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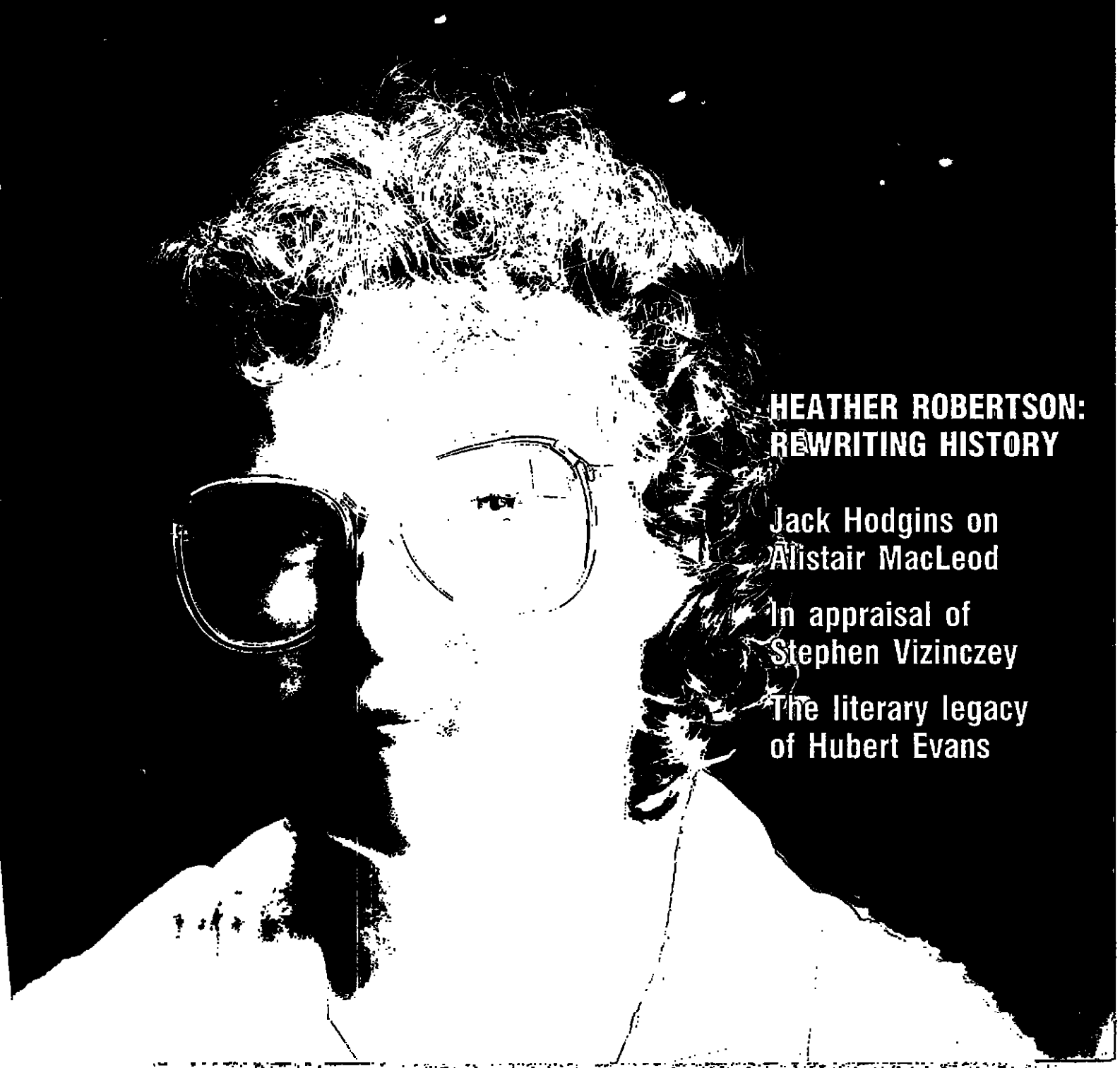
BOOKS IN CANADA



HEATHER ROBERTSON: REWRITING HISTORY

Jack Hodgins on Alistair MacLeod

In appraisal of Stephen Vizinczey

The literary legacy of Hubert Evans

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Jack **Batten's** new book, Judges (Macmillan). Is reviewed on page 28. **Matthew Behrens,** a former California resident, is a Toronto freelance writer. Joseph A. **Benderavage** k a Toronto writer. Bob **Blackburn** frequently contributes comments on English usage to these pages. Toronto lawyer Charles Campbell Is helping to prepare a handbook on judges. Tom Carpenter is a Toronto freelance writer. **Sherrill** Chsda is publishing adviser at the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. George **Elliott Clarke** surveys the Canadian poetry scene fmm Cherrybrook, N.S. With this issue, **Doris** Cowan. who recently returned to Canada after two years with the United Nations in Switzerland. joins us as managing editor. **Marc Côté is** a Toronto playwright and editor. Ann **Crosby** is a radio dramatist and freelance writer in Hamilton. Ont. **Meagan Daley** studies criminology at the Universitv of Toronto. **Brunvvn Drainie is** a Toronto writer and broadcaster. **Garv Draper** is a librarian at the Universitv of Waterloo. **Ray Ellenwood,** a Toronto writer and translator, is at work on a study al the Quebec Automatistes. **Cary Fagan** is a frequent contributor to these pages. Gay **Filip** Is a Montreal poet. **Gideon Forman** and Mark **Fortier** are Toronto freelance writers. Douglas Plover's moat recent collection of short stories, Dog *Attempts to Drown Man* in *Saskatoon* (Talonbooks), was reviewed in our June/July issue. Victoria writer Jack **Hodgins is completing a** new novel. Helen **Hogarth** and **Connie Jeske** are Toronto freelance writers. **David Latham** teaches at the University of Lethbridge. **Patricia Morley** k a biographer and critic. **Barbara** Novak. a freelance writer in London. Ont., is expecting her second baby. **Paul Orenstein's** photographs of literary personalities appear frequently in these pages. John **Oughton** is a Toronto poet and critic. **I.M. Owen** is a Toronto editor and translator. **Sherie Posesorski** also reviews for the *Globe* and *Mail.* Barbara Wads Ross is a Toronto freelance writer. **Roslyn Schwartz,** whose drawings appear throughout this issue. is a Toronto artist. **Dona Sturmanis is** a Vancouver writer. Paul **Stuewe's** Hugh *Garner and His Works* was recently published by ECW Press. Ale" **Twigg's** *Hubert Evans: Ihe First Ninety-three Years* was published this year. **Bruce Whiteman is** a poet and bibliographer. Alla" **Weiss's** *Index to Canadian Short* Stories Is to be published this year by ECW Press. Janet **Windeler writes fiction** and teaches piano.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL ORENSTEIN

Paying the piper

As the county's writers discovered, when the government doles out $3-million its agents call the tune

RUDY WIEBE WILL have a clearer understanding now, from personal experience, of how Big Bear saw government agents. Their techniques haven't changed in 100 years. Under political and moral pressure to distribute treaty money, they'll do all they can to make it look like a gift, and they'll insist it be matrolled and doled by themselves.

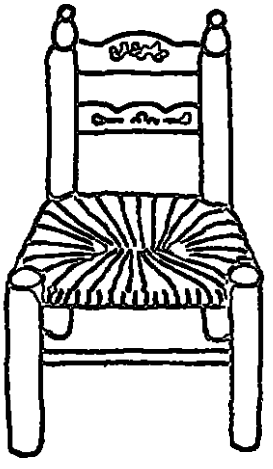
As incoming chief of the Writers' Union of Canada, Wiebe attended a meeting in Ottawa this spring to discuss ways of implementing "'payment for public use," whereby a $3-million fund is to be divided among Canadian writers to compensate them for tbe free circulation of their books in public libraries. Delegates representing more than a dozen associations of writers, literary translators, librarians, and publishers had assembled not around a ceremonial fire but along a semi-circular table in tbe gleaming new offices of the Canada Council, each wired to a glass-fronted booth housing simultaneous translators.

The issue of payment for public use has been simmering for more than 40 years, after the Canadian Authors' Association and later the Writers' Union of Canada, encouraged by similar schemes in England, Germany, Scandinavia, Holland, and Australia, began lobbying for a system to compensate writers for the royalties they lose when readers borrow their books from libraries rather than buying them. The Canada Council became involved in the late 1970s after it had "turned down applications from the Writers' Union and the Book and Periodical Development Council to undertake independent enquiries, on the understanding that the Council should and would conduct the enquiry.. .." That very telling sentence from the opening page of *A Proposal to Establish a System of Payments for Public Use*, published by the Canada Council in 1981, is early evidence of the rivalry over this issue that has grown up between the council and various writers' groups.

Whatever its intentions, the council had no government money to cover such payments, so it suspended any action on the proposal until last year. when the Writers' Union and tbe Union des Ecrivains Québécois organized an international conference on payment for public use and again began lobbying. Eventually, Marcel Masse, then minister of communications, announced the $3-million fund, and the meeting was called in Ottawa to decide how to distribute it.

No one knew quite what to expect. The Writers' Union and the Union des &xiv&s Québécois had been led to believe they would play an important part, yet Masse's legislation placed the money solely under the Canada Council. What did it mean? Was the council to have complete control, or would it simply transfer and audit funds according to the wishes of a board controlled by the writers' organizations? Nothing was certain, and many models were possible. At least, so the writers thought.

At the outset, we were reminded by Peter Roberts, director of the Canada Council, that this money was neither a grant nor a prize, but rightful payment. Our job was to agree on a method of distribution. Nevertheless, when delegates arrived that morning they were presented with a "Constitution" and "Proposed Structure for a Payment for Public Use Commission" drawn up by the Canada



Council, presumably in consultation with the Department of Communications. The document's language was unfortunately all too dear: the Canada Council, it said, "approves commission's creation, powers and procedures" and "approves commission's Board membership"; it invites recommendations from writers' groups for appointment to tbe board, but "three positions would be named by the Canada Council" and "Tbc final selection will be made by the Canada Council." Last but not least, the head of the commission "would have the status of an employee of tbe Canada Council" and would report "to the Director of the Canada Council."

However much that $3-million might have been destined for individual writers, control of distribution was obviously seen as *a government agent's* prerogative. same old story. The representatives of tbe Department of Communications, Chuck McGee and Gaston Blais, along with Naim Kattan, director of writing and publication of the Canada Couocil, seemed genuinely surprised that the writers' groups would take offence and grumble about paternalism. Kattan, who chaired tbe meeting, shrugged off any questions about propriety.

Discussion began with some polite attempts to discover how flexible tbe proposal before us was, and to what extent it was bound by legislation. Gradually, the questions b- more pointed. Kattan, who seemed to see any questioning of the principle of the document as an attack on the Canada Council (and hence on himself), became flushed and flustered, not hiding his impatience with Matt Cohen and Michel Gay, major spokesmen for the Writers' Union and the Union des Écrivains Québécois. Cohen and Gay, in turn, became increasingly vocal about their frustration with the proceedings.

Eventually, some of the disputes were resolved. The writers' groups were allotted a majority on the board and executive committee of the commission, their delegates being chosen among themselves and not requiring approval by the Canada Council. Further delegates named by the Canada Council. publishers, and librarians, though in a minority, would have a vote. The revised proposal, however, would still be subject to the approval of the Canada Council; the commission offices would be under the Canada Council roof; the head of the commission would be a Canada Council employee. Thus the writers would direct policy-making, but the council would retain administrative control. The ungrateful recipients remain worried

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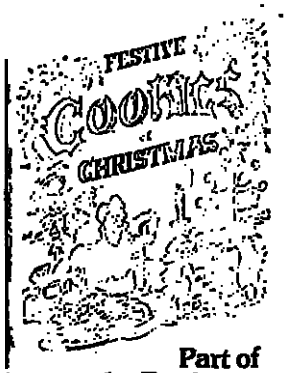

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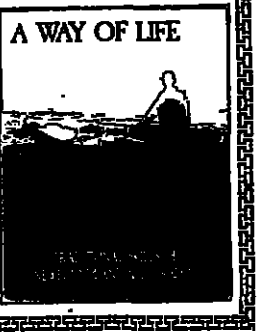


The crafts of Newfoundland and Labrador are preserved in this beautiful, easy to understand book. The concise explanations and ample photographs teach skills such as rughooking, spinning, codtrap, barrel, snowshoe and boot-making. A must for all those interested in their heritage and traditional crafts.

about how much will be left for them once the federal agents have paid their expenses, and whether such agents will be diligent and effective lobbyists for future changes in the program.

Throughout tbe day, I was often lost in clouds of analogy, day-dreaming of council fires and smoke--s, of bemused agents explaining to ignorant literary savages the mysterious ways of government. And so I thought of Rudy Wiebe returning to the plains, and of what his temptations might be as he remembers this meeting and thinks of the year ahead. — RAY ELLENWOOD

Beauty and the book

IN THE CORNER, a tiny washstand table and a chair: a cosy place for a child to crayon, perhaps, or med. But at the top of this table is a set of burins, delicate wooden-handled tools. and in the centre rests a half-engraved block of boxwood, an orchid bloom emerging from the surface. No child works here, but Gerard Brender à Brandis, a lanky, square-jawed man with big bands. Brender à Brandis is not only an artist but a printer, papermaker, weaver, and binder — or, as be calls himself, a bookwright. His own publishing house, Brandstead Press. has produced 14 spare end exquisite books in limited editions, and Porcupine's Quill has published a selection of his engravings, *Wood. Ink and Paper. His coastal* landscapes, farmhouse scenes, and detail of flora have appeared on magazine and book covers, and be has illustrated two children's novels by his sister, Marianne Brendis, for Porcupine's Quill.

Brender à Brandis's landscapes are small enough, but an engraving of a snail's whorled shell or a mouse may be as tiny as a postage stamp. His sensibility es an artist is reminiscent of the Hawthorne story, "The Artist of the Beautiful," in which a watchmaker finds beauty in smallness and abhors the enormity and power of modem industrialism. As en en student at McMaster University, Brender à Brandis bated having to paint huge abstract canvases. An offhand comment fmm his instructor led him to attempt his first wood engraving, a minute portrait of a frond. His instructor took one look end sneered, "So you want to be a little Dutch master, do you?"

Brender à Brendis has insisted on being his own kind of artist since then, although it took him some time to fmd his way. Born in Holland, he emigrated with his family when he was five, in. 1947, and grew up in northern B.C., Vancouver, and Nova Scotia before settling in southern Ontario. He now lives in a farmhow attached to his father's in Carlisle, Got. His studio is in the basement: one smell mom for engraving and binding, another for printing, and a third a small gallery, all heated by a single woodstove.

Unlike the woodcut, wood engraving — in which the grain of the block is turned on end — allows for very fine detail. Brender à Brandis began by making Individual prints; his first books were gifts for friends, but gradually he began to think of his engravings es integral to the page and type of a book. He searched out texts he could marry with his engravings — a recent example is *With Cheerful Heart*, a sampler of botanical writings by Catherine Parr Traill. The book, including 35 engravings printed on rag paper, is bound in linen printed with an antique fabric-printing block. in an edition of 100 copies.

He is indebted to both Thomas Bewick, the 18th-century master of wood engraving, and William Morris, initiator of the Arts end Crafts movement, but Brender à Brandis feels more akin to another English artist: Beatrix Potter. "She's much simpler end more accessible," he says, "snuggling right down to Mother Nature. Beatrix Potter is going back to your own garden end saying, 'Look whet's here!'" His own garden includes hundreds of orchids, the models for the richly detailed orchid blooms languidly trailing over the margins of his next book.

When he isn't engraving, Brender à Brandis works the calm rhythm of bis spinning wheel, prints on the 1882 Albion press, or binds. His books are simple structures, tbc bii executed without the technical deftness of the engravings. But they have a warm texture, and the artist's sensibility shines through.

Next year Brender à Brandis will move next door to a house he is designing himself. He'll have more light to work by, but he isn't allowing himself any more space. In fact, he'd be happy with less.

— CARY FAGAN

Small world

WHAT WOULD YOU do to put the world right? If someone had asked me to write a response to that question when I wee a child, I might have written, "Please let John Kennedy, Nikita Khrushchev, and Fidel Castro become bat friends." Their threats and counter-threats over *the* issue of Sovial missile sites in Cuba held me spellbound in October, 1962. When my grade two teacher asked us to express our concerns and state our solutions, for all of us. the political equalled the personal: our hopes were expressed through tbe actions end morality of our daily lives.

I was acutely reminded of just how personal the political is for children while browsing through the answers from some 4,000 five- to 18-year-olds who were asked last spring how *they* would change the world and put it right. The best 400 responses -in poems, prose, and drawings —.are to be published this fall in a book titled Dear *World:* How I *Would Put the World Right.* It has been made possible through the combined efforts of Canadian publishers, book manufacturers, and booksellers, who have donated their services to the project. Ninety per cent of the money raised (the first printing is to be 100,000 copies, which will sell for $9.95 each) will go to Global Ed/Med Supplies Canada, a charity set up in 1982 by Doreen Wicks.

The idea for the book first came up at a lunch meeting between Fred Wardle, vice-president of Methuen Publications, end cartoonist Ben Wicks. Wicks talked about his wife Doreen's struggles to raise money for her charity, end Wardle suggested putting out a children's book similar to one published by Exley in England, also called Dear *World*, the royalties from which had been turned over to Oxfam. "Doreen end I thought that format would be ideal," says Wicks. "Not only would children have the opportunity to do something directly to help children in the Third World, but it is a great way of raising the consciousness of children to life in the Third World."

Lest winter Wicks, Wardle, and George Bryson, president of Addison-Wesley Publisher& planned tbe project during a series of lunches. Methuen would distribute the book to the trade, end Addison-We&y would handle the school distribution. "George believed that it needed to be endorsed and coordinated through the various provincial ministries of education," says Wicks. "Within 10 minutes of sitting down at the table, he would inevitably get up end dash off to phone some ministry official. In nine lunches, I don't think he spent more than five consecutive minutes at the table."

Mailings were sent to schools across Canada, asking students to submit their entries to the local Bank of Montreal, which organized regional selection committees. Their choices were forwarded to Methuen in Toronto, where they were judged by Margaret Atwood, Pierre Berton. Margaret Laurence, *Maureen* McTeer, Mila Mulroney, Pierre Tisseyne, and Ben Wicks. The top 30 entrants among the 400 whose work will be published will also be flown to Ottawa in November to meet Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Governor General Jeanne Sauvé.

The overwhelming number of entries are about nuclear warfare, pollution, famine, drug and alcohol abuse, and

poverty. The solutions, directives, pleas, and prayers poignantly combine faith in and fear of tbe future. As one child writes, "Our plight is to save the world from ourselves."

For many entrants, space is not the final frontier but an infinite garbage dump. Some suggest loading the space shuttle with drugs and alcohol and shooting them off the planet; others believe that tbe cruise missiles should be seat into outer space. One boy in the Northwest Territories has a unique plan to rid the world of pollution: "I would get a long hose about 500,000 metres long and I will take all the pollution and pump it into space.."

To solve the problem of famine, many suggest cutbacks in arms spending and the allocation of those funds for food. One child, however, believes the solution lies in placing the starving in hotels with unlimited access to mom service. The ban symbol recurs in many of the drawings, illustrating the elimination of such menaces as ""clear warfare and smoking, and in one drawing a boy bans sisters.

But by far the most common are pleas for peace. A poem by Laura Perry of Sydney, N.S., epitomizes the political and emotional acuity of the Dear *World* entries:

Peace
Like dawn creeping
Slowly over the world
Banishing the cold darkness of the night
Comes slowly draining hatred from the world.
Peace cannot come in a minute
It comes in small things
A smile. a truce.

SHERIB POSESORSKI

ENGLISH, OUR ENGLISH

The wrong stuff

No matter how hard a writer strives to find the word that precisely denotes his meaning; it may remain a secret between him and his dictionary

By Bob Blackburn

A FEW MONTHS AGO, I perplexed a number of people when I attempted to explain my objection to certain uses of *after*.

The example I used was, "Three people are io hospital after their car collided with a threshing machine." Many readers saw nothing wrong with that sentence. One who complained made it clear that he could not distinguish between *after* and *because*.

As a conjunction, *after* is used to introduce an adverbial clause of time. It denotes a sequence. *Because* is used to introduce a clause of cause or reason. Replacing *after* with *because* in *the exam*ple would make the sentence correct; replacing *are* in with were *taken to* would produce a better sentence.

Here are some sharper illustrations: "The hotel is a heap of rubble after a typhoon struck." "She is a free woman after the jury found her not guilty."

Some of the readers who reacted to my earlier comment have impressive *academic qualifications. I would appre*ciate some-help from them. If s&one can convince me that there is nothing wrong with the two sentences quoted in the preceding paragraph, I shall drop the subject, but will never wittingly write their like.

I RECEIVE (or have received until now) a monthly newsletter published by an association of broadcasting executives. It contains a regular column under the byline of the president of a national organization dedicated to convincing advertisers that television is the most rewarding medium in which to spend their money. Here are two sentences from his August column: "The percentage of working women has doubled since 1950, with 42% now employed full time." "Although light users of all media, television provides the best mesas of reaching the younger working woman."

What interests me is that, while the second sentence is a syntactic abomination, I can understand what he meant to say. The first, which appears to be relatively straightforward, I have been puzzling over for days. I haven't the foggiest idea what it means. Think about it.

SOMETHING SINISTER is happening to *Incidence*. Its valuable modem meaning, outside of special vocabularies, has to do with range of occurrence or influence. One properly *might speak* of a decline in the incidence of volcanic activity or drug abuse (or one might wish one could). One also might speak of a decline in the number of incidents involving such thines.

Suddenly, however, we are reading and *hearing of incidences* of *things — inci*dences of child abuse or government corruption. Wbat has happened to *incidents*? Perhaps the answer lies in some confusion with *instances*, since *instance nowadays* is most commonly used (correctly) to mean example.

Homonyms have always been a problem in our language, and the problem has bee" aggravated by the ever-increasing incidence of broadcasting. Because of a" interest in home-computer telecommunications, I read a great deal of casual written correspondence among young people who are usually unaware of such distinctions as those between *instants* and *instance*, or *incidence* Sod incidents. They misunderstand each other very often.

(The thought just struck me that *homonym may now* mean *the* alias used by someone leading a double life, and no one has told me. 1 have long since learned not to say I am feeling gay. but I am still having trouble with *homo*. It has always been troublesome, anyway, since in Latin it means man, but as a Greek-rooted combining form it means same or like. The publicity surrounding the AIDS plague has given currency to *homophobia*, and I wonder what sort of Rosetta Stone etymologists of the 40th century will need to decipher *that*. Them was a time when respectable word-coiners would "se homogeneous roots, but *television* changed *all* that. So a future scholar might wonder whether a homophobe would be frightened by men or by seeing himself in a mirror, but how would he guess that the "word" refers to a person who is afraid of people who indulge in homoerotism?)

It used to be that the writer's struggle was to *find the* word that *precisely* denoted his meaning. He may still seek it and find it, but if he is a realist he will realize that it's a secret between him and his dictionary.

DURING THE DOG days . . .

One evening a charming CBC weatherperson apologized for the inaccuracy of her forecast the previous evening, and explained that "the weather system didn't move as planned."

A news report on an informal gathering hosted by Prime Minister Mulroney told us that 'half the 15 ministers were part of Monday's cabinet shakeup." □

PROFILE

Fact and fiction

'Unless you write a novel, you are not considered to ba a real writer,' says Heather **Robertson, who 'switch-hits' between journalism and a new career rewriting history**

By Barbara Wade Rose

HEATHER ROBERTSON is Opinionated. "Very opinionated," she **agrees cheerfully as she sits cross-legged on a fabric-covered futon on** the second floor of her **Toronto** home. For most of her adult life **she has been paid to express her** opinions. Even in **the course** of a **casual discussion she will comment,** "I **notice Daniel** Ortega has **called** Reagan the greatest **fascist since** Hitler. **I would certainly agree with that." Her** opinions as a **journalist** have been valued, she believes, because "the **press represents the** public's **eyes and ears** and **conscience."** Ha **conscience** tells her that emperors **and** politicians **wear** the **scantiest** of **wardrobes.** "YOU [as **a** member of the press] are engaged in **a** kind of **warfare with** the **politicians, because** the politicians **usually** want to **pull the wool over people's eyes."**

Heather Roberts

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL ORENSTEIN

It may also be ha opinions that have given value to ha **fiction writing.** At 44, Robertson **has become, in Canadian** terms, a successful fiction **writer. Her** first novel, Willie: *A Romance* **(Lorimer), won** *the* Books **in** Canada **Award** and **the** Canadian **Authors** Association Literary Award when it **was** published in 1983. She **deliberately** chose the **consummate** politician **William** Lyon **Mackenzie King** as its subject because of her obsessive **— and** opinionated — interest in politics. It suits **her role** es a "switch-hitter," as she calls **writers** who are **both journalists** and novelists. "There **are** not many switch-hitters in **this country,"** she says. "I think **a** lot of journalists **are intimidated** about writing fiction. And **a** lot of fiction **writers** can't **write journalism,** although a lot of them try." The **second** volume in her trilogy on King, Lily: A Rhapsody in ***Red, is*** **to** ***be*** published **this fall.**

Next to the room where Robertson sits is her study. With three windowed walls like an enclosed porch, light surrounds the silent computer **terminal.** The new **book** is complete and Robertson is **taking** a little time off. **She** will tour **in** the fell, **something she finds "very exhausting. One's salesmanship is an enormous factor. I heard that a writer was turned down recently by a major radio show because he was judged to be inarticulate — not interesting." She** does not **react when** one of **the** opinions she expressed es a journalist **in** a 1975 ***Maclean's*** column is reed back to her: "If **all art** is of **equal** value es individual **expression,** attention naturally **shifts** to the artist. Instead of critical **evaluations** of their work we get **interviews:** we know how **much booze** they drink, **what** kind of typewriter **they** use, how often they've been **married** and how **much** money **they** make."

IN **1963, THE** start of **the** sunshine decade, Heather Robertson **was** a bright young Canadian **on** a **Woodrow** Wilson scholarship to Columbia University in New York, where she studied Victorian literature -the period, she says, of **"the** great fat novel." Some of **the other scholarship** students would not **speak to her,** since **she was** only **from** Canada and could hardly be **their** intellectual equal. To others, her **birthplace, Winnipeg,** sounded **exotic** — better, my, than **Minneapolis. Another future writer, Erica Jong, was studying** English at **Columbia** at **the** time, but the cloistered nature of the discipline **was such** that Robertson **rarely saw** her; **Jong's** studies were **anchored** in **an earlier century.**

Robertson was in **the process** of deciding **that she would rather** write **than** reed. She didn't **want** to **teach** English at some **ivy**-covered U.S. university-she wanted to **return to** Canada. But what could she **write there?** "Most **of** the **Canadian** fiction I read **was** unbelievably self-conscious end pretentious. Here I was **a very middle-class** young woman from Winnipeg, and I thought, whet really do I have to say? Not very **much."** Particularly not very **much,** she **believed,** if she **was** determined to avoid either of two common first-novel themes: **the** autobiographical novel or a **coming-of-age novel,** *the* kind that **"most** young novelists do." **She** had little feeling **for "slim novels** of much **contemplation."**

The **Canadian** writers Robertson respected most at **the** time **were "Peter Gzowski** and **Christina Newman** and **all** these **peo-**

ple at *Maclean's. Maclean's* in its heyday was a very serious magazine and there were high expectations." On the strength of her work on the student newspaper and a summer job as a reporter for the Winnipeg Free *Press, she was hired as* a reporter on the Winnipeg *Tribune. At age 23, she divided her time* between reporting — interviewing John Diefenbaker, among others — and writing drama reviews of John Hirsch's productions at the Winnipeg Theatre Centre. In the closely-knit Winnipeg arts community, she quickly rose to prominence.

The idea for her first book arose from some of her work for the *Tribune.* Robertson had visited some Indian reserves, where she discovered a civil rights movement emerging, much as it had among blacks in the southern United States. At the time, in anticipation of Canada's centenary, Imperial Tobacco was soliciting manuscript outlines on what Canada would be like in the year 2000. Robertson knew her project was not exactly in keeping with the theme, but she sent in 8 proposal anyway. she was one of the 10 *who got $3,000 each, enough to subsidize research* and travel during the next year.

'When everybody else was spending the Centennial summer cavorting around the country, having a good time in Yorkville, smoking dope," she says, "I was locked in my apartment writing this manuscript. It was enormous — about 500,000 words. I just couldn't stop, I bad so much to say." Eventually, her Centennial project became her first book, *Reservations are for Indians* (1970), which she published with "an old friend from university," James Lorimer. Half a dozen other non-fiction books on topics from prairie life (*Grass Roots,* 1973) to war *art* (*A Terrible Beauty,* 1977) were *to* follow as Robertson developed ideas from her journalism, her columns, or her own restless mind.

She was a voice from the west to whom Toronto had decided to listen. She also won attention because of her youth. "The feeling then was that the future was with the young. You had magazines like *Saturday Night* — Robert Fulford, who wasn't very old himself, was very receptive and seeking out young writers. *Maclean's* was seeking out young writers. You had people actually pushing you forward, wanting to get your books into print. It's like looking back into a golden era by today's standards."

Robertson wrote profiles and articles for almost every major Canadian magazine in the style of the self-absorbed 1970s. In the light of the direction she would later take, her articles sometimes read like the fiction-writer Heather Robertson expressing herself. A *Maclean's* profile of broadcaster Barbara Frum describes From in terms of Robertson: "She. a Jew from southern Ontario, and I. a Wasp from the Prairies, are both. in a sense, children of the Depression, daughters of intelligent, energetic mothers whose own ambitions were beat by poverty and social custom into the mold of conventional domesticity."

Robertson's writing ability and self-described interest- in "challenging the conventional wisdom" landed her a column on the back page of *Maclean's* in the pre-newsmagazine, pre-Allan Fotheringham days. There she wrote thoroughly researched essays once a month on topics ranging from education to masculinity, including one, "Confessions of a Canadian Chauvinist Pig," in which she expressed "a desire to toss a hand grenade into every American camper I pass on the highway." The man who hired her, Peter C. Newman, says of her columns and of some television criticism she wrote for the magazine, "She was fabulous. I couldn't wait to read her copy myself, and that's a rare experience for an editor."

The column or essay is still Robertson's favourite medium in a magazine. ("It's very difficult to do as a writer because it seems very self-serving, but I love that kind of debate, that kind of dialogue with the reader.") But by 1976 she had decided "to get out of the news field." Still distressed by the state of Canadian fiction ("so rural, so domestic"), she wanted to write a big book about the status of Canada. Around the same time

William Lyon Mackenzie King's perplexing diaries were released for publication. and Robertson found her subject. "What an extraordinary personality! What a gift to the nation — a man's personal diaries!"

"IN THIS COUNTRY, if you write a novel — any novel — you are considered to be a real writer," Robertson says. "If you publish absolutely brilliant journalism in a magazine you are not considered to be a real writer." Initially she found the idea of writing a novel "terrifying." She struggled through 130 pages or so and took the &aft to Lorimer, knowing "be has great judgement end he's very frank. When be thinks I've gone off the rails or am doing something stupid. he'll tell me so: He also has a strong sense of in which direction I should be pushed." Lorimer thought she should be encouraged es much es possible, end handed her over to Roy MacSkimming to learn tbe fine points of fiction writing.

> 'It was very difficult knowing how to leave out chunks of stuff. If you're a journalist, you're so conscientious about trying to proceed along and not leave a hole in your argument. With a novel, the key is the white space'

"I found that if a character wasn't working you just simply drop it," Robertson recalls. "It was very difficult knowing how to leave out chunks of stuff, skip time. Especially if you're a journalist, you're so conscientious about trying to proceed along and not leave a hole in your argument. Bet with a novel, the key is the white space." She would begin writing et nine o'clock every morning end work until noon, then return for another couple of hours after lunch, discipline she learned es a deadline-locked journalist. "It's true in a sense, thet there is a muse. You work out of your subconscious. Non-fiction is written out of your conscious, your rational mind. You have to sort of open the well and allow that process to happen." The daily trip to the well sometimes produced only a page or two. bet at other timer tbe words came easily. Sometimes Robertson would awaken et 3 a.m. with the characters she had created "nattering on in my bead."

For tbe first several years it was a slow process, until she realized she no longer was restricted either by facts or decorum. "My moment of liberation es a fiction writer came when I set down et my typewriter and wrote 'The Red Cross sucks cock.' To get that out of my Wasp Presbyterian subconscious was totally liberating. After that the novel took off. It just wrote itself. After five years of agony I sat down and wrote the rest of it in three months."

She laughs. "'Heather Robertson Falls on Face' — I could see the headlines. The fell thet *Willie* came out I was just terrified. I could see them all sharpening their pens!' Tbe pens wrote mostly praise, however. Ken Adachi of the Toronto *Star* wrote, "Sly, pungent and funny. *Willie is as entertaining* as it is artfid. An experienced journalist end author of five well-received non-fiction books, Robertson has all tbe literary equipment for a new career: a peeled eye, a tuning-fork ear and en innovative way with local color end speech." *Maclean's* Anne Collins described *Willie* as "more *than* just a psychological portrait of a prime minister end an important social portrait of the pest. It is an ode to the myriad ways in which humans build public poses to bide their empty hearts."

Her confidence bolstered, Robertson took another year off from journalism to work on the second volume in the Mackenzie King trilogy. "I have written the kind of fiction tbet I've

always loved to read, **which** is **historical fiction.** Lots of action. lob of adventure. lots of people. lots **of scope,** lots of time and space to **move around** in. And **a** much more distanced view of the characters. I'm not **a** bourgeois novelist. People **who write** about **relationships,** about personal traumas, about **individuals in** conflict **—** that's not for me. I **will** never **write** a **novel like** that. I am **much** closer to **Doctorow, to Gore Vidal,** to Tolstoy and **Solzhenitsyn.** You write more out of **an** epic tradition."

A few **critics** didn't **take** kindly to Robertson's **"innovative way with color** and **speech."** Her **character** Lily **—** a **woman born** before **the turn** of **the century — writes in her diary slang** terms like **"puked,"** and **marries William Lyon Mackenzie King**

> 'I have written the kind of fiction that I've always loved to read. Lots of action, lots. of adventure, lots of people, lots of time and space. I'm not a bourgeois novelist. People who write about relationships, about personal traumas — that's not for me'

in a furtive, fictional ceremony. Describing tbe book as **"terrible," historian** Jack **Granatstein** took ha to **task** on **CBC-Radio** for distorting history **without the justification,** he **feels,** *of* **a greater artistic purpose. He now says, "I remember her saying —** and I'm sure **this** is **almost a direct** quote **— that 'the historians** had left out **everything** interesting.' Well, it's one **thing** to **internalize Mackenzie** King's **thoughts,** but it's **another thing to have King dressing up in an Air Force uniform, to have him committing** in effect **a rape [after Lily** shouts at **him,** 'Screw **your mother!'],** to **have him** marry. Mackenzie King's life and records **are** quite **interesting enough** without **her doing this." Adachi calls Granatstein** a "purist."

Robertson herself believes **that "all** you're **asking the reader** to do is to **re-imagine history.** It's a **game.** I **call** it suspension of belief. **During** tbe **course of the** book you **suspend** your belief **in the historical record and look at it again in terms of a more mythological point** of view." **Asked** about **the ethics** of **rewriting history,** she replies, **"It** is entrenched in **British** law **that you cannot** libel **the** dead. It is **the** very basis of **free** speech. People **while they are** alive **can construct all** kinds of mythologies about **themselves — the** Biiy Bishop furor is a case in point. At some point somebody has tbe **right** to cell it into question, to **say that's** not true, or to say ***perhaps*** **that's not true. In journalism you can do** it **while they're still** dive-if you **can** make **your** case."

HEATHER ROBERTSON is still very **much** a journalist. A recent issue of ***Chatelaine*** carries **her** article about **a** Soviet woman she **considers** "my **counterpart"** and tbe **friendship that sprang** up **between them. A recent *Saturday Night* contains her account** of **an** armed **forces** private **who** was drummed out of **CFS Shelburne because** she is **a lesbian.** Robertson seized on tbe idea **when a newspaper clipping about the woman piqued her interest — her usual reason for writing articles. "There are certain** magazine stories that I **always love** to do."

Her view of **the** fiction writer is tbe same as **her view** of the journalist. "Society puts up a **kind** of mythology of the **state view," she says. "It's** tbe novelist **who can** present a counter mythology. **That's** why **writers are** so feared, why **novelists are** expelled from the Soviet Union and **even** killed **in** some **countries."** And she **brings a** journalist's sensibility to the **value** of her fiction work. "I don't believe **in writing** for **the fit audience, though** few. If people don't **want** to read you, **there's prob**ably something wrong **with** your work. I know for a fact **that** if my books failed, I **would** stop **writing** them." □

IN MEMORIAM

'So dear, so fleeting . . .'

The remarkable career of Hubert Evans (1892-1986) was often obscured by the self-described Old Journeyman's mysterious life and character

Ey *Alan Twigg*

FOLLOWING HUBERT EVANS'S death, a little over a month after his 94th birthday, four of us huddled under a lean-to on the beachfront outside the cottage be had built in 1927. Typically, before he succumbed to pneumonia complications on June 17, Evans bad requested that there be no funeral for him, no display of public mourning, no wake. No fuss. So instead the four of us — writers John Faustman and Edith Iglauer, Evans's publisher Howard White, and myself-traded sandwiches and stories through tbe afternoon, and reminded ourselves how little we really knew about this exceptional man.

Hubert Reginald Evans was born in Vankleek Hill, Ont., on May 9, 1892. The eldest son of a stern Methodist schoolteacher, Hubert often dreamed of running away in a canoe to live with the Indians. Half a century later he would get his wish, live among B.C. Indians as a friend, and subsequently write the classic novel, Mist *on the River*.

At 18, he dropped out of high school to work as a reporter for the Galt *Reporter*, *the Mail & Empire*, *the World*, the New Westminster *News* and the Nelson *Daily News*. From these experiences he learned his lifelong respect for brevity and clarity as literary virtues.

Hubert Evans

PHOTOGRAPH BY LES YATES

He spent 2½ years as a signaller in tbe trenches in the First World War, was wounded at Ypres, and subsequently rejected a City Hall reporter's job in Toronto. A chance meeting on the train to B.C. led to a job as a salmon hatchery superintendant at two remote northern lakes. He corresponded with his school friend, Ann Winter, who shared his philosophy "to travel light, to own only what you can carry on your back." They married in Vancouver in 1920, after Hubert bad lost his "stake" in a poker game.

Ann Evans, a graduate of the University of Toronto, encouraged her husband's writing aboard a 48' x 28' floathouse ha built on Cultus Lake. His freelance writing career began when he sold a 500-word satirical piece to Dorothy Parker at the *New Yorker*. (Evans would publish most of his books and articles in the U.S.) In 1927, the first of three adult novels to appear at quarter-century intervals, The New *Front* Line, a study of a B.C. homesteader, echoed his idealistic responses to "the old front line" of European warfare.

With books such as *Derry of Totem Creek* (1920) and *Forest Friends* (1926), Evans became one of the most popular writers for young people in North America. ("My wife suggested I write for teenagers because you can still change a person's viewpoint up to the time they're 20.") He built his seaside retreat at Roberts Creek, joined the Quakers. and raised three children. "Two hundred dollars a month was my cash crop; but you could live like a king on that if you wanted to work with your hands, do some gardening, cut your own wood, build things."

During the lean years of the Depression, Evans beachcombed, fished, and built skiffs for the unemployed mea. (one of his boats is in the museum at Gibsons, B.C.) A CCF supporter, he also wrote doctrinaire radio and stage plays and, in 1932, a Writer's Prayer: "Help me to see and to help others see creative purpose. Help me to write with sincerity and without sentimentality. Thine is the gift. May I ever be a faithful steward of the talent entrusted to me, and never use it for unworthy ends."

'As a faithful steward. Evans wrote hundreds of pacifist morality talcs for juveniles during the Second World War. He also wrote the first fiction to document the internment of Japanese Canadians, No More Islands, a complex novella that appeared in 1948.

In 1945 Evans and his wife were invited to teach Indian children in isolated mission schools at Kitimat and Hazelton, B.C. Nine years later (after two short stories about Skeena River Indians had appeared in *Maclean's*), Evans published *Mist* on *the* Riw, the first Canadian novel devoted to the realistic and unsentimental portrayal of Indians as its central characters.

After Ann Evans died in 1960, when Hubert was 68, he became deeply depressad. He wouldn't publish another book for 16 years. He burned his manuscripts and grew convinced the world was "headed for a fast wind-up."

Tbm, impressed by a radio broadcast by Al Purdy, he began to writs poetry, which was published by Howard White of Pender Harbour. An admiring Margaret Laurence wrote in 1974, beginning their enduring correspondence. After Silver Donald Cameron wrote that "Hubert Evans was a professional writer when such elder statesmen as Ernest Buckler and Hugh MacLennan were in knee pants." Evans was invited to be one of only three lifetime honorary members of the Writers' Union of Canada.

Beset by heart operations and other seven ailments, Evans painstakingly began to taps reminiscences of a turn-of-the-century Ontario boyhood. Typing made him dizzy, but by holding his nose inches from his old Underwood, he managed to write his other great book, 0 *Time* In Your *Flight, a memoir-novel* of events seen strictly through the eyes of a nine-year-old protagonist. II'S perhaps the best novel ever published by an 87-year-old — anywhere, anytime.

In 1984 the president and chancellor of Simon Fraser University, along with Margaret Laurence (who flew out to meet Evans for the first and last time), travelled to Roberts Creek to bestow an honorary

doctorate. Laurence's convocation address praised Evans as "the Elder of the Tribe." He bad published 10 books of fiction, more than ZOO short stories, dozens of serials and radio plays, a biography of David Thompson, three books of poetry, and countless articles.

The B.C. Book Prizes named one of its four new literary prizes after Evans in 1985. That same year he fell, was stranded on the cold floor of his seaside cottage for a night, and was told by his doctor that he should finally enter a rest home in nearby Sechelt.

In those final years — when those of us on the beach knew him as the witty, self-described Old Journeyman — Evans had meditated daily and found increasing solace in Buddhism. He often recited a haiku by a Japanese poet of the 1500s: "Dew evaporates. AU our world is dew. so dear, so fleeting . . . ."

As an essentially British Columbian author for six decades, Evans never had the connections with Britain that made the likes of Pauline Johnson, Malcolm Lowry and Roderick Haig-Brown into B.C.'s best-known writers. As we left the windy beach, we agreed it was next to impossible that our provincial government might see tit to arrange for Hubert Evans's house at Roberts Creek to be preserved. Aboard the ferry back to Vancouver, John Faustman and I jokingly agreed that somebody should establish an underground Hubert Evans Appreciation Society — maybe call it the Hubertites — as if all that decency was somehow necessarily subversive.

The good news is that the University of British Columbia library has finally acquired the cardboard boxer containing Hubert's private papers-the few boxes from the chicken coop that he didn't see fit to destroy. The sad news is that, like this article. posthumous recognition of Hubert Evans, although better late than never, cannot-do justice to the man or dispel the lingering mysteries of his life and character.

So long, Hubert, we barely knew ye. □

FEATURE REVIEW

Home is the haunter

In Alistair MacLeod's short stories, in one form or another, the past always forces itself upon the present

By Jack Hodgins

As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories, by Alistair MacLeod, McClelland & Stewart, 189 pages, $12.95 paper QSBN 0 7710 5566 8).

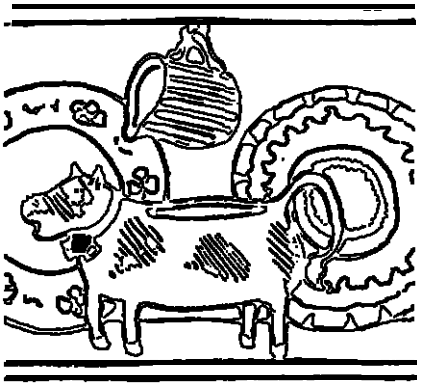
SEVERAL YEARS before Alistair MacLeod published his first book, I came upon one of his stories in a *Best American Short Stories* anthology and became an admirer even before I'd got to the end of its first paragraph:

> There are times even now, when I awake at four o'clock in the morning with the terrible fear that I have overslept; when I imagine that my father is waiting for me in the room below the darkened stairs or that the shorebound men are tossing pebbles against my window while blowing their hands and stomping their feet impatiently on the frozen steadfast earth. There are times when I am half out of bed and fumbling for socks and mumbling for words before I realize that I am foolishly alone, that no one waits at the base of the stairs and no boat rides restlessly in the waters by the pier.

It now seems clear that this single paragraph. which opened "The Boat" (later included in his first collection, *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood*), was a strong signal of what would continue to stand at the centre of MacLeod's fiction: the past's insistence on intruding upon the present; the inescapable pull of life on the seacoast; the haunting figure of the admired father. It was also a demonstration of the sort of intelligent and sensitive care this writer would be willing to put into his choice of words, his creation of rhythm, his shaping of sentences, and his subtle engineering of the reader's response.

Ten years of this sort of care have gone into MacLeod's second book of stories, published in McClelland & Stewart's new Signature series. As *Birds Bring Forth the Sun* includes seven fine stories. all set in Atlantic Canada, or in the places Atlantic Canadians came from, or in places they have gone to. In every one of these stories the past forces itself in some form upon the present: a childhood memory of a heroic dog betrayed, a returned brother, a radio station's renewed interest in the old Gaelic songs, a recalled family legend of a big grey dog that has attended deaths of fathers back through several generations. a recurring talent for the "second sight" in a blinded eye. Sometimes the present is illuminated by the visiting past; always it is haunted.

What MacLeod may be best at is the short narrative passage in which an individual labours, in spite of surprising obstacles. in pursuit of an important if unusual goal. In this book there are at least three of these passages I expect to remember for a long time. In each case, I discovered myself sitting forward, grinning, ready to whoop aloud with admiration.



In "The Closing Down of Summer" the narrator is struggling to dig his brother's grave in the crowded family plot while his father's disintegrating coffin must be held back from falling in from the adjoining site. In "Winter Dog'! the boy-narrator has gone out with his dog on the heaps of ice that have crowded in close to shore., and has pried loose the frozen corpse of a seal that seemed "more real than reality." Bringing the seal home on his sleigh, he discovers a gap has widened between the ice and the land.

In "Second Spring" a farm boy who wants to breed and raise his own calf for a local club is finally given permission tc take the chosen cow to visit the perfect bull five miles away over a narrow dirt road. At the top of the hill the boy and the cow are spotted by a most undesirable bull.

> He weighed perhaps a ton, with immense shoulders and an enormous chest. . . .He carried his head low as he moved and moaned towards us with strands of beadlike saliva. falling from his lower jaw. . . .No formal heritage was visible in the way he looked or the way he moved, and there was nothing like him in any book entitled *Standard Breeds of Cattle*.

This bull knows nothing of the club's high standards and will not be distracted from his need and his intention. The unasked-for and frightening romantic encounter is recounted in some of the best narrative writing I've read in a long time.

The title story is perhaps the most inventive in the collection, in terms of technique. I expect it will be, for me, the most memorable as well. It appears to announce its particular slant in the language of its beginning:

> Once there was a family with a highland name who lived beside the sea. And the man had a dog of which he was very fond.

Though beginning like a fairy tale, this becomes the legend of the narrator's great-great-great grandfather, who lovingly raiser a pup left at his gate. When the dog grows too large for male dogs to mount, he — being a man used to breeding animals — goes so far as to find a large enough male and to assist the pair in the process of mating. some years after the dog and her pups have run off, he comes upon them on an island and calls to the dog. Misunderstanding their mother's reasons for running to this human, the wild pups leap upon him and kill bim in full view of his horrified sons.

The story shifts at this point, in a quite wonderful manner, to become a contemporary account of the narrator's own vigil, with his brothers. at the bedside of his dying father. The entire family down to the present generation has inherited the fears and superstitions that attend the legend of the big grey dog of death. "We do not want to hear the voice of our father, as did those other sons, calling down bis own particular death upon him."

While very much aware of the hardness of Life for the people he writes about, MacLeod's wise heart perceives their secret longings, admires their patient strengths, and records with great authority the small triumphs in their struggle for dignity, pride, and love. The last story in the collection, "The vision," which is the longest and certainly the most complex, makes the greatest demands upon the author's heart as upon his writing skills. Another writer might have needed the space and freedom of a novel in order to tell this multi-generational tale of blinded eyes and vision, of sex and love, of friends and neighbours and enemies. In the final paragraph, which is also the final paragraph of the book, MacLeod acknowledges the difficulty of the task he has set himself:

> And when the wet ropes of the lobster traps came out of the sea, we would pick out a single strand and then try to identify it some few feet farther on. It was difficult to do because of the twisting and turning of the different strands within the rope. Difficult to be ever certain in our judgements or to fully see or understand. Difficult then to see and understand the twisted strands within the rope. And forever difficult to see and understand the tangled twisted strands of love.
>
> This is the task he has set himself in all the p&ceding pages, a task he has performed — for all its diffiily — with originality, strength, care, wisdom, and remarkable talent. Pm an admirer still. □

REVIEW

Hearts of the West

By *Barbara Novak*

The Gates of **the** Son, by Sharon **Butala, Fifth House,** 342 pages. $22.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 920079 22 9).

SHARON BUTALA, whose ***Country of the Heart*** **was** *nominated* for the 1984 Books in **Canada** First Novel **Award, has returned to the same ranching country of southwestern** Saskatchewan for the setting of her **second novel. The first** of a two-part **series, The *Gates of the Sun is 'the* story *of* one man's** deep love for the prairie and of his struggle to fmd meaning in his life.

The book is divided **into four** parts. **detailing** the four **stages** in the **life** of **Andrew Samson,** who **emigrated from** the United States as a young child shortly **after the turn of the century to settle in** Saskatchewan with his mother, who ranched **and** did midwifery to **support** them. **By the time he is eight, Andrew is riding in cattle round-ups, secure in the knowledge that "all he wanted in this** world was to be able to ride **horses** with **these men, to be like them, free to go** anywhere a good horse would take him, **free on the open prairie; his own man."**

In part two, Andrew has achieved all this and more.: a legendary horseman. **musician, and womanizer, he has little regard for the laws of the land,** though **a deep respect for the laws of nature. But** his **mother's** slow death **from cancer, followed** by his **imprisonment** for **cattle** and horse rustling, **propel** him into maturity. In **part** three he **marries,** raises **a family and establishes himself as a hard-working, prosperous** rancher. But no human being holds the power over him **that the prairie does — neither his wife nor** bis children.

Part four **finds Andrew an** old **man, alone and powerless to prevent the future** from **encroaching upon** his beloved prairie. The **vast plains on which cattle once grazed are being ploughed into farm** laud, some of it overworked to the **extent** that it **has turned** to dust **and** salt. Everywhere, oil **wells pump relentlessly. "Andrew couldn't understand how a man could** do that to the earth. **In the end, what did a man have but the ground under his feet?"**

When an artist arrives unexpectedly on Andrew's ranch, he learns something about the nature of life. Change is inevitable; but the artist, like Andrew, has a profound respect for the prairie, and captures on canvas the beauty of the landscape as it was before it was cultivated. Andrew tells him: "All my life . . . I thought this land belonged to me.. . . Now I see that ain't right. It don't belong to nobody."

The novel is undeniably slow-paced; its rhythms approximate the vastness of the prairie itself. The speech patterns are terse, particularly in the first part: there is an absence of humour; and the overall style tends to be flat, dispassionate. The effect, however, is compelling. Alert to sensual details. Butala dwells on physical descriptions of the prairie in ail its manifestations.

The book is shaped internally by the cycles of birth and death and the seasons, and much of the action concerns the never-ending, back-breaking labour of prairie dwellers. Whether she is describing women preparing meals without benefit of running water or electricity, or men digging wells. rounding up cattle, and breaking horses, Butala captures realistically the daily struggle of the peode who settled the prairie.

Andrew emerges as a character with a rich capacity for observation, but Butala wisely limits the depths of his insights. His questions, therefore, are for the most part left unanswered. If this were not the case, the novel, given its use of stereotypical situations and characters (tough whores, overburdened ranch wives, the schoolteacher Andrew marries, the alcoholic doctor), would come perilously close to sentimentality. As it is, part three ends with the statement: "He cried for all the things he hadn't done, and for all the things he had." Fortunately, such lapses are rare.

Andrew's efforts to wrest meaning from life are met with disappointment. He is shaken to realize that his dying mother has no greater understanding of life than he does:

> Didn't she know what it was? She had come all this way and she didn't know? All these years he bad thought she knew. Thinking that she at least knew why each of them had been born had given him the courage to do all the things he did. He could not believe she didn't know. He was appalled to think that she would not understand her dying tither.

But by the end of the novel, he has arrived at greater understanding: "His heart ached for the life that had been his. But then, he thought, how perfect it bad been, how exact, and long, and detail-filled, how complete and beautiful. How beautiful."

Butala is more successful at physical descriptions than she is at exploring the emotional core of her characters, where she tends to be somewhat heavy-handed. The depth of Andrew's loyalty to his mother, for example. is psychologically ill prepared. There is nothing in the first part to suggest that his love for ha would be as strong as is indicated by his response to her d e & in the second part. At its best, however, The *Gates of the Sun expresses a* prairie existentialism that is profoundly moving. □

REVIEW

Constellations of the heart

By **Douglas *Glover***

Nadine, by Matt Cohen, Penguin. **256 pages,** $19.95 cloth **(ISBN 0** 670 **81083 5).**

WRITTEN IN THE form of a fictional memoir, ***Nadine chronicles the*** **eponymous heroine's** life **and loves** fmm **birth in** the shadow of **Drancy,** a Nazi transit camp **on the outskirts** of **Paris,** to **her moment of truth during a terrorist attack** in **Jerusalem** 40 **years later. In the intervening years. she overcomes the** loss of her **parents (in the death** camps), early **exile to a foreign land (Canada), a strange liaison with** her **obese** and **corrupt** uncle, **and the loss of her one true love to reach spiritual maturity and become chairman** of the **astronomy** department at the University of Toronto.

Nadine Santangel, the novel's narrator-protagonist, **is** backed by a **striking** cast of **supporting characters:** the **brilliant Stefann Piakowski** who **promotes** her **career, seduces her,** and **finally confesses his complicity** in ha **parents'** deaths: **the neighbour boy Dennis Miller** who. **brushed** by **greatness, discovers** a comet and **becomes** a star (a Canadian Carl Sagan) **only** to **suffer** the **indignity** of his sexy wasp **wife's multiple infidelities;** and **the saintly,** real-life British **peace activist Langston Hughes.**

By **picking astronomy** as his **heroine's** lifework, Cohen breaks new **literary ground,** not to mention **giving himself the** opportunity for lots of clever **interplanetary imagery.** stars, comets, planets. the **Milky** Way, black **holes,** and the like are **the business** of the book and **also** its **analogue:**

> **Suppose the universe has a code. Suppose the maps we make of the sky are the maps** of our **own psyches,** and the **constellations in fact the countries of the heart.**

He has a decided talent for making us see the **fabric** of a **life lived,** for making us **believe in** people and **milieus,** from afternow trysts **in** the Park **Plaza** to **anti-nuclear demonstrations in London, from a 1960s graduate student *ménage* in Cambridge** to the **Wailing** Wall **in** the 1980s.

If **ever** a **woman** had **reason** for **despair** and **bitterness, Nadine Santangel** does; but hers is a story of the triumph of love, Intelligence. and fortitude over **unspeakable evil,** human **weakness,** and the crossed **wires** of fate. It is the story **of a woman who, though scarred (inside** and out by the **end of the** novel), **refuses** to see herself as a victim. and achieves a **special** kind of **sanity and** wisdom. If ***Nadine* has *a* message *(and I think*** it does), it is an **ancient one: *sursum corda, or in the* English** of the **King** James **version, "Be** shone and of **good courage."**

Cohen tells his tale with skill and a minimum of **technical** fuss. A **master** of **dramatic narrative,** he **is** clearly fascinated by plot and the flow of story. Eschewing **post-modernist whimsy. Nabokovian playfulness,** or **Joycean pyrotechnics,** he alms **straight for realism, practising** the **age-old novelistic arts of selection, foreshortening,** and control of point **of view to** keep the **action moving and** yet **give** it emotional impact and the **texture** of specific **detail.** He deploys a **limpid** prose style, **first-person, relaxed, and ironic,** yet capable of condensed and evocative **imagery:**

> 1 **even** wanted **a coat that hadn't worn away so many of its threads that it was turning into the bone white of canvas — a bone white like the bones** of **skeletons,** a bone white that **nevertheless showed, on its left arm, the clear outline of where a yellow star had been sewn** for a **previous unlucky owner**

Nadine* continues *the exploration of Jewish **themes** that **Cohen** began **in his** previous **novel, *The Spanish Doctor.*** **Though not a sequel in any obvious sense** (five centuries and **Freud separate** the **two** stories). **this** new book bears **an intriguing family resemblance to the earlier one. Though** the **connection is** not made **explicit, Nadine seems** to be a **20th-century** descendant of the line **established in** the 15th **century** by **Avram Halevi** and **Gabriela Hasdai** de **Santangel.** Like **Avram, Nadine** is a **child** of the pogrom; **like** him, she is a **scientist.**

The two novels share a **common romantic structure** -the **long-suffering childhood sweetheart** waits ("waits" is not, perhaps, the correct **word;** as Nadine says, "For most of our **lives** we were **like twin** stars, **revolving** around each other **...")** for **an** ambitious but **muddle-headed boy/man** to settle with her at the **end, with all this implies in terms of phallocentric** politics **and** poetics. Yet ***Nadine is sui generis — the* flesh *that. clothes*** **these** bare **thematic bones** is new and **delightful.** With **this novel, Cohen**

once again asserts his claim to being a fit-rate practitioner of tbe "good read" and one of Canada's pre-eminent storytellers. □

REVIEW

Neither here nor there

By Ann Crosby

No Fixed Address, by Aritha van Herk, McClelland & Stewart, 320 pages, $19.95 **cloth (ISBN 0** 7710 8701 2).

IT COULD BE argued that **Arachne Manteia,** the woman of **no fixed address in Aritha van Herk's third** and most recent novel, is **one** of the **more fortunate women in** Canadian **fiction.** For **one thing, she** has steady **employment,** and not in the female job ghetto where boredom is bred. **Arachne** is a **travelling** salesperson, free to set **her own** schedule and **to** pick **her own routes** through the **prairie towns of Alberta where she stocks the shelves** of general stores with **the** Ladies' Comfort line of women's **underwear.**

It's not a bad job **and** she's **good** at it **—so** good, **in fait,** that **Ladies' Comfort** pays the upkeep on **her car,** a 1959 vintage **Mercedes with genuine** leather interior. Considering the miles she **travels** and **the high-strung nature** of the vehicle, that's quite a perk.

The car was a gift, willed to ha by Gabriel, a **kindly, rich,** tea-drinking friend of **Arachne's** mother **Lanie. Lanie was** a **fortune-teller, loud** and **brassy. She wore rhinestone-rimmed** glasses and Gabriel visited after hours, but if the' arrangement **was** illicit **Toto, Lanie's husband,** never objected and **Arachne** was **spared** tbe **knowledge.** Gabriel treated tbc **daughter with** adult respect and left her **the Mercedes.**

In fact, all of the **men in** Arachne's life are exemplary. In **the** days when **girls were** unable to get jobs as paperboys, **Toto,** a **labourer, left** work for **an** afternoon and took his daughter to a barbershop and **on** to the newspaper **office where** she was **assigned** a paper **route.** The mute **was Arachne's** idea; it was not a **case of a father trying to turn his daughter into the son he never had.**

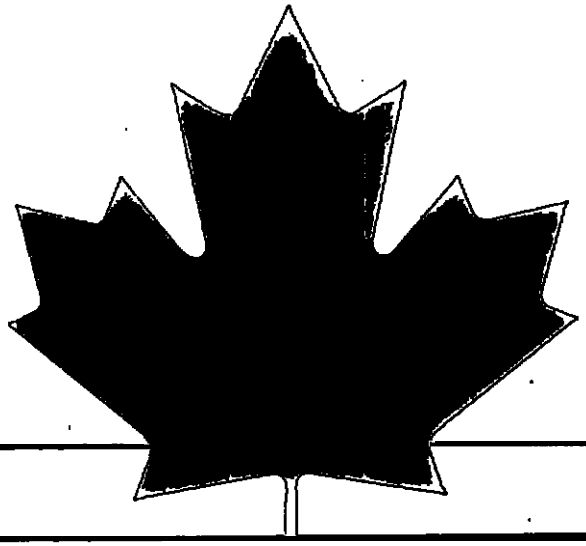
Arachne's "apocryphal **lover,"** Thomas, **whose house** she **shares,** is a **cartographer,** a man **who matches Arachne's practical interest in roads and maps with a successful career in map-making. When Arachne** is not **on** the road the couple **enjoys an esoteric meeting of the minds and an** ecstatic **mating** of **the** bodies. **When she** is **on the road, Arachne enjoys** other **men on demand — hers — and Thomas,** with **full knowledge,** waits patiently for her **return.** He also does **all** of the **cooking,** shopping, and cleaning and **has no** hang-ups about getting married **or** having **children.**

Thena, Arachne's **one** close **female** friend, plays the **role** of audience for **Arachne's** endless **stories** of sexual exploits, keeping **the** details of her **own** life as **a** divorced **single parent** largely to **herself** out of respect for **Arachne's** lack of interest in **such** trivialities.

Arachne's life seems relatively blessed. True, as a child, she was **"not** so **much neglected** as ignored," **but** her **parents** were married **in** a comfortable and boring **sort** of a way. **There was** no domestic trauma for the child to **endure.** Street life **was tough, but Snotface** Mitch taught ha how to get **pennies for** pop bottles **(does one** have to be taught **that?)** and, hating **once** been **robbed** of a **sockful** of **paper-route money,** she **learned** the wisdom of **the streets and set herself up as the only** girl **and** the **leader** of **the** most powerful street **gang in** the **area.** One bout of **bully-bashing** accomplished this feat. **Otherwise, Arachne** endured **the** normal frustrations and **restrictions** of **childhood.**

So what's her **problem? The** problem, it seems, is that she doesn't fit into the story **that** has **been** written for her. Had the author presented tbe character as a case study of nihilism and amorality, **Arachne** could have played **her role,** but instead poor **Arachne** is forced to **keep insisting** that her **predicament** is due to **her femaleness,** and it doesn't work. **Arachne spends her** adult life **endlessly trying to escape a sense of gender responsibility,** but there is **no one in** the **novel** making any demands **on** ha. Day **after** day she travels her **sales** mute., convinced that **only** by **driving can she** prove that life is **not** static. **Fine,** she **proves** it, but what is she **fighting? There** is **nothing or no one** in the book **to** stop her.

She chooses to **sell** women's under-&ear, "the instruments of **repression,"** but she herself is not repressed. Why is she **then selling** repression to other **women?** She doesn't like women. but **then** she **doesn't** like **men** either. **"They're** just bodies," she says, "you could put a paper bag over **their** heads." Luckily for **her,** most of **the men** she **encounters** act **as though they have paper bags over their** heads. She cruises for mm, but **none** of **them hurts her; a few insult her, but only mildly, and most are kind, understanding, concerned, and** helpful. She is not kept. harnessed. belittled, beaten, **impregnated,**



left, domesticated. She is loved, supported, free, serviced, listened to, fed, cared for, and employed.

Wblcb brings us back to nihilism. Van Herk has drawn a character whose nebulous brand of internal frustration leads to amorality, a character who sees herself as a perennial victim in spite of the good fortune that she encounters in her own life and the way that life in general seems to conspire to protect ha. It is a story about senseless direction and the fact that Arachne is a woman is neither here nor there. It is not the socially eon-:;" norms of femininity that thwart ..

In spite of occasional lapses into self-conscious prose ("it makes her uncomfortable, some dish weighed down with cheese, so she lays her fork prongs in the middle of the plate and looks back at him under that lambent skin") and some allusions that boggle tbe mind ("a brother-in-law without the sense to power a D-cell battery"), van Herk does make an artful stab at portraying the birth and development of nihilism. In spite of Arachne's protestations, however, there is very little evidence within the book that the nihilism is sex-linked. □

REVIEW

High spirits

By Paul Stuewe

The Devil Is Loose!, by **Antonine Maillet,** translated **from the** French by **Philip Stratford,** Lester **& Orpen Dennys,** 310 **pages, $21.95 cloth (ISBN** 0 88619 097 5).

THE RUM-RUNNING Rabelaisians of ***The Devil Is Loose!*** are constantly stumbling over one another's poorly concealed caches of illegal spirits, and in much the same way reviewers don't have to scratch very bard to unearth the reasons for Antonine Maillet's popularity. Ha stories of life in Acadie, those French-speaking enclaves in the Maritimes that have preserved their distinctive cultural inheritance, combine tbe delightful simplicity of folk tales with the intriguing complexity of advanced literary techniques. Unlike the objectively depressing human specimens who infest so much contemporary literature, the inhabitants of Maillet's world are too busy experiencing and enjoying life to devote much tlme to wallowing in obsessional neuroses or bemoaning the dissolution of society; and if their actions don't always turn out for the best, their "nothing ventured, nothing gained" approach ensures that boredom will never be a problem for either her characters or her readers.

The Devil Is Loose! is set in the early 1930s, a period when bootlegging had replaced fishing as the major occupation of many coastal Maritime communities. The place is the Acadian villages of southeastern New Brunswick, where two groups of locals, one headed by a well-established grafter and the other led by a feisty young woman named Crache-à-Pic, are vying with each other and various criminal and police organizations for control of this extremely lucrative racket. Tantalized by the lure of easy money, the inhabitants of the area react by concocting a variety of devilish schemes that soon loosen the bonds of traditional social mores.

Most of the' action revolves around Crache-à-Pic, whose tiny band of stalwarts usually succeeds in outwitting both the law and their criminal competitors. But Crache-à-Pic and her friends aren't in it only for the money: their motives are really a mixture of locall patriotism and an ingrained appreciation of a good tight, with money important only as a rough index of success. The relative purity of their intentions gives them a definite advantage over their opponents, whose more selfish concerns result in a much less creative approach to the grand game of rum-running.

But it would be misleading to imply that *The Devil Is Loose!* is merely an Acadian version of the revenuers-vs.-bootleggers conflicts familiar to fans of Burt Reynolds films. Overlaying this basic dramatic situation is a colourful tapestry of myth, folklore, and tall-tale telling that supplies a rich cultural background for what is essentially a simple and straightforward story. Maillet uses this material to flesh out her portraits of individual characters as well as to explain the social conventions of the community, and much of the appeal of *The Devil Is Loose!* comes from our awareness that we are exploring unfamiliar territory with a knowledgeable and perceptive guide.

Maillet unfolds her narrative in a chatty, discursive style that reflects the oral traditions associated with folk literature. She is writing about a culture in which everything is related to everything else: there is nothing so new or extraordinary that it will fail to evoke a "That reminds me. . ." from those who remember older days and ways, and it is through this process that a simple tale of group rivalries becomes a complex web of stories recaptured and retold. Those who prefer a more linear approach to story-telling may well find The *Devil Is Loose!* excessively long-winded; but anyone who appreciates a good yarn regardless of its twists and turnings shouldn't fiid it difficult to accept the narrative's penchant for genial meandering.

In terms of its author's intentions and interests, *The Devil Is Loose!* is an almost completely successful novel. If Maillet's literary palette sometimes seems limited to the primary colours, with a noticeable absence of nuance in its delineation of particular characters, this reflects her desire to portray a collective brand of consciousness rather than a collection of individual psyches. Similarly, her avoidance of anything resembling social realism, initially somewhat disconcerting in a Depression-era story set in a by no means affluent fishing community, is a perfectly apt expression of her conviction that it is the subjective aspects of history and culture that constitute a people's 'essential heritage.. In Philip Stratford's highly readable and convincingly idiomatic translation, *The Devil Is Loose!* comes *to* us as *a* marvellously *imaginative, cleverly* structured, and highly entertaining novel that should appeal to just about every literary taste, while also whetting our appetites for the 20 or so as yet untranslated titles from this enviably talented author. □

REVIEW

Cat eat cat

By Ray *Filip*

The Alley Cat, by **Yves Beauchemin,** translated from the French by **Sheila Fischman, McClelland &** Stewart, 450 **pages, $14.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 1150 4).**

THIS ENGLISH VERSION o f **Yves Beauchemin's *Le Matou,*** is the *grand roman* of the New Quebec. The 450-page novel manages to catwalk between the pretentious extremes of litter-atom that is too arty or too political.

A million-copy best-seller in French, *Le Matou* revises and extends the *diable tradition* of French-Canadian folk tales. Florent Boissonneault desires to make his money in the restaurant business and enters a pact with a devilish usurer to buy The Be&y. He and his wife end up going broke. living in a dump, finding heat at night from a vacuum cleaner and warming their hands by day over coffee at Chez Bob Snack Bar, until the owner pays them $10 to go away.

The thick plot boils with mean cuisine, dirty ticks. and out-to-lunch characters. There is Egon Ratablavsky, both the "Old Rat" and "slimy alley cat" *doppelganger* of the story; Slipskin, a shifty schemer; Father Jeunehomme, an aging priest who doesn't say Mass or offer confession but searches for the unfinished pages of Gogol's *Dead Souls manuscript tossed* into *a* stove *in a lit* of religious fury; Madame Jeunehomme, the priest's mother, who lives in a Miami mansion

after making a fortune selling pornography in Quebec; and Monsieur Emile, the six-and-a-half-year-old alcoholic, raised on beer in his baby bottle, who lived in the back lanes with his cat Breakfast.

From the opening paragraph, when a brass letter falls from a post office sign and crushes a mm's skull, to escapades such as Breakfast tumbling into a pot of pea soup, to the dose of the book when Monsieur Emile plummets to his death from the mof of a burning building while trying to rescue his cat, the falling motif is one of many threads in the circular yarn.

Beauchemin's achievement is that he has succeeded in telling a moral tale without any moralizing. He lets his characters be. We see how they suffer, bleed, weep, die. give birth, and, of course, joke around with that beautiful blasphemy and joie *de vivre* bred into Québécois genes.

Sheila Fischman's translation moves along as trippingly as walking poodles. The English reader may be taken aback by the two anglos, Spufferbug and Slipskin. They are depicted as cold, power-hungry, and conservative — a colonial stereotype *that still* lingers *in* this multinationally-controlled province. But Beauchemin's people are not symbolic. It would be foolish to interpret the text as a swipe at the *blokes*.

The *action* takes place in the Plateau Mont-Royal slums between 1974 and 1976. Interesting to note that the book was written between 1976 and 1980, a period that aroused distress calls in the anglophone community. Politics isn't meant to be taken seriously; it's flat beer. Madame Jeunehomme, a paranoid Canadian nationalist, accuses René Lévesque and his "mob" of "being in the pay of the Soviets." The issue is dismissed in one paragraph. Beauchemin attempts to make sense out of the painful mess through the pleasures of the table and the fable.

A waitress from Stash's cleaning the restaurant window, or the nave of Notre Dame cathedral that "looked more like a railway station," or drinking Prince Noir at the Faubourg St. Denis — Beauchemin lifts the flavour of Montreal out of the air into mimetic magic through his Satanic satire.

There is no happy ending, only a dark tail in the shape of a question mark. Life, whodunit? Funny that the human comedy in Quebec continues to find its most omnivorous fire on the French tongue. No English writer can speak for us all. And no epic voice has yet emerged to deal with the *mélange* of languages shaping this plural culture.

Bristling with passion, humour, and heart. *The Alley Cat* will *be* considered the great timeless book of the '70s. *Le mieux.* *0*

REVIEW

The variations of love

By *Gary Draper*

The Bishop, by David Helwig, Penguin, 234 pages, $18.95 doth (ISBN 0 670 80746 X).

AT THE STILL centre of David Helwig's latest novel is a deathbed. It is the axis, so to speak, of two different, only occasionally intersecting worlds: the one inside the mind of Henry, the dying Bishop of the book's title, and the one outside his body. That first world is vast, extending in time back to Henry's own distant childhood, in space fmm southern Ontario to the Arctic and to wartime London. The second is narrower, its chronology the few days remaining to him, its geography the great cathedral whose priest he has been; it is peopled, however, by a wonderfully odd assortment of deathbed attendants.

The book is a meditation on the varieties of love. This is not to say that death is not a major *theme:* of course it is. But the novel is much more a celebration of love. an examination of love in death's light: Henry's thoughts about his secretary. Rose. suggest one of Helwig's central concerns: "Sometimes he thought she was in love with him, in some distant, harmless way, and Henry did not discourage it. Love came in many forms, and he had learned how few of these should be avoided." The book is full of echoes, and Rose's feelings about Henry reinforce the message: "The thinkers all blabbed on as if the types of love were distinct, as if any fool could tell *eros* from agape and *agape* fmm *philia, but* Rose had never found it so simple. . . . She would not waste her life looking for a word for what she felt for the dear old man who lay imprisoned in silence, but she knew that the world would be emptier when he was not in it."

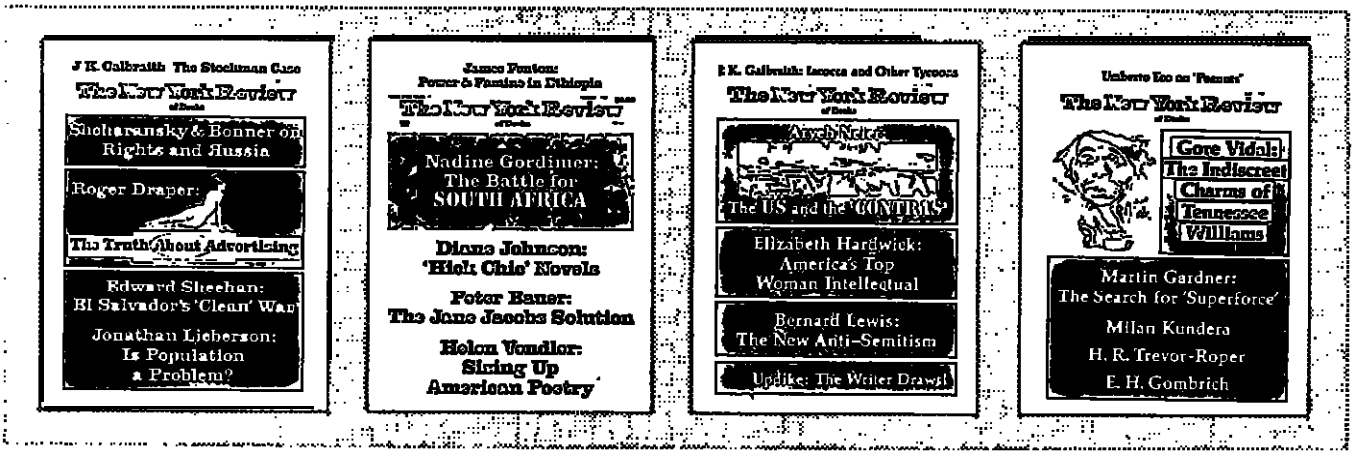
'It would be wrong to imply that Helwig has simply written an extended essay about love and hung some characters on it. His most powerful statements are all embodied in action and image. The varieties of love are not described but shown. There are the deep and complicated versions of love joining Henry to Rose., to the Inuit shaman Ishakak, even to the briefly encountered Mrs. Goodridge. There is the unlikely passion of two of Henry's parishioners. Above all (or perhaps underneath all) there is the story of Henry and Amelia, his wife, a story of consuming love, of misunderstanding, jealousy, forgiveness, and loss.

Helwig has created some very diverse characters here, with varying degrees of success. Amelia, as a central character, remains frustratingly elusive (perhaps because in some sense she remains elusive to Henry. and we know her only through the medium of his memories). A few characters never rise above caricature. But the Bishop and Rose are both strongly and convincingly drawn. And there are two characters orbiting about the Bishop who are wonderfully realized, largely because of Helwig's ability to capture them through their own voices: Ishakak the Inuit shaman, who comes south to be a part of Henry's dying, and a retarded young man named Norman, who inhabits the cathedral.

The novel's greatest strength may be simply the power *of* Helwig's prose. At its best it can be incredibly evocative, poetic in the best sense without being self-conscious or arty. When the third-person narrative picks up some of the habits of mind and the tone of voice of the central figure of the moment (Henry, Rose, or Norman). it is instantly identifiable and convincing. The opening pages, for example, constitute a kind of prose poem by way of introduction to the Bishop's inner world: slippery, fragmented, absorbed in detail, struggling for alertness and understanding. Throughout the book there are passages of remarkable power and beauty.

There are problems here as well. The lack of forward movement is sometimes annoying. There is simply too much fragmentation, too little narrative push for long spells to drive the reader on. Questions are answered, sometimes, before the reader's curiosity has been sufficiently piqued. There are long passages from Henry's childhood that, credible as their appearance may be under the circumstances, are simply-not interesting enough. They get in the way, in fact, of the most powerful narrative line, which is the story of Amelia and Henry. And virtually all the reader's questions that are going to be answered have been answered well before the book's end. The problem, then, is one of structure, one of internal balance.

The second problem is related to the first. There is insufficient cohesion among the fragments. I have mentioned Henry's childhood. If the book were longer it could perhaps afford to be more inclusive, and to move at a more leisurely pace. In fact, the book is relatively short, so that time spent on what seem to be narrative inessentials really cuts into the reader's interest. There is also the matter of the people inhabiting the present world of Henry's dying. Some of them are simply too peripheral. Though Norman's presence may be justifiable on symbolic



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end thematic grounds. in terms of its ability to distract and alienate the reader, it is a mistake.

The Bishop suffers somewhat from the fragmentation of the narrative and fmm a lack of cohesion among some of its parts. But at its best it is a powerfully moving story told with exquisite craft. □

REVIEW

Diamonds are for Evers

By Jack Batten

The Iowa Baseball Confederacy, by W.P. **Kinsella, Collins,** 310 **pages,** 819.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 00 **223046** 1).

ONE ORNERY POINT about **baseball, which** is of course at **the centre** of **W.P. Kinsella's novel,** is **that no** matter what **wonderful** inventions **a story-teller can conjure** up about **the** sport, **the** real **thing will come along with events and deeds on** the diamond that are even crazier **and more imaginative.**

Consider **this: Kinsella's** book is about **a gargantuan exhibition baseball** game. lasting **more than** 2,000 innings, **that takes** place **in 1908** in **Onamata,** Iowa, **between the Chicago** Cubs **and an all-star** team fmm **the** Iowa **Baseball Confederacy. The game is mythical — at least** to most people — but **the** Cubs are real. These **are** the Cubs of **Tinker** to **Evers to Chance —** shortstop, second **base, first** base-masters of the **double play.** Well, only **a** couple of weeks before **the Kinsella** book **turned up, *Sports Illustrated* carried an intriguing article that,** among other **amazing** bits of baseball **lore unearthed from the** ancient **files** of **the *Sporting News* — the Bible of Baseball — reprinted an** astounding and **wacky Johnny Evers tale.**

It seems that **Evers was determined** to solve **the** problem of what to do when the opposing team has **runners** on **first** and **third.** It's a deed **cinch** for **the runner on first** to steal second because if the catcher **throws down to second, the guy on third will** dash home **and score. Johnny Evers** pondered **this terrible** pickle of a **baseball dilemma** and came up **with a strategy. The catcher would throw down to second, keeping the ball** low **and** herd, and **Evers** would catch the bell **as** he **charged over** second **base and** toward **the pitcher's** mound. **Then, as Evers** explained in the Nov. 12.1908, *Sporting News, he would make his clever move:*

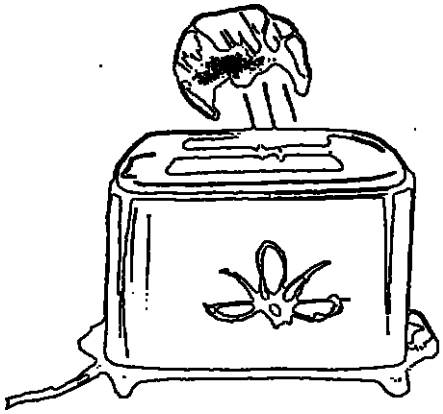
'With much practice, I was able **to run** in on such plays, **thus holding the runner at third,** end **with a** good throw fmm **the catcher,** I **could** take **the** ball and **with the same movement pass it** between my **knees back** to second base in **time** to nab the **other runner."**

Isn't that magnificent? Isn't it **diabolical?** Just **a trifle** nuts? Doesn't it **surpass anything that a** novelist could **devise?**

Well, maybe not **quite. Kinsella's** book **is full** of **baseball** stuff that **genuinely** staggers and **delights** the **imagination.** it has **the 2,000-inning game.** It **has cracks** in time that **enable** people to **travel from the** present back to 1968. It has **such marvellous characters** es **an** Indian named Drifting **Away** who has a **large chip on** his shoulder. And it **has** love affairs that join obsessive men **with magical** women, **a combination guaranteed to produce joy** and heartbreak on **a** grand **scale.**

The book is structured around a man, Gideon Clarke. who **has inherited from** his **father** the belief bordering on fanaticism **that** the Cubs of **1908,** reign**ing world champions, journeyed to Iowa to play an exhibition game that eventually stretched over several** days **and** several hundred innings. **Baseball history** shows **no** record of **such an** epic **contest.** But **Gideon** and **a** ball-playing **pal manage** to **slip back in time and to become both spectators** end participants, **along** with Tinker, **Evers,** Chance, Three-Finger **Brown,** President Teddy Roosevelt, **the Black Angel** of Death, and **assorted other** oddball **characters,** in **the great** and **wonderful** multi-bluing **extravaganza.**

The novel **is** about a lot of **things — obsession,** love, **dreams, the supernatural. And Kinsella sets everything down in the** fiie **lyrical** style **that** his earlier books have prepared us for. But **the** most pleasure **in *The Iowa Baseball Con-***



***federacy* is reserved** for readers **who share** the belief of **Gideon** Clarke's **father** when be makes tbis small but essential speech about **baseball:** "Name me **a** more perfect **game! Name** me a game with more **possibilities** for **magic, wizardry, voodoo, hoodoo, enchantment,** obsession, **possession. There's** always **time** for daydream-@. **time** to create your own illusions at **the** ballpark."

Which is **something** that **Johnny Evers wouldn't have any trouble accepting —** and to appreciate fully and **truly Kinsella's accomplishment,** it's **necessary** to have **a generous share** of Johnny **Evers** in **vour** sold. □

REVIEW

Sense and sensitivity

By Sherrill Cheda

A Hot-Eyed Moderate, by **Jane** Rule, Lester **& Orpen Dennys,** 242 pages. $12.95 paper **(ISBN** 0 88619 077 **0):**

THIS COLLECTION, whose **basic** theme **is** love, **confirms** me in my **belief that** Jane Rule's best writing is about **ideas.** Although **she has** published **many** novels **and short stories, her fine work of literary criticism, *Lesbian Images* (1975), stands** *out. along with these essays,* **as** *her* best work. to date. I constantly felt, **while reading** ha wise **comments** on **writing, sexuality,** and **art, that** I was **in the presence of a most humane, reasonable, and civilizing influence.**

The **excellent first section** of **essays** includes topics **ranging from the** effects of **feminist literary criticism on writing to the morality of writers. At times,** Rule **gives us crystal insights. In "For the critic** of whet isn't **there," she says,** about **those who wish** to **plagiarize the** pain and poverty of **others, "Looking** down is just es **distorting as** looking **up** end es **dangerous in perpetuating hierarchies."**

The second section contains selections **from** her **writing** for **the** gay **press, and her** point of **view** is **best** summed up **in** her **words: "I** am more interested **in** ins!& **than** in **judgement. . . ." She clearly and** eloquently explains **why, although they** have differing priorities. she **writes** for **the** *Body Politic.* **In *one*** of **her** essays, she **writes, "Preoccupation with** periods **of *intense sexual* activity *as the* goal** of **liberation,** simply **because** it is **the** image of immorality, can become **finally** not only boring but distorting in a **damaging way of how we read the length of our** lives."

Rule's **"Free** to live" is **one of the better essays in the literature of "coming out" — connecting it, as she** does, to **recollections** of her **grandmother's** sense of identity. She also offers **wise advice** to gay women **and** men **on** when **to "come out"** to **their parents. Whether** she's **writing** about **appropriate clothing** or **drag, monogamy or minorities, her gentle, direct, open voice becomes her endearing style: "Political writers** often **find it** easier to **write** about **rabbits or** Martians **than** about people: **That's**

because, to the untutored eye, they all look alike."

One understands why Jane Role was a recipient of the Fond for Human Diity award, but I have to admit that so much unrelenting reasonableness made me want to plead for some occasional righteous indignation. Where she's a hot-eyed moderate. I'd be a red-eyed radical.

The fin-al part of the book, "Profiles and Recollections" (on painters and writers) and "Reflections," aptly ends with a thoughtful piece about the chain of life.

Throughout her book. Jane Rule shams with the reader ha not inconsiderable insight into the human condition. Her refreshing point of view, her gentle humour and logical mind make this collection a joy to read. At the end, I felt as if I had had a series of warm, interesting and stimulating conversations with a dear friend. □

REVIEW

In appraisal of older writers

By I.M. Owen

Truth and Lies in Literature: Essays and Reviews, by **Stephen Vizinczey,** McClelland & Stewart, 351 pages, $22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 8762 4).

IT'S NATURALLY gratifying to a reviewer to receive a book consisting mainly of the author's book reviews. (Is it possible that these ephemera of mine should be thought worthy of preservation between covers? Answer: Not unless you write a couple of successful novels, chum. Oh.) It's still more gratifying to fmd that Stephen Vizinczey's reviews are first-class examples of the genre.

He never loses sight of the primary purpose of a review, the strictly utilitarian one of conveying to his readers a sufficient idea of the book to allow them to judge whether *they* want to read it. That makes the sharp distinction between reviewing and literary criticism proper: a review is written for people who haven't read the book, while a work of literary criticism assumes an acquaintance with the writings it discusses. I'm well qualified, by the way, to confirm that Vizinczey carries out this primary function well, since I haven't read a single one of the 54 books reviewed here.

But of course what gives -or fails to give — a review value beyond its immediate purpose is the quality of the reviewer's personality, opinions, and style. Reviews of concerts or of theatre — ephemera about. ephemera — you would think would be the most perishable kind of writing, and usually they are. But Bernard Shaw's six volumes of musical and dramatic reviews constitute one of the great monuments of English prose. sometimes I dip into them before writing a review just to recharge my battery with Shaw's powerful supply of current.

.I didn't need to do that this time. Vizinczey has personality, opinions, and style in plenty. Especially opinions; while reading him I was often reminded of Lord Melbourne's remark about the leading book-reviewer of his day: "I wish I was as cocksure of anything as Tom Macaulay is of everything." We quickly learn Vizinczey's uncompromising dislikes: Goethe, "the great charlatan of Weimar"; "the appalling novels of Walter Scott"; André Malraux, "the grand old man of the pseuds." (I was a little surprised to fmd a review expressing admiration for Ivan Illich. who to me is the high priest of the pseuds, but he attaches to it a note retracting his error.

We learn some of his endearingly remarkable convictions: "erection-anxiety is the main source of evil in the world." And we learn who Ids principal literary heroes are: Kleist, Stendhal, Balzac, with Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky not far behind. In a fine essay (not a review) called "Why Eog. Lit. Is Not Enough" he explains his admiration for these and his contempt for the English Victorian novelists.

Let me confess, disqualifying myself forever as a reviewer of fiction: I am ill read in European literature, even French. Because I can read French pretty well, I have for decades thought that it would be unworthy of me to read French literature in translation. But when I settle down for an evening's reading, somehow something in English seems less like work.

Vizinczey has no such scruples, being a Hungarian — to whom all Indo-European languages are equally alien — who lives and writes in English. He's quite happy to read Stendhal and Balzac in English. Go I, and do likewise.

He's partly right, but mostly wrong, about Walter Scott and his successors, the Victorians. Scott was pioneering in many ways, and like all pioneers (look at English plumbing) he produced some pretty crude structures. But at his best — as he quite often is — he's magnificent. As for Thackeray and Dickens, what he misses is that they're essentially great entertainers. It was a rare accident when tither wrote a first-class novel, a *Henry Esmond* or a *Great Expectations*. He dismisses George Eliot with grudging praise.

But I suspect him of not having read the greatest of them all, Anthony Trollope. That's my personal heresy — shared, though, by Tolstoy, who wrote "Trollope kills me — he kills me with his genius," and promptly adapted the central incident in Trollope's The *Prime Minister* to use as *the* climax of Anna *Karenina*. I'd like Vizinczey to meet Trollope's heroines -them isn't a Dora Spenlow in the bunch — and to compare Lizzie Eustace with Becky Sharp. Becky is funnier, but Lizzie is real.

Besides the reviews, there's an article on the Mafii that's much better than anything I've read on the subject by a professional journalist. There's a thrilling essay on Imre Nagy (the Hungarian Communist leader who defied the Russians), setting him in the context of Hungarian history. As I read this, I felt a curious sensation. It proved to come from the few drops of Hungarian blood in my veins, tingling with pride. They'd never been heard from before.

The first *part* of the title essay deals with Melville's *Billy Budd*. It's many years since I've read *Billy Budd, and* I've always wondered if I had misunderstood or misremembered it, but Vizinczey confirms that it's just as hateful as I thought. As he says, its moral is essentially the same as the defence in the Nuremberg trials. Then he proceeds (trampling over Dickens on the way) to another of his great hates. the 19th-century French critic Sainte-Beuve. His peroration seems appropriate to quote hem:

> Sainte-Beuve makes you believe in multiple reincarnation. You see Sainte-Beuves on all the review pages, praising the spurious, the innocuous, the pretentious, and damning everything that is truthful, lively, passionate, unruly — anything that might move you deeply and stir you to think — anything that might change you. Because if you change, who knows, the world might change — and that must not be.

Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson of Hamish Hamilton, the London publisher, of this book, says in his introduction, referring to Vii's first book. In *Praise of* Older *Women, "he* took the risk — he had to take the risk — of publishing it himself." Before this statement becomes enshrined in a hundred Ph.D. theses as proof of the timidity and prudery of Canadian publishers in 1965, let me pot it on record that the book was accepted by McClelland & Stewart, and Vizinczey withdrew it on the ground that the advance offered was too small.

This was indeed one reason, but there was a more important one. I recall his exact words, I think: "I said to myself, Jack McClelland wants to publish my book. So Jack McClelland thinks he can make money. out of my book. So why don't I make the money instead of Jack?" After that self-published first printing was exhausted, he confessed with amusement that his net return had been exactly what he would have received in royalties from McClelland. □

CRITICAL NOTICES

BEAUX ARTS

William Notman: The Stamp of a Studio, by Stanley **G. Triggs,** Coach **House** Press, **illustrated,** 173 **pages, $42.00** cloth **(ISBN 0** 88910 283 **X).**

By John Oughton

WILLIAM NOTMAN was one of the many Scottish **immigrants** who helped build **19th-century** Canada. Instead of bridges **or** legislation, however, he produced an **invaluable** photographic **record** of the **nation through his own work and that of the many photographers his studio employed.**

The most striking thing about this well-researched and lovingly produced book is that it is **only** the second printed **collection of the work of the most important studio** Canada has had. **Notman** opened his business in Montreal in 1856, and prospered by **marketing** portraits (often **hand-coloured) and** views of the landscape, people, **and growing cities** of Canada. The latter work **won him an** international reputation, **and** foreign collectors came to **prize Notman's** views of **scenes like Niagara Falls and the wild** B.C. **interior and** quaint **Canadian pursuits** like **tobogganing.**

Although the studio continued **under** the **Notman name** for 80 **years,** the **thousands of historically significant plates in** its collection were **almost** forgotten. **The studio's** importance was not really **recognized by art historians, Triggs writes, until 1955.** The **plates** in this **book concentrate on the pre-1900 period,** which was the least documented by other **Canadian photographers.**

Triggs summarizes the **life** and **work of Notman and** his **employees known** to have produced significant portfolios **under** the studio stamp. **including new names** uncovered **since Trigg's first Not-**men book in 1967. **The** curator of the **Notman** Collection at Montreal's **McCord** Museum. **Trigg** also assembled **the** Art **Gallery** of **Ontario's exhibition from which these historically fascinating photographs are** selected. □

BELLES LETTRES

Essays on Chaucerian Irony, by **Earle Birney, edited by Beryl** Rowland, **University** of Toronto **Press,** 162 **pages,** 825.00 **cloth (ISBN** 0 **8020** 5624 **5)** and $12.95 papa **(ISBN** 0 **8020** 6525 **2).**

By Joseph A. Benderavage

IT'S SURPRISING *how* **ideas** of beautiful **consistency** arise **all** of a piece from the past, as if **awakened** from **an enchanted obscurity.** Seven of these ideas **conceived by poet Earle Birney from 1937 to 1960** present a **strong argument that irony in** sophisticated variety is central to Chaucer's poems.

Tbe **essays** follow **Beryl** Rowland's **witty,** sympathetic, **and** discursive introduction, in **which** she marks tbe slip. **pery** nature of irony and reviews its literary history to as far back as Homer.

Medieval rhetoric, a **cornerstone** of Chaucer's **education, "recognized officially the curious value** of saying something different **from what** is meant, not to **deceive with** a lie bat to awaken to **a** truth," ***Birney writes.*** **He** postulates that **masks and images** in "The Friar's **Tale" comprise a moral: the corrupt summoner** received **poetic** justice **because** he fails **to** perceive **irony** in the utterances of a disguised devil. In its reciprocal **conte,** "The **Summoner's** Tale," thwarted **expectations form the dramatic irony of the** story of a friar who is in love witb himself.

The teat contains copious noted and **quotes. Bibliographies** exceed 350 **works** and attest to exhaustive and extensive **research. An** index lists **proper names,** title-s, and **foreign** phrases, but **refers to** few **major** concepts.

Historians, critics, ***literati,*** **and** writers **will appreciate this compilation; Birney's** lucid style **and logical** argument **retain credibility even** for **the sub-professorial** audience. Literature students will need it **(and** may like 'it) for supplementary reading, except where quotations **in Ger**man, Latin, or Old English remain untranslated. □

The Impossible Sum of Our Traditions: Reflections on Canadian Literature, by Malcolm Ross, McClelland **&** Stewart, 211 pages, $19.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 7710 7726 **2).**

By Bruce Whiteman

MALCOLM ROSS *IS* **one** of the clitics who helped to create **Canadian** literature as a **recognized** academic discipline. More than that, he is in large part responsible for **rescuing** for tbe **general** reader es well es the student **many** of the then **forgot**tea teats **(I** am speaking of the **1950s)** that compose our **literary** history, **from *Emily Montague*** on **down.** I am **referring,** of **course, to his founding of the New Canadian Library, with which in many respects** tbe **whole CanLit** enterprise may be said **to** begin.

Ross has been ***polutropos,*** as Homer says of Odysseus. He **returns** most **frequently, in his** ruminative essays, to the subject of the Canadian **identity and** its **presence in** our literature. Rut he has **also** written **fine essays** about individual teats (some of them as **introductions** to NCL **reprints),** remarkable **pieces** about individual **writers (Bliss Carman,** for example), as well **as** survey **articles on** particular forms. **In** all of these his **humanistic vision** and **critical acumen are always present. Reading him, one is never suspicious** that the **critic secretly** feels **himself and his opinions to be of more value than the text** themselves.

The Impossible Sum ***of Our Traditions (the title is taken from an essay by Robert*** **Kroetsch) gathers** up some 15 **essays written over the last 22 years, all of them** hitherto published but here brought together for the **first time.** Ross is above a8 readable, **and** even **when** one disagreed **with him (I cannot sympathize with his sentimental admiration for *Bliss Carman,* to give one instance) one finishes an essay with a richer and better informed opinion than one started with. Whether he is investigating the Christian culture** o f **Fredericton** out of which Roberts **and Carman** emerged, or exploring **the** metaphysical loneliness of **Goldwyn Smith, or homing in on the ambiguities** o f ***The Incomparable Atuk,*** **Ross is always a delight to read. CanLit owes him a large debt, a debt the publication of this** collection **has** now **much** enlarged. □

FICTION

The Bridge Out of Town, by **Jake Mac**Donald, Oberon **Press,** 160 **pages,** $23.95 **cloth (ISBN** 0 88750 618 **6) and** $1295 paper **(ISBN** 0 88750 619 4).

By Gideon Forman

NATIVE-WHITE relations are the **common denominator of these** 1 1 **connected** stories, played out **in** the northern **Ontario town** of **Keewuttunnee. That's OPP** country, **and** it's not **coincidence that cops appear in so many of the tales; the relationship** they have to **Indians and** vagabonds **—** a relationship **of** unequal **power — forms the centre of author Jake MacDonald's** concern.

All through the book we witness situations Of **strength** versus **vulnerability. In** "Vagabonds" the **provincial** police **burn** tbe **inoffensive shelter** of **two drifters; in** "Tourist Season" a **former** U.S. **marine** knocks **an** Indian guide **flying.** That native people suffer at the heads of white **society** is no revelation, but MacDonald's **engaging stories make the oppression tangible.**

The collection is not simplistic, and *consequently* power is described in its complexity. Officer Chaput — a character in several of the stories — *is* a nice guy, one who seems genuinely concerned about the people of his precinct. For all his concern, though, the power structure remains. In one of the book's finest scenes Chaput is taking music lessons from the jailed Indian guide, Sonny. MacDonald reminds us that while the officer treats his prisoner like a buddy. there is no question who's in control: "With the cigarette dangling from the corner Of his mouth Sonny took the banjo and held it es best he could through the steel bars."

The story "'Norris" — about a soon-to-be-eaten pig of that name — extends the examination of power to include that over nature. A poster advertising the pork roasting party "showed a handcuffed Norris being smooched by officer John Murphy, whose *nose looked* slightly more rounded and porcine than usual." A brilliant detail, the ad powerfully demonstrates that brutal authority can put up a friendly guise.

The pieces are not flawless — "The Window," for example, tends to plod — but the great majority are strong. Absorbing characters, a number of humorous passages and lifelike. inconclusive en- - make these important stories enjoyable reading. □

Buried on Sunday, by Edward Phillips, McClelland & Stewart, 192 pages, $12.95 paper QSBN 0 7710 6992 8).

By Sherie Posesorski

SARTRE ONCE CLAIMED that "hell is other people." But what is really hell is being trapped with other people with whom you share guilty secrets. *In* Edward Phillips's philosophical thriller, *Buried on Sunday*, middle-aged lawyer Geoffrey Chadwick finds himself in one hell *of a* situation. Trapped by old friend Catherine Bradford into accepting an invitation for a weekend stay at her Quebec cottage, he discovers with dismay that Catherine's latest husband is the former love of his life, Mark Crosby; that his weekend roommate is none other than bitchy queen Larry Townsend, whom he has been attempting to avoid; and worst of all, there is literally no exit after three escaped bank robbers hold them all hostage.

One of the primary pleasures of Phillips's second Chadwick novel (he first appeared in Sunday's *Child) is the* company of Geoffrey Chadwick. His narrative voice and philosophical perspective on human nature are an engaging blend of elegant style and moral substance. The novel is worth reading just for the intelligence and wit of Chadwick's numerous epigrammatic musings.

The plot combines the elements of a thriller and a Ben Travers farce. But the soul of the novel resides in the Chekhovian reflections of Chadwick on his and his friends' lives. Suspense end tension are generated more by the unravelling of personalities than by how the host&e taking will end.

The bank robbers interrupt what promised to be an awkward weekend. filled with averted glances and guilty fears that social masks will be dropped. That is precisely what happens after the robbers arrive. These revelations don't diminish the characters; rather, they establish their psychological and moral complexity.

Buried on Sunday has all the delights of a good party: a host who entertains us with his captivating wit and cynical yet compassionate commentary, intriguing guests, and provocative conversation. Not much more can be asked for in a party or a novel — except that Edward Phillips should provide us with further invitations to visit Geoffrey Chadwick. □

Canadian Short Fiction: From Myth to Modern. edited by *W.H. New*, Prentice-Hall, 516 pages, $14.95 paper (ISBN 0 13 113820 0).

By Allan Weiss

SINCE *RAYMOND* KNISTER'S *Canadian short Stories* (1928), anthologies of cans-&n short fiction have tended to favour the most recent work in the field. Even anthologies that endeavour to provide a historical overview, such as Alec Lucas's *Great Canadian Short Stories* (1971), emphasize current developments and seldom place them in their historical context.

W.H. New's Canadian *Short Fiction contains 60 stories,* of which about half first appeared before the Second World War. New's valuable introduction attempts to place them within their context, showing the long national and international traditions behind the most recent works. He includes samples from a much broader range of fictional types than is available in other anthologies: native myths, Confederation-era sketches, traditional and contemporary French-Canadian tales, and modern fables. While tantalizingly short, the introduction provides the skeleton of what is sorely needed in the field: a detailed critical history of the Canadian short story.

New's notes on the authors and their works are useful, but they at times descend into the pedantic. For instance, he describes Ken Mitchell's hilarious "The Great Electrical Revolution" es "a spoof of those centralized systems of power that are so large they are inadequately aware *of* their fringes, and ... a declaration of the residual power of local individualism." His comments may confuse as often as *they* help readers.

The number of stories included. the variety of fictional kinds covered, and the introductory material and bibliographies make this a most worthy collection. □

The Paris-Napoli Express, by Janice Kulyk Keefer, Oberon Press, 144 pages, $23.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 623 2) and $12.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 624 0).

By Allan Weiss

WITH THIS FIRST collection Janice Kulyk Keefer joins an ever-growing number of Canadian writers producing well-crafted, subtle, and entertaining short stories. Her stories are marked by sensitivity and vivid imagery as they bring characters face to face with the unfamiliar — especially in the form *of* foreign culture.

The title story (which won *Prism International*'s *fiction* competition in 1984) carries Jerry, a Canadian intellectual, into a modern "heart of darkness," a surreal world peopled by grotesques. "Red River Cruise," perhaps the strongest piece in the collection, is a moving account of high-school students of Ukrainian descent who find themselves tom between different cultures es well as the worlds of childhood and adulthood. And Keefer's least sympathetic character, Mrs. Putnam in "Mrs. Putnam at the Planetarium" (which won the 1985 CBC Literary Competition), cannot tolerate sharing a society with people "whose names ended in off or *ski* or *vich.*"

sometimes this encounter with the unknown leads Keefer's "tourists" to strengthen their ties with each other, as in "Somewhere in Italy" or the somewhat pat "Viper's Bugloss." but seldom do characters come to terms with the "other." □

FOLKWAYS

Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods, by Edith Fowke, NC Press, 146 pages, $19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 920053 51 3) and 012.95 paps QSBN 0 920053 80 7).

By Helen Hogarth

THE LANGUAGE OF roughing it in the bush *is central to Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods.* The jaunty *lyrics* sprout amid a welter of scholarly impedimenta that threatens to rob the book of any appeal for the general reader. This remark is not intended to disparage the scrupulous research underlying such a copiously annotated work; indeed, musicologists with a special interest in *folklore* will *no* doubt revel in the information on tune relatives (contributed by

Norman Cazden) and stanza variants. The rest of us can still enjoy the tales of able-bodied and merry mm.

Although this anthology was first published in 1970 for the American Folklore Society, "all the songs it contains were collected in Canada." Fowke ad& that "it is the only book devoted entirely to our lumbering songs." Tbe songs are divided by theme—"Death in the Woods" includes some memorable selections. The graphic lyrics ("His flesh it was cut into ringlets,/ Not a piece left the size of your hand") vividly recount some of the tragic episodes immortalized lo tbe shantyboys' repertoire. Elsewhere, a song chronicling the logger's dally routine includes a verse of curious timeliness:

It rained *all day* in Tory *Hill*
And left it very damp
And at suppertime well I arrived
'Way up at Turner's camp.

Although Lumbering Songs can only be fully savoured by a select audience, there is much to be gleaned fmm these modest lyrics. □

Over the Counter: The Country Store in Canada, by **Enid Mallory, Fitzhenry** 4 **Whiteside, illustrated,** 272 pages, 519.93 **cloth (ISBN** 0 88902 989 **X).**

By Helen Hogarth

MOST *OF* US, during a leisurely country drive, have stopped to bask in the tin-ceilinged nostalgia of a country store. After the picturesque charm of Carol Priamo's *The General Store* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978). *Over the Counter* seems dry goods indeed. Enid Mallory offers up *a heap of* neatly packaged anec-

dotes, each headlined lo the manner of a small-town gazette. "Egg Yolk AU Over" and "When I Ate Dog Food" represent the sort of tantalizing bids made for the reader's attention. Regrettably, the piecemeal format deprives the book of any logical continuity and trivializes the storekeepers' reminiscences, collected by the author during a cross-Canada ramble.

Some of tbe reminiscences are wonderfully evocative and can stand on their own (Jean Leach beating beaver pelts at a Hudson's Bay company post springs to mind). However, many incidents fall flat as humorous or even pertinent episodes and would probably have been met with stony silence if related around the ubii quitous pot-bellied stove. The archival photographs provide glimpses into the early life of the country store, but the addition of some nuts and bolts information would have enhanced the cavalcade of anecdotes immeasurably. □

HEALTH & WELFARE

Emotions, by June **Callwood, Double**day, 264 **pages,** 819.95 **cloth (ISBN 0** 385 19976 **7).**

By Connie Jeske

READING THIS BOOK *iS* like watching a Polaroid self-portrait develop. The black void that first reveals nothing slowly separates into patches of living colour. Angry reds, pensive blues, and unwanted greys fall into painfully familiar lines, and you wish you could retouch things just a tit. In much tbe same way, Callwood exposes the human soul. She uses emotions and human qualities like colours, each one filling in another part of ths picture. Chapter by chapter, Callwood delves into such mysteries as love, bate, anger, and courage.

In tbe hands of a younger, less impassioned writer this book might have become self-indulgent mush, about as substantial as a rainbow. But Callwood has ploughed through 8 mountain of source material to lend weight to her thesis. Originally published in 1964, *Emotions* has been expanded; one-third of this edition is new material, bringing sociological findings up to date.

Marrying the psychologists' statistics, gems from philosophers through the ages, and snippets from everyday life must have been a monumental task. Tbe thousands of loosely related facts have been well organized, woven together and set into perspective. Callwood's personal style is the binding force. She is the skilful interpreter whose warmth and integrity deliver scientific findings into the hands of everyday people. (Who else but Callwood would refer to the human brain as a grey three-pound pudding?)

Given the full picture. this book is devastating. It pries off our carefully groomed social masks to reveal the little children within. Readers will wince as they discover the failings and frustrating patterns within themselves. They will also, however. clutch a renewed *hope* that, though tripped up and battered by life, we can come through magnificently. Either that or readers can skip the chapters "Courage" and "Honesty,' and concentrate on deciding which of their friends really need to read tbis book. □

ON STAGE

Careers in Music: A Guide for **Canadian Students,** edited by Thomas Green, **Patricia Sauerbrei, and** Don **Sedgwick, Frederick Harris Music, 196 pages,** 824.95 cloth **(ISBN 0** 88797 143 1) and $14.95 paper **(ISBN 0** 88797 228 4).

By Janet Windeler

ALTHOUGH INTENDED primarily as a guide for students considering careers la classical music, these 24 concise and generally well-written essays by noted Canadian musicians and practitioners of music-related occupations may prove to be more valuable and most interesting as a collection of musical philosophies — some of which seem, ironically, to invalidate the very notion of producing a book such as this.

The music world, French film-maker, writer, and musician Bruno Monsaingeon has said, is a poisoned one made venomous by competition and tbc search for power, a world where genius often is sacrificed "on tbe altar of the public relations system." Ironically again, the underlying intention of this or any other career guide seems to be to provide the kind of information that will most expediently steer young talents slam-bang *into* the maze of the public-relations system — in music, a system that at best serves as a game of political hype and glamour-infused nonsense. At its worst, it becomes Monsaingeon's hellish place of frantic ambition, approval-seeking, and false satisfaction, foreign and entirely antithetical to the nature of what music is all about.

Fortunately, many of tbis volume's contributors understand tbe dangers involved in focusing on the career aspects of music — tbe most abstract of all art-forms — and indeed, they attempt to draw the reader away from the insidious pursuit of "career success." Quebec pianist Henri Brassard writes, in his entry, against the "inhuman" world of international music competitions. which he calls "musical Olympics," widely considered today the necessary launching pad to a performing career. (Brassard's piece is reminiscent of Glenn Gould's *High Fidelity* article, "We Wbo Are About to Be Disqualified Salute You!," in which he likens music competitions to boxing matches and toxic medication, to be prescribed only with skull and crossbones clearly marked on the entry forms.)

Toronto Symphony concertmaster Steven Staryk reminds us that truly to enter the musician's world students need not strive to become superstars, which are merely manufactured commodities; and composer Harry Freedman takes a moment to denounce the unsympathetic

atmosphere about the CBC these days. Essays on music librarianship by Helmut Kallman, music publishing by Wayne Gilpin, and instrument manufacturing by Robert Zildjian are all thoughtfully rendered; and William Littler's entry on music criticism is witty and literate. Eleanor Koldofsky Sniderman's piece on record production is winning in its exuberance. ("A record is a triumph of sound, a tussle with the emotions.") Valerie Ivy's essay on music therapy, though clearly well-intentioned, is defensive and oddly uninformative: I'm still not sure what music therapy actually is. Finally, a postsaipt by Carl Morey, dean of the University of Toronto's faculty of music, sums up the guide in a decidedly deanish manner. He tells us that the world is round. that there is satisfaction to be found in every part of the musical profession, that no one goes into music for the money. and that it is doubtful whether anyone actually chooses music for a career: it is the music that does the choosing. □

THE PAST

The Land of Lost Content: A **History** of **CUSO,** by **Ian Smillie, Deneau,** illustrated **408** pages, S29.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 **88879 125 9).**

Ey Matthew Behrens

THE HISTORY *of* **CUSO** (Canadian **University** Service Overseas) is a long end **chequered** fabric, end **Ian Smillie** does a **fine** job of **interweaving a** historical overview **and the personal accounts of a handful** of the **thousands** of **Canadians** who **went abroad** to work for international development. An enthusiastic **and lively style carries this well-researched work, whose publication was timed to coincide** with the **organization's 25th anniversary.**

The sheer **volume** of **information** on CUSO makes **Smillie's** job a **difficult one,** but he **manages** the **bulky** materiel well, **despite a** few **foggy patches describing** the **internal workings** of the agency that **might well** have been omitted. He is et his best **when dealing** with **actual** CUSO projects, **examining their** effects in **the** project **countries themselves and in Canada. Smillie also has an** expert's feel for **the** political **and** historical background of **countries** in which **CUSO** Is often the **only** Canadian presence. from Grenade and Nigeria to Bangladesh and Bolivia.

Though as a veteran of **CUSO Smillie must have his own bias, he seems to have** set it **aside in his analysis** of the **various streams of thought that run through the agency. Whether it** be the tale of **the** split between **the English- and French-Canadian sections** Of **CUSO or** the **argument** over whether to **support** liberation movements or uphold the ***status quo in' Third World nations, his reporting is*** fair, and **rarelv weighted with cheerleading** for a **specific** viewpoint.

Comparisons with **the** giant to the **south often lead Canadians to play down** or **underestimate** their **achievements. Smillie's** book is **an** important history, which documents the **all** too easily overlooked **Canadian** contributions to the people of nations **less** fortunate **than** our own. □

POETRY

A Manual for Lying Down, by **Richard** Lush, **Wolsak & Wynn,** 62 pages, $7.00 **paper (ISBN** 0 919897 010).

By Tom Carpenter

RICHARD LUSH *IS* **subtle;** Ids metaphors end **similes disappear.** If tbis **collection** of his poetry is **successful,** it is largely **because he has created the illusion of providing no** more **than** a **raw** book of lists. Rather **than describing what** it is like to feel a **certain way in a given** situation. he **simply puts his finger directly onto the objects** and **sounds** whose evocative power is **the building** material of moods. Cats. **woollen sweaters,** and jam **jars** are important for what they ***do to one*** and not for **what** they ***represent.*** At his **best** Lush **creates poems that are rounded and complete —** poems that work like depth **charges, that are** contrived to go off after **a short delay and in a way that is hard** to **ignore.**

For the most part these are poems about **the uneasiness** of relationships, the **awkwardness of meetings and the pain of departures, and individually they** are often very **effective.** Yet because the collection **begins** with a long unrelieved **succession of such poems the reader eventually risks becoming more worn than illuminated.** If not for **the timely interjection** of "Risk at the **Parlour** Lounge" **and** "Not **Photographing** You at the Metro Library" one would **begin** to **suspect that Lush** is **lacking an all-**important sense of irony. As **the** hook **progresses** there is also a **growing** suspicion that **nothing** worthwhile ever **happens between the torturous beginnings of a relationship** and its **painful** conclusion -that there is **nothing** contained in **relationships** that could **account** for **the pain** of **losing** them. Don't, **for instance, men ever talk with women?**

Perhaps it is misgivings of **this** sort **that throw the poems of the fifth and final section of the book into a higher relief. They** are **recollections, bridges from** past to present. end precious **vignettes. Here** Lush's **careful crafting** works best, **and** there **is** powerful **clarity in** poems like **"Chassidim** at the **Harrison** Baths" **and "Drowning** in **the Coral** Sea."

Although the **final —** title **—** poem is **not strong enough to retrieve the reader** from all **that has** gone before, it does make **a gesture** in the direction of **affirmation. It reverberates** back through the previous sections **in** such **a** way that **the book can well repay a second reading.** □

The Night the Dog Smiled. by **John Newlove,** BCW Press, 80 pages, 59.00 paper **(ISBN** 0 920763 **31 6).**

By John Oughton

WHAT A PLEASURE to have a new collection from John **Newlove. One** of the least **bombastic** and most **self-critical** *of* **our** established poets, he has **not** been heard **from** for a **while —** but all the **strengths** of his **earlier** work inform **this** new **collection.**

The diction is still clipped and **careful,** the **perceptions** brutally **honest,** yet there are surprises here, too. There's rhyme **in** some of the shorter pieces, **flashes** of **humour,** even optimism, end **a** renewed **commitment** to writing: **"Even** in **these worn-out davs./worn-out terms./once in a while our poets/must/speak." An** extraordinary serial poem, **"White** Philharmonic **Novels,"** recalls and **recycles many earlier lines** in **the** book.

There's also a disturbing prose poem about **a** baby **being sliced up into translucently thin sheets. With** the dislocation of a dream. **Newlove's avoidance** of **any normal reactions to such an act raises some** questions about what he is saying. **Newlove's** more oblique here than in his poetry, **where** he lets his **worst fears hang** out: **"your** only function **is** to die," he **reminds himself.**

A wider range of emotion than in his earlier collections **accompanies a** sense of **renewal.** Through **the** black **humour** of **life he still sees, and transmits, some light.** The **intelligence** of **this collection** even **denies** one **of** his **own lines:** "Look, nobody gets wise **writing."** El

Other **Names** for **the Heart,** by David **Wevill, Exile Editions,** 136 pages; $11.95 peps **(ISBN** 0 **920428** 76 2).

By John Oughton

ON THE *BACK* **cover** of this **collection, Bruce** Meyer comments that 1966 marked **a** turning point **in CanLit: chief rivals** for **the Governor** General's Award for **poetry** that year were **Margaret Atwood and** David **Wevill.** Atwood's victory marked. **Meyer argues, the beginning of an era "in which influences from** abroad. **especially from** British **and** European poetry. became markedly less **noticeable."**

A traveller, born in Japan and educated in England, Wevill has remained on the outskirts of our **literature** despite **the authority** of his work. It is more cam-

cerned with what is human than what is Canadian. But in our preoccupation with writers who discuss (or try to create) a Canadian identity, we have overlooked his more international sensibility, which explores other mysteries.

Wevill's poetry is complex, often elliptical, and increasingly focused on his own consciousness; "As one grows older one becomes less clever and more personal. . . ," he quotes from his notebook. After experimenting with form — from his earlier work in long stanzas to sonnets and the Spanish rincon — he has settled into shorter lines and stanzas. They cut more deeply than wide, with what he calls "the energy/of *the* quiet, the very still."

There are tine poems here, in careful yet charged language. that meditate on a godless universe, on ancestral bonds with the desert, on a& and death. Sometimes Wevill loses the reader by becoming too private or depending too much on references to other sources (one poem nods to Kawabata, Tolstoy, *and* Ponge). But most of these poems reflect a lyrical ear and a rueful sense of the limits of the lives we build ("Because I need light to write this by, a whole landscape must die to serve a coal mine. I could have waited till daylight.') This is a worthy addition to any poetry collection. □

The Top of the Heart, by Lesley Choyce, Thistledown Press, 64 pages, 88.95 paper (ISBN 0 920633 13 7).

Ey Tom Carpenter

LESLEY CHOYCE has a sympathetic eye. He looks around, takes his stories where he can find them, and then tells them kindly. He enjoys the tiniest narratives ("Making Contact," "Fingerprint") and, because he avoids grand speculations, his poems have a comfortable openness about them. Choyce's poems are not symbolic or obviously allegorical. They are descriptions of the commonplace within which some small point of significance is highlighted.

The style of the poetry is similarly unpretentious. In fact Choyce often goes beyond simplicity and plays his metaphors perilously close to the edge of naiveté. At times they are simply overworked (". . . *the water tower/that* fed the same chlorinated fluid/to every household in town"). Yet even though several of the poems will not stand on their own, and even though there is the occasional cliché, Choyce is not easily dismissed. He manages to balance somewhere between impressive originality and borrowed sentimentality by means of an apparently deliberate lack of sophistication. Just when the reader has been pushed to the edge of exasperation — ". . . three inches from the rivets of endurance" — Choyce restores consonance and subtlety with single strong and simple phrases.

Choyce is not a poet for everyone's taste. He has fitted himself, somewhat self-consciously, into the tradition that runs from Whitman through the Beats to the Hippies. However. for those people who still feel a dormant nostalgia for simpler times, and who look on the 1960s and '70s as a sadly uncompleted project, Choyce has a few gently ironic things to say in this collection. He occasionally says them very well. □

The Transparence of November Snow, by Roo Borson and Kim Maltman, Quarry Press, 68 pages, 88.95 paper (ISBN 0 919627 30 7).

By John Oughton

THIS COLLECTION is a puzzle: credited to two poets who have individually carried off first prize for poetry in the CBC Literary Competition and published half a dozen titles. There are no notes to indicate whether each poem is a collaboration, if facing poems are written in response to each other. or whether each poet contributed three of the six sections.

Here's a worthy project for an M.A. thesis or a computer program tbat analyses characteristic lexical patterns. Certainly Borson's surprising metaphors and depth of perception are evident in lines here, as are Maltman's precision and eschewal of poetic -machismo. Presumably the two have a more than literary relationship, or so the loving back-cover photo would argue. But Ois isn't a collection of lyrics by poets-in-love as was the fine No *Longer Two People,* produced a few years ago by Pat Lane and Lorna Uher/Crozier.

But. says the heckler, isn't it the poetry that matters7 True, although the authors' approach neatly disarms such reviewing functions as assigning praise or blame to a particular author and estimating her or his progress.

The themes here meditate on the landscape, nature, working people, living in a world where little is certain. Often the short poems are best (although the longer "Trellis" and "Sweet Basil" sing with family tension rooted in the soil reminiscent of the film *Padre Padrone*). *An* example is "Night Train," where there are "no conceits, just the rails/like a heart coming up fmm below/to silence my own." That sense of yielding to reality, of listening rather than interpreting, is the most consistent thing about this collection. Two minor annoyances: the paper is a glossy yet pebbled variety better suited to greeting cards than poetry, and the copy editing (perhaps overcome by the double-barrelled author) is inconsistent: "Like the frames of one-way mirrors/ hut from which who looks?" Good question; who asked? □

Waiting for Saskatchewan, by Fred Wah, Turnstone Press, 96 pages, 87.95 paper (ISBN 0 88801 096 6).

By Marc Côté

IMMEDIACY OF PERCEPTION *is the most striking* aspect of Fred Wah's poetry. This makes. however, for a challenging read. But if one understands the dismissal of standard grammar (replaced by a rhythmical, musical one) and if one reads this poetry more slowly and thoroughly than usual. there are plenty of rewards.

Perhaps Wah's experiences with language (his father was part Chinese, and he studied linguistics) and music (he plays jazz trumpet) best inform his poetry and enable him to assemble poems shaped by their emotional and intellectual content. Despite the difficulties this causes, the clarity and complexity of Wah's perceptions are realized. The reader need never be lost.

The drive behind the book becomes clear as one reads on: *Waiting for Saskatchewan is a search. The poet* is searching for himself, his dead father, himself in his dead father, and his dead father in himself. Through this search, Wah creates

himself. He becomes the sum of his past and present, his lineage and language:

> *You were part Chinese I tell them.*
> *They look at me. I'm pulling their leg.*
> *So I'm Chinese too and that's why my name is Wah.*
> *They don't really believe me. That's o.k.*
> *When you're not "pure" you just make it up.*

There is nothing tranquil about Wah's memories of his father. In the first two sections of tbe book the father is referred to in present tease. He is alive and spotted

frequently by his son. These occurrences are disturbing. But they are part of "the 'inging' of a/life like an arrow." They are part of making the past present.

The last two sections of the book contain prose poems that are the result of the search. These are easier to read, more accessible. There is a feeling of resolution that carries both grammatically and emotionally as the father is constantly referred to in the past tense. Tbis half of the book is less challenging, less demanding, but more fulfilling.

In Waiting *for Saskatchewan* there are no *lyrical* passages, rich in description. The book is a successful, alive, and significant attempt to "... really gain *sight* of/word's imprint to pose itself es action on the world...." R is also the achieved end of a man creating himself through his work and his world. □

WORK & WORKERS

The Financial Post Selects the 100 Best Companies to Work for in Canada, by Eva Innes, Robert L. Perry, and Jim Lyon, Collins, 357 pages, 824.95 doth (ISBN 0 00 217643 2).

By Dona Sturmanis

SALES OF THIS book have been booming since it hit the book stores, and no wonder: it addresses the core of what every unemployed and working Canadian searching for greener occupational pastures wants to know. Through extensive interviewing and research, the authors have pinpointed the country's 100 top employers. Not only have they surveyed routine areas such as pay, benefits, promotion, and job security, but they have also examined such concerns es job satisfaction, communications, and personal development.

After the recession of the early 1980s, many of the nation's companies struggled back to stability by changing their business strategies, putting harder pushes on productivity and trimming their workforce. This of course meant getting the most out of the remaining workers, and a whole new focus on motivating them. The result has been an improvement in working *conditions in most* cases.

All of the 100 companies here have personnel programs rated from "good" to "excellent." In many cases, salaries are poor, benefits dodgy, and opportunities for promotion limited, but after interviews with 3,000 employees, the researchers found it *is* the human factor that *counts* most.

companies from across the country and every corner of industry are examined closely. Besides discovering that Mary Kay cosmetics purveyors really are as motivated as 60 *Minutes* would have us believe, that Toyota workers really do

feel the team spirit dramatized in their television commercials, and that employees of Telestat Canada, operators of a satellite-based telecommunications system, "get high" when a new spacecraft is launched, readers will learn what they really should look for when applying for a job.

No doubt. thousands of people across Canada will be flooding the offices of these 100 firms with resumés. The real value of tbis book. however, is that it is an excellent preview of what it's like to work for good companies in varied industries in the '80s. □

REVIEW

Warming the bench

By Charles Campbell

Judges, by Jack Batten, **Macmillan,** 272 **pages,** $24.95 **cloth (ISBN** 0 7715 9129 0).

JACK BATTEN'S latest paean to the legal biz is an anecdotal collection about our judges. Like its predecessors, *Lawyers, In Court,* and *Robinette,* it is long on glitter and gossip and probably easy enough for a clear-headed 13-year-old, but decidedly short on insight' and critical perspective. It is a good book on which to practise speed reading.

First, to give Batten his due, that 13-year-olds could understand this collection of courtroom war stories is a supreme compliment to his ability to condense and simplify dozens of complex legal battles to pithy and straightforward "issues." There is a" impressive mastery of the subject matter here.. But Batten's portrait of our judiciary is disturbingly awe-stricken. One wonders if he could have written the book if he had been forbidden to use the words "brilliant." "wise," "insightful," and "dedicated." Chapter by chapter he slavishly regurgitates the stories told bim by tbe high and mighty in their private interviews before and after court.

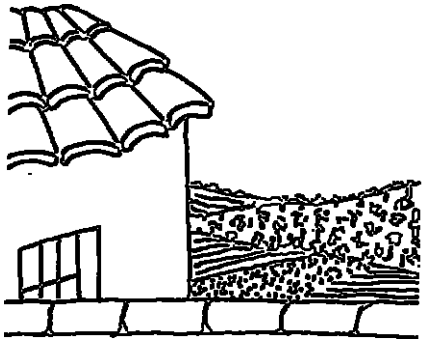
There are no bad judges according to this a-t save the long-departed, rigid, cranky, alcoholic — even impotent — progenitors of the early, early days in the Supreme Court of Canada, and these old fellows are there strictly as foils for the dedicated, brilliant, wise, and overworked current office-holders. The worst thing said of the living is that Judge Dnieper, in Toronto's Old City Hall Provincial Court. is a "loose cannon," and that Mr. Justice Davie Fulton in British Columbia is a reformed alcoholic, albeit heroic, brilliant, wise, insightful, etc.

It is. admittedly; bard to criticize living judges by name. The Court retains intimidating powers to jail those found in contempt for "bringing the administration of justice into disrepute." The Judicial Council. which is charged with disciplining bad judges, conducts its affairs in extreme secrecy. But Batten makes no effort to be critical.

Furthermore, Batten is shy. even when it comes to labelling judges liberal, conservative, progressive, federalist. or provincial-rights-types. Only the chapter on the Supreme Court of Canada speaks in such language -and then only vaguely. Various judges in the book admit political connections when they talk about their appointments, but this is not developed, even though Batten interviewed Ed Ratushney, now an Ottawa law professor, who for years advised the federal government on its selection of judges.

The Charter of Rights has given our judges important new political powers, and divided the bench into civil-libertarian interventionists mid conservatives who back the bureaucracy against the complaints of citizens. But for Batten, there are only war stories of individual cases and wise decisions rendered after Olympian deliberation with no taint of political perspective. No doubt many judges believe their task is "above politics." Other judges "my know better, but wish to preserve the fiction. It is, after all, an important source of their power. But Batten's book is woefully inadequate for perpetuating this mythology.

Judges tells us a great deal about what judges think about their judging, a lot on the opinions of their sycophants, and nothing about how the system really works. How could anyone write a chapter about the judges and not discuss their alleged tendency to believe the police of- above all others? From the smartest criminal practitioner to the dumbest low-



life, that's all anyone talks about in the corridors of the court house. If Batten had his ear to the ground, rather than his head in the clouds. he would have picked up what ought to have been his major theme -what are tbe real operative day-to-day assumptions, the biases if you will, of the working judge? Do cops ever lie? Should mothers work? Not that these questions are easy to answer, but Jack Batten doesn't give us any clues they even exist. □

REVIEW

Poetic licence

By Patricia Motley

Sir Charles God Damn: The Life of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, by John Coldwell Adams, University of Toronto Press, illustrated. 235 pages, $24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 2595 1).

THE ONLY inflammatory portion of John Coldwell Adams's portrait of "the father of Canadian literature" is the title. Adams, head librarian of Forest Hill Collegiate Institute in Toronto, has given us a solid, workmanlike picture of Roberts that is fair, kindly and cautious.

Along with Roberts's newly launched reputation as a womanizer, the startling title should sell a few copies. It was used as a jocular expression among editors and friends in Roberts's time to keep his initials straight. (He had been christened Charles after two uncles, George after both grandfathers, and Douglas after his father's parish, where he was born.)

Adams is Roberts's second biographer. The first, Elsie Pomeroy, was a spinster teacher some 25 years younger than Roberts. Pomeroy greatly admired Roberts and perhaps hoped to marry him. Adams met her in 1960 and was struck by all the things that she had left unsaid. He calls her biography a valuable source of first-hand information: "A very engaging figure emerges from its pages, one that I believe to be true to life. but not the whole truth."

Any biographer who aspires to convey "the whole truth" is a brave if not quixotic figure. Adams writes that his aim has been "to present all the available facts in their proper context and let them speak for themselves." The goal is admirable if a trifle naïve. Facts rarely speak far themselves, and the personalities who present them -to us should not be ignored. Arrangement and selection of facts are also powerful editorial tools. This granted, I hasten to observe that Adams's look at Sir Charles seems balanced and, on the whole, sympathetic.

Roberts's tangle of romantic affairs might easily have met with harsher treatment. He married young (far too young, in Adams's view), when he was not quite 21. His wife, May Fenety, was not an intellectual and cared nothing for poetry.

The two were grossly incompatible. After 15 years and four children, Roberts began to live by himself in New York. For the next 35 years, until May's death in 1930, the two kept up the charade of a temporary separation rather than a permanent split. May looked after the children in Fredericton on pitifully small amounts of money, sent irregularly, while Roberts lived abroad as a freelance writer. His numerous affairs with other women had begun long before their first separation.

Roberts's letters to his cousin, Bliss Carman, document his many infatuations. Adams records the faults on both sides of the marriage, and provides some relatively gentle criticism of Roberts. The poet rapidly became addicted to living on his own in cities that were more exciting than Fredericton. Perhaps his greatest weakness lay in his inability to face painful human confrontations. His son Lloyd describes him as a "strong, weak, lovable, remarkable character!" Adams sees him as a deeply lonely man.

The biography methodically traces Roberts's life (18604943) from New' Brunswick's Tantramar marshes (celebrated in his most famous poem) and his collegiate training in Fredericton under George Parkin through his long and fascinating career. Adams emphasizes the strong nationalism that formed a significant part of Roberta's personality, and the influence that his work had on other Canadian writers of the late 19th century, such as Archibald Lampman, Carman, and Duncan Campbell Scott. Roberts was an inspired teacher, and many of his students also attributed their literary success to his inspiration.

Although poetry was Roberts's first love, he earned a living by prose. He told Parkin that he lived *for* poetry and *by* prose. Animal stories earned a large part of bis income. Adams admires these stories, and subscribes to the currently fashionable view that Roberts's stories are "more realistic" and somehow "better" than those of Ernest Thompson Seton. Yet Adams acknowledges that the two writers appeared concurrently, and that Seton was "the most successful nature writer of all time."

The attack by the young radicals of Montreal, modernist poets Leo Kennedy, Frank Scott, and Arthur Smith, is handled with insight and dispassion. Since Roberts was still living and still writing, they made him the focus of their attack on the so-called Confederation poets. None of the young radicals had any real knowledge of the work they chose to pillory.

Adams is obviously well acquainted with Roberts's writing. He concludes that although early acclaim for Roberts's work may have been undiscriminating, he had become vastly underrated by the middle of thii century. Adams calls him "Canada's first important man of letters in the post-Confederation period." Summarizing critical views, the biographer credits Roberts with at least 100 "accomplished and satisfying" poems, and the same number of animal stories "unequalled in their genre."

Adams writes with intelligence, insight, and a dry wit. The biography includes several dozen black-awl-white photographs, and a particularly well-organized index. □

REVIEW

Between the lines

By *David Latham*

The *Collected* Poems of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts. edited by Desmond Pacey, Wombat Press, 672 pages, $49.50 cloth (ISBN 0 9890828 3 5).

WHEN I FIRST heard about this critical edition of Roberts's poetry nearly 10 years ago, I telephoned *McGraw-Hill* Ryerson to learn more about it. Eventually I was told that, yes indeed. they did have such a manuscript, that it went on For some 1,800 pages, half of which were textual notes. McGraw-Hill was interested in publishing the poetry, for which it figured there would be a market, but those hundreds of pages of notes would merely make the book cumbersome.

Here was an opportunity to publish the first critical edition of a Canadian author's work. Why would its publisher want to shelve it? Its editor, Desmond Pacey, had signed a contract with Ryerson Press; but now both Pacey and the press had died. Professor Graham Adams had completed Pacey's edition. but *McGraw-Hill* had taken over Ryerson. A landmark in the study of Canadian literature was now threatened by the market strategists of a branch plant. Anyone pondering the free trade debate should consider how this important work of scholarship, so long left in limbo by a multinational Goliath, has been not only rescued but so handsomely produced by the Wombat Press of Wolfville, N.S.

The Collected Poems of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts begins with Fred Cogswell's introduction, a convenient classification of the poetry into the 15 genres Roberts practised. Cogswell argues that such technical facility made Roberts precisely the poet our Victorian culture needed: he gave the new Dominion dignity by expressing "the thought and feeling of the Canada of his day in forms that Canadians had been taught from infancy to

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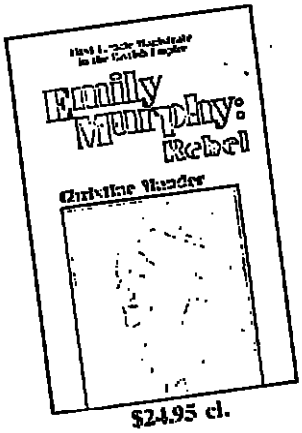

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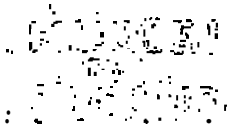

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revere and respect." (Cogswell speaks *of the* public man of letters, not of the philanderer who could surprise a host after a reading by requesting a woman for the night).

Following the introduction, the poems are printed in the order of their composition. Of the 384 poems, 36 were published previously only in periodicals, while four are published here for the first time. The text for each poem is the last publication overseen by the author, *on the principle that* it represents the author's final intention. The notes to the poems are printed as an appendix that comprises the last half Of the book. Each entry begins with a brief history of the poem's publication, including early periodicals and later anthologies. Next follows a record Of the variant printings of each teat, ranging from errors in punctuation to revisions of words and stanzas. The entry ends with a glossary of explanations of unfamiliar references and allusions.

It is common for critical editions of poetry to be arranged chronologically, but the decision to do so can be controversial. The chronological order is meant to reveal the growth of the poet's mind, and it is fascinating to follow the growth of Fredericton's precocious teenager, who would publish his first book at the age of 20. But *to* follow the growth of his adult mind, we would require some indication of the fiction be was composing (prolifically) at the same time as the poetry. Moreover, what we lose through this chronological approach is a sense of the poet's ultimate intention: his ordering of the poems in a sequence as a published volume of poetry. To consider, then, whether a poem might function as a shift in mood or a counterpoint in an argument, we need to consult the original editions.

Another important decision has to do with the notation of variants: whether to distinguish between accidentals (typos or punctuation changed to conform to the publisher's house rules) and substantives (the author's intentional revisions). That Pacey chose to include all accidentals means that he should have designated his work as a variorum rather than a critical edition. The glossary notes to "Orion" and to "Ave (An Ode for the She&y Centenary)" provide useful critical commentary, bat the notes for "Launcelot and the Four Queens" are more typical: rather than identify separately who Launcelot and Guinevere are, a critical edition should give a preliminary note about the Arthurian myth and how Roberts adapts it. The bulk of the notes are devoted to variant punctuation (including curiously the variants from a 1937 issue of the Saint John *Telegraph Journal*, which reveal *no* authorial *intention* but rather the haste of the compositors of a dally newspaper).

Not until the later poems, for which there are manuscripts, do the variants serve as meaningful demonstrations of the poet's creative process. The revisions of "The Iceberg," for example, reveal an interesting pattern. Images associated with the berg are made less concrete in order to emphasize the berg as an immeasurably massive force. Conversely, the "timid" ptarmigan is revised to become "fleet-winged" and the "drifting" fox becomes "backward glancing" as Roberts contrasts the particular details of other forms of nature with the abstract volume of the berg.

Its other revisions demonstrate the mature artist's restraint. The original "writhing coils of mist" may read more powerfully than the revised "treacherous swaths of fog" but the serpentine image of the former might mislead one to expect a heroic conflict between a white godly berg and a dark demonic fog. A questionable revision occurs near the end of the poem, where the change in the berg from "shrunken" to "fallen" and from "then" to "last" emphasizes the tragic pattern of life. But the revision of the very last lines shifts from the dissolution of the berg to the baptismal transformation of its soul. These lines *that* follow the alleged "last" stage "then" shift from death to rebirth, fmm dissolution to onion:

> *Last* I become
> A little *gleaming* globe *of cold*
> *That slid and sparkled on the slow-pulsed swell.*
> *And then . . .*
> *Dissolved in ecstasy*
> *Of many coloured light,*
> *I breathed up my soul into the air*
> *And merged forever in the all-solvent sea.*

The exploration of such questions about Roberts's creative process will be encouraged by this edition. which brings together for the first time the variants Of a Canadian author's work. It should also encourage further pursuit of the chronology of some of Roberts's compositions — for instance, some of his patriotic verses alleged to have been composed early in 1885. I suspect the "January, 1885" date on a private printing of the poem "Canada" may have been a printer's common year-end misprint for "January. 1886." Editions like Pacey's make possible such quibbles, from which serious scholarship may eventually emerge. I was worried when I found a whole line omitted from Roberts's most famous poem, "Tantramar Revisited." but after finding on-4 one other typo ("smells" for "smell" in "In the Barn-Yard's Southerly Corner"), I am confident that this variorum will encourage further studies of Roberts's craft. It is fitting that the man who lent such dignity to Canadian

literature should be the first to receive a dignified edition of bis work. The enormity of the task *of* properly editing his prose may mean that we will wait many more decades for a prose companion to *The Collected Poems.* ❑

REVIEW

Suffer little children

By Bronwyn Drainie

Time of Their Lives: The **Dionne Tragedy,** by **John Nihmey** and Stuart **Foxman,** Nivs **Publishing (Macmillan), 224 pages,** 819.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 921043 **00 7).**

THE SUBTITLE says it **all.** Fifty **years after the events** described **in this** novel, **the authors** say, it's **time for Canadians** *to* **look at** the dark side of tbe **Dionne** phenomenon. time to count **the incredible human cost. Pierre Berton has** already **softened up this ground with his** factual account. ***The Dionne Years,*** which **appeared in** 1977, **but Nihmey and Foxman** obviously felt them **was** more of **a** story to be told: the hapless victimization of the **entire Dionne family. Why it is written in fictional form** is not **clear —** perhaps it is **because** the central **figure, father Oliva Dionne,** who died **in** 1979, could not be interviewed.

From the vantage-point of the mid-1930s. tbe **Dionne** story **seems unbelievable.** A French-Canadian **farm woman in a tiny rural community near North** Bay, Out., gives birth to five **identical live** baby **girls.** Miraculously **they all** survive. **The local** doctor. **Allan** Roy Dafoe. is called **in** by the **midwives** because of the extraordinary circumstances. **and** doesn't leave for eight **years.** Citing tbe **need** for strict hygiene, he **isolates** tbe babies fmm the rest **of** the family, and even **though the quintuplets** develop very quickly into normal **healthy infants,** Defoe **manages** to **convince the** Ontario government to build bim **a** hospital to house tbe little girls.

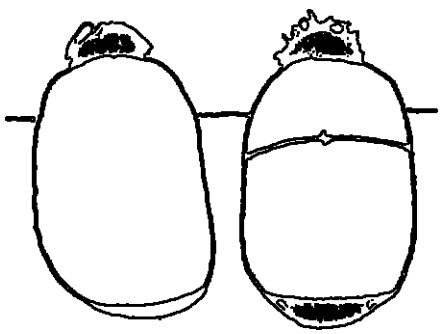
The parents' protests against this **hijacking** of **their daughters** fell on entirely **deaf ears.** Dr. Defoe, Ontario **premier** Mitch **Hepburn, and the** world **press** quickly cast Oliva and **Elzire Dionne** in **the role** of wicked **step-parents:** ignorant, **dirty,** greedy. and **French.** Dafoe gets a Nobel Prize **nomination and becomes the** toast of New York **society, while** tbe **Dionnes** sit helplessly **in** their **farmhouse,** watching **the** world **beat a path** to **the** ● 'hospital" **across the road, where** their daughters **are** pot **on display every day like caged animals.**

For eight years, Oliva Dionne fights a **hopeless** battle for his children. **Eventually** it is **a historical shift that leads** to the **reunification** of **the** family. The adorable **Dionne** Quintuplets, **such** a **spark** of **light. and hope during_tbe darkest days of the Depression, become** a **silly** and **irrelevant** freak **show** once the Second World **War** begins. and are molly returned to **their** grieving parents.

The novel stops et **this point,** but the reader **can fill in** tbe rest of tbe story. **Knowing** what we now **know about infant** bonding, **and** about the **uneasy clash** of **French** and **Anglo cultures, we can glimpse the bottomless unhappiness** of tbe **Dionne household. The** other **seven children resent their** pampered. **famous** sisters, **and** the **girls themselves are totally unprepared** for **the abrupt** end to their **fairy-tale existence. All five leave** home at 18, **three have failed** marriages, two die **young, the surviving three** live as **recluses in Montreal** and **have not been home to see their mother since the** father's **death.**

One new element that Nihmey **and Foxman have added** to the story is **the character** of **Mort Fellman, a** cub reporter **on** the **North** Bay *Nugget* who **broke** tbe **news** of **the** quintuplets' biih to **an astonished** world. **The Dionnes** became pert of his **regular** beat for **years,** and he **was** es responsible es **anyone** for **creating** tbc myth of **kindly Doc** Dafoe **and the** brutish parents **across** the mad. But **unlike many** journalists, **Fellman finally** stopped **believing** his own copy, **opened his** eyes, and began documenting **the** reality of the **Dionne** tragedy. **Clearly** he was **an im**portent **source** of **information** to the **novelists.**

This book **has** a **ring** of **truth** about it, **in spite** of awkward **writing** at **times and some** clumsy attempts -at **amateur psychoanalysis, especially** of Dr. Dafoe. **Revisionist history like this, whether factual or** fictional. **serves** a purpose beyond setting the record straight. It **can** be a yardstick of our **ethical** development. To the extent that **we feel** shock **and revulsion at such cavalier treatment** of **human** lives, to that same extent have we **inched along** tbe mad to civilization **in** the pest **50 years.** ❑



REVIEW

Advice and dissent

By Matthew Behrens

Turning the Tide: The U.S. end **Latin America,** by **Noam** Chomsky, **Black** Rose Books, 298 pages. $29.95 dotb **(ISBN** 0 920857 78 0) **and** $14.95 paper **(ISBN** 0 920057 76 4).

EVERY FEW YEARS there emerges a **definitive** text **that** adds to **our understanding** of **one** of tbe world's **most** volatile hot spots, Central America. **Earlier in this** decade such works were **Walter LaFeber's** *Inevitable Revolutions* **and Penny Lernoux's** *Cry* of the *People.* Now **Noam Chomsky,** a noted **linguist** and social critic, **has written** a **study** that **deserves** special **attention** es a **high-water** mark in **this field.**

For two decades, Chomsky has been among **the** most outspoken **members** of the U.S. academic **community, and** his **works have stirred** debate, **condemnation,** end **suppression (his** *Economy of Human Rights,* **written with Edward S. Herman, was dropped by the original publisher for "unpatriotic"** content). His **relentless search for truth in an age of complex myths ranging from the creation of the cold war** to the legitimacy of **democracy in Israel places Chomsky in the decided** position of **intellectual** dissident.

His latest work is no exception. Though his tone is one of **anger,** Chomsky pm**duces firmly based and well-documented judgements. Far from randomly soapboxing,** he **carefully examines** numerous **facets** of bidden **history,** never **taught** (or even hinted et, for **that** matter) **in** U.S. **schools. Chomsky's research shows that current** policy **in Central** America **is** nothing new for the U.S.; **rather,** the air **war** in **El Salvador and** tbe genocidal counter-insurgency program in **Guatemala have precedents in earlier U.S.** actions, fmm the **destruction** of native **cultures and peoples at home to the brutal subjugation and slaughter** of **hundreds** of **thousands** in the **Philippines, Greece,** Vietnam, Chile, **and dozens** *of other* **nations that were perceived victims of the red menace.**

Given the current political atmosphere in tbc U.S. **and the silence** of the mainstream media, **such** ideas **are** not widely **aired. In examining** U.S. policy, **Chomsky expresses various thoughts that** to **most are downright shocking: the recruitment** of Nazis **after** the Second World **War and the promise of clemency in return** for **anti-Soviet allegiances,** Israel's

role in supplying napalm and armaments to Third World dictatorships, and the fact that the conservative "trend" in the U.S. is more a product of public relations than a reality.

A central part of Chomsky's work is the examination of the misuse of language by officialdom. Through careful analysis, he shows us the brazen manner in which the Reagan administration flouts facts, truth, and logic, and distorts concepts like freedom and "improvements" in human rights.

The first reaction of many reading this book will be anger, both at how little we are informed and at the extent of destruction and misery inflicted in Central America, which now ranks with — if it does not surpass — what was wrought in Southeast Asia.

Little space is given here to the problem of how we can turn back escalation; the number of possible solutions merits another book — this at a time when most veterans of the anti-Vietnam War movement are just getting around to evaluations of the tactics used *then*. Chomsky does note, however, that education is a key, and with this valuable resource, a conclusive and up-to-date survey of the regional war, he has produced a first step. For the previously uninformed reader, here is an opportunity to step in on the ground floor. □

REVIEW

Hot blood and hovering stones

By George Elliott Clarke

Clouds Flying Before the Eye, by Harry Thurston, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 76 pages, $7.95 paper (ISBN 0 86492 052 8).

When the Stones Fly Up, by Dale Zieroth, House of Anansi, 95 pages, $8.95 paper (ISBN 0 88784 145 7).

THESE POETRY COLLECTIONS share concerns with family, memory, and dreams, rural subjects, and the morpheme "fly" in their respective titles. Yet, whereas Harry Thurston is earthbound, Dale Zieroth ascends.

Thurston promulgates a sort of rural zen in 46 poems that deal with family, nature, art, and artists. This spirit infuses the book's three sections. The first, "Clouds Flying Before the Eye," opens with "Mooring," a slim, imagistic poem that paints a moon-haunted, memory-illuminated, Henri Rousseau-like landscape:

It's Haute levitates
The sandstone moon
ascends amidst
a cat's cradle of hills . . .
as we descend
the switchback road
to the sea
gearing down
mooring memory

Thurston's most effective poems arise from his direct examination of nature, from his — in zen terms — "direct pointing to reality." Another example is "Bulbs," about the links between generations: "A man plants his seed and withers himself/Not a bulb. It resurrects perennially/a vegetable Lazarus."

Thurston's eye for nature generates such sensuous lines as "August hears the hum of its own hot blood./Crickets rub their legs together with incendiary passion," and spawns the forceful poems of the last section, "Bush Notes." Here, the gospel according to *Harrowsmith* — a vision of the saving grace of rural life — receives its best expression. For instance, Thurston asserts that in flowers' bright petals "lies a strategy/to survive winter/that lasts an age" ("The View From Bennett Hill"). Never mind humankind's wars.

"The Stammerer's Soliloquy," a boisterous dramatic monologue, is — surprisingly — Thurston's most arresting poem. This rugged lyric shotgun weds Alden Nowlan's rhythms and Milton Acorn's diction to produce true, Maritime language:

There are times I can't even understand
myself for this damn stammering.
It is only here in this tarred shack
I can say something straight out
like I hear in my head. . . .

Unfortunately, the brilliance of such good poems is obscured by those tarred by either insufficient editing or pedestrian depictions of human relationships or both. The former results in such base coinages as "bleary eyes," "rue in their quiet hearts," such prattle as "Fish head/hen fish," and such excremental images as "like a gull defecating." (The cumulative effect of these inventions is that of ragged patches sewn on a lamé gown.) The latter results in hackneyed situations (best illustrated by Thurston's attempt, in "The Habits of Bears," to play Goldilocks to Nowlan's bear).

Yet, Thurston's pointillist exactness with nature imagery makes *Clouds* worthwhile. A native Nova Scotian and former editor of *Germination* magazine, Thurston breaks no new ground — but he does not need to. The present soil is rich enough; he must merely clear the weeds.

Zieroth's three-sectioned collection of 51 poems focuses on contemporary West Coast life, the poet's prairie roots, and his immigrant-settler heritage. In the first section's title poem, "House in the Night," a dream blurs distinctions be-

tween past and present, indoors and out:

Here the birds come boldly
to our windows as if inside
they still can glimpse the old
brambles and the displaced nests.

In "Father and Child," the speaker discovers "He has sunk himself month by month/down into this child," and in the adjacent poem. "Digging," he realizes that stones wait "their turns to be taken up and held, and dropped and held again." In both cases, dreams squeeze past, present. and future into one moment.

In "When the Stones Fly Up," the second section, Zierotb explores his childhood's landscape and introducer its folk. Here, longing is restriction, having is freedom. A sensuous instance of longing occurs in the dramatic monologue, "1956: the school teacher falls in love." The teacher dreams of a schoolboy. "how he would manage my breasts." but states, "I am afraid of love in this country."

Another dramatic monologue, "1956: The old Lutheran pastor," describes the freedom of having. The minister, peering "toward the graves with their bright willows/dancing," notes, in a beatific vision, that "beyond us — look — the land shimmers."

Like Thurston, Zieroth observes nature with a fierce fidelity. "The Field" and "Harvest" possess such grit that one can feel the hot sun or finger the rough grain. Yet surrealism informs "When the stones Ply Up": "the stones fly up fmm their fields,/they hover in the sky, they break open."

The last section, "The Boat," deals prominently with ancestry. Two long narratives, "The boat" and "Elizabeth/ Matriarch" command particular attention. "The boat" records an ancestral voyage from Europe ("dark as a cowshed") to Canada. a journey undertaken by millions but by principally "two people ....clinging to each other/and to the dream approaching." The volume's final poem, "Elizabeth/Matriarch," is also its best, and celebrates the origin of the first settlers and the poet's recognition from them

that the world had not changed
and changed, and that it gripped them
and called itself war
and that the name of the war
changed and did not change
and what is beyond the horizon
cannot be controlled.

Such biblical language echoes Eliot's Four *Quartets.* However, Eliot provides mere backing vocals: the lead voice belongs — as always — to Zierotb. Throughout his book his diction remains wheat-supple, his images, scythe-plain. His verbs astound with their homely appropriateness.

What finally makes his poetry so exhilarating is Zieroth's understated belief that matter and events are one. One awaits this gifted poet's fourth volume with great impatience. □

REVIEW

Matter over mind

By *Meagan Daley*

Melanie Klein: Her Work and Her World, by Phyllis Grosskurth, McClelland & Stewart, 515 pages, $35.00 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 3838 8).

PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH stumbled upon this project in 1980. During a particularly frustrating period of researching material for a life of Marie Bonaparte, she happened to read Melanie Klein's *Envy and Gratitude. She* decided to abandon Bonaparte and launch an investigation of Klein. The result is an engaging and meticulously thorough biography of a leading psychoanalyst, *Melanie Klein: Her Work and Her World.*

Grosskurth *sets the scene in* psychoanalytic style with an examination. of Klein's childhood relationships. Her father, who was 50 when she was born, was never very interested in her. openly preferring another daughter. Melanie nevertheless admired him and longed for his approval; she decided early in life that she too would he a doctor. Grosskurth calls Klein's own description of her mother, written as an adult, idealized and sentimental. Letters from mother to daughter, reproduced here, reveal a manipulative and self-centred matriarch. Klein's favourite was her older brother Emanuel, and Grosskurth suggests that then may have been a conscious incestuous attraction between the two.

In her psychoanalytic work, Klein made many novel contributions.- Her theories on envy and the complex relationship between mother and daughter were original and disturbing. Similarly, her views on the death instinct and the role of impulses of hate in the formation of the superego made her a controversial figure. She also pioneered the practice of analysing children, pushing back the frontiers of psychoanalytic discourse with a bold exploration of the child's subconscious and the inevitably sensitive domain of children's sexuality.

Not surprisingly, many of her proposals were met with reserve, to say the least. The idea of analysing children was in itself offensive to some, who believed that children are too suggestible and too immature to deal with the frightening sexual and destructive impulses psychoanalysis assumes them to have.

Yet many of her ideas took hold and she and her followers became a "school." As such, the Kleinians were soon embroiled in a feud with the Freudians. Grosskurth enthusiastically depicts the various levels on which this battle unfolded and the intensity with which it was fought. As she points out, it was more than a matter of concepts; it was clearly also a matter of personal antagonisms, and beyond that "it was more deeply seated in the sense of anxiety and fear about what [Klein's] ideas would do."

Grosskurth admits to a strong identification of herself with Klein; she found many parallels between her subject's life and her own. Occasionally the book reflects, a little too obviously, *this* spiritual bond, and it is at these times that one might question the accuracy of Grosskurth's presentation. There is no doubt, however, that she is an expert at reconstruction, painstakingly weaving together personal correspondence, tidbits from interviews, and other fragments of history to create a comprehensive and coherent narrative. Although biographies by their nature can tend to magnify the relative importance of a person's actions and contributions, it is also clear that Klein was a powerful influence on 20th-century psychoanalysis. □

REVIEW

Troubled waters

By Matthew Behrens

Floodshock: The Drowning of Planet Earth, by Antony Milne, Alan Sutton Publishing, 176 pages, 823.95 **cloth (ISBN** 0 88299 270 2).

The Late, Great **Lakes:** An **Environmental History,** by William **Ashworth, Collins,** 274 **pages,** $24.95 cloth **(ISBN** 0 00 217684 3).

THESE TWO BOOKS explore topics of great concern: pollution, aberrations of nature, and changing patterns in the global eco-system.

Milne's treatment of floods is a self-important doomsday book, designed apparently with secondary-school students in mind, complete with obligatory exclamation marks and solemn warnings about rising waters: "We must ensure we do not ignore them." He also makes some highly careless socio-political judgements, claimed Third World residents "make things worse for themselves" by living in flimsy homes — as if most of them had a choice.

Though he eventually gets around to suggesting that the increase in violent weather might be attributable to our tinkering with geography and ecology, Milne fails to integrate this important thesis into the body of his work. Rather, he isolates the topic and continues pointing out "disturbing" trends without elaborating.

Such a history would have been more successful had it been given the treatment the Great Lakes receive in William Ashworth's frightening yet highly readable book, required reading for anyone who drinks water. At a time when daily revelations appear about increasingly toxic substances in our water, Ashworth's account of our continued destruction of the largest body of fresh water in the world is timely indeed.

stories of environmental disasters can easily be boring and witless, yet this unassuming work is almost humorous in an absurd fashion. Ashworth mixes his objective history with his personal journeys through the region and, far from setting himself above the reader and dictating (as so many self-important scientific writers do), he allows us to join him in passionate condemnation of missed opportunities and insane decisions that have gotten us to this point of ecological crisis.

Ashworth's fine sense of the interconnectedness of life and events — missing in Milne — gives his book a coherence and flow that allow the previously uninitiated reader to follow along. His logical presentation, combined with a wealth of information and insight, make this an important contribution to the diminishing and unfortunately unheeded body of environmental studies. In an age when most people are too disillusioned and despairing to turn things around, here is someone still willing to try. □

FIRST NOVELS

Double vision

Sat in different eras, one novel finds happiness in social convention while another portrays society as throttling mankind

By Douglas Glover

ALI-JANNA WHYTE'S Economic Sex (Coach House Press, 224 pages, $11.95 paper) is a wide-eyed novel ("novella," the jacket copy says, though it's over 200 pages long) of Yuppie self-disgust. It is a combination young-woman-coming-of-age/loss-of-innocence (spiritual, definitely not sexual) novel and a spirited, post-feminist howl of rage at the smug family politics of upper-middle-class southwestern Ontario.

Sarah Stauton, offspring of a moderately wealthy family with a big house on the Niagara Escarpment, is a fast, cynical, snobbish Toronto magazine editor. She despises her parents for living a life of small-time emotional arbitrage, but when her chance comes, she makes a calculated play for a rich New York boy named Nicholas, though he treats her shabbily and often bores her. She has other lovers, of course. She becomes pregnant, (difficult to say who the father is), has an abortion, gets dumped by Nicholas. then suddenly wakes up to the fact that it's all economic sex.

> Baby listen. lie's got money, tradition and power. As long as he's got that he'll have more people around him than the press. He won't even hear you. He can buy love. Both nice ladies and wicked women. He can buy experience. He can buy virgins. He can buy trust. He bought you. Remember that.

The title of this book is meant to be taken literally. Concealed behind the smug politesse of her upbringing, Sarah has perceived and understood the real message. A girl's body is all she's got to trade for the good things in life. ("I really don't *want* you, Nick. But I do want what you've got. The lifestyle.. The ease. The security. The money.") Sarah sees the world as a marketplace. The simplest gesture, a word, an anecdote, is a gift, an article of exchange, to be bartered away for a clear return.

And what does our Sarah learn? In the final pages of the novel, a year after the break-up with Nick. she speaks of love and pens her own new testament, what she has come to believe:

> We have to go back to the basics. To the very beginning. We have to understand who to trust. Who to believe in. And why. We have to choose between Life and Death. People or Things. Civilization or Annihilation. Yes. We have to make these decisions. . . .Listen, I know we must give up this destructive, unnecessary, all-consuming Greed. We must reject this inheritance. . . .I believe we have greater deeds to do. You and I. As givers and takers of life.

Unfortunately, it's not clear that Sarah has earned her perception. She may be witty and beautiful; she may be a female deadpan Buster Keaton in the ring of love (her enthusiasm for her New York beau leads to occasional pratfalls and bizarre situation comedy); but her rich-bitch cynicism (which, after all, is a species of innocence — innocence not being the morally ambiguous category it's cracked up to be) is neither glamorous nor illuminating. Rather. it seems adolescent and jejune. One suspects, by the end of *Economic Sex, that Sarah still has a lot* of growing up to do.

Donald Purcell's *The Lucky Ones* (Oberon Press, 160 pages, $23.95 cloth, $12.95 paper) is a warm, gentle story of old-fashioned family life and love. set in rural Quebec during the 1930s and '40s. Paul Dandurand is a SO-year-old widower, a farmer and wood-cutter (these people are so poor and self-sufficient that the Depression scarcely touches them), Catholic and one of the *bonne monde* (as opposed to families "where things happen"), pious, industrious. and upright. The crises and conflicts in his life are homely: his 13-year-old daughter is becoming rebellious and boy-crazy (on the advice of the village priest, Dandurand sends her to a convent school in Montreal); an older daughter mania but finds herself dissatisfied with homestead&9 *and threatens* to *return* to the home farm; and Dandurand finds himself sinfully drawn to the town floozy.

He decides he can only solve his problems by remarrying. With a touching, though somewhat clumsy, rural delicacy, he approaches a Montreal parish priest who arranges a meeting with a shy spinster. The story of their courtship is told from the spinster's point of view. A sister, disappointed in love, tries to intervene. Paul's daughter runs away from the convent school with a delivery boy. For a while, the happiness of these lonely, ordinary, good-hearted people hangs by a thread. But in the end, they are married. The family survives social change and the vagaries of fate and personality, and soldiers on into post-war Canada.

The Lucky Ones stand poles apart from *Economic Sex*. Reading them in conjunction, one gets an almost dizzying double vision They are "about" the same thing:

the inheritance of traditional social values. Almost as clearly as Sarah (though in a different language — and I don't mean French). Paul Dandurand sees the acquisition of a wife as a practical exchange. a" exercise in family politics and the satisfaction of physical needs.

But Purcell's message is that ma" cannot live outside the social fabric, that the wisdom of the group is essential to survival. that happiness lies in bringing oneself into coincidence with the life of the tribe. Whyte's message is that tbe social fabric is throttling mankind, that greed is the engine of human intercourse. Of course, Purcell is writing about a different time. Arguably, the homogeneous tribal wisdom he presents no longer exists in Canada. Whyte *speaks* with the voice of another more tattered, anxious age. *The Lucky Ones reads* like a pleasant memory, a pastoral dream of some almost-forgotten golden age.

Four Wet to the Civil War (McBain Publishing, 317 pages, 828.95 paper), by 73-year-old Lois E. Darroch, is a historical novel about four Canadian brothers who join the Union side in the war between tbe states. It is based on a true story, and Darroch incorporates authentic letters and diaries that have apparently come down through her family. The brothers are Jasper, Newton. Alonzo, and Alfred Harding (Wolverton in real life). Their father Enos runs a lumber operation near St. Williams, Ont., which makes him a frequent visitor to Cleveland. where his market lies. (Shingles, shakes and Reciprocity — *plus ça change, etc.)*

The lumber business is o" the skids when the Civil War breaks out. and the Harding boys decide to join up as teamsters i" order to augment the family income and help pay for their schooling. Jasper, the youngest, dies of typhoid early on. Alfred dies of smallpox. Newton, the scholar, also falls ill, but survives and returns home to go to school, help out with tbe family business and, later, fight the Fenians. Alonzo is bayoneted at A"-tietem, survives and enlists as a regular soldier for the remainder of the war, seeing action around Chattanooga.

These are the bare hones of this idiosyncratic, ambitious, sprawling. curious and, ultimately, flawed novel. The hook is, almost incidentally, salted with delightful characters and snippets of significant historical and economic data. The Hardings are products — though Darmch passes this over without much explanation — of complex economic factors such as depression and reciprocity; living across the lake and being in a co"-stant business relation with the U.S. (the Americans never seem to pay their bills). they participate in a uniquely Canadian pioneer existence. They are commodity suppliers, busily employed in denuding southern Ontario of its forests, yet failing financially. They are restless, acquisitive, religious (the sister). obsessed (the father), and alive. Yet Darroch persists in muffling their story in pages of third-hand paraphrase of U.S. history.

The trouble is that she has tried to combine three elements — authentic letters (italicized in the teat), Civil War history, and fictional narration — that mix about as well as oil and water. The real Wolverton letters and the war history consistently undercut or digress from the story of the fictional Hardings. Life and art fail to coincide, and tbe novel degenerates into a pastiche of documents, secondary source material, and fiction. ***Four Went to the Civil War*** has charm, but it is the charm of a ***bricolage, not*** of a novel.

Cynthia Long's Wishbones (McClelland & Stewart, 176 pages, $10.95 paper) is an anti-male romance, or a feminist anti-romance, that combines fairy tale and pop wisdom. ("Give your love to no ma" unless he recognizes that your true beauty lies beneath"; "What you must find is inside. There lies the greatest pleasure, before you are ready to share.")

Cassie, the protagonist, is 30, a clarinet-player on the edge of a career in jazz. Sk is teetering between "the way of ambition" and "the way of blind

hope." Along comes David, a piano player, who kindles ha hope (love, etc.) and the" weasels out of the relationship, leaving her, in the end, triumphantly alone and pregnant. Flashbacks fill in the background: Cassie at three, at 15, her mother's story (first sexual experience, forced fellatio:, later, marriage to a weak and aloof man; now, bitter loneliness), and her grandmother's feminist fairy tales (allegorical princesses imprisoned by jealous, fearful husbands, escaping to seek and win the Water of Life).

Men are weak, mean, jealous, possessive, and lying; women are confused but basically well-intentioned. Lo"8 explains the situation this way:

> Perhaps it is the trade-off of birth for life, the gift of a womb, which curses and blesses a woman apart. A man, through his body, with its stamen-thrusting needs, f- searches and yet remains. lost. Unable to accept the final capitulation, he is a rebel for art, power and good sex; yet perhaps if just once k could feet his body give back life, if we were all mothers, wet nurses of our wisdom, our brief time would not be so smothered by wasted anger, hovering in a dirty cloud of egotism over the constant battleground of his precious war.

This is typical Long prose, portentous, abstract (what is "the final capitulation" anyway?), syntactically and semantically imprecise ("he" to "we" to "our" to "his"; wet nurses are not the same as mothers), metaphorically mixed (that "wasted anger" both smothering and hovering at once), and biologically strained (if we were all mothers, there wouldn't be any of us to read this novel).

One of the basic problems with this kind of story is that i" order to make the point (that men are such prick), the male characters have to be incredible, one-dimensional bad guys. So, three sentences after meeting David, we know he's a bounder, and we begin to wonder why Cassie (who otherwise seems intelligent enough) persists in falling for him. We begin to suspect some deep character flaw in Cassie that the author is withholding and, finally, we begin to lose interest in the story. If Cassie had a" ounce of real *chutzpah*, she *wouldn't have given this* jerk the time of day.

Quinn McIlhone's Trade Rumors (McClelland &Stewart, 236 pages, S4.95 paper) is a combination hockey and con- - novel. Michael Cassidy, a New York Ranger forward, is 32. over the hill, and broke, his ex-wife having taken him to the cleaners in divorce court. Faced with having to return to his native Montreal without a dime, Cassidy concocts a weird and dangerous scheme to get himself (nearly fatally) injured i" an on-ice brawl, making him an instant millionaire on the insurance..

Tbis is a difficult book to classify. 0" the one hand, it purports to give us an inside look at the world of modem professional hockey. Cassidy has bee" playing organized hockey since he was 12; he didn't finish high school; he became a brilliant success in his early 20s; and now he's nothing hut a tom-up husk. We are treated to scenes of (Canadian) hockey players doing cocaine, throwing beer bottles off Manhattan high-rises (this did sound authentically Canadian to me), and chasing bimbos. There is a serious theme here: what happens to kids from Prairie

towns or Montreal tenements when, For an achingly brief period of their lives, they are thrust into celebrity and fortune? But McIlhone only touches this theme glancingly, then chases up the ice to score a cheap goal with his sting conclusion.

The style of this novel tends to glorify a kind of macho, I've-got-a-worse-hangover-than-you puerility. McIlhone's characters. when they aren't being outright ugly misogynists (" 'She's an absolute pig,' Flynn informed Cassidy in a loud aside, 'A-l American prime. And her knockers are obscene!' "), seem to think a woman's breast size is a major character trait. And the flip side of their adolescent bravado is a kind of sickly self-pity ("I played my heart out and what have I got?") that is finally very irritating. (The man who says this is pulling down $80,000 a year, owns a house in Connecticut, rents a Manhattan apartment, and can expect a pension when he turns 45.) Despite the author's attempts to draw sympathy For Cassidy, he remains an aloof and antipathetic hero.

Gregory Sass's Redcoat (Porcupine's Quill, 89 pages, 58.95 paper) is a picaresque novel set in England and Canada at the time of the War of 1812. Thirteen-year-old Shadrach Byfield, teased and beaten by wealthier schoolmates, runs away From home and joins the British army. He ships out to Canada in time to skirmish with the Americans near Prescott and later fight with Brock at Detroit. A victim of constant ill-luck and injustice. he deserts. is captured by Indians, skirmishes with the Americans again, loses a hand and nearly dies under the lash before making his way home to England.

A scant 89 pages long (less if you subtract the line-drawings), this is a very thin novel. It's an adventure book without much adventure (though a lot *happens*), a history book without much history. The prose is competent, though pedestrian. The *whole thing seems* meant For a juvenile audience. (Sass is a Former teacher and author of several school history texts.) The implied comparison with Charles Dickens that appears on the jacket copy is ludicrous. □

INTERVIEW

Alistair MacLeod

'I write about what I want to write about. I think of that material almost as you think of someone you love'

By Mark Fortier

METICULOUS, UNPROLIFIC craftsman, Alistair MacLeod has been widely praised For two books of short stories spaced 10 years apart: *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* (McClelland & Stewart, 1976) and *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories*, recently published in McClelland & Stewart's new Signature series. Born in North Battleford, Sask., and educated at Nova Scotia Teacher's College, St. Francis Xavier University, the University of New Brunswick, and Notre Dame University, MacLeod writes mostly about the fishermen and miners of Cape Breton, whose lives — particularly in their confrontation with the past — he describes in almost mythic terms. Since 1969 MacLeod has taught English at the University of Windsor. where he was interviewed by Mark Fortier:

Alistair MacLeod

Books in Canada: *The narrator in 'The Boat" in* The Lost Salt Gift of Blood *says, "I wished that the two things that I loved did not exclude each other in a manner that was so blunt and too clear.." I wonder if you see your writing as a reconciliation between where you come from and where you have come to.*

Alistair MacLeod: *In some* of those stories there is a tension between an intellectual fulfilment and an emotional fulfilment, which people who live in fairly remote areas have to Face. IF you're on James Bay. or you're in one of the outports of Newfoundland, and you want to be a radio announcer, or a physicist, or a jockey, this means you have to leave your environment, and this may mean leaving your parents, or leaving your landscape. or leaving lots of other things. This is a tension that's Felt by a lot of people in Canada because of the nature of the country. What you want to do with your mind may be at variance with the yearning of your heart. What happens in a story like "The Boat" is that no matter what decision you make, I don't know if I'd say it haunts you. but it does follow you.

BiC: *In your new book there seems to be a reconciliation and an integration in some of the characters, who have so internalized their past that they don't hove any anxiety about losing it.*

MacLeod: This is true about some of the people in some of the stories. It's a coming to terms with certain things, and coming to terms with them does not necessarily mean losing them. We have an intellectual life, an emotional life, and also a physical life. I think of an athlete who can no longer physically play tbe game, but who may remember the emotional excitement of the game. In a lot of these stories the characters are engaged in very physical lives. IF you live in the kind of world where you use your body every day — you're not only laying your psyche on the line but you're also laying your fingers, or your neck, or your toes. That's what I was interested in "The Closing Down of Summer." I was also interested, in that story, in the fact that iust because people do not speak does not mean that they do not Feel. The image that I had when I wrote that story was triggered by Howard Cosell interviewing athletes. The athletes would do these wonderful things with their bodies, and then he'd show them on tape, and the athletes wouldn't be able to talk about themselves. You see almost completely physical man on the one hand and &t-completely verbal man on the other.

BiC: There *seems to be in some of the stories an interest in how to express these things that have remained unexpressed — coming to terms with how you can best make these people speak. I think of the*

way you've used more Gaelic, more folk songs.

MacLeod: The issue there is whether ethnic art makes converts or just goes out to the same people and comes back. You say, "Who understands the way I am?" The answer the character in that initial story comes up with is no. There is a kind of loneliness in that.

BiC: There is a line in "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun": "You cannot not know what you do know." I wonder if that's a position you write from as well?

MacLeod: Yes. I think so. No matter what we do with our outer lives, there is still our inner lives, and once we know things, or once we have memories, whether we try to forget them, or whether we try to be different people, we can only do tbis to a certain extent. You can't just say. "I'm going to make an intellectual decision not to be tbis way any more." Sometimes you find yourself reacting to a knowledge you had almost forgotten in an intellectual sense, but in an emotional sense it's always still there.

If you live in a very physical world, there are always things that can happen to you. My father worked in a mine for a while and his five brothers worked in tbe mine. and almost even one of them was mutilated in some way. Whet this means is their lives are forever changed because of that. And these physical changes have emotional and psychic effects not only on the person but on those that are connected with him.

BiC: Your reader comes to expect a certain outcome to your stories. some catastrophe, often violent death. At times you go against that, for instance in "The Second Spring" where the boy doesn't get the calf he wants, but it's not so tragic after all.

MacLeod: What I was interested in was tbe attempt to be in control of things. So you get into something like baseball, where all you have to do is catch any ball that's hit between here and there. Never mind worrying about more cosmic things.

BiC: In your stories you don't hide those heavy things. Your stories are about them and bring them forth in very powerful ways.

MacLeod: I like to think of myself as basically a kind of realistic writer, not steeped in pessimism. I like to think of myself as telling the truth as I see it. What else can I do? In an urbanized world there is more of a chance to escape death, because you don't have to see it. But if you grow up in a rural world, where the animals are always being killed, that is part of your reality. I don't think that's pessimistic.

BiC: Your realism has incorporated something legendary and mythical and communal.

MacLeod: Well. the world that we live in is not necessarily all that we have. And the world that we comprehend intellectually is not all that we have either. A lot of these characters are not instant North Americans. They go back a long way and, whether this is any good or not, they have no choice. You cannot not know what you do know.

BiC: There are labels that net attached to you: regional writer, writer's writer, best-kept secret in Canadian literature. Are any of those anything like what you would want to be called?

MacLeod: I don't think you have any control over that. You just do your work. The main thing is the work. A word endures somehow. if it's good enough. Pm very pleased that this work travels so well and is read by people who've "ever been to Cape Breton — anv more than I was in Georgia or Mississippi when I first read Faulkner or Flannery O'Connor. I think that if you look at Canadian literature seriously, you see that it all comes out of certain regions, but coming out of certain regions it's able to make universal statements. T.S. Eliot says in *The Four Quartets* that home is where we start from.

I'm always scared that someone will classify me as "the voice of Cape Breton." I would not be that pompous. Because you always find out that you don't represent as many people as you thought. I write about what affects me in an emotional way; that is still true of that place. I think of it as a "landscape of the heart," to use Elizabeth Spencer's phrase.

EIC: You *don't want to be called the voice of Cape Breton, but them is in your work* some *attempt to express the nature of the place.*

MacLeod: I express what I see. but I would not want to have a T-shirt that said. "The Voice of Cape Breton." I write about what I want to write about, which I think is a good way to write. I think of that material almost as you think of someone you love. IF I were Free to spend all my time with someone, who would I spend it with? That material is who — or what — I want to spend my time with. What's happened over the years is I've come to think of it as being more worthwhile — this is as good a way to spend your life as any other. Why not do it? Alice Munro has said about her own work, "Everything I do is an offering, and people can take from it v/hat they wish." That's all I can do, is put it out as well as I possibly can. That's all you can do. ❑

LETTERS

Our misguided reviewers

REGARDLESS OF ANY credentials Joel Yanofsky may bring to his reviewing, bis complaints about Bii Percy's style (June July) read like those of an illiterate. Some of what he says is Fair enough. A Model *Lover*, Percy's short-story collection from some 35 years of writing. is indeed uneven. Any writer who has remained even since 19.50 bad best be doing Harlequin romances. But "inaccessible"? This reviewer's cliché, invented to describe contemporary poetry, fits about as well as I-luck Finn's trousers. Percy is one of the most lucid, straightforward (and literate) writers in Canada.

I suspect that Yanofsky is the victim of speed-reading, a technique useful for textbooks but Fatal when applied to poetry or imagistic prose. Trying to tear the guts out of Percy's book in an hour or so, he would. naturally, stumble aver paragraphs that are perfectly clear, but that are designed for sound and image, as well as for "information transfer," and that consequently do not lend themselves to being read at 500 words a minute.

When Percy writes in dialect, Yanofsky likes him well enough. When he writes in his own voice he is "dense," "pretentious," and "virtually unreadable." IF Yanofsky bad been reading at the pace of spoken language, he might have added an even more damning criticism: Such "self-indulgent" pieces as "Reflections" and "Shadows" often Fall into stretches of iambic pentameters. Yanofsky should look up those words in his dictionary (if be has a dictionary).

And perhaps you should instruct your reviewers to stop calling writing "self-indulgent." Shakespeare's great monologues are the most self-indulgent things ever written.

Harold Horwood
Annapolis Royal, N.S.

IS THERE AN award for the worst book review of 1986? If so, may I nominate Mordechai Ben-Dat's review of Michael Bradley's polemic on the NDP. *Crisis* of *Clarity* (April)?

To write a bad review one must show evidence of not having read the book properly. Ben-Dat fulfils this requirement admirably, falling to record the thesis of the book correctly. It is not true. as Ben-Dat thinks, that the NDP's difficulties begin and end with its alliance with labour. Bradley does perceive problems here (and give him some credit — this is more than can be said For some New Democrats). but this is just *one* of his points.

Instead the actual thesis is referred to on the book's dust-jacket. It's that the NDP's problems stem from "the philosophical schism between humanist motivation and ideological motivation." As Ben-Dat seems dimly aware, Bradley favours humanist motivation, which he sees as epitomized by Tommy Douglas, while ideological motivation is reflected in David Lewis. Though Bradley's case does indeed lack "objectivity," the significance of this tension (which is also a farm-labour and west-east division) is worth assessing. A competent reviewer would give this at least a sentence, not that Ben-Dat's opinion would he worth much.

Nor does Ben-Dat adequately acknowledge the case for the NDP disaffiliating from labour, even though this subject is intimately related to what he thinks the book's thesis is. Bradley's advocacy of this may well be mistaken, but he is right to note problems with the party image and the uneven commitment of unions.

Instead of addressing substantive issues, Ben-Dat wastes space criticizing the relatively minor Flaws of Bradley's irrelevant digressions into areas like sociobiology and bis inaccurate references to Lewis as a Marxist. (But where are the other misleading theories that Ben-Dat says this is only an "example" of?)

Ben-Dat might have noticed Bradley's limited research. His footnotes show that he relies very heavily on Doris Shackleton's *Tommy Douglas* and David Lewis's The Good *Fight*.

Your reviewer *masters the* art of the bad review with subtlety. *Crisis of Clarity is a* bad hook, but instead of crudely praising it as a good book, he makes it out as having no interest at all.

Ben-Dat is right that the title, *Crisis of Clarity*, is "quite apt." But I can't resist pointing out the irony that his review suffers from the same problem.

Christopher Page
Victoria

THE SOCIALIST MENACE

AS A SUBSCRIBER to *Books in Canada,* I always look forward to each issue and usually read it From cow to cover. And, unlike *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, I even keep copies For future reference. However, please don't join these other Canadian magazines with the general presumption that all B.C. Social Credit supporters are either non-intellectual or anti-education. Believe me, not all thinking people in this province support the socialists. Although I consider myself to be a supporter of the arts — including books and a Canadian culture — I have generally been quite pleased with the government of Bill Bennett.

Two reviews in your June-July issue dealing with books on education and B.C. politics are so outrageously pro-socialist that I must question your reviewer's motives. In the case of the book about Bill Bennett by Allen Garr, we are never told that Garr has been a long-time proponent of the socialists or that he has never written anything favourable to the Social Credit government. Yes, it is truly "unashamedly one-sided" as your reviewer notes, but why not let the review stand alone without inserting all kinds of anti-Socred fluff.

I enjoy *Books in Canada* and appreciate the articles and reviews very much. But, please: don't eater into the realm of politic4 to the point of alienating readers who hold differing views.

Simon J. Gibson
Clearbrook, B.C.

FORGETTABLE PROSE

THE SHORT STORY "To Be Forgotten" by Norman Levine (May) is as exciting as eating a boa of soda crackers for dinner. An anniversary treat? shame.

However, I did like the title.

Basil Zarov
Toronto

THIRD IMPRESSIONS

IT IS NECESSARY *to* put the record straight. *Legacies, Legends and Lies,* (March) *is* the third, not the second, in my oral history trilogy Of the Ottawa Valley. The first, Some *of the Stories I Told You Were True, now in its fourth* edition, was slanted toward the lumbering sags in the Valley. The second, *Laughing All the Way Home, now* in its second edition, is a collection of the unique humour of the Valley, and was on the short list (six) for the Stephen Leacock Award last year. The third, Legacies, *Legends and Lies, now* in its second edition, is actually the other half of the *Laughing All the Way Home* manuscript; it was too much for Deneau to handle la one volume. *Legacies, Legends and Lies* this year was on the short list (six) for the Ottawa *Citizen Book Award* and won the first *Ottawa-Carleton* Literary Award.

Joan Finnigan
Ottawa

MAC ATTACK

I WAS PLEASED to review the George Whalley collection (June-July), but what whey-faced loon let by the misspelling of my name? Really! This may be a milestone review. Think of the nightmare for future bibliographers!

R.L. McDougall
Department of English
Carleton University
Ottawa

THE LAST WORD

I'M SORRY TO have to take up space in your letters column for such a small matter, but I have to settle the dispute between Gwendolyn MacEwen and Grant Shilling regarding the signs I've worn while selling my books in public. Shilling said in his article in the March issue that I'd worn a sign saying "WORLD'S GREATEST AUTHOR." The fact is I never wore such a sign and never would. After the article appeared, I wrote to Shilling to inform him that this attribution was erroneous and to ask him please to retract it. I'm disappointed that he failed to do so, and I'm truly baffled that after having been set straight by me, he would have the temerity to contradict MacEwen and hold to his error.

Crad Kilodney
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

Goodbye Harold, Good Luck, by Audrey Thomas, Penguin. As this new collection shows, Thomas, like Alice Munro and Mavis Gallant, is at her best working within the boundaries of the short story. She creates a fiction that is subtle and fragile, made up of hard choices and vivid moments.

NON-FICTION

***Studies in Literature and the Humanities,* by George Whalley, edited by Brian Crick and John Ferns, McGill-Queen's University Press. These 11 essays suggest that Whalley, though overshadowed in his lifetime by the catchier teachings of Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye, may yet emerge as Canada's most persuasive and enduring critical theorist of the 20th century.**

POETRY

Immune to Gravity, by Mary di Michele, McClelland & Stewart. With impressive skill, di Michele turns her hand to a range of ideas and emotions, accompanied by vividly physical images, that are often both contemporary and timeless.

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-Determination Off a Land Base, by John Weinstein, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.
Aboriginal Self-Government and Education in Canada, by Jerry Paquette, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.
All the Polarities, by Philip Stratford, ECW Press.
The Amazing Leguma, by Alice Jenner, Cover to Cover.
Amway: The Cult of Free Enterprise, by Steve Butterfield, Black Rose Books.
Anne: La Maison aux pignons verts, by Lucy Maude Montgomery, translated by Henri-Dominique Paratte, Ragweed Press.
The Art of Angling, by Tiny Bennett, revised and updated Gordon Pyzer, illustrated by Glen Loates.
Beeding Into Heaven, by Steve Noyes, Turnstone Press.
Beek on Tuesday, by David Gilmour, Couch House.
Bieker's Secret, by Julia Aitken, Grosvenor House Press.
The Bible and the Psyche: Individuation Symbolism in the O.T. Testament, by Edward F. Edinger, Inner City Books.
Bice Lake & Rocky Shore: A History of Children's Camping in Ontario, Natural Heritage/Natural History.
Business-Government Relations in Canada, by W.T. Stanbury, Methuen.
The Butterfly Plague, by Timothy Findley, Penguin.
Cajun-Creole Cooking, by Terry Thompson, HP Books.
Canada, What's Left?, edited by John Richards and Don Kerr, NeWest Press.
Canadian Guide to Personal Financial Management, by Mary Turner, Daniel Le Rossignol, *et al.* Prentice-Hall.
The Canadian Rockies Bicycling Guide, by Gail Helgason & John Dodd, Lone Pine Publishers.
Candy From Strangers, by Diana Hartog, Couch House Press.
The Carcerfree Life, by Gillian Hemstock and Frank McEnaney, Mosaic Press.

CANWIT NO. 113

WITH ALL THE celebrities writing books about grooming and fitness, we suppose it was inevitable. At any rate, word has just reached us that the fall list of one publishing house will include *The Big* Girl's *Beauty Book*, by Sarah Ferguson. Other titles rumoured (but difficult to confirm) include *Chin-*Ups: Brian *Mulroney's Guide to Personal Fitness and Poor People: A Celebration, by* Peter C. Newman. contestants are invited to propose titles for other books in which prominent Canadians try to make the best of their weak spots. The prize is $23. Deadline: October I. Address: CanWit No. 113, *Books* in *Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9.

Results of CanWit No. 111

OUR REQUEST FOR translations of masculinist words and phrases into cumbersome non-sexist terms prompted a variety of responses. the rudest of which was the suggestion that manhole covers be henceforth known as diaphragms. The winner is Paul Denham of Saskatoon for a list of neutered book titles that includes:

- ☐ *Personfield Park*
- ☐ *Playperson of the Western World*
- ☐ *All the Monarch's Persons*
- ☐ *Death of a Salesperson*
- ☐ *St. Urbain's Jockey*

Honourable mentions:

All the reigning sovereign's horses and all the reigning sovereign's servants (both military and civilian, female as well as male) couldn't put Humpty together again.

— David Murray, Toronto

- ☐ *Menstruate:* individualstruate
- ☐ *Menopause:* individualpause
- ☐ *Hymn:* individualmn

— Terrence Keough, Ottawa

The Carpenter of Dreams, by W.D. Valgardson, Skaldhus Press.
Changes of State, by Gary Geddes, Coteau Books.
The Character of Class Struggle, edited by Bryan D. Palmer, M & S.
A Clear Head in Tempestuous Times, edited by Francis Hollohan and Melvin Baker, Harry Cuff Publications.
The Country of Acadia, by Melvin Gallant, translated by Elliot Shek, Simon & Pierre.
Crabtz, by William Bell, Irwin.
The Crime and the Crystal, by Elizabeth Ferrars, Totem.
Cultured Mussel Cookbook, by Julie V. Watson, Four East Publications.
Cut Flowers, illustrated by Mary Close, Prentice-Hall.
Dangerous Waters, by David Philpott, M & S.
Death in the Old Country, by Eric Wright, Totem.
The Devil Is Innocent, by H. Gordon Green, Harvest House.
Diplomatic Passport, by Charles Ritchie, Macmillan.
Dog Training for Law Enforcement, by R.S. Eden, Detselig.
Double Day Double Bind, by Charlene Gannagé, Women's Press.
Drawings from the Newborn, by Heather Spears, Ben-Simon Publications.
Dream and Wonder, by Elsa Radskopp, Kindred Press.
Droit et pouvoir, Pouvoirs du droit, edited by Guy Rocher and Robert Vandycke, Les Press de l'Universite de Montreal.
Echocmos, A Bilingual Collection, by Heidi Bourbaoui, Mosaic Press.
Economic Consequences of Transition, by Brian Hall, Nisbet House.
Elanth, by Harold Rhenisch, Sono Nis Press.
Encombs, by Tony Cosier, Moonstone Press.
Entrusted to My Care, by Grant MacEwen, Prairie Books.
Equestrian Sculpture, by Ralph Sketch, NC Press.
Escape From Camelot, by John Melady, Macmillan.
Ethical Reflections on the Post-Tranxition Economy, by Brian Hall, Nisbet House.
Everything Happens At Once, by Yvonne Trainer, Goose Lane Editions.
Excerpts from the Real World, by Robert Kroetsch, Oolichan Books.
Fallacies of Creationism, by Willard Young, Detselig.
The Fat Woman Measures Up, by C.M. Donald, Ragweed.
The 5th Season, by Paul-Marie Lapointe, translated by D.G. Jones, Exile Editions.
Financing Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada, by Marc Malone, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.
The First Family Car, by Nan Doerksen, Kindred Press.
Ford: The Men and the Machine, by Robert Lacey, M & S.
Forgotten Soldiers, by Fred Gaffen, Theytus Books.
Frank H. Underhill, Intellectual Provocateur, by R. Douglas Francis, University of Toronto Press.
Frogs & Other Stories, by Diane Schoemperlen, Quarry Press.
From the Fifteenth District, by Mavis Gallant, Macmillan.
A Gathering of Ghosts, by Roy Lewis, Totem.
Gentlemen and Jesuits, by Elizabeth Jones, U of T Press.
George Meredith's Politics, by James S. Stone, P.D. Meany Publishers.
Goin' to the Ice, by Michael Harrington, Harry Cuff Publications.
The Great Escape? An Examination of North-South Tourism, by B. Philip English, The North-South Institute.
Grizzly Country, by Andy Russell, Douglas & McIntyre.
Hannah, by Robina Salter, M & S.
Hard Money, by Michael M. Thomas, Penguin.
Heart Politics, by Fran Peavy *et al.*, Black Rose Books.
A Hinge of Spring, by Patience Wheatley, Goose Lane Editions.
The Honeymoon Festival, by Marian Engel, Penguin.
Housebroken, by Leona Gom, NeWest Press.
Huntsville: Pictures from the Past, by the Research Committee of the Muskoka Pioneer Village, Boston Mills Press.
I'll Stop if You Will, by Wallace Ryan, Xx Press.
Implosion: An Analysis of the Growth of the Federal Public Service in Canada (1945-1935), by Nicole Morgan, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
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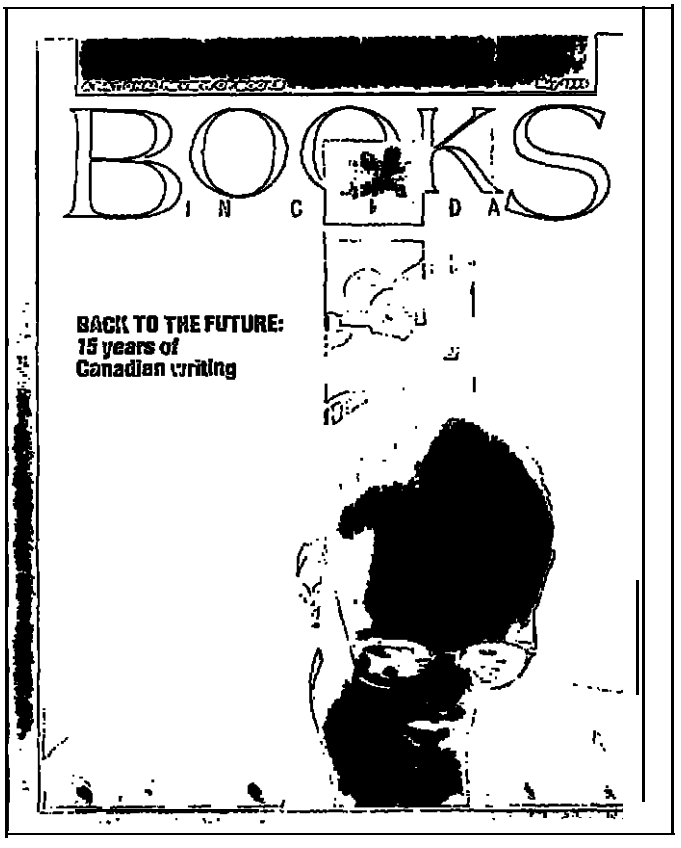

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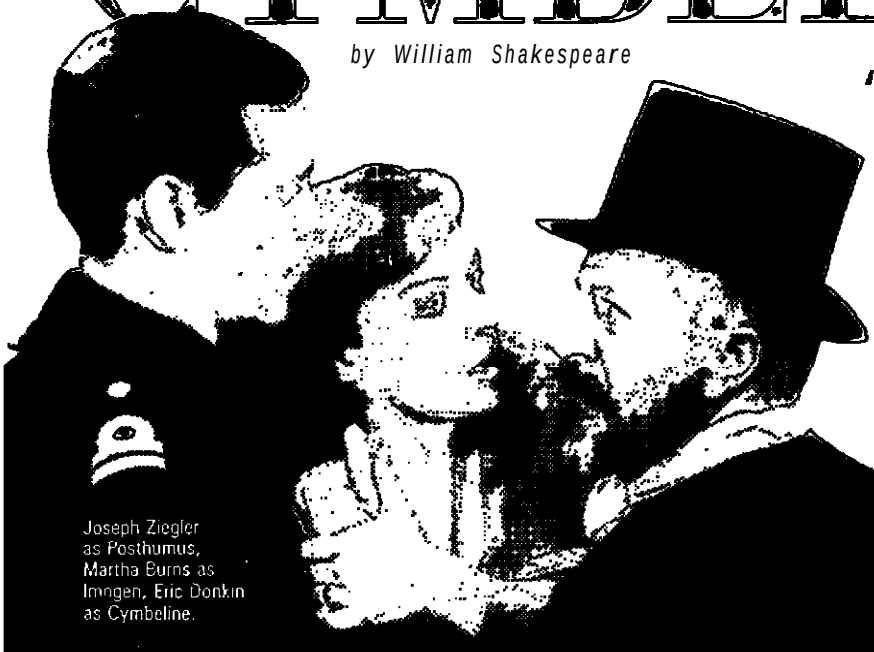

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