains from them new and vivid textures and colorations. At their best, parts of this book fulfil Craig Brown's promise to present "familiar themes... freshly observed, newly minted."

Occasionally, however, a narrower vision imposes itself. The foreword lapses a little easily into rhetoric about Canadian virtues, while Americans sometimes become unintelligible threats or a lesser breed without the law. Brown explains how Canada after 1840 sought expansion westward, "aiming to control the Hudson's Bay territory before Americans got it." Peter Waite brands American traders on the western plains as the source of rotgut whisky that debauched the Indians, while Canadians are credited with peace: "We put the law and law enforcement in first, and the settlers afterward." Geography and Indians, eve" before Confederation, stop at the border ("The plains reach from the United States border to the Mackenzie River delta"), and the map on page 24 confines native language families (miscalled languages) within modern national boundaries although outlining their distribution at the time of early European contact.

Another pitfall in a book such as this is the temptation to package history in a more neat and tidy (and uncontroversial) package than it deserves. Some of the authors make reference to debates and conflicting interpretations that lurk behind their prose, but too often the lay reader is left unaware that seemingly unquestioned conclusions, and even some "facts," are matters for lively disputation. We may argue about whether "the fur trade ultimately defined the boundaries of the nation" or whether, after 1947, "Canada's prosperity now depended utterly on the United States." Divergent statements of Indian population size need attention: Ray gives a figure of some 300,000 at early contact, while Waite estimates "perhaps under 300,000" in 1840, after several generations of epidemics. Neither notes the challenges we still face in trying to trace native population changes and their implications.

Of the whole, Indians, women, and others who suffered neglect in older general histories fare moderately well in this one. Canadians of Indian-European descent fare poorly, however. Inter-marriage is overlooked in Moore's discussion of the peopling of New France though noted in his description of the Great Lakes fur trade. Waite's characterizations of the 1870s communities west of Lake Superior as "volatile and primitive" and of the Riel risings as "armed blackmail" do not make the Métis intelligible; nor do

BACK TO BLACK

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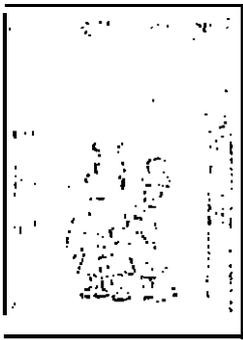
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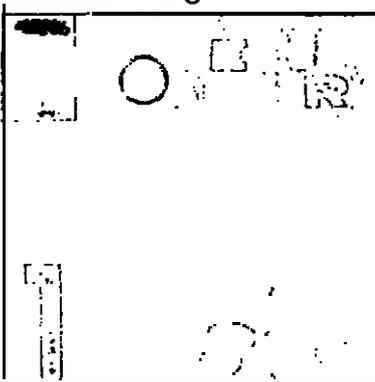
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they reflect current understandings. And after 1885 the **Métis** disappear completely from this book, despite their recently heightened profile in historical scholarship, politics, and culture.

Their absence (and some other missed opportunities) raises a question: is it significant that the book's **seven collaborators are all men** writing from Toronto, Halifax, and Vancouver? I believe it is. Their relative neglect of the **Métis** would be unlikely in **prairie-based** writers. Farther, the inclusion of a feminist historian in their ranks would have shifted the course of the **mainstream, stirring interpretive depths more than do the gentle ripples of these authors' good intentions.**

The book is handsomely produced and edited. Most of the illustrations enhance the text, and some are magnificent. Many, however, are too small. The worst offenders are **certain maps** reproduced in dense and largely unreadable detail. One egregious double standard gravely limits the book's utility. Although **all its pictorial materials** are carefully attributed, footnotes, bibliography, or other **modes** of documenting the text are entirely lacking. The authors quote vividly from **memoirs and other documents, published** and unpublished, but readers are on their own if they wish to pursue these sources or test their interpretations.

AU in all, this volume is worth having. But it could have been better. □

REVIEW

Being there

By Patricia Morley

One Woman's War: A Canadian Reporter with the Free French, by Gladys Arnold, James Lorimer, 222 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88862 875 7).

THIS EYEWITNESS report is so vivid, so utterly human, that one puts down the book with the feeling of having been there: in the ravaged villages of France, in the spring of 1945; in London just after the blitz; on a freighter jammed with refugees; in wartime Quebec while the debate between the supporters of the Vichy government and General de Gaulle raged.

Gladys Arnold grew up in Saskatchewan and began writing for the Regina *Leader-Post*. She headed for Europe in 1935, lured by political curiosity: "Living through the drought and unemployment of the Depression in Saskatchewan, those of us in our twenties passionately debated the pros and cons of socialism, communism, fascism and democracy, searching for answers to why more than

a million Canadians could not find a job. . . In Europe surely we would find some answers."

Once there, she talked — or rather wrote — her way into becoming the Paris correspondent for Canadian Press by sending them articles for three months, unsolicited and unpaid, followed by a polite ultimatum. Her credentials as a journalist became an effective pass into an endless variety of dramatic situations. Her intelligent curiosity and skill with words did the rest.

Her exposure to the human costs of war left her, she writes, forever changed. The experiences opened for her readers may have similar effects. She writes from two points in time, with both the immediacy of an actual witness (using contemporary journals) and with the reflection that is possible 40 years later. Thoughts of a third and even more horrible world war surface occasionally like muffled drumbeats.

Unlike most military historians, Arnold writes largely of the civilian battlefield. Living and working in Paris in the winter of 1939-40, she was the only Canadian reporter to experience the German invasion that spring. Strategists, expecting to fight the First World War over again, were depending on the Maginot Line to defend France. They were not prepared for "the lightning of mechanized warfare" nor for the brilliant but brutal German strategy of uprooting masses of civilians ahead of the advancing forces.

With two other women, Arnold set out by car for Bordeaux, the emergency site of the French government, on June 12, 1940. They found themselves part of a mass of refugees: "An endless river of people on foot, in carts, wagons and cars; animals and bicycles so tightly packed across the mad and sidewalks that no one could move more than a step or two at a time." For five days they slept in the car or in doorways. One unforgettable break in the misery was a strawberry festival, where villagers heaped tons of sweet bounty on trestle tables, urging refugees to eat the fruit and carry it away. The Germans were not going to have it.

After working in England and meeting with General Charles de Gaulle, Arnold was assigned by CP to report on a shipload of British children being sent to Canada for the duration. In Ottawa she wrote feature stories on the Canadian war effort, and was in constant demand as a speaker on war-torn France.

Her sympathies for the Free French soon led her into full-time work with the Free French Information Service in Canada, based in Ottawa. She had expected the enthusiastic sympathy and support of Quebeckers, and was upset to discover that many were antagonistic. The Vichy regime was cleverly posing as coo-

servative and religious. They even suggested that the occupation was divine punishment on a "anti-clerical France. Added to this was the antipathy felt by many French Canadians towards Britain.

One of the highlights of the Quebec saga is the story of the capture of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon from the Vichy regime. The United States, through a "arrangement of which Canada had not even been informed, supported the puppet government in these islands. With a submarine and several corvettes, members of the Free French took over the islands and held a referendum. Popular support was 98 per cent in favour of the Resistance forces.

Arnold's sympathetic account of wartime France, England, and Canada gives us a deep insight into some of the extremes of human experience. She writes with intensity, humour, and a strong sense of humanistic values. One *Woman's War* is compelling writing, one of those rare books that extend the boundaries for those of us who live quieter lives. □

REVIEW

Making connections

By W.H. New

More Stories by Canadian Women, edited by Rosemary Sullivan, Oxford, 197 pages, \$14.95 paper (ISBN 0 19 54036 2).

THIS IS a sequel to Rosemary Sullivan's 1983 anthology. Stories by *Canadian Women*, which was both a history and a survey. It contained some contemporary writers (Mavis Gallant, Margaret Atwood, Marie-Claire Blais, for example), but also attempted to look at contemporary writers through the several filters of earlier prose stylists (Ethel Wilson, Sara Jeannette Duncan, Susie Frances Harrison) -and vice versa. One of the great achievements of the 1983 book was its recognition of alternative traditions in Canadian writing: those which crossed barriers of region and language (like the new book, it included translations from French) and revealed the cumulative heritage of gender. It also touched on ways in which the subjects, language, and form of stories by women challenged (implicitly — and sometimes explicitly) many social and literary conventions. But one of the things the earlier anthology could not do, for reasons of space, was demonstrate the depth and range of contemporary practice. To rectify this situation is the aim of Sullivan's new book.

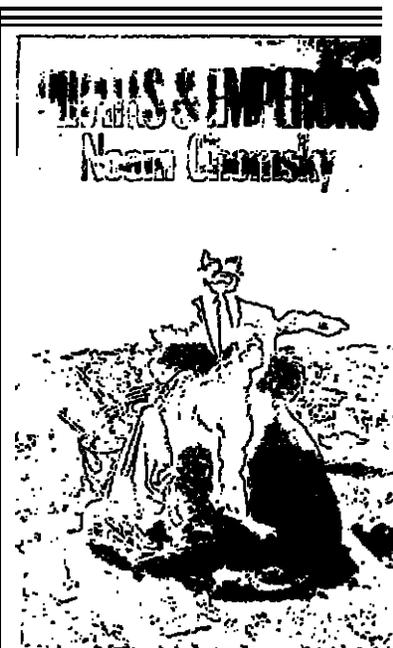
More Stories by Canadian Women

assembles 17 stories by 17 contemporary writers (alphabetically arranged, from Claudette Charbonneau-Tissot to Adele Wiseman) who were not represented earlier. Still there are omissions one regrets — Veronica Ross, for one, Désirée Szucsany for another — and to leave out Mavis Gallant, Audrey Thomas, Alice Munro, and Madeleine Ferron creates a formidable absence. But the writers who have been selected for inclusion repay reading. As with Sullivan's earlier volume, this is a book to absorb rather than to tush through. The stories work their separate revelations: but as Sullivan has arranged them, they also design a rhetoric of another order: one concerned with the character of loss and denial and the power of speech to express and counteract experience.

Predominantly, these are "realistic" stories. They contrive to portray empirical events, but through their stylistic techniques they reveal how experience translates differently to separate people. (In some ways, Alice Munro is everywhere in this collection, a voice behind these several voices.) It is this sense of separation that is so strongly stressed. Loss, absence, a false passivity, restriction, divorce, negation, death: these are the reiterated motifs. Love is a hazardous occupation here; marriage is almost always seen in terms of possession; the desire for passion figures as a desire for violence; children are a burden, sometimes to be given away. But as Robyn Sarah's "The Pond, Phase One" makes clear, the kin& of conversation or communication that establish connections between women are different from those that link me" with each other. And connection is, after all, possible.

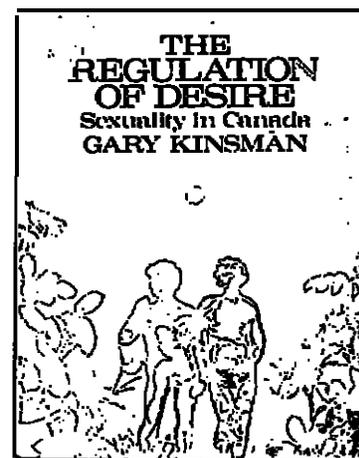
At least, this is the anthology's implicit argument. While the most obvious arrangement of the stories is alphabetical, the juxtapositions, contrasts, and sequences &sign another arrangement, one with an over-arching narrative. The book opens with several stories about the kinds of pressures that enclose the self, mainly of the pressures constructed by "ten; Charbonneau-Tissot's "The Hot House" provides one metaphor, the "butterfly board" on which a mental patient feels pinned in a story by Margaret Gibson provides another. The woman in Phyllis Gotlieb's science fiction fantasy "A Grain of Manhood" feels at first that she is "lying formless," aware only of a white circle of pain "like a wedding ring."

By this point in the anthology, the reader is aware of the linking that the anthology is establishing, the conjunctions between women, writers, experiences. The succeeding story, Katherine Govier's excellent "Responding to Pain" (about the kinds of pressure that derive



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METHUEN

from friendship and whatever is considered responsibility), reiterates the image from Gottlieb and the theme from Gibson. Now endings become important. While "The Hot House" had ended with uncertainty, Beth Harvor's "Our Lady of All the Distances" ends with "the beginning of something" — but this @ "something" still involves, perhaps requires, a distance from others (even the others whom the world calls loving) because of the demands they inevitably make upon the self.

Janette Turner Hospital's story about a teacher-student relationship introduces a new sequence: Isabel Huggan's account of the terrible predicament of a girl who is blackmailed by sexuality and naiveté and misjudged by those who should trust her, and Janice Kulyk Keefer's artfully phrased "Mrs. Putnam at the Planetarium." In turn come stories of other pressures — of sex, race, money, and power — by Bharati Mukherjee, Madeleine Ouellette-Michalska, Monique Proulx. Two of these are set in bars. Like Charbonneau-Tissot, Ouellette-Michalska reworks the familiar "dangerous stranger" motif of Quebec writing: in both cases here the stranger is of another race, male, and somewhat stereotypical.

In Mukherjee's story of elegant mockery and tawdry infidelity, race differences again figure as one cause of the mutual failure of respect; and in Helen Weinzwieg's "Causation," which follows, it is a self-centred Hungarian fascist who is the grasping stranger that a circumstance-bound woman must turn away by truth. (The problem for her is that this new version of truth still keeps her trapped in someone else's house.) The tourist, the wandering stranger, figures in stories by Jane Urquhart and Carol Shields also: in Shields's wonderfully evocative "Mrs. Turner Cutting the Grass," an "ordinary" woman, in solitary silent conversation with herself, reviews the passions that have given her life meaning, despite the dismissive judgements that others (who should know better, and whom she does not know) make of her.

Only Monique Proulx, here, is directly writing about the telling of stories. "I've reached the epilogue," her narrator says, but she then asks where the "real ending" lies — "she's exhausted from making up stories for herself," the narrator says of her ostensible "character." When the story the" doses in cliché (a light at the end of the mad), readers are asked to recognize artifice for what it is: a communication as illusory in life as in fiction. Yet for Sarah and Shields and Adele Wiseman communication remains possible, even if it seems at first to be indirect. Wiseman's story — and hence

the anthology — closes with a family laughing together. It's a small sign of connection (but a formidable one, placed where it is), especially in a book that is so singularly and stylishly concerned with a hunger for something different. 0

REVIEW

Wedding in wheat

By Douglas Glower

Getting Married in Buffalo Jump, by Susan Haley, Macmillan, 276 pages. \$19.95 doth (ISBN 0 7715 9903 X).

SOPHIE WARE, the heroine of Susan Haley's *Getting Married in Buffalo Jump*, is a hot-blooded kindergarten teacher with a family wheat farm (one of those huge Alberta affairs measured in "quarters") and no one to run it. Sophie's hired hand, the sexy but taciturn Alexander Bresnyachuk, wants to run a farm but doesn't have one. So Alex proposes a marriage of convenience, setting in motion a off-beat mating dance.

Haley presents two lines of conflict. The first is a comedy of manners: romantic Sophie, anxious to fall in love, wants to take Alex to bed, but Alex demurs, preferring (along with his parents and her mother) to talk about property settlements and pre-nuptial agreements. The second is pure melodrama: Sophie discovers Alex's high-school love affair with a "India" girl and his intense friendship with the girl's violent, drunken, and politically engaged brother. This Indian boy seems to hold the key to an inner sadness Sophie detects in her fiancé. She tries to trace the Indian only to find that he has hanged himself in a Montana jail after beating a white woman to death.

The strength of Haley's first novel. A *Nest of Singing Birds*, was her ability to take an ordinary situation (junior lecturer falling in love with a separated colleague) and make it funny and touching (mostly through manipulation of her charming protagonist). By comparison, *Getting Married in Buffalo Jump* is forced and awkward. The fact that the mysterious Indian youth is dead means he never actually appears in the novel. We only learn about him through second-hand reminiscences that fail to reveal adequately character and motivation (either his or Alex's). The central premise—that a "modern" woman would settle for an old-fashioned "arranged" marriage — requires a major suspension of disbelief. It also requires that Sophie appear weak and ineffectual, causing (as Henry James

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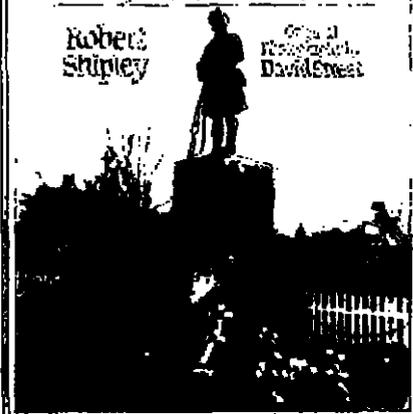
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would say) a "leak" in the reader's interest.

These structural deficiencies would be enough to sink most novels. It is only Haley's polished and witty writing, the surface texture of *Getting Married in Buffalo Jump*, that keep this one afloat. □

REVIEW

Man of the world

By Brian Fawcett

Life Begins at 65: The Not Entirely Candid Autobiography of a Drifter. by Hans Blumenfeld, Harvest House. 326 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88772 034X).

I MET Hans Blumenfeld in the mid-1970s when he was invited by then-regional planning director Harry Lash to add his wisdom to Lash's \$5-million metropolitan plan for Greater Vancouver. My recollection of Blumenfeld is of a small, abrasively confident man with a heavy German accent who argued with everything and everyone.

Unfortunately, I recall only the effortless way he raised the hackles of the planners he was there to advise. What he was telling them went right over my head. As one of the pack of wild animals Lash hired to work as community organizers, I was very much on the periphery of the discussion and of the planning department — my job was to find out what kind of city the public wanted, and Lash astutely encouraged us to remain as ignorant as possible of the obscure jargon urban planners talked in.

At that time, I sensed that I was missing something profound, but it wasn't until I read *Life Begins at 65* that I seriously began to regret my inattention. I had been in the company of a truly remarkable and wise man. Now Blumenfeld has published an informative and thoroughly entertaining autobiography that lets me off the hook.

The rather silly title of this book is the least informative thing about it. Its publication was partially funded by a grant from the Canadian Institution of Planners, and consequently the volume is framed as if it were of interest chiefly to planners. In fact, the book, the autobiography of an extraordinary world citizen, is of much wider interest than its editors have recognized.

Blumenfeld's long career (he now is 95) certainly didn't begin at 65 — that's simply the age at which he arrived in Canada to work with Murray V. Jones in Metropolitan Toronto's infant

planning department. Note that I use the term *worked with*. Blumenfeld "ever worked under anybody. He worked with an astonishing range of this century's most talented urban designers, architects, and planners, and in a wide variety of circumstances, including seven years in the Soviet Union during the 1930s.

What he worked for is still more interesting, both for content and for the consistency with which Blumenfeld pursued it. He believed (and believes) that it is possible to create human settlements that are humane, efficient, and based on social cooperation. Unfortunately for all of us, too many of today's Intellectually and morally bankrupt planners just wave away such goals as Utopian; content merely to engage their craft as a conservative form of internal diplomacy.

Yet one would be hard pressed to argue that Blumenfeld's career was that of a dreamer. He is a lifelong socialist and a technical pragmatist, and he argues throughout, and particularly in his insightful summation, that any competent urban planner must embrace both those ideals if humane and just cities are to be achieved. Along the way he supplies ample illustration as to why this is so, particularly in the chapters on Weimar Germany and the Soviet Union.

The book is a record of both his political and professional activities — between which he recognizes no difference. The caveat lodged in the subtitle — that the book is not entirely candid — is therefore accurate enough. Not much is revealed about his personal life beyond a few cryptic notes on his sexual relationships and one hilarious anecdote about a short and ill-fated fling as a patient of psychoanalyst Alfred Adler, the spiritual grandfather of Scientology, EST, and a lot of other self-help therapies. Blumenfeld has more important fish to fry, and his recipes are rather more profound than the gossipy fare of most autobiographies.

Some of the things he has to tell us about planning and about our cities are distinctly unfashionable now that we are drowning both our urban ecosystems and our political economy in entrepreneurial drool. Personally I was disturbed by his enthusiasm for the Soviet Union, particularly his explanation of the Ukraine famine, which he witnessed at first hand in 1932, without acknowledging the administratively generated starvation that historical records have now established beyond dispute. But elsewhere in the volume he is always challenging and in most instances startlingly articulate.

A drifter, however, he is not. In the deepest sense, Hans Blumenfeld is a world citizen, managing to be at home — alert to local conditions and of use — wherever he lived. He knows where he's

been, and he has some very firm ideas about where we're going that are worth listening to. If this man was drifting, then God help the rest of his profession. □

REVIEW

Portraits of a nation

By Christopher Moore

Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI: 182135, edited by Frances G. Halpenny, University of Toronto Press, 960 pages, \$65.00 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 3436 5).

START AT THE beginning of this volume of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* and the first character you meet is Robert Addison ("He had great expectations for life in Upper Canada"). A Church of England minister at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Addison was a maladroit dabbler in both land speculation and elite politics. It is an intriguing life but, barely a column into his story, a cross-reference distracts you to John Norton, born (in Scotland) to a Scots mother and a Cherokee father. Before dying at 60 (in Mexico), Norton was army deserter, teacher, fur-trader, interpreter, tribal spokesman, biblical translator, decisive contributor to the 1812 victory at Queenston Heights, traveller, author, British army major, and cuckold. All in all a remarkable figure, but his biography has an irresistible cross-reference to someone called Shakoyewatha, a vigorous advocate of Six Nations land rights who almost brought off a mass native drop-out from the midst of the War of 1812.

If three biographies, you have travelled from *Barchester Chronicles* via James Fenimore Cooper to the concerns of the Berger Report, and the volume has 416 lives left. When you meet the last entry, the alcoholic Rev. John Young, it will probably be through a cross-reference from one of the scandalized Montreal Presbyterians who secured his dismissal.

Every volume of the DCB is a window on its times. There are few really great names in Volume VI — the longest biography seems to be Bishop Joseph Plessis's — but the lives covered here nicely encapsulate a growing Canadian society in the early 19th century. The geographic reach is from Newfoundland to British Columbia to the Arctic, but what is most striking is the diversity of lives and careers that was possible by that time. The colour of the 18th century endures, as seigneurial aristocrats accommodate to the new reality of British rule,

as old soldiers retire to their land grants, and as the last few duels are fought. But at the same time, artisan's sons become doctors or entrepreneurs, ethnic communities sprout, religions blossom, tiny iron foundries and leaky canals are opened, scientists botanize, and eve" poets and sculptors find a niche. There is a lively sprouting and ramifying feel to the times, and the dour Scots businessmen who will dominate later 19th-century volumes are just beginning to assert their presence.

Of course there are treatments of important historical issues, and they immediately make this volume a" essential reference on its period. The life of Pierre-Stanislas Bédard has a tight summation of early Lower Canadian politics. Henry Procter and Charles de Salaberry illuminate military command in the War of 1812. Shawnadithit, Job" Peyto", and John Bland together provide a sensitive account of the end of the Beothuck people. For-trade commerce, Red River colonizing, Upper Canadian social conflict, and Maritime religious fervours are detailed with equal care.

But, just as often, DCB lives subvert neat historical categories or statistical grouping. The real diversity here, as in any DCB volume, is the testimony given

to the sheer variety of human existence. What should we make of Phoebe Arnoldi, Hessian soldier's daughter, child bride, separated single parent, shopkeeper, and Ursuline mm? Or, just before her, Lewis Amadeus Anspach, Geneva Calvinist turned Church of England missionary in Newfoundland. Anspach's biographer cites him as the island's first historian, though elsewhere in this volume John Reeves is accorded the same distinction. (With the understated humour that is its hallmark, the DCB tells us that Reeves, a barrister of the Middle Temple in London, "stepped out of the conventional life of his profession" when he accepted a judgeship in the Newfoundland of 1791.) Again and again, real lives undermine stereotypes.

To its great credit, the DCB has always tried to find room for more than merely the famous and powerful, but in this volume that effort seems haphazard. There are wonderful studies of Upper Canadian murderers and other criminals, which testify to diligent research (mostly by R.L. Fraser) in Ontario's judicial & chives-but were there no interesting criminals in other colonies? Could we not have had a few examples of the emigrant Irish, who in these years were becoming

the country's largest ethnic group — and who provided so many of the victims of the 1830s cholera epidemics? (And it is sad to see the DCB becoming dated before it appears: Professor Akenson's 1984 work on the Irish was clearly much too late to influence either the editors or the contributors.)

Warts and all, the DCB remains the central work in Canadian historical writing — the indispensable reference that is also a pleasure to read. IL brings out the best and the worst of the Canadian academic community. Under the ludicrous misapprehension that the DCB is a "mere" dictionary, useful only for checking birth and death dates, many Canadian universities will not consider contributions to it as serious scholarly work. Young professors who devote much time to DCB biographies may be jeopardizing their advancement. Yet in the face of this (from the same people who tell us that all the problems of higher education will be solved if we throw more money at them), the Dictionary of Canadian Biography manages to be a showcase for the remarkable breadth and depth of historical scholarship in Canada today. One more volume and there will be a complete run from 1000 A.D. to 1890. Bring on the 20th century! □

— J. I.

FIRST NOVELS

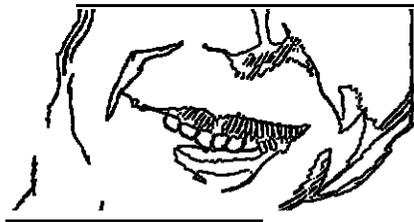
Me, myself, and I

Two new novels seem so self-indulgent that it is difficult to tell the difference between the writer and the protagonist

By Janice Kulyk Keefer

THE PROBLEM with J.J. Steinfeld's *Our Hero i*" the Cradle of Confederation (Pottersfield Press, 192 pages, \$9.95 paper) is Our Hem — the name by which the protagonist is addressed throughout the book. Presumably created as a" antithesis to that literary limper of Prince Edward Island, Anne Shirley, Our Hero actually comes to resemble her in his engaging naivety (*vis-à-vis his love for a*" adorably exotic actress) and in his general goodness, not to mention magnanimity, toward the down-and-outers with whom he shares a rooming house in Charlottetown. Steinfeld has obviously had a lot of fun creating his cast of eccentrics and derelicts and using them to flay the exceedingly hypocritical and philistine ethos of his version of the Island, but his novel fails as high, or eve" middle-of-the-road comedy: the tone of his narrative and the confused nature of his narrator's relationship to the protagonist mar his text.

While in some ways Our Hero is Steinfeld's antithesis — a" unpublished novelist whose work-in-progress is that uninterrupted panoply of fantasy and wish-fulfilment which Steinfeld's own text deliberately denies him — in other ways we are invited to take this protagonist as Steinfeld's alter ego: a fiction writer pursuing his vocation against monumental odds of isolation, alienation, and provincialism. A dubious self-interest or narcissism works its way into the narrative. Our Hem must serve double duty both as comic creation and as mouthpiece by which the author can vent not so much rage as spleen against



"Picture-perfect Charlottetown . . . Tourist-attraction supreme." Steinfeld, unfortunately, is no Baud&ire. By the end of the novel the narrator's ironic attitude toward Our Hero and his sourly arrogant appraisal of his milieu give way to a most unconvincing endorsement of said hero's will to "fight back" and "dream." (His next opus, the narrator informs us, will be "a novel about hope.")

Thii lachrymose ending, coupled with the novel's gratuitous subplot — the inconclusive unmasking of a Nazi war criminal — and its superficial treatment of the disastrous marriages of Our Hem and of his parents vitiate this text's interest and authenticity. Steinfeld is intellectually ambitious enough to quote from Schopenhauer, and Our Hem in the *Cradle of Confederation* contains some amusing scenes to do with mousetraps and public libraries, but all in all this novel doesn't live up to the provocativeness of either its title or its cover. I" some ways Gail Scott's Heroine

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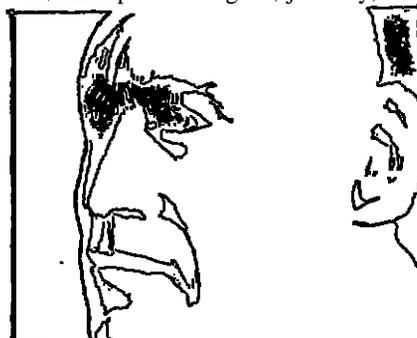
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(Coach House Press, 183 pages, 39.95 paper) is an instructive counter to Our Hero. Like **Steinfeld's** protagonist, Scott's is a **struggling novelist** whose own heroine, "a sensitive, progressive woman," exists to correct the experiential fogies of **her creator** and to **realize** her project of "wanting to change the world and have love too." Heroine boasts an even stronger narcissistic element than Hero: not only is Gail Scott's heroine named Gail, in **what** seems a deliberate flouting of the caveat against writer-narrator identification, but also **the** narrative, being a sustained confession, is delivered **in the first person**. The odds against which **Gail** struggles are significantly different from those braved by Our Hero, however—she inhabits no **subprovincial** capital but the metropolis of Montreal, and **indeed** the best thing in this novel is the way in which the **splendours**, miseries, end sheet animation of the city pervade Scott's narrative.

Gail's hurdles are **created** by the **psychosexual** implications of her transition from the '70s to the '80s, from Marxism to **feminism**, and from actively **political to overtly aesthetic loyalties**. Yet to an **unfortunate** degree, **Heroine** is not so **much Bildungsroman as a decade-after Love Story**. **Gail**, an **anglophone refugee** from the prissy horrors of life in Lively, Ont., loves Jon, a glamorously European political radical. Jon, however, loves not **only** Gail but also the **Girl with Green Eyes**, not to mention a West Coast swimmer nicknamed **Venus**. Gail is too besotted with Jon to get much leverage out of her affair with N (whose **lover, D**, Jon subsequently picks up) and too timorous to embark on a lesbian affair with the ripely seductive **Marie**. **Accordingly**, the narrative writhes in **harmony** with **Gail's** powerless grief, jealousy, and



sexual frustration as questions of how to "break through the **hypnotic** surface of out media-determined existence" and to radically change consciousness and language are relegated to a very remote **back burner**.

For most of the text, **the narrator floats** in a pool of rancorous, erotic, and sometimes blessedly disinterested memories and observations **as she** enjoys the delights of a hot **tub** on a gritty winter's

day. At novel's end she **leaves** her tub, gets dressed, and **walks** out into the **world**, **having seemingly discovered** how to live and **write according** to an intuition she **receives** earlier in the text: "**survival** for a **woman** is a little **like** the negative of a photo. She just **has** to pick the **place** in it where night (**her deepest self**) and day (reality) **are** combined in **the** right synthesis of light and dark for her." Unfortunately, Scott's text doesn't make **clear** in **any** persuasive way how **this day/night survival** for a woman is in **any** fundamental or revolutionary way different from **survival** for a man. Aren't we all **engaged** in the **same act of synthesis**?

Heroine is an interesting if self-indulgent work, not **least** for the **nature** and texture of its narrative. While hardly radical in comparison with the **work of contemporary Quebec feminists**, Scott's novel **is** definitely post-modern in the attention it pays to language. With its elisions of French and English, its privileging of pattern (visual motifs and surreal images) **over structure**, and its inclusion of alternatives to traditional literacy discourse — diary excerpts, snatches of conversation, **Janis Joplin** songs—it stands in marked contrast to a novel like Mary Walters **Riskin's The Woman Upstairs** (NeWest Press, 184 pages, 518.95 cloth, \$8.95 paper). Yet there is **the same centring on self** in **both** works: **like Scott, Riskin** uses a **first-person** narrator, and the story she has to tell is also **an** account of a woman's **freeing** herself from the emotional grip of her past — in this **case**, not a **faithless** lover but **an Iron Maiden** of a mother responsible for the disappearance or literal **destruction** of the two most important men in her **daughter's** life, **her father** and her **first** love.

Where there's a flamboyant, free-wheeling sense of self-exposure in **Heroine**, the **prose of The Woman Upstairs** possesses a tightness and **exactitude well-suited** to the **Wasp** boogies this novel confronts. For **Riskin's** novel is set in Alice **Munro** country, small-town Ontario, **land of life-denying, all-controlling** women who annihilate **their men** and imprison their **daughters** in their **own** unyielding image. **Riskin's** heroine succeeds in her task of confronting and making peace **with her dying** but **still** formidable mother — **amazingly, Riskin** manages this narrative feat **without** sentimentality, such is the **restraint** and decorum of her prose. The result, however, is that her novel lacks intensity, power, and distinction: all the earnest interweaving of past and present, all the laborious construction of **suspense** in the world cannot make up for **the** lack of **Munro's** gifts — an **unobtrusive** yet miraculous gift for **language** and a **genius** for **revealing** the **peculiar** in the ordinary,

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without destroying its ordinariness.

The ordinary is defiantly in abeyance in Teresa Plowright's feminist sci-fi novel, *Dreams of an Unseen Planet* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 273 pages, \$28.50 cloth). So, refreshingly, is the ego-centrism of the previous works under discussion: with this novel the reader is given "a literally distanced fictive world (the space colony of Ventura) and characters who are not pocket-mirrors of their author's psyche. And though her prose can often be awkward and undistinguished, Plowright is capable of using images and ideas to convey a powerful female sense of the

erotic imagination. Accustomed as we've become to the "erecto-centric" sensibility (to borrow Aritha van Herk's term), what a pleasant change to encounter a world that we might call utero-centric, a vision of human possibility structured according to female imperatives and experience.

Plowright has women make most of the important discoveries and decisions in *Dreams of an Unseen Planet*, yet she presents the subversion of traditional male authority in the interests of human survival in subtle rather than strident fashion. The dust-jacket of *Dreams* informs us that Plowright has a "M.A. in

communications — her possession of felicitous rhetorical skills is therefore not surprising. She is certainly not a "writer's writer." "or is she "literary" in the way Steinfeld, Scott, and even Riskin aim to be. yet this account of a last-chance colony's struggle for survival, its radical w-visioning of our responses to the life within and around us, is more than just an easy or a" entertaining read. Disregard *Dream's* truly awful blurb, which promises an extra-terrestrial Harlequin. Plowright may not be Doris Lessing, but her first novel is a legitimate work of fiction, intriguing and rewarding. □

INTERVIEW

Andrew Weiner

'There has never been significant publishing of science fiction in Canada. Canadian publishers don't understand SF, and don't want to understand it'

By Terence M. Green



O MANY READERS freelance journalist Andrea Weiner is perhaps best known for his articles in such magazines as *Quest*, *Maclean's*, *Reader's Digest*, *Toronto Life*, and *Canadian Business* and for the recently published *Financial Post Moneywise Dictionary of Personal Finance* (Random House). But the other side of Andrew Weiner is the writer of fantastic fiction whose short stories have appeared in such U.S. publications as *Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine*, *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, and *Twilight Zone Magazine* and such anthologies as *Harlan Ellison's Again*, *Dangerous Visions*, *Pri-teus*, and Doubleday's *Chrysalis* series. His first novel, *Station Gehenna*, is to be published this fall by Contemporary

Andrew Weiner



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW DAINOFF

Books in the United States and *Beaver-books* in Canada. Born in London, England, in 1949 and a graduate in social psychology from the London School of Economics, Weiner now lives in Toronto, where he was interviewed by Terence M. Green:

Books in Canada: You weren't born in Canada. Do you perceive yourself as an alien?

Andrew Weiner: When I first came to Canada I lived in Montreal for two or three years. I guess I did feel extremely alienated, partly because of general read-justment, partly because of Montreal. I'm much more comfortable in Toronto. It's a culture I can much more easily understand than Montreal. If you're asking me the Canadian influence on my work, I think *Station Gehenna* was influenced by the idea of the environment as overwhelming and merciless. That's what I sometimes felt in Montreal. Montreal is not the Far North—it's not all that cold — but it's a shock when you're not used to that. I guess the whole Canadian theme of survival, at some subliminal level, is there. I think of *Station Gehenna* as a Canadian story because it's about survival.

BiC: What do you see happening on the Canadian scene in the science fiction and fantasy gem-e?

Weiner: When I first came to Canada there was Phyllis Gotlieb and that was it. It's like what they used to say about the British Liberal Party: that they used to fill a taxicab, then it was up to two taxicabs. I think we've now got about two taxicabs full of science fiction and fantasy writers in Toronto alone, and much

is happening elsewhere. I think it's the baby boom generation. People working in the genre in Canada are pretty much of a similar age and outlook. The harder question is why there was none before. I'm England, which was certainly not a high-tech society, there was always a British genre magazine, along with domestic publishing programs. Here in Canada there's: "ever bee" significant publishing of the genre.

BiC: Why did you not submit your manuscript to a Canadian publishing house?

Weiner: It "ever occurred to me. There's just so little history of SF in Canada. Canadian publishers don't understand SF, and they don't want to understand it. It's interesting — in England there were always one or two of the publishing houses, like Gollancz, who were enthusiasts. I don't mean they only read and published SF, but they were interested in publishing it. In England, too, though, the mystery novel has always been more respectable. In Canada now you're seeing domestic mystery writing being published. Maybe SF will be next. I don't know.

BiC: Tell me about the place and prominence of aliens in your fiction.

Weiner: I think they're metaphors. I don't really take aliens seriously. Aliens are what we want them to be. In *Station Gehenna* they're metaphors for what is finally unknowable. There's an influence from Stanislaw Lem's *Solaris*. I think that book there is a living ocean on the planet that people go to study. I thought of *Gehenna* as *Ten Little Indians set on the planet Solaris*. It's a mystery story, but it's a" intellectual mystery.

BiC: You mentioned to me that you saw

SF as the "literature of anxiety."

Weiner: Michael Moorcock, the British editor of *New Worlds* magazine in the '60s said that. It's a literature in which people deal with their fears of technology. In the '70s it became even more valid.

Most traditional SF of the first half of the century was about people coping with such fears -Nerves, by Lester del Rey; Heinlein's stuff. Competent people in control of technology, in control of their lives. Barry Malzberg is another influence on this book. His books are about people who are out of control, and the anxiety is completely out in the open. *Gehenna* is a book in which anxiety is overt; people walk around expressing their anxiety.

BiC: What other writers have been either favourites or influences?

Weiner: J.G. Ballard, Malzberg, to some degree-some of his work is very powerful — Alfred Bester, and Patrick Moore.

Moore is an English astronomer. a cult figure in England — he's been on TV shows since I was a kid. But he also wrote these juvenile SF novels about people colonizing Mars and Venus. living in domes, attempting to terraform the atmosphere. So on a subliminal level, *Station Gehenna* is influenced by Patrick Moore.

BiC: Any other books from the last decade or so that you thought were striking in some fashion?

Weiner: I read the American Jewish writers, like Malamud, Roth, Salinger, Mailer. Philip Roth, in some strange way, is an influence on *Gehenna*. I can't quite pin it down—the intellectual first-person narrator. Also Graham Greene, Raymond Chandler. Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is one of the finest pieces of SF that I've read recently. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* is a stunning book.

BiC: *Station Gehenna* was originally published as a shorter work in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. How did you find the experience of expanding a shorter work?

Weiner: For years I wanted to write a novel. I made various false starts. It just seemed overwhelming, the idea of sitting down with a blank slack of paper and writing hundreds of pages. Finally I decided to take one of my short stories — I'd seen this work for other writers — so that I could at least start with something. It was less threatening. Also it was a story that I originally felt could have gone on longer; I had hurried the ending, some of the character development, and I felt that there was more to say about it.

BiC: In your novel a character quotes Freud as saying that the external environment that we must all confront contains "overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction." Are you approaching the

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unknown with science or with Freudian psychology?

Weiner: There is a Freudian subtext to the novel. I guess. There's a running theme through the book about Inside and Outside. But if we return to the issue of the environment — I'm not sure that is a Freudian thing necessarily. I think it's the human condition. We confront an environment that is hostile; the world is very hard to deal with. Our own bodies are in the slow process of decay. The narrator is a fool, because he thinks that by using just his mind he can solve any problem, fix any situation, and to that degree he is much like the company that employs him: they will make an uninhabitable planet inhabitable; they can fix anything. BIC: You mention in the novel that this attitude is a masculine viewpoint.

Weiner: The book is about technology, about the program of technology. I guess you could say that's a male program. In a sense, the planet is a woman. The idea of a living planet is a very old one, one that has only lately become scientifically respectable — the idea that the whole ecosystem is alive. Technology, in a sense, is a violation of the ecosphere. I'm not really an environmentalist, but I am playing with these ideas here.

BIC: Tell us about the title of your novel.

Weiner: I guess I just like the sound of it. I needed a name for a planet that would be really awful, a really terrible place. Gehenna means Hell.

BIC: Isn't it rather unlikely that anyone would name a planet after Hell and expect anyone to go there?

Weiner: It is unlikely, and the character alludes to that.

BIC: You've written a novel essentially called Hell. Is it just a metaphor?

Weiner: There's certainly no religious content to the book. It's just meant to sound like an unpleasant place.

BIC: You make your living as a freelance journalist. What inhibits you from considering a career as a fiction writer, especially in this particular genre?

Weiner: It comes down to a matter of time and money. If you're a freelance writer, you're engaged in selling pieces of your time. SF is not a lucrative way of selling your time. It's a very, very hard way to make any money. Fiction in general is a difficult way of selling your time. It's partly a matter of personal choices and how you want to live and what level of income you are able to accept. If you are a Canadian "mainstream" writer, you have the Canada Council but its programs have not been very helpful for an SF writer to date. So, basically, SF was something I did in my spare time. It's one thing to write short stories, but to write a novel can mean real fear. That's a big piece of time to commit to something that may never sell at all.

An article, or a speech — I know they will sell because someone asked for them.

Nobođv asked me to write *Station Gehenna*. □

LETTERS

Conventional wisdom

I READ WITH dismay the patronizing review of Elizabeth Smart's journal in the April Issue of *Books in Canada*. It seemed Audrey Thomas chose to review not the work but Smart herself, hectoring her for laziness and conventionality.

The charge of artistic laziness against Smart is naive if you knew her as many of us did. She was out to celebrate the senses, to create an incendiary force in words, on the page and off, that would move us all to feel the beauty and sadness of life. I think her goal was to create an earthly paradise, and she thought this might happen if we would all pitch in and make love end art with equal abandon.

This pagan's appreciation of life often infuriated those in bondage to the stolid Canadian values of hard work and caution. When she was in her cups, going on about those stolid values, she could be a pain in the ass, but I think she wanted to rescue us from ourselves.

There was a wonderful generosity about Elizabeth Smart that is impossible to forget. I remember the sight of her walking into her reading at Harbourfront, carrying an armload of other writers' books, passing them out to everyone she met that evening, pleading that they be read at once so that the receiver could enjoy the beauty of the language. I remember thinking that here was an artist who made it her business to promote art — and not only her own art. Thomas's reference to Smart's upper-class background may give the impression that she had an independent income, but this was not the case. She was out there slugging away in the world like the rest of us. She published three books of poetic prose and several booklets of poetry; she wrote extensive journals, and also earned a living and raised four children on her own.

Thomas's second charge also seems unknowing. To accuse Elizabeth Smart of stereotyped thinking is a little like comparing the head priestess at Dionysian revels with the cartoon character Wilma Flintstone. Smart liked men, with a lusty appreciation that came across as heresy in the early 1980s when cocks were still seen as unsavoury, maybe unwholesome, and she did early in her career want a man for her partner, but her gusto (though out of step with the times) was linked to recognition of the male as co-partner in

the creation of life. I think she came nearer to the spiritual truth of things in this insight than many of us who were and still are concerned with the political and social ways our society takes advantage of us as women.

The possibility of love between men and women is one of the truest ways we have of feeling human, and if our patriarchal society makes that difficult, it is the impulse to exploit, not the impulse to love, that should be questioned. A desire for a mate is not a reason to dismiss a woman as conventional. Perhaps Audrey Thomas is the one who needs to have her vision widened.

Susan Swan
Toronto

FOOD FORTHOUGHT

THANK YOU for the review of our book, *The Hunger Machine: The Politics of Food*, by Jon Bennett, in the August-September issue. I would, however, like to point out an important error. *The Hunger Machine* is published in Canada by CBC Enterprises (distributed to the trade by McClelland & Stewart) and not by Polity Press, who published the book in Britain.

Polly Manguel

Editor, English Books Department
CBC Enterprises
Toronto

RECOMMENDED

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

FICTION

On Middle Ground, edited by Douglas Daymond and Leslie Monkman, Methuen. The superb novellas collected here — by such writers as Keith Fraser, Mavis Gallant, Clark Blaise, and Audrey Thomas — should cause us to consider revising the easy assumption that the short story is Canada's strongest form.

NON-FICTION

Freshwater Saga: Memoirs of a Lifetime of Wilderness Canoeing in Canada, by Eric W. Morse, University of Toronto Press. Morse, a pioneer of recreational canoeing, joins Sigurd F. Olson and R.M. Patterson as one of a select group of North American authors who have written lyrically of the canoe in this century and made it a living part of our heritage.

POETRY

Anyone Can see I Love You, by Marilyn Bowering, Porcupine's Quill. Bowering's audacious sequence of poems about Marilyn Monroe is neither stylistically nor thematically exciting, but one has to admire her making something fresh from what had seemed squeezed of all freshness.

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:

Aboriginal Self-Government Arrangements in Canada, Evelyn J. Peters, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.
 Abri, Joan Barfoot, Penguin.
 The Adventures of Mickey, Tuggey, Puppo, Cien and How They Discovered the George R. Gardner Museum of Ceramic Art in Toronto, Canada, by Karl Rekal, Canadian Stage and Art Publications Ltd.
 AIDS: What Every Responsible Canadian Should Know, by James D. Greig, Toronto Sun Publishing Corporation Ltd.
 Allee Manno: Paralel and Paralel, by W.R. Martin, University of Alberta Press.
 All the Bright Company: Radio Drama Produced by Andrew Allen, Quarry Press/CBC Enterprises.
 Alligator Pie, by Dennis Lee, illustrated by Frank Newfeld, Macmillan.
 Amazing But True, by the editors of *Owl Magazine*, Greedy de Pencler Books.
 Ashes, Ashes, All Fall Down, by Zdena Salivarova, Larkwood Books.
 Best Recipes Under the Sun, by Marion Kane, Totem.
 Big Sarah's Little Boots, by Paulette Bourgeois, illustrated by Brenda Clark, Kids Can Press.
 The Binky and How it Works, by Steve Parker, illustrated by Giovanni Caselli & Giuliano Fornari Sergio, Macmillan.
 A Book Dragon, by Donn Kushner, Macmillan.
 By Hook or By Crook: My Autograph Book, Tundra Books.
 Can You Catch Josephine?, by Stephane Poulin, Tundra Books.
 Canadian Bird: 1938 Engagement Diary, by Wayne Lynch, Key Porter.
 Canadian Literature Index, 1986: A Guide to Periodicals and Newspapers, ECW Press.
 The Canadian Wildlife State, edited by Jacqueline S. Ismael, University of Alberta Press.
 Case Critical: The Dilemma of Social Work in Canada, by Ben Carniol, Between the Lines.
 Chances in a Hand, by Tristan Tzara, translated by Lee Harwood, Coach House/Underwich.
 The Conflict Resolution Syndrome, by Alexander Abdennour, University of Ottawa Press.
 Coronan Aquilae: The Miracle of a President, by Cecilia K. Gullis, Cultural House (U.S.).
 The Courage of Poetry, by Paul Chamberland, translated by Ray Chamberland, Guernica.
 Dancing on the Shore: A Celebration of Life at Annapolis B-In, by Harold Horwood, M & S.
 Death-Watch, by Jacques Brault, translated by David Lobdell, Anansi.
 The Deptford Trilogy, by Robertson Davies, Macmillan.
 Dr. Zed's Dazzling Book of Science Activities, by Gordon Peters, illustrated by Linda Bucholtz-Ross, Greedy de Pencler.
 Dragon Sandwiches, by Guendolyn MacEwen, illustrated by Maureen Paxton, Black Moss.
 Driving: A Driver's A to Z Handbook, by Stephen Barnes, Sound and Vision.
 Duet for Three, by Joan Barfoot, Penguin.
 Egyptian Themes in Canadian Literature, by Sylvia DuVernet, Blue Chip Publications.
 Elm World, by Jane and Michael Stern, Penguin Canada.
 The Enlightened Eater, by Marion Kane and Rosie Schwartz, Methuen.
 The Eternal Peter Pan, selections by J.M. Barrie, illustrated by Susan Head-on, Tundra.
 Exploring the Night Sky: The Equinox Astronomy Guide for Beginners, by Terrence Dickinson, Camden House.
 Famous Lives, by Bob Goodwin and Dymna Hayes, CHP Books.
 Federal State, National Economy, by Peter Leslie, University of Toronto Press.
 The Fire Garden, by Paul Wilson, Coteau.
 First Impressions: Early Printing in Nova Scotia, by Marjory Whitclaw, Nova Scotia Museum.
 Flight of the Falcon: Scott's Journey to the South Pole, 1910-1912, by J.A. Wainwright, Mosaic.
 Foreign Ownership and Canada's Feature Film Distribution Sector, by Steven Clebman and Aidan Vining, The Fraser Institute.
 French Poets of Today, edited by Jean-Yves Reuzeau, Guernica.
 Fun With Nature, by Dymna Hayes and Melanie Lehmann, CHP Books.
 Fun With Opposites, by Dymna Hayes and Melanie Lehmann, CHP Books.
 Fun With Rhymes, by Dymna Hayes, illustrated by Annelles Davis, CHP Books.
 Future Lives, by Janet Simpson-Cooke, Ragweed Press.
 Grandmother Came from Dvoritz, by Ethel Vineberg, illustrated by Rita Briansky, Tundra Books.
 The Great War of Words, by Peter Buienhuis, UBC Press.
 A Halifax ABC, by Gordon Roche, Tundra Books.
 Horse Playgrounds, by Marilyn Mohr, Camden House.
 How to Dance to Emerald Mountain, by Beth Cuihand, Lazara Publications.
 How Ottawa Spends: 1936-87: Tracking the Tories, edited by Michael J. Prince, Methuen.
 I Walk in Two Worlds, by Eleanor Bress, Glenbow Museum.
 The Illustrated History of Canada, edited by Craig Brown, Lester & Orsen Denny.
 Interior Landscapes: A Life of Paul Nash, by James King, Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

CANWIT NO. 123

• *Who Has Seen the Wind*, by W.O. Mitchell: An ominously purple, crocus-scented windstorm sweeps across the prairie. When the hare rises, giant gophers surround the schoolyard.

AS ANDREW WEINER notes in this month's interview, *CanLit* has almost no tradition of science fiction. Contestants are invited to compose brief plot summaries (limit: 50 words) for well-known Canadian books as an SF novelist might have written them. The prize is a first-edition *Books in Canada* sweatshirt. Deadline: November 1. Address: *CanWit* Na 123, *Books in Canada*, 365 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9.

Results of *CanWit* No. 121
OUR REQUEST FOR slogans for real Canadian institutions didn't prompt our readers to heights of creativity. The winner is Barry Baldwin of Calgary, whose list includes:

- United Church of Canada: From See to shining See.
 - Quebec Air: French flies.
 - Royal Conservatory of Music: Our Bach is better than our bite
- 0 *Canada Post*: *Propter hoc, ergo post!*

Honourable mention:

- Royal Winnipeg Ballet: On our toes for you.
 - Greenpeace: For a whale of a time.
- Mike Schultz, Acton, Ont.

SOLUTION TO CANLIT ACROSTIC NO. 8

Having to wear shoulder braces for a few weeks might bring results. . . They made him sit up straighter at school more like in the position of attention and they sort of pinched when he took too deep a breath. But at *least* they did not creak like Aunt Martha's corsets did.

— Hubert Evans, 0 Time in Your *Flight* (Harbour Publishing)

Issues in Entrenching Aboriginal Self-Government, by David C. Hawkes and Evelyn J. Peters, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.
 Jellybean Fever, by Joanne Brisson Murphy, illustrated by Leonard Agnarso, Black Moss.
 Jokes and Riddles, by the editors of *Owl Magazine*, Greedy de Pencler.
 Life through the Ages, by Giovanni Caselli, Macmillan.
 The Lucky Old Woman, by Robin Muller, Kids Can Press.
 The Mad Trapper of Rat River, by Dick North, Macmillan.
 Maintenance in the Year of . . ., by Stephen Cruise, Coach House Press.
 The Merzbooks: Kurt Schwitters Poems, by Colin Morton, Quarry Press.
 Mind Benders: Brain Twisters, by Paul Hayes, CHP Books.
 Mind Benders: Picture Puzzles, by Dymna Hayes and Melanie Lehmann, CHP Books.
 Mind Benders: Word Teasers, by Dymna Hayes and Melanie Lehmann, CHP Books.
 More Court Jesters, by Peter V. MacDonald, Methuen.
 More Dear Teacher, compiled by Emile and Diana Lize, Methuen.
 Moving and Growing: Exercises and Activities for Fives and Sixes, by Judy Hansen, Fitness Canada and The Canadian Institute of Child Health.
 Murphy: The Wonder Dog, by Harold Town, Mosaic.
 Nadsie, by Matt Cohen, Penguin.
 Off Earth: Poems and Effects, by John Robert Colombo, Houslow Press.
 Our Mammoth, by Adrian Mitchell & Priscilla Lamont, Overlea House.
 Pen-in-strap Josephine? by Stephane Poulin, Tundra Books.
 The Polka Dot Doer, by Polkaroo with Catherine Ripley, Stoddart.
 A Popular Guide to Egyptology, by David A. Spector, Benben Books.
 Posted to Canada: The Watercolours of George Russell Darnell, 1835-1844, by Honor de Pencler, Dundurn Press.
 Princess Frownsalot, by John Bianchi, Bungalow Books.
 Puzzles and Puzzlers, by the editors of *Owl Magazine*, Greedy de Pencler.
 Ranches, Cowboys and Characters, by Sheila Jameson, Glenbow Museum.
 Red Wolf, Red Wolf, by W.P. Kinsella, Collins.
 The Search for Accommodation, by David C. Hawkes, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.
 The Second Ben Wicks Treasury, by Ben Wicks, Methuen.
 The Science of Social Redemption, by Marlene Shore, University of Toronto.
 Sociologie et Sociétés: Travail Santé Prévention, edited by Marc Renaud and Marcel Simard, Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
 Sous la Langue/Under Tongue by Nicole Brossard, translated by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, Gynergy Books.
 Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs, by Patrick O'Flaherty, Breakwater.
 Tell Me It's Only a Phase!: A Guide for Parents of Teenagers, by Saul Levine, Prentice-Hall.
 Telling the Tale, by Robin Skelton. The Porcupine's Quill. This Won't Hurt a Bit!, by Vicki Gabreau, Collins.
 Unnatural Acts, by Marg Yeo, Gynergy Books.

Visualizing Distance: A Study of News Organization, by Richard V. Ericson et al., U of T Press.
 Weird and Wonderful, by the editors of *Owl Magazine*, Greedy de Pencler.
 What Happens at the No Nutsy Summit: Mollere's Tartuffe, adapted by Richard Ozounian, Ms Fr Press.
 The Wheels on the Bus, by Maryann Kovalski, Kids Can Press.
 When Child's Play Is Adult Business: A Consumer Guide to Safer Playspaces, edited by Mary Walls, Canadian Institute of Child Health.
 Where's Waldo, by Martin Handford, Overlea House.
 Yarmarok: Ukrainian Writing in Canada since the Second World War, edited by Jar Balan and Yuri Kiyavov, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies.

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CanLit acrostic no. 9

By Mary D. Trainer

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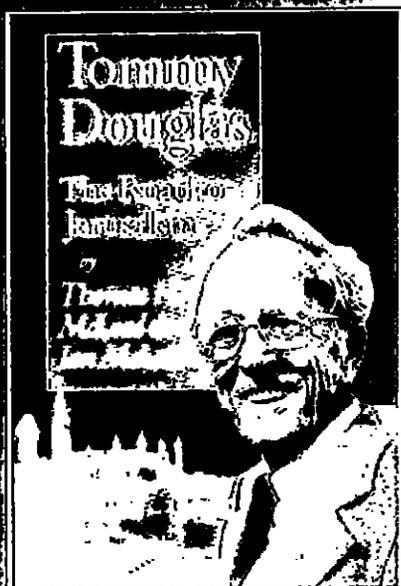
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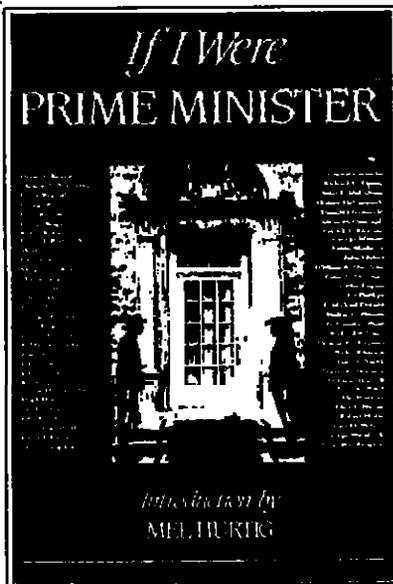
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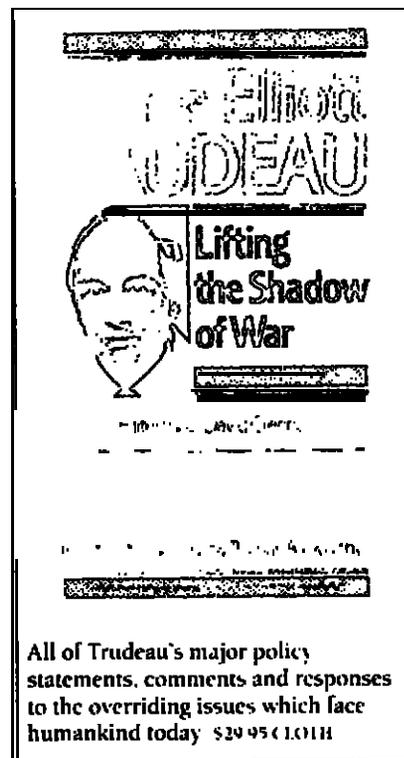
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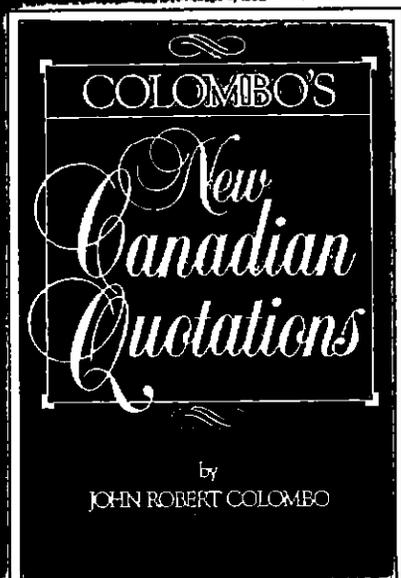
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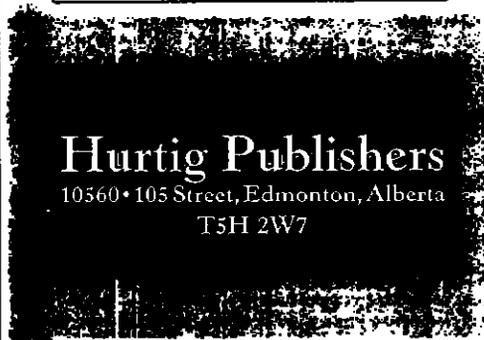
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