

BOOKS *in* CANADA

INTRODUCTORY EDITION

MAY 1971

ROBERTSON DAVIES *by Douglas Marshall*
PAUL KANE *as seen by Al Purdy*
SMALL PRESSES *by Randall Ware*
A LOOK AT CANADIAN SHORT STORIES:
David Helwig

FROM THE MYSTERIOUS EAST: *Alden Nowlan*
WORKING PEOPLE *reviewed by Hugh Garner*
BI-FOCUS ON PIERRE VALLIERES
by C. Alexander Brown and Richard Bebout

A MAJOR CANADIAN NOVEL

SAINT URBAIN'S HORSEMAN

Mordecai Richler; McClelland & Stewart; cloth \$7.95;
424 pages; DDS F.

by David Godfrey

THERE IS ALWAYS a strange field of forces at work in Richler's fiction: fearsome history, ghetto laughter, the sex of clowns, Talmudic analysis, a suspicion of connection between foul orifices and man's justice worthy of Luther, the myths of romantic paranoia. And other bombardments. Like one of those absurdly diverse baseball teams which used to batter their way out of the Cooksville brickyard in the early 1950s; a Kovalick on first base, two gum-chewing, perpetual-mouth-movement Abruzzi brothers in the field, a fat Tradak behind the plate, the town doctor's son the warm-up pitcher for Johnny Palumbo, and at least four other languages of dis-possession melting in sweet curses into the air above the Cooksville Fair Grounds. When they came up against the Brampton farmers it was like watching a flock of clowns struggling against a machinery of sun-burnt robots. A flock of clowns, acrobats and lion-tamers: with a far-distant vision of greatness. Or acceptance. Would they ever make it? Unknown wars were always present, drifting in from the far rail of the race track to disrupt and dismay. Only the mocking shouts: *D-peeess!* ever united them. If they won, they won in a fury. Losing was the inevitability of mistakes and inner angers. They flock disintegrating into a sunlit mirroring of century-old hatreds.

The main reason for the happy tension which has awaited *St. Urbain's Horseman* has been the expectation that this time Richler finally was going to roll it all together. We were



photograph courtesy McClelland & Stewart

going to get that new, near-mythic intensity of *Cocksure*, without losing the historical validity of *The Acrobats*, without losing one drop of the juicy vitality of *Duddy Kravitz*, without sacrificing any of the psychological realism of *Smaller Hero*, without missing any of the barbed, anti-Canadian chuckles of *Atuk*.

And there are many moments when the expectation is fulfilled. Jacob Hersh is the closest that Richler has ever come to putting himself into a novel. Jacob Hersh, yes that old protester for lower chocolate bar prices, seems to possess all of Richler's own bitter wit, confusion of adolescent sex dreams, confession of fears of mortality, dreams of anti-Nazi heroics, distrust of Jewishness and of anti-Jewishness, and love of ironies both major and minor.

The novel functions mainly as a sounding board for Jacob's confusions, memories and outbursts. The range of his personality stretches to replace that net of existential absurdity and decaying Nazi monsterism which held diversity together in *The Acrobats*. His love affair with his wife Nancy ties together much of that strange admiration for Pro-

testantism which ironically underlies *Cocksure*. But it is in the strange tension between Harry Stein and Joey Hersh that the secret of Jacob Hersh lies — and, the success of the novel. You rarely see Joey Hersh and you hear almost too much of Harry Stein, but they are the beast and angel of Jacob's being — the beast who shouts for justice and the angel who's peddling contraband from the clouds. Stein is a Gully Jimson out of Franz Fanon, driven by his observance of the money games of the rich into a greedy and destructive yet Swiftian liberation of his sexual hollerings. And Jacob Hersh recognizes himself in Stein even as he denies (all of? part of?) Stein's actualities. Joey is his dream model, the Wonderboy who is never absent from the later Richler fiction. But this time the battle is clearer. Joey Hersh represents the counterforce to success and security, the restless, aggressive, honourable instinct within Judaism and within man.

Although he lives in a castle of security more bourgeois than Uncle Abe's and merely dreams of *The Horseman* approaching the retreat of Dr. Mengele in vengeance, although he accepts Miss Loebner's sweet hand upon his cock as unprotestingly as his own suspended sentence while Stein receives seven years, Jacob Hersh is heroic in that he does battle for Joey's myth against Uncle Abe's cynically realistic disclosures, and in that he accepts, in fear, Stein's ultimate vengeance. He is to Stein as Mengele is to *The Horseman*.

No one has yet clearly delineated the range of similarities between Richler and MacLennan: both teeter on the edge of paranoia in their search for the roots of evil, for historic and haphazard expressions of evil; both lust after explanations and cannot resist pulling author and reader out of the flow of event and into the clinic of analysis; both appear tormented, even possessed by a harsher, vastly more elemental past which they cannot quite understand, but must admit as a major reality; both write awkwardly of women.

In the battle which broods over Canadian fiction, the battle between starers and myth stealers, both MacLennan and Richler are clearly on the side of the starers. Life is out there and, damn it, they have shed too much blood learning to look at it — and fear it — to package it all up in some Frye & Co. cellophane. There are hints in *St. Urbain's Horseman* though, that Richler has been tempted. The search for Joey

in America, Germany, Israel and the Montreal ghetto bears worrisome resemblance to the nephew-uncle search in *The Second Scroll*, and Richler mentions once too often the definition of golem in close proximity to Joey's name. But not to worry, doctors. Myth floats uneasily in this world of hard-staring and will soon dissipate. *St. Urbain's Horseman* is not the great Canadian novel after all, just another damn fine one.

Virtues balance weaknesses. Richler cannot suspend his own male, tormented, assertive Ishmaelic personality long enough to really penetrate the souls of characters other than those who belong to his own brotherhood; but who cares really, when we see that personality in full mock-vital flowering. *Duddy Kravitz* must remain the major Richler novel after all, but the whole team is somehow made more important by the addition of Joey Jacob Harry Hersh. As in MacLennan, the opus becomes more important than any individual work. The final patterns must be made by the reader, plunging into delights, quick-trotting through emotion-tinged definitions, recoiling from raw sociology. The life is there: raw, vital. Take it. Add your own spices and deodorants.

"The CBC unit coming out here next week is only pretending to be shooting something called Freedom's Defenders. How many air women have you got stationed on the base?"

Waterman appeared perplexed.

"Is it classified?"

"Maybe a hundred."

"When the CBC unit arrives you keep close tabs on them. The truth is they're really putting together a film on lesbians in the armed services. You'd better believe it, Waterman."

Bodies were gnawed by rats, as were unconscious women. The women were plagued by lice.

"Then Mengele came. He was the first one to rid the entire women's camp of lice. He simply had the entire block gassed. Then he disinfected the block."

"Mengele cannot have been there all the time."

"In my opinion always, Night and day."

If God weren't dead, it would be necessary to hang Him.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Dave Godfrey is a man of many parts. He is a lecturer at Trinity College at the University of Toronto and one of the founders of new press, one of the most exciting and successful of the new Canadian publishers. His novel, *The New Ancestors*, recently won the Governor-General's Award.

MORDECAI RICHLER ON WRITING

The following comments by Mordecai Richler are taken from the series *Canadian Writers On Tape*, prepared by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The full set of six half-hour conversations (with Richler, Sinclair Ross, Margaret Laurence, Hugh MacLennan, Morley Callaghan and Hugh Garner) are available from OISE at \$18 for a full cassette set. Order from: Publication Sales, OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto 5. Quote catalogue number: 44150045.

□ "I think certain doors of perception close after 20 and so writers continue to mine the experiences they had before they became self-conscious and cunning about experience. Once you've become a writer, you seem to function on two levels. Things happen to you and things are useful to you at the same time."

□ "One keeps dredging bad experience up. There's a certain amount of vengeance connected with writing and one does, on the coarsest level, get even with the world for slights imaginary or real."

□ "There have been two strands to my fiction. I've written several novels of character with certain satirical content. After that . . . I went off into satire. With *Cocksure* I went about as far as I could go with satire. And then I've spent years trying to fuse these two strands, the novel of character and my satirical bent, into one lone complex work, which is what I've just finished now. That's *St. Urbain's Horseman*, which I've been working on for five years.

□ "Canada 20 years ago was not what it is now. The standards were really picaresque. The kind of people who were reviewing books or writing about books were embarrassing. The kind of books that were coming out were embarrassing."

□ "Right now, this country is shaking with nationalist feeling: some of it good, some of it bad. Now, I'm fundamentally for this and I would like this country not to fragment or become part of the United States. But the dark underside of this kind of nationalism is that Canadian writing — or painting or whatever — is pushed too far in the yearning to have a culture of our own. We can — and have in the past — made too much of writers not good enough. This works another way in that when one visits Montreal and Toronto, there are still a number of writers who feel they're not known in New York or London because there's some internal conspiracy against Canada. Well, the truth is, no one gives a damn, one way or the other. If you've written a good novel set in Pittsburgh or Montreal, they're equally acceptable. Probably Montreal is inherently more interesting. There's no built-in prejudice against Canadian writers abroad."

□ "Fundamentally, all writing is about the same thing: it's about dying, about the brief flicker of time we have here, and the frustrations that creates."

write in

When in July we go into full national and public distribution, the centre pages of *Books in Canada*, under the above title, will be reserved for letters to the Editor on any aspect of publishing, books, writing and criticism. We hope that anyone anywhere who has anything pertinent to say will put it on paper and mail it to: WRITE-IN, *Books in Canada*, 6 Charles St. East, Suite 219, Toronto, Ontario. As far as space and the law allows we will do our best to print it. In this edition, since obviously we have no letters to publish, we have assembled an anthology of statements relating to our magazine in particular and book-reviewing generally. The Editor.

"... In Canada the media, at all levels, seem reluctant to treat news of authors and books as being genuinely newsworthy. Despite the protestations of the newspaper, magazine, TV and radio officials contacted by Val Clery for his recent report on book reviewing in Canada, it seems clear from the actions of these men that in most cases they regard books as being of little importance to their readers or their viewers. In this context it is worth noting that publishers of a Toronto magazine who solemnly assured Mr. Clery of the great importance they placed on their book review section dropped the section altogether a few months later..."

-From brief to Royal Commission on Book Publishing by Doubleday Publishers of Toronto

"... This conference recognizes that the absence of a national book review in Canada is a serious deficiency in the cultural life of this country. This deprives the author of the critical appraisal of his work before a national audience which would encourage higher

standards of writing. This situation limits national awareness of the issues and perspectives which various regions and specific interest groups wish to communicate to a larger audience. Finally, this inhibits the sale of Canadian books by virtue of the fragmented and imperfect information on which Canadian book buyers, including librarians, must rely..."

-From Workshop Report to Conference On Publishing In Canada

"Insects sting, not in malice, but because they want to live. It is the same with critics: they desire our blood, not our pain."

-Nietzsche

"... Books of our own... are the essential component of our national identity. The Canadian story is passed from generation to generation between the covers of our books. Our creative writers explore the distinctive interplay between the human spirit and the Canadian environment. Our political, social and economic issues are thrashed out in the pages of our books. For all these reasons we need "books of our own." We can neither expect, nor rely upon, the foreigners to publish these books for us. If Canada is to survive as something more than a geographical expression, we *must* establish a climate in which a healthy and competitive book publishing industry can flourish..."

-Brief to Royal Commission by Peter Martin Associates, Publishers, Toronto

"... Many publishers feel that a subsidized, high-quality (but not too high-brow) critical weekly or monthly book review, to appear in both languages, would help create an awareness among librarians and the public of what is being written in Canada. Not all publishers are equally sure that they would be able to support such a magazine by advertising. I can only say that the process of giving a hand requires a little muscle from both parties concerned..."

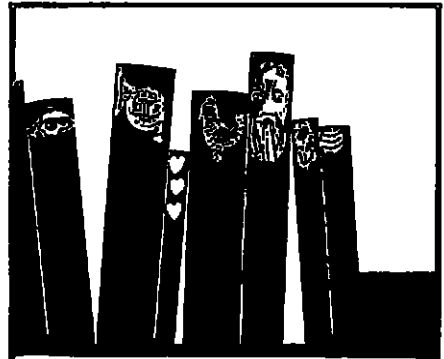
Speech delivered by Hugh Faulkner, MP, to Conference On Publishing in Canada

"Everything that is written merely to please the author is worthless."

Voltaire

"A book is a mirror: if an ass peers into it, you can't expect an apostle to look out."

-Georg Christoph Lichtenberg



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THE MERLIN OF MASSEY COLLEGE

BOOKS IN CANADA TALKS WITH ROBERTSON DAVIES

by Douglas Marshall

ONE CAN'T HELP envying Robertson Davies. There he sits at 57, a man in his prime and of his time, part Merlin ("The artist is a magician in that he makes something out of nothing") and part hard-headed word merchant ("Writers can't live on the smell of flowers; not only should they get money, but they should get as much money as they or their agents can secure"). He plays the slightly theatrical Master of Massey College and the common marketplace story-teller with equal relish. He basks simultaneously in the creature comforts of recreated Oxbridge and the less material comforts of literary fame. As he toys harmlessly with his mandarin paperknife, the points he makes cut ruthlessly through to the heart of what's wrong with Canadian writing. He has the assurance of the man who practises as well as teaches and practises as well as anybody else in the country. He has the best of both worlds and words.

Behind him are 20 years as a newspaperman, 10 years as a professor of English at the University of Toronto, four novels and 15 other assorted works of fiction, drama and criticism. His latest novel, *Fifth Business*, (Macmillan, \$6.95) is a very good book indeed. It is about magic and Original Sin and rural Ontario and several other well-juggled themes and it earned international praise on a scale that can only be described as lavish. The Paris edition of the New York *Herald-Tribune* called it "one of the best novels of this or any other year." The New York *Times* found it "a marvellously enigmatic novel — elegantly written and driven by irresistible narrative force." *Time* observed that Davies' work "deserves to be better known" and even a few Canadian critics confessed themselves impressed.

Gordon Sinclair, for instance, made a rare voyage of discovery into literature and returned to announce that *Fifth Business* was "perhaps the great Canadian novel." (Sinclair was undoubtedly also impressed by the fact that *Fifth Business* is big business by Canadian terms; more than 15,000 copies had been sold in the United States and Canada by April, the paperback rights went for \$29,000 and there have been three nibbles from film companies.)

The trouble is, we seem to have discovered not just one great Canadian novelist but half a dozen of them — all in the same man. Reviewers variously describe Davies as another Dickens, another Thomas Mann, another Evelyn Waugh, another John-Fowles, another Henry James and another C. P. Snow. While one Robertson Davies is mildly flattered, another of him is furious:

"Of course, everybody with a strong narrative style is compared with Dickens and I'm grateful to be compared with Thomas Mann. But I wish to God I didn't always have to be somebody else. I think by this time I'm really old enough to

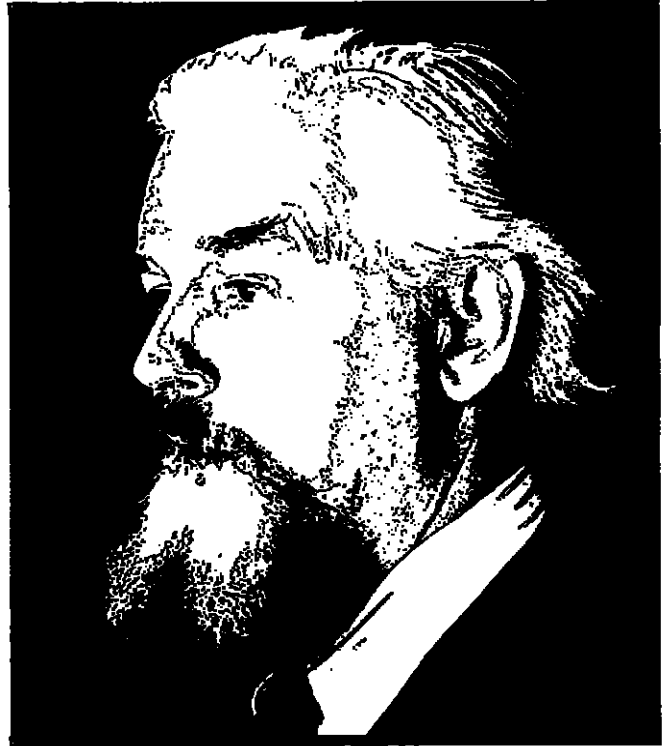


Photo by J. Jensen

be me and if the critics don't know who I am, they might as well say so. We no longer have that absurd business in music where every girl who can sing is called the Canadian Callas. Why should we still have it in literature? It's awfully offensive to be a two-bit or road-company something else. It's very Canadian, this notion that we have no reality except in relation to some other standard."

One of the other problems that has always plagued the Canadian book world, Davies says, is that it's so small. Publishers double as novelists and novelists as critics: "This is a very bad practice because there's always a certain amount of infighting. If we're going to establish anything serious, people have to start declaring themselves as either writers or publishers. They can't wear too many hats.

"Finally, Canadian criticism must stop being so dismissive. We're too quick to decide whether somebody's any good or not. We take the attitude that a writer is through forever if he misses once. If every Canadian novelist had some sort of cutoff applied to him when he happened to write a book that wasn't quite as good as the previous one, there wouldn't be many of us left.

Better standards of criticism, however, are relatively easy to achieve compared with what Davies really wants for Canadian writers: "What I want I'm not going to get. That is, more readers in Canada, more people who actually buy books and are interested in them.

"A while ago I met a woman at a party who was wearing what my wife told me was the most superb mink coat that she'd ever seen in her life. This woman said, 'Oh Mr. Davies, I'm so looking forward to reading your book but you know the list in my library is so long that I don't know when I'm going to get it.' You run into that all over the place. I was told by a Canadian publisher that Canadians hate to buy

continued on page 28

BOOKS *in* CANADA

EDITORIAL

BOOKS IN CANADA is a radical magazine. By radical we mean going to the roots, not projecting political fantasies. The root of Canada's current publishing crisis lies in the question: are Canadians reading Canadian books? Spraying a million dollars worth of government aid on the uppermost branches (and McClelland & Stewart are due that eminence) may temporarily ease their blight, but unless a lot of it filters down to the vital point of contact between books and readers, it will weather pointlessly away. Publishing books, even the finest of Canadian books, must go beyond merely editing and printing them. And most Canadian readers are either poorly informed or totally uninformed about the Canadian books currently available to them.

Every year the range of Canadian titles published increases. New Canadian publishing houses, depending on a shoestring of nationalist zeal and Canada Council grants rather than on the patronage of foreign publishing (like their established elders), have done much to stimulate new writing in Canada. Nationalism is not enough. Many of these same publishers, by their insufficient grasp of their responsibilities as publishers, have succeeded in disenchanting almost as many new writers as they have encouraged. They inherit from their elders in publishing that fatal wishful belief that the major function of a publisher is producing new titles. Given the obvious facts of Canada's size and the spread of its population, it should be evident to every Canadian publisher that when a new book arrives in his warehouse his work has just begun. And no Canadian writer who has received from his publisher a derisory royalty cheque that indicates for him a readership of hundreds instead of thousands can be blamed for turning his talents towards television, or journalism, or advertising. Or indeed for writing in future with American publishers in mind. What more damaging contempt for a writer can there be than to print his book and condemn it to the obscurity of a warehouse?

The aim of *Books in Canada* is to provide a bridge between Canadian writers and Canadian readers. The arch of that bridge, we realize, must be supported by a book industry that has

been weakened by distrust and dissension. Publishers and booksellers snipe at each other over which should do what about promoting books; publishers and librarians over the quality of service and the use of wholesalers; and publishers themselves are riven by squabbles about imported books, tariff protection, government aid, and who is most Canadian.

What we feel about some of these questions should be made quite plain. It is our radical position that given information about Canadian books, given a fair evaluation of them and access to them, Canadian readers will buy and read them; that given fair critical attention and wider sales, Canadian writers will disprove a myth, common even if unspoken in the Canadian book industry, that Canada is somehow unique in its lack of native literary talent; and that from the stimulus of such interplay a Canadian literature will mature which can not only meet the fair competition of imported books but gain and fertilize itself from that challenge.

We are not deceiving ourselves with any belief that *Books in Canada* can alone achieve any miracles of regeneration. Even with the wholehearted support of every publisher, bookseller and librarian in the country, we can only hope to initiate some kind of chain reaction. We know that books, and even some Canadian books, are being well and extensively reviewed in a few of the larger centres of Canadian population, but we sense that that response is so sporadic as to produce in perilous murage before publishers the belief that

their books are gaining national attention. It is our aim to bring every worthwhile Canadian book to the attention of readers wherever there is a library or a book-store, and honestly to point to its virtues and its faults in relation to other Canadian books and even to other imported books of its kind. In 1967 we Canadians discovered our identity. In the 1970s our national hunger seems to be to know ourselves and our society better. Books, our own books, remain the most accurate record and reflection of what kind of people we really are. We need to know that if we are to persist. This decade may be the last chance: that is why *Books in Canada*, however small a part it may play, has gone to press.

THIS EDITION OF *Books in Canada* is a means of introducing ourselves to the Canadian publishers whom we hope will support us by promptly and comprehensively servicing our editorial needs and by advertising with us; to the booksellers and librarians whom we hope will put us in touch with all Canadians who buy and read books; and to those colleagues in newspapers, magazines, television and radio who review and inform about books (who we hope will welcome us). Conceived in some passion, born in haste, we feel ourselves essentially Canadian in being somewhat short still of our potential. We have yet to develop the ease of style, the range of reviewers, and the trans-Canadian reach to which we aspire. By July, we hope to be more ourselves. Meanwhile we hope to be gratified by your forbearance, encouraged by your reaction, heartened by your advice, and reinforced by your subscriptions and purchases of space. To all those who have already bestowed on us one or more of those favours — our thanks.

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ET TU GEORGE ANTHONY?

THE POSTER THAT you see reproduced on this page was sent out in the third week of April by the Toronto *Telegram* to announce the appointment of their new book page editor, George Anthony. It says that he "hobnobs" with seven of America's best-selling but critically disparaged authors. He is sitting on a pile of some forty-three American books. He is reading *The Sensuous Man*, a book which you don't have to be a member of Women's Lib to know is decidedly sexist and certainly not the kind of book that we expect our Saturday book pages to worry over in their limited space. The poster was sent to many of the Canadian publishing houses in Toronto.

Canadian publishers, big and small, find it exceedingly difficult to promote and sell their books. The very size of the country makes it virtually impossible to mount and sustain any kind of promotion that will show a significant effect on sales. Books produced for special interests, such as particular geographical areas, not only require intensive promotion in those areas but also need the press and other media to realize that by reviewing and otherwise pitching for those books, they are not only helping the publisher but are also doing the people a favour by bringing these books to their attention.

It is impossible to believe that Canadian books are inferior to any other books. Certain books may be badly written or boring, but there are plenty of books written by people everywhere like that. The only advantage that the Canadian book has is its relevance. I think that it is safe to assume that Canadians increasingly realize that they are part of a unique experience. The country is not so much in a state of being as it is in a state of becoming. And we need our literature, as well as all the arts, to help us interpret our experience. We need to promote our literature in order to be sure that everyone knows of its existence.

The *Telegram's* unfortunate promotion piece is not, I'm sure, totally the fault of George Anthony. He has been shunted from the newspaper's travel section to the book page without having been apprised of the delicate situation in Canadian publishing. Several publishers have been in contact with him, and I am sure that his awareness of the

Canadian publishing scene is rapidly growing more acute. John Bassett, publisher of the *Telegram*, was surely not the instrument of this *faux pas*. Because he is part-owner of Toronto's Channel 9 and certainly well aware of the new CRTC rulings, he perhaps better than most of us, appreciates the perils of being a media tycoon in Canada at this time. No one could think that this was, in any way, a deliberate affront to the Canadian publishers.

The total sales in Canada of the most recent books by the seven American authors amounts to less than the sales of the last Pierre Berton book. Berton's book sold about 65,000 copies. George Anthony doesn't hobnob with Pierre Berton. In the United States a publisher needs to sell about 5,000 copies of a book to break even. In our country, one-tenth the size of the U.S., we need to sell about 2,000 to stay in the black. Simple mathematics tells us that selling books in Canada has to be more difficult. Is it any wonder that Canadian publishers beat their heads against the wall when they see valuable newspaper space being devoted to the latest imports?

Small publishers assured me that they regularly sent review copies and other promotional pieces to the newspapers. The search for publicity is not what is in question.

A newspaper publisher might counter with the argument that, by reviewing an inordinate amount of imported books, they are merely giving the public what they want. The publicity pouring over the horde most surely does create a market for imported books. Because America has a Vietnam, Canada has a Vietnam consciousness. But, just as surely as Vietnam pushes Canadian issues like Indian ghettos or the pillaging of our resources by foreign interests to the back pages of our newspapers, so does the already over-exposed American book push the Canadian book into oblivion. Newspapers have to accept the fact that they are opinion-makers, not just reporters. Val Clery found in his report, *Media and Response*, that the best book page in the country in terms of Canadian content was that of the Toronto *Star*. Yet, they managed to review or notice only about six percent of the Canadian books published annually. Most periodicals en-

This man hobnobs with
Erich Segal, Harold Robbins,
Jacqueline Susann, Allen Drury,
Ayn Rand, Irving Wallace
and Mary McCarthy...

To name just a few. Women of Letters. Last. Anthony
hobnobs with seven of America's best-selling but
critically disparaged authors. The *Telegram's* Book Letter
will be devoted to American authors in the coming Saturday.
The *Telegram's* Book Letter will be devoted to American
authors in the coming Saturday.

Can he hobnob with the new best-selling authors and
not with the old ones? The *Telegram's* Book Letter
will be devoted to American authors in the coming Saturday.

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authors in the coming Saturday. The *Telegram's* Book Letter
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The *Telegram's* Book Letter will be devoted to American
authors in the coming Saturday.

If you're a collector, look at the book page in the
coming Saturday. The *Telegram's* Book Letter will be
devoted to American authors in the coming Saturday.

The Toronto Telegram



joyed figures substantially lower than those of the *Star*. It does not come as a surprise to learn that books are published in this country that people never find out about. It then becomes less surprising to find Canadian publishing houses selling out to foreign interests.

George Anthony went to visit several of the smaller Canadian publishers prior to the issue of his poster. He indicated to them that wonderful things would be forthcoming. We are left to speculate: will he move into a new social sphere where he might "hobnob" with Norman Mailer, William Gass, and Kate Millett, or, horror of horrors, might he find that Canadian writers like Pierre Berton, Farley Mowat, Margaret Laurence, Peter Newman, Leonard Cohen, not only sell more books in this country than do his American friends, but also are willing to hobnob with newspaper critics.

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ECONOMIC FICTIONS

CANADIAN WRITING TODAY

edited by Mordecai Richler;
Penguin: \$2.15.

GREAT CANADIAN SHORT STORIES

edited by Alec Lucas;
Dell: 95 cents.

by David Helwig

HERE ARE TWO anthologies designed, in some sense, to present Canadian writers to other parts of the world, Mordecai Richler doing the editing for Penguin books in England and Alec Lucas for Dell in the United States.

In the introduction to *Canadian Writing Today*, Mordecai Richler says, "The sour truth is just about everybody outside of Canada finds us boring. Immensely boring." There were times, in reading the book, when it seemed to me that Richler has set out to make sure that this state of affairs continued.

Richler is a fine writer of fiction, often an excellent journalist, but it should be clear to anyone who has read much of his criticism that he is a mediocre critic, largely derivative and unthinking. His collection of Canadian writing presents us to the world as consistently middlebrow, hung up on our own climate, geography and history, serious and worthy perhaps, but having only occasional moments in which we understand what art is all about.

It could be argued that this is a fair enough picture, but anyone with a passing knowledge of Canadian poetry can demolish this selection in something under 30 seconds. A bit of Layton, Purdy in the north, a snippet of Atwood, two or three poets from Quebec, and not much more. Nothing to indicate that Canadians are, for whatever reason, great readers of poetry, that a first book of poems may do as well here as a first novel.

Richler often claims to be concerned with international standards, but he includes nothing by Margaret Avison, one of the few Canadian poets who made a reputation in the U.S. as early as she did in Canada. She is left out, presum-

ably, because she is a difficult poet and Richler doesn't like difficult poetry.

We get two of Layton's slighter epigrams, and none of the poems that any Canadian critic would call his most important.

And Gwendolyn MacEwen? Jay Macpherson? Ondaatje? b. p. nichol? Dennis Lee?

In prose Richler's selection is more satisfying. He includes a splendid story by Mavis Gallant and fine pieces by Munro, Moore, Richler himself, Ducharme, Aquin and Marie-Claire Blais. But while he mentions Dave Godfrey as an editor, he includes none of his work. Nor that of Ray Smith, another experimental prose writer.

The book is very heavily weighted toward discursive pieces that explain Canada; Neil Compton on broadcasting, Frye and Kilbourn on our sense of ourselves, Trudeau on French Canadian nationalism, Kattan on French Canadian literature, Woodcock on the novels of Callaghan. All of these essays are interesting in themselves, but all are directed essentially to a Canadian audience, or to an audience that wants to find out about Canada, rather than simply experiencing what is most exciting in the writing that Canadians are doing now.

No doubt every anthology has a strong tendency to make the reader want to re-edit it, but I've never felt the urge so strongly as in this case.

A Canadian friend who spent several years in England once said to me that Richler spent his time "misinterpreting Canada to the English and England to the Canadians." No doubt the remark is unfair, but this anthology did bring it back to my mind.

Richler's anthology, then, is a somewhat personal and idiosyncratic selection. "Put plainly," he says, "this is an anthology of the Canadian writing I like." Alec Lucas's *Great Canadian Stories* is a more traditional kind of book, overlapping with Weaver's Oxford selection and Pacey's Ryerson anthology. It's a generally satisfying book, with nothing in it that isn't worth the time spent reading it. It begins with Thomas Haliburton and ends with Ray Smith, contains three stories translated from French (including a particularly fine one by Yves Thériault), and it more than justifies its price. The book is certainly not self-consciously Canadian. We see Ethel Wilson in California, Lowry in Mexico, Moore in New York and Ulster, Gallant in Italy and England, Metcalf in England, Clark Blaise in Florida.

In a book of 27 stories, it's hard to pick out single stories for comment, but I was struck with the thought that Edward William Thompson's "The Privilege of the Limits" may embody a central Canadian theme and that its title might be used as the title for a history of our literature, perhaps even of our society.

And in reading Morley Callaghan's "One Spring Night," I was reminded that Callaghan's stories really are unusual, with a combination of simplicity and subtlety that is all his own.

On the whole then, I prefer the workmanlike editing of Alec Lucas to Richler's personal selection, especially when one bears in mind that the audience for each of these books will be partly one that knows little or nothing of Canadian writing beyond the book they hold in their hand. Unless an anthology is to be a deliberately distorted one, committed to a single view of Canadian writing and arguing that view, I think it's better to offer a representative selection and let the readers draw their own conclusions.

MATING GAME: LAWS AND LOOP-HOLES

Everything You Should Know about Law and Marriage. F.A.R. Chapman; Pagurian Press; paperback \$2.95; 163 pages.

DID YOU KNOW that if a woman introduces you as her fiancé and you do not deny it at the time, you are legally prevented from denying the engagement at any later date? Or that between July 2 and August 24, 1968, six petitions for divorce were filed citing deliberate refusal to consummate the marriage as the reason? These facts and many more are incorporated into this lively and informative book.

All aspects of the mating game are included, from engagement through divorce, alimony, and maintenance. The variations in the laws between the provinces are carefully explained. Death duties, estate planning, and bankruptcy, yes, they are all there. As an added bonus, the book carries models of separation agreements, divorce forms, and the Canadian Divorce Act of 1968.

This book is an extremely useful reference tool, a kind of Baedeker to the laws and loop-holes of the mating game.

RW

CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN CANADA



WOLF RUN

A Caribou Eskimo Tale, written & illustrated by James Houston: Longman Canada Ltd

by Carol Leonard

IN THESE "FUTURE SHOCKED" times that we live in, the writing of children's books must be one of the more difficult tasks. How often we find that exposure to television and other media has made our children much more sophisticated than we first expect, and the books we give them to read so much less so than we imagined. But a sense of our history and the knowledge of the diversity of our culture is too often lacking.

James Houston has produced what I think is an extraordinarily fine book for children over the age of eleven. The story is very simple but completely effective. Punk is a young boy charged with the feeding and welfare of his family. While the others perform the ritual chants to induce the caribou, their main source of food, to come back, he sees that the only solution to the problem is for him to set out in search of them. The story then is the story of the search.

It is not a book filled with great vistas of sweetness and light. Life is presented as it was, and in many cases still is, for the Eskimo in this country. Some of the hardships that he faces had me wondering whether this book wasn't perhaps a little too realistic for younger readers. But, on reflection, I realized that James Houston was paying our children the ultimate compliment, he was acknowledging their sophistication.

The book is copiously illustrated, although I did not find the illustrations to my taste. However, they are integral to the text rather than superimposed as so many seem to be.

The wolf in the title does play a very important role in the story, but as it is part of the superb twist ending, I won't say any more about it.

My twelve year old daughter thought it was great, I thought it was great.

Houston's consistent use of Eskimo myth, belief and practice creates interest in and lends credence to the book. At this time, when increasing numbers of people are trying to get back to the land and trying to learn and understand the customs and manners of the original inhabitants of this country, it is reassuring to have such a book as this to give to your children.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Carol Leonard is the mother of three children. She managed a book shop for two years where she became quite well-known for her knowledge and discrimination about children's books.

THREE GOOD REASONS FOR SUMMER READING



THE ASSIGNMENT

Martin Myers

An outstanding first novel by Torontonian Martin Myers. "The Assignment" is a funny, bizarre, outrageous puzzle about a Jewish junkman called Spiegel, the most delightful Everyman to come along in some time! Who is Spiegel? Is he really a junkman? He says he is on an assignment. Is he? Or is it a big put-on? You decide. But be forewarned — between the lines, between the laughs, there will be something puzzling that will gnaw at you long after you have finished reading. Join Spiegel, the loveable scrupulously honest connoisseur of castoffs, as he bounces from one hilarious mystery to another — until finally — but that would be telling! \$9.95

AT THE EDGE OF HISTORY

Speculations On the Transformation of Culture

William Irwin Thompson

This book begins as a quest for the historical roots of personal identity and ends up demolishing the identity of history itself. With a view from his Canadian retreat in Toronto, Professor Thompson, a barely-over-30 cultural historian presently teaching at York University, has written about Los Angeles, Boston, and the new Toronto of draft dodgers, deserters, and émigré intellectuals — those places where the edges of America are most raggedly visible. An important and original piece of work that might antagonize the many who have arrived and certain to excite those who are still moving. \$8.75

MANY BROKEN HAMMERS

Kelly Covin

Kelly Covin, who lives in Victoria, B.C., is the author of "Hear That Train Blow." His second novel is a deceptively simple story of violence and prejudice, pitted against nobility and tenderness. Within the crucial time span of one day, a cataclysmic confrontation takes place. Blood is spilled and lives are destroyed. Out of the holocaust the people's resolve is cemented, a new leader comes forth, and an enduring love is born. \$8.75



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DOWNTOWN LOWDOWN

WORKING PEOPLE

*James Lorimer and Myfanwy Phillips; James Lewis & Samuel,
cloth \$13.50, paperback \$4.95, 272 pages, 32 photographs.*

by Hugh Garner

FOR THREE YEARS the two authors of this book (though I suspect James Lorimer did most of the writing) lived on one of the short dead-end streets north of the eastern end of Toronto's Wellesley Street, where St. James Cemetery, the Don Valley and the Rosedale Ravine come together. The short formerly working-class street bears the fictitious name of Minster Lane. In a fictitious map drawn near the front of the book Sackville St. has become "Acacia," Sumach St. is called "St. John," Spruce St. has been renamed "Victoria," and there is a completely fictitious street called "Macdonald." I believe the renaming of these streets was an error — with the exception of Minster Lane — but it was the only error, and my only gripe about an excellent sociological study of a working class district of the city in which I lived twice, once as a child on Metcalf Street and later in a rooming house on Wellesley, east of Parliament.

James Lorimer, a graduate of the University of Manitoba and a PhD from the London School of Economics (1966), has collaborated with Myfanwy Phillips (who took the 32 pages of excellent photos of working class people) a painter and photographer. For 18 months of the three years they lived on "Minster Lane" James Lorimer kept a journal which is quoted extensively towards the end of the book. Lorimer has wisely chosen four families who were his neighbours on the tiny street, giving them fictitious names: George and

Betty Andrews and then two children, Tom and Peggy King and their two children, the Smyrchanskis and their five children, and John and Diane Moore and their two sons. These are the principal characters, supported by a cast that includes Lorimer and Phillips, and many other citizens who lived in the 18 row houses that make up Minster Lane, and also some from Sumach and Wellesley Streets and other streets in the neighbourhood.

Lorimer, an economist who lectures at the U of T and the Osgoode Hall Law School, has kept his book remarkably free from sociological jargon, and has not investigated the working class, as many "sociologists" do, by looking at them as Margaret Mead looked at the Easter Islanders. He has described their life style, foibles, aspirations, employment, pleasures, hates, prejudices and fears, as the kids say, Right On! Their neighbourhood, which never had a distinctive name like Cabbagetown and Moss Park to the south and west, he calls "east of Parliament," and which the city planners have chosen to call "Don Vale."

The theme of the book is the lives of a small group of mainly Anglo-Saxon working class people living in a hidden enclave of a blue-collar district, whose street has now largely been taken over by members of the middle class who have left the arid wastes of suburbia to buy up the small cheap working class houses, renovate them by tearing down interior walls, installing modern plumbing, and painting them white with black doors. These houses, which before World War Two could have been bought for a song, are now called "town houses" and probably sell in the neighbourhood of \$35,000. In my day the aspirations of most of the denizens east of Parliament was to get the hell out to the Danforth, East York or Scarborough, but now the ethnic migration has been reversed. A pox on the middle class status-seekers!

There is a counter theme or leitmotif in the book: the so-far defeated attempts of the municipal yahoos at city hall to tear down the neighbourhood and replace it with public housing. Though I happen to believe that the tearing down of old Cabbagetown and replacing it with the Regent Park North and South public housing in the late 1940s and early 1950s was a good thing; and the present tearing down

continued on page 14

heard

Peter Martin Associates announced that the film option for their best-selling novel, *Killing Ground*, has been picked up . . . Meanwhile, filming of Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Edible Woman*, which was to have been completed by now, has in fact, not even begun . . . *The Lace Ghetto*, projected third volume in the Women's Liberation series published by new press, has been postponed until the fall — just like a woman to be late . . . Scott Symons, author of two novels for McClelland & Stewart, has just packed up and left the farm of poet Al Purdy where he has been working on his book about Canadian antiques. Rumour has it that this will be the definitive book on the subject . . . Doug Fetherling, popular poet and author, has left House of Anansi and signed a contract with MacMillan of Canada. The book is called *Our Man in Utopia* and will appear in the early fall . . . Mark Frank of Progress Books told us an interesting story the other day. It seems he published a book about the War of 1812. He sent a review copy to the American Historical Association only to have the American Customs refuse to let the book enter the country. The ruling, FAC 603.3, says that books from a theatre of war may be refused entry into the U.S. Paranoia? The fourth book-shop in the free world devoted exclusively to film books has opened and it is Canadian. Ciné-Books is located at 692a Yonge St., Toronto 5, and they are eager to build a nice mail-order business . . . Stephen Vizinczey, author of the best-seller of a few years ago, *In Praise of Older Women*, is suing the German magazine, *Stern*. It seems that they assumed that the libertine in the book was Stephen. Not so, says he . . . *White Niggers of America*, one of the hottest books in the country at the moment, was refused by several English-language publishers when it first came out in Quebec. The rights were subsequently bought by an American company, from whom the Canadian rights had to be bought when it became important here . . . new press, in conjunction with Outerbridge and Dienstfrey of New York, has made the first reciprocal distribution arrangement in recent Canadian publishing history. They will publish books jointly, often using staff from both opera-

tions. This may prove to be the wedge in the door of the American market, a market which Canadian publishers have always found virtually impossible to crack . . . Robert Thomas Allen, author of *Children, Wives, and Other Wildlife* (Doubleday, \$6.95), is this year's winner of the Leacock Medal for the best book of humour produced in Canada in the last year. His new book, due this fall, is entitled *We Gave You the Electric Toothbrush* . . . By the time you read this, House of Anansi will have met with several of Toronto's leading booksellers to ascertain whether or not they (Anansi) might offset their losses by raising the prices of some of their books. Booksellers are famous for carping about publishers, so we hope this meeting might pave the way for a new understanding. Each can learn much of value from the other . . . Finally, Doubleday of Canada has made a generous gesture towards a Canadian authoress. Doubleday distributes books for McCall Publishing of New York in Canada. When they discovered that McCall's book, *Against the Season* by June Rule, was written by a Canadian, they gave her a separate contract for Canada, so that she would get full royalties on all sales here, rather than the standard export royalties which are substantially less. BIC

The Way to a Canadian's Heart

THE CANADIANA COOKBOOK

*A Complete Heritage of Canadian Cooking.
Mme. Jehane Benoit: Pagurian Press Ltd.,
Toronto. \$7.95.*

HOW COULD ONE say a harsh word to the Comfortable Cook of Canadian TV, who obviously doesn't gallop or clown amongst the canapés but who, according to the lush colour photograph on the dust-jacket of her book, is obliged to do her cooking at the foot of the staircase in the front hallway of her home? Obviously her publishers (like most publishers) assume that most other people cook in their studies, because as usual the book is bound for stacking in a bookcase, in hard-cover, with the kind of paper that absorbs grease and splashes, with pages that will always turn over in the crucial moment of cooking and have to be grabbed with a sticky hand.

This is the kind of cookbook with a fascinating range of recipes from

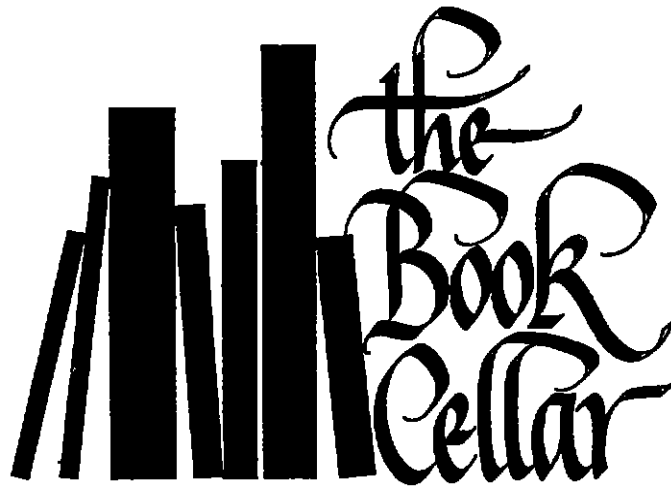
every region of Canada, the kind that would be in constant use, and yet manufactured in a way that would ensure it to be a hideous object after a year's cooking. When will composers of cookbooks, generally practical people, insist that their publishers make their books practical? Every cookbook should be bound like a modern calendar, with a wire spiral hinge, able to be stood up or hung up, with stiff pages of wipeable gloss paper that can be turned vertically over the back. Well, perhaps one other criticism — that recipe from British Columbia, given Mme. Benoit by a Murial Wilson and given the name "Sausage In Yorkshire Pudding" is known in the rest of the world as "Toad-In-The-Hole" (and has little else to recommend it). VC



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FROM THE MYSTERIOUS EAST

by Alden Nowlan

MORE POETRY IS being published in Fredericton today than was being published in the entire country when I began to submit verses to Canadian magazines in the 1950s

The Fiddlehead, a literary quarterly published by the University of New Brunswick and St. Thomas University, has grown from a little mimeographed pamphlet to a book-sized outlet for some of the country's best fiction writers and poets. It also publishes a good deal of solid criticism. Thanks to the Canada Council it's even able to pay its contributors — something that would have seemed incredible when I began to write.

The Fiddlehead group also publish a series of "New Brunswick Chapbooks" with cover illustrations by local painters. There have been 10 titles in the series, most of them by poets who either are now, or have been, students or teachers at UNB.

There's been serious talk of publishing books of prose, including novels and collections of stories, under the imprint of The Observatory Press. (*The Fiddlehead* office is located in a 19th-century astronomical observatory.)

Fred Cogswell, teacher, poet, critic and patron of the arts, continues to issue books and booklets of poetry under the Fiddlehead Books imprint. (Curiously and a little confusingly, Fiddlehead Books is not connected with *The Fiddlehead* magazine.) Last year Cogswell published a dozen titles, many of them first collections by young poets scattered across the country. His publishing venture is a true cottage industry: his press is in his basement and he and his wife, Pat, fold, collate and staple books on their dining room table.

There's a lively student literary magazine called *Floorboards* which, unlike many such magazines, was founded by students, on their own initiative, and has been published and edited by students with neither faculty advice nor administration money.

The Atlantic Advocate (c/o the Gleaner Building), published in Fredericton, is perhaps the only Canadian commercial magazine that still publishes fiction. It has printed stories by Margaret Laurence, Norman Levine and Mordecai Richler, among others. It features a young and preferably unpublished poet in each issue.

Brunswick Books, affiliated with *The Atlantic Advocate*, seems to have discontinued operations. While its fiction titles tended to be trivial and rather Victorian it issued a number of books of regional interest that otherwise might never have been put in print — such as a history of the 104th New Brunswick Regiment and a biography of the Maritime outlaw, Henry Moore Smith.

Fredericton is also home of *The Mysterious East* (P.O. Box 1172), an iconoclastic monthly circulating, like *The Atlantic Advocate*, throughout the Atlantic provinces. *The Mysterious East* is chiefly concerned with reporting and commenting on the news from a liberal to left point of view, but it has also published poetry and last year issued an ambitious book review supplement.

The editor of *The Atlantic Advocate* is John Braddock. The anchor man among the team of part-time editors of *The Mysterious East* is Donald Cameron, a UNB English teacher.

The recently appointed editor of *The Fiddlehead* is Robert Gibbs, another UNB English teacher, and a poet. His immediate predecessor was Kent Thompson, a teacher, short story writer and poet. *The Fiddlehead* owes much of its present prestige to Thompson and his predecessor, Cogswell.

Besides all of this publishing activity, there's a CBC radio station in Fredericton that has produced a number of features of literary interest, and a cablevision channel that has televised interviews with local figures involved in writing and publishing.

Last year it was estimated there were 15 nationally published poets living in Fredericton, and at least a dozen nationally published prose writers, including writers of fiction, criticism and serious journalism.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Alden Nowlan is the author of numerous books of verse, including the popular success, *the mysterious naked man*, published by Clarke Irwin.

THE SMALL PRESSES

The small presses are the "print freaks" of publishing.

by Randall Ware

FROM VERY STONE HOUSE on the West Coast to Fiddlehead on the East, individuals who care about books are producing them for specific markets in their area. These books have many common characteristics: they are written by authors who are usually not nationally known (Governor-General's Award winner b.p. nichol excepted); they are nearly all produced lovingly in small quantities (100 to 500), fine examples of the nearly lost art of book-making; and they offer us a most comprehensive view of the experimental writing being done in this country.

Delta Canada (5 Ingleside Ave., Montreal 215) has issued a series of eight "quarterbacks," 10 page chapbooks designed to help previously unpublished (in book form) authors to achieve a wider audience, while at the same time exploring the directions in which Canadian poetry is moving. They are published in editions of 500, sell for 25 cents, and represent poets from all parts of the country.

Weed/Flower Press (756a Bathurst St., Toronto 179) has recently re-appeared with a new volume of poetry by Victor Coleman, senior editor of the Coach House Press. *Old Friends' Ghosts* appears in an edition of 350 copies and costs \$3.00. The book comes in paperback with an attractive wrapper and a slightly over-sized format. The poems represent an excellent cross-section of the work that Victor has been doing for the last few years.

Coach House Press (401 Huron St. rear, Toronto 181) has just given us two fine new books of verse. *Weeds* by Frank Davey is a paperback at \$3.00. The book is so beautifully produced that I must confess that I had a hard time concentrating on the content. Don't miss it, Nelson Ball's

book, *The Pre-Linguistic Heights* (\$2.50, paperback), is a more conventional production, but it only serves to heighten the effect of his spare verse, a kind of free-form haiku.

Bugaloo Down Bank Street by Paul Stoddart and published by the Auto-Body-Mobile in Vancouver is a pastiche of prose, poetry, and photographs which may well be a novel. Ross Willow's photographs reminded me of Japanese brush and ink drawings. The book is a paperback at \$2.95 and a welcome addition to any Canadiana poetry collection.

Finally, from Montreal comes *Ingluvin* (5355 Walkley Ave., No. 41, Montreal 265), which bills itself as "the magazine of Canadian writing." Edited by Seymour Mayne and Kenneth Hertz, this second issue features a number of well-known writers, including Leonard Cohen, John Glassco, Robin Mathews, and Irving Layton. It runs to 88 pages in length, is the size of a regular paperback book, and, at seventy-five cents, is one of the best bargains published in this country.

We are grateful to receive small press books produced anywhere in Canada. This column will be a regular feature and we rely on our readers to help keep us abreast of what is being produced.

DOWNTOWN LOWDOWN continued from page 10

of the bug and rat-ridden shacks of Trefann Court is also good, I go along with James Lorimer in trying to preserve a neighborhood that is poor working class (excepting the middle class invaders) but is not yet a slum.

Those who are house owners in the district can sell their houses at a tremendous capital gains profit and move, but the rub is that the city fathers (read "children") wanted to expropriate most of the owner-occupied properties at sums that would not have allowed the expropriated to find similar housing in the suburbs or other city neighbourhoods. This is also the contention in Trefann Court.

I became enamoured of James Lorimer when he correctly corrected all the immigrant Toronto journalists from Elbow, Sask., and Plaster Rock, New Brunswick, who call everything east of Yonge Street to the Don River "Cabbagetown." He placed it where it was, south of Gerrard Street, east of Parliament. His authenticity, for a middle class PhD, amazed me. He has used his eyes and ears well among the working class, and his insight into their pride of work, philosophy and domestic integrity is absolutely the best things I have ever read about the urban Canadian working people. For instance, he discovered that the blue-collar workers east of Parliament prefer Fords to GM or Chrysler cars, and have little use for imported automobiles.

Lorimer introduces us to shopping on Parliament Street, folk and country music, family doctors, drinking at the Winchester Hotel, the tremendous percentage of taxes that the working people pay, and finally the harassments that the poor have learned to live with all their lives, from welfare officials, housing inspectors, health inspectors, unemployment insurance clerks, school teachers, and other white-collar riff-raff.

He writes, "... many, perhaps most, employees of these organizations feel that working people, particularly low-income working people from an old downtown neighbourhood, are less deserving of consideration and respect than other people." And, "... class prejudice is implemented by a discriminatory use of administration discretion against

area residents . . . the day I called to complain that Minster Lane had not been plowed (nine days after most Toronto streets had been plowed following a heavy snowstorm) it was only when I changed my identity from an east of Parliament resident to Doctor Lorimer that the street got cleared of snow."

In the Toronto Public elementary and high school system, seven of eight children of professional parents are in the five-year academic course leading to university admission, as against only one of seventeen children of mothers on welfare. Today, the elementary school teachers are better educated than in my schooldays of 45 to 50 years ago, but I share James Lorimer's distrust of them. I attended eight Toronto public schools, and I don't remember the names of any of my teachers today except one. The only reason I remember him is that he once strapped five or six of us, and one of the kids went home, had a convulsion, and died. The so-called "educators" and "education administrators," who to me are merely white-collar civil servants and elected members of the school board who are bucking for alderman and other civic plums, call the downtown city schools "inner-city schools," giving them an opprobrium that is earned by most of the teachers, not the pupils.

James Lorimer gave me a chance to share his educated disgust and anger, and I cannot praise his book too much. I'm very pleased to have been given the chance to read it. You should read it too.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Hugh Garner has a new collection of short stories coming on October first from McGraw-Hill titled, *Violation of the Virgins*. On November 1, Pocket Books of Canada will issue five of his early novels and one volume of short stories in paperback.

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ECOSTRATEGY: THEM ARE US

THIS GOOD, GOOD EARTH

Our Fight for Survival; Donald A. Chant and Ralph O. Brinkhurst; MacMillan; \$6.95

STALKING THE GOOD LIFE

Euell Gibbons, Madrid McKay; \$7.25

by Marjorie Harris

CYNICS MAY YAWN at the idea of yet another book about pollution and our imminent destruction. But when a book like *"This Good, Good Earth": Our Fight For Survival*, by Donald Chant and Ralph O. Brinkhurst, two University of Toronto zoologists, appears the yawns should change to cheers. This book is so good that it's hard to imagine another being published this year that will have as much meaning for Canadians. Every politician, highschool student, industrialist, . . . hell, anyone who can read, should snap it up. They won't, of course. It costs \$7 for one thing, and the public's famous apathy is a consistent factor from a business, political and consumer point of view.

Chant and Brinkhurst are incredibly effective in their well-reasoned, cool style of presenting facts. They are facts we've heard before in many instances, but they are compiled in such a way that even a lay person can get an over-view of man and his environment. The book is also a plea for the activist academic to be listened to seriously: "How can we persuade the world that technology has not replaced biology and if it did the human race would cease to exist?"

They answer their own question constructively throughout the book. Their basic premise — the interdependence of every living aspect of our finite environment — is revealed step by step. We're shown how each industrial operation destroys the capacity of some part of the environment to perform its vital function. But they don't stop with just cataloguing disaster. They point out, also step by step, just what changes must be made in our attitude to the earth. First by getting over the *them and us* syndrome: *them* (big business and government) and *us* (consumers). As Pogo said, we are all *us*, spurred on by big advertising.

Their style is neither lyrical nor laden with academic clap-trap. Occasionally, they plunge into clichés to wrap things up. But it makes gripping reading. They are honest about their limitations. So they don't deal at length with air pollution because they lack the information and expertise. But the chapters on sewage Canadian-style is enough to turn anyone into a faeces expert or give you constipation.

The book is mainly about Canada, but the problems these ecologists are groping with are global. They see the desperate need for bringing biologists rather than engineers or chemists into prominence. For instance, we've begun to control chemical pesticides, but there's still an ingrained suspicion about using biological rather than artificial controls. Insecticides cost us about \$70 million a year — 14 percent of that at home. By 1970, the authors estimate that the body politic of Canada was carting around about two tons of DDT in its own collective tissue. We've had a fine anti-pollution Fisheries Act for 100 years. But because of greed, it was never really enforced in Ontario. The result — we no longer have a lively fishing industry in that province. The chemists have known about mercury pollution since 1953. It was ignored with the usual cop-out: "Let's wait until we get more information." Chant and Brinkhurst argue that the last fact will never be known about anything; we must act now.

They suggest the immediate creation of an Environment Council of Canada. It would eliminate all over-lapping research, the lack of communication between governmental, industrial and academic scientists. The Environment Council would issue reports, much like the GNP report, telling the public just where it stood on, and what are the *actual* costs of non-renewable resources, waste, effect on our health and recycling.

If your vision is not to *do it*, as Professors Chant and Brinkhurst advise, but to *enjoy it*, get Euell Gibbons' book *Stalking the Good Life*. He really set the tone of conservationist writing in his earlier books *Stalking the*

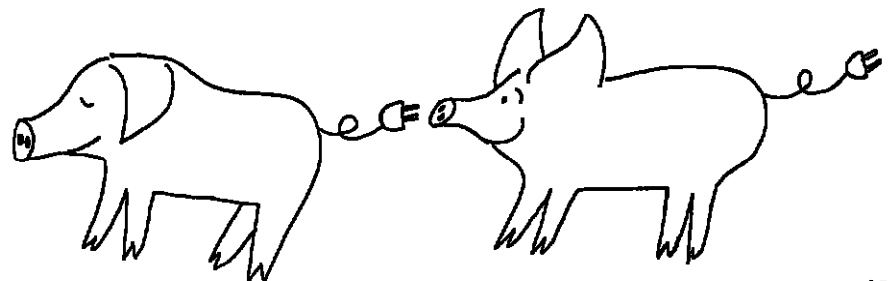
Wild Asparagus, and *Stalking the Blue-eyed Scallop*.

He's heavier on poetry than passion and there's a lot of fun in his recounting of great trips into the wilderness, surviving on his own wits and knowledge. It's the kind of book you have to read as you would as a cookbook or gardening book: a small dose at a time. It's filled with wonderful information that needs to be gone over again and again. I was really tempted to tap the trees in my backyard after reading the chapter called "Tree Saps": barrels of sweet fun. And I'll never destroy another weed without checking out its relationship to the other plants in my garden. We'll even be eating dandelions in our summer salads.

Gibbons makes survival sound like fun. It's a fantasy game and he's convincing enough to make any city slicker dissatisfied with his drab downtown lot. We all may have need for his teachings someday, especially what he calls his non-violent approach to nature.

Gibbons comes to the same conclusion as Chant and Brinkhurst in a much more personal style. He too opposes the *them-us* syndrome. But who's going to listen to a couple of zoologists and a man who likes running around in the woods collecting berries? They aren't computer specialists, or engineers or politicians — yet. But they have a humane and urgent message to deliver, more so than the others have managed to burp out recently. Both books advocate that all waste must be considered potential new raw material, that we cannot ignore our finite ecosystem any longer, nor fiddle away our non-renewable resources by selling them to other countries who will create even more waste.

In their introduction, Chant and Brinkhurst say: "Politically, pleas for clean air, pure water, and fertile soil are as safe as declarations in favour of Motherhood, and Mom's pie." Right, and if we leave it in the hands of *them*, instead of all of us acting now, we're going to end up with the dinosaurs—interesting artifacts in a long-forgotten part of earth's history.





Paul Kane's Frontier

Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, edited and with a biographic introduction and catalogue raisonné, by J. Russell Harper, University of Toronto Press, 350 pp., \$27.50.

by Al Purdy

IN CANADIAN ART, Paul Kane is a forerunner, ancestor and pioneer. Knowledge of this formidable status is enough to make students and appreciators of Canadian painting shy away from Kane as if he were poison. Few before him attained any ability or eminence: but most of his successors owe him something, if only the wisdom to throw away their paint boxes and run like hell when chased by buffalo on the western plains. Which by itself is a singularly useless wisdom in the 20th century.

From 1846 to 1848 Kane travelled through the frontier country of North America – mostly in Canada – painting and sketching as he went. His subject matter was Indians and the wild west generally at a time when it really was fairly wild. He covered thousands of miles, made hundreds of sketches and paintings, taking part in the last great Metis buffalo hunt in Rupert's Land in 1846. During that western great adventure he starved and froze by turns. On his return to Toronto, Kane was slowly going blind.

In 1859 Kane published his book, *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*. It cost twenty-

five shillings then for the book-buyer, and rather more to the artist. On the rare book market now it's worth \$400. Which is rather ironic, since Kane was plagued by lack of money most of his life. Being famous never made him rich.

Paul Kane was one of several painters of Indians, the others being American. One of these last, George Catlin, was a friend of Kane. Catlin's English exhibition of Indian paintings in 1843 probably provided the spiritual impetus for the Canadian painter's westward journeys.

Most of these painters of Indians thought that these original inhabitants of the western hemisphere were doomed to extinction. Peter Skene Ogden, a Hudson's Bay Company man in Fort Vancouver, said in a letter to Paul Kane in 1848: "We have had very dull and gloomy times since the Fall. The American Immigration consisting of four thousand Souls if they have any, brought in with them their pleasant travelling companions of Measles, Dysentery and Typhus Fever." (Note: "if they have any.") As a result of that one incursion fifteen hundred Indians died on the Columbia River alone. Small

wonder that Kane, Catlin, Ogden and many others thought the disappearance of Indians only a matter of time. And the native death-toll indicates that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse rode Indian broncos as well as European pure-breds.

This motivation for painting a vanishing race is extremely interesting. Kane, Catlin and others thought they were preserving history before it disappeared: they wanted this pictorial record subsidized by the Canadian and U.S. governments. I contrast this painterly attitude with what I conceive as: the terror of being a painter: everything changes while you look at it: everything vanishes: landscapes and people you paint are in continual process of growing older and dying. But I suppose this feeling is related to the idea of preserving history, and probably Kane felt both.

Paul Kane's Frontier is a huge and ponderous (weighty) book. It consists of a biographical introduction by Harper, Kane's own 1895 book reprinted, *Wanderings of an Artist* – and most important of all, 204 black-and-white illustrations, plus 48 colour plates. The

forbidding ancestor of Canadian painting puts on flesh and glows with colour, comes to life before your eyes like a 120-year-old phoenix. For it is the colour plates that make the book a marvellous portable museum, reaching a little way back in the past. For instance: the same year Kane started west to paint Indians, 1846, my grandfather was born. No trumpets sounded for either event.

Not that Kane was an Old Master in the way of Rembrandt, Rubens and Breughel. He misjudged proportion continually, and had to keep re-touching and adjusting the size and shape of his human figures. Kane's Indian bronzes looked like Arab barbs; his fleecy European cumulus clouds sometimes sent parochial Canadian critics right up the regional wailing wall.

All of which strikes me as damned irrelevant. Really, who cares about that now? Isn't it the good things, fine things, maybe even great things about Kane that are important? Indians and prairies and mountains and rivers. History delayed, circumvented and preserved, time itself spat on, as the old Indian painter wished. What vanished long ago still stares out from these unreasonably marvellous facsimiles.

Where are the braves, the faces like
autumn fruit,
Who stared at the child from the
coloured frontispiece?
And the monosyllabic chief who
spoke with his threat?
Where are the tribes, the feathered
bestiaries?—
With fur on their names to make all
live things kin—
Chief Running Deer, Black Bear,
Old Buffalo Head?
(A.M. Klein, in "Indian
Reservation: Caughnawaga")

Well, here *are* the faces like autumn fruit, also the feathered human bestiaries — with fur on their names and feathered head-dress to make all flying, walking, crawling live things kin — Here, at least, are a few score of them:

Wearing a red British army jacket, an old Ojibway chief from Fort William (an older, different Fort William!). He fingers a silver Queen Victoria medal proudly; his bald head, out-thrust jaw and fleshy knotted lower lip — like an ancient fencepost. And "He-Devil," Ojibway chief, stands wearing red white and blue battledress, tomahawk quiet across one arm. "The Man Who Always Rides" rides now in white buckskin astride a white horse, red lance about to be hurled. And here's "Fox River" with uncanny eyes

(would you buy a used car from this man?) and nose like an icebreaker near Baffin Island.

In a thousand words you can't describe it, all the riches in this book. And besides, you know the old bit about one picture being worth a thousand — etc. Looking at these pictures, I think Kane did everything he set out to do and more. (More, for he can't see my reactions.) I don't care about his lousy sense of proportion, his noble Arab steeds — even the beasts in the painting, *Buffalo Pound*, with all their legs in exactly the same position. What's important is Indians, every one an individual, a man or a woman, with fur on their names and bodies — whose great age has vanished; but their descendants remain as step children of the Just Society.

And I wonder what Kane would have thought of that? I mean: Indians *now*. But he died in 1871, his fame nearly forgotten by Canadians, a kind of relic, a sort of ancestor — sprung to vivid life again in the bomb-haunted 20th century.

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HUMOUROUS WRITERS have to live. Most of us can accept that. But in Canada, because there are so few of them and because there's a space on the library shelves that needs to be filled up, the fun scribes do rather well. Eric Nicol may actually have needed the renovations to his home described in this book, but there's no justification for his attempting to pay for the work by assembling all the weary jokes about architects, all the snobbish chestnuts about the idle inefficiency of local contractors and plumbers, and trying to pass it off as a humorous book for \$4.95. Unworthy of the holder of three Stephen Leacock Medals for books of humour. Almost a case for the Better Business Bureau, humourist turned counterfeiter. VC

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BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN

WHITE NIGGERS OF AMERICA

Pierre Vallières: McClelland & Stewart;
cloth \$7.95; DDS - 301.4514071

by Richard Bebout

IN KEEPING WITH what seems to be a revolutionary tradition, *Nègres blancs d'Amérique: Autobiographie précoce d'un "terroriste" québécois* was written in prison. Pierre Vallières scribbled it down, as he says, during the winter of 1966-67 while in the Manhattan House of Detention for Men (the "Tombs"), with his fellow revolutionary Charles Gagnon, serving a sentence for a disruption at the United Nations. Both men are back in prison in Montreal in connection with events of last October. Translated by Joan Pinkham and published by one of the most respected houses in Canada, *White Niggers of America* is now available to us "Anglais," that we may see what sent Québécois to jail, presumably without having to worry about going ourselves.

As the original title suggests, the work is largely autobiographical. Vallières presents life in Quebec in clear gripping terms. He speaks of his rough childhood in Montreal's East End, where his father, despite the grinding labour he endured every day, maintained a rebellious spark of hope that contrasted sharply with his wife's Catholic resignation; of his education under the Church and the growth of his disgust with it; of a despair so deep with the conditions surrounding him as a young man that he left the Quebec of Duplessis and Cardinal Léger and headed for France. He eventually returned and found his way into the growing circle of progressive Quebec intellectuals which included such men as Chartrand, Pelletier, Levesque, Marchand, and Trudeau. This group was united in opposition to Duplessis, but apparently in little else; from it were to come both the governments and the revolutionaries of the October crisis.

It is as the personal memoir of a

revolutionary that *White Niggers* has been most praised by the critics thus far, and it is indeed an extraordinary, passionate narrative which has served both to focus the anger of the Québécois and to help the rest of us understand it. But the book is not only a personal record. To a large degree it is also a manifesto of the FLQ, and as such it puts forward a particular political and historical point of view which should not be overlooked.

Vallières presents a brief history of Quebec early in the book which is remarkably unclouded by the nationalist romanticism of more classical historians. New France was far from idyllic: large numbers of settlers were imported by force and married off in droves to populate the land, and thereby secure it for the benefit of the French aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The Conquest, which looms so large over classic Quebec historiography, is to Vallières when "the English merchants took over from the French merchants," during which "nothing changed in the frugal and monotonous life of the Habitant." Papineau and his "Patriotes" of 1837 (whose red, white and green colours are proudly displayed today by hip radicals) come off as *petits Canadiens capitalistes* who simply wanted a slice of the English economic pie (with crumbs, maybe, to the people). Vallières calls Confederation "nothing more than a vast financial transaction carried out by the bourgeoisie at the expense of the workers of the country, and more especially the workers of Quebec." With the Riel rebellion Confederation's promise of a truly bilingual Canada began to sour, and French Canadians turned their hopes back to Quebec. There frustrations turned inward and became a dedication to "la survivance," to defence of the language, the race and the faith. Under this umbrella of ingrown nationalism corrupt politicians moved as they pleased, with the Church always at their right hand facilitating the economic domination of the people by insuring their psychological submission. The trend culminated in Duplessis, who

in the name of the race and with the blessings of the faith sold out *la nation* to the Americans.

While all French Canadians have suffered as a linguistic and religious minority, of much more importance to the great majority of them, Vallières emphasizes, has been their economic exploitation not only at the hands of "les Anglais" and the Americans but also under French Canada's own bourgeoisie. And the greatest weapon of that last group has always been *la langue, la foi, la race*, the certain appeal to French Canadian nationalism. What then of Quebec's latest manifestation of this spirit—separatism?

Separatism, we tend to assume, is the primary concern of the FLQ. Yet one could read *White Niggers of America* from cover to cover and justifiably conclude that Pierre Vallières is not a separatist at all, were it not for the large fact that he says he is: "Quebec separatism in itself is an excellent thing and I support it 100 percent." But one who has seen a people's nationalism turned against their own true interests must have some reservations, and in fact Vallières' are stated in the very next lines: "But that does not mean that I close my eyes. I am not unaware of the fact that Québécois separatists do not all pursue the same objectives, that they do not all defend the same interests." He goes even farther:

The presence of fascist elements within the separatist movement is also very disturbing, for we all know that fascism is the art of transforming, sublimating, and then crushing popular discontent in the name of a false "national renaissance". . .

OK. Let's tell Ottawa to go to hell. And then? What's going to change? We'll have one tax return instead of two? A direct telephone link between Quebec and Washington? A comic-opera army integrated with NORAD? A delegate to the UN, another to the OAS, a third to NATO, and our very own ambassador to the Vatican? And then what? The iron of the North Shore, the asbestos of Asbestos, the mines of Abitibi, our forests and hydraulic resources, our commerce, finance, and industry - and the political machines: will not all that still be the exclusive *property* of the Americans?

ial or so vital to us as Canadians that it demands the attention of more than
may contradict each other but because they may complement each other, or
, or regional viewpoints. For some books Bi-Focus may become Multi-Focus.

So the "paper independence" for which the moderate separatists fight would be worthless. Separatism, at least as seen by English Canadians, is for Vallières and for the FLQ not the issue at all. The issue is economic liberation. "This revolution that Quebec needs — as do all the countries that are enslaved by capitalism and colonial imperialism — implies nothing more nor less than the disappearance of capitalism itself." The struggle therefore is hardly a national one. For "Quebec" in the above quote one could easily read the name of almost any nation, including not least of all "Canada." Within Canada itself separatism has only served to cloud the picture, to divide people whose true interests are perhaps quite similar. Vallières may see an Ontario worker or a farmer in Alberta as a potential class ally, but they probably feel quite a bit different.

While Pierre Vallières' separatism may not be soundly based in political theory, his emotional commitment to it is clear. The brilliant autobiograph-

ical work in *White Niggers of America* makes that easy to understand, despite the apparent contradiction. Nationalism is like that; certainly open to abuse and potentially dangerous, but nonetheless human, like love and anger. Canadians and *Canadiens* are discovering both sides.

by C. Alexander Brown

ENGLISH CANADIANS who still ask themselves "What does Quebec want?" should read *White Niggers of America*. They will not find the whole answer to that question here, but they will gain perhaps, a clear understanding of the despair that has caused so many of the young intellectuals of Quebec to support the aims, and perhaps more importantly the methods of the FLQ.

Reading this book, I got the strange feeling that I knew the man Vallières, and understood him as well as I would have if I had met him and listened to him talk at great length. This feeling was generated not only by the vivid details of the autobiographical sections

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Rick Bebout came to Canada from the United States two years ago. He is one of the new crop of young writers *Books in Canada* will be bringing to the attention of the Canadian reading public.

of the book where he described growing up in poverty and hopelessness in the East End and on the outskirts of Montreal, nor by his retelling of the convoluted route by which he arrived, self taught, at his present philosophical and political position. but because as a black journalist travelling from Toronto, I have met in Detroit and New York and Philadelphia and Los Angeles (where I lived for eight months) and even in Trinidad many young blacks who have travelled the same route as Vallières, and arrived at the same conclusion.

Their commitment to changing the social order is so deep that the North American capitalist system will either

RUMOURS OF WAR

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have to destroy them, or turn to whatever extent, in the direction they want it to go. Vallières and his Quebec compatriots, and the young educated blacks in the United States (his title is aptly chosen) are not simply asking for autonomy or equality within the existing social structures. They want to help overturn capitalism and help see it replaced with a socialist system. But at the same time they have as much scorn for the leaders of the Kremlin and the official western communist parties as they have for Nixon, and in the case of Vallières, Trudeau.

Vallières describes himself as being "neither a scholar nor a philosopher. I'm only a proletarian who has had the good fortune to read a great deal, but without method." The writing, especially in the beginning of the book, is sometimes tortuous, but it is always fascinating, and sprinkled throughout

with gems. He describes Claude Ryan as. "A dry man with the piercing eye of an eagle who spoke little, answered our questions vaguely and scrutinized us the way an entomologist scrutinizes insects." He describes the neighbourhood where he grew up in East End Montreal as being "a violent universe in which children dreamed about gigantic conflagrations." Conflagrations such as occurred in Watts and Detroit, one might ask?

Vallières writes with the vividness and imagery of a novelist, and indeed he has written, and destroyed, three novels. *White Niggers* is a very persuasive book, and the comparison now being made in American reviews to the writings of Malcolm X and Franz Fanon are justified -- although Vallières is not as lucid a writer as either of them. If one should for the moment forget justice, or rather injustice, it is under-

standable why the Quebec government would want to imprison him on the rather flimsy grounds that his book persuaded others to commit manslaughter. This amounts to paying strong, although unintended compliments to the persuasiveness of Vallières' writing. It is to be hoped that the book will sell well in English-speaking Canada, because although Vallières was once the protégé of Trudeau and Pelletier, his Quebec is not theirs any more than the Boston of Malcolm X was the Boston of President Kennedy's family.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Alexander Brown was born in Jamaica, and studied at Sir George Williams University in Montreal. He worked for the CBC's Public Affairs Department for seven years, then went to Los Angeles where he worked as a producer for National Educational Television Network. He has travelled extensively in Canada and the United States.

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

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LA CRISE D'OCTOBRE

Gérard Pelletier, Ed. du Jour: \$3.50

QUEBEC IN QUESTION

Marcel Rioux: James Lewis & Samuel:
\$3.50

by Ben Shek

OF THE THREE titles in question, the first two deal specifically with the recent FLQ crisis, the latter touching only marginally on those events, while providing a broad background to them. The first two appear in their original languages, while the Rioux book is the English translation of his *La Question du Québec*, first published in Paris in 1969, with an additional final chapter, in which the author comments briefly on the crisis, as well as the 1969 police strike, the Quebec language conflict and the April, 1970 elections.

Rumours of War is the work of two authors, who have obviously concentrated on different areas, Haggart on the side of reportage of incidents of, or relating to, the crisis, and Golden, a lawyer, on legal aspects pertaining to the recent events as well as to background on the civil rights issues in-

tain amount of repetition and a lack of linearity and continuity, which are not necessarily bad in themselves, but which sometimes limit the reader's attention span. I found most readable the chronicle-style account of the kidnapping of Cross, the arrest of singer Pauline Julien and her children, the captivity of Pierre Laporte, the final dénouement of the "Liberation Cell," and similar dramatic episodes. While it is true, as has been noted elsewhere, that this "reportage" adds little that was not known before, it is still fascinating reading when assembled together within one volume. Also, the historical background to the original enactment of the War Measures Act and its subsequent use (or non-use) in times of stress in Canada, is enlightening. The authors, stressing a civil libertarian approach, draw certain analogies with flagrant violations of human rights in the past which will undoubtedly trouble supporters of the Federal and Quebec governments, but are certainly food for thought, though at times digressionary.

Haggart and Golden are by no means radicals, and reject, in general, the term "political prisoners," yet they persistently question the credibility of the Trudeau-Bourassa governments in enacting the War Measures Act and its successor in their attitudes to the vital legal question of "apprehended insurrection" and the so-called "provisional government plot." Their tone is generally calm and their material quite comprehensive, yet they often make use of ironic jibes which aim to highlight contradictions in the official arguments.

Gérard Pelletier, Secretary of State in the Trudeau cabinet, writes from the "inside," yet, as has also been noted elsewhere, he adds little if anything new to our knowledge of the events. (True, his appendices give us excerpts from a number of FLQ documents and underground papers not previously assembled in one place, to our knowledge. Here, though, there is a considerable amount of confusion and contradiction -- which may be real.)

As Pelletier himself notes, his tone is often polemical and combative, yet I was struck even more by his defensive (and sometimes paternalistic) gestures. A good half, if not more, of his book is taken up with answering FLQ charges, and responding to the terrorists' manifesto and other declarations. We have already referred to the appendices, all of which bear on the FLQ, while those in the Haggart-Golden book, apart from the FLQ manifesto, concentrate on the texts of the War Measures Act and its successor, as well as the official correspondence relating to its enactment.

While Pelletier, too, tries to find loopholes in the arguments of his adversaries, my feeling is that he has not given as much weight to the views with which he disagrees as have the authors of *Rumours of War*. He ignores almost entirely, for example, the critical views of Claude Ryan, editor of *Le Devoir*, concerning the crisis and its handling. Even more important, he treads very lightly over the question of the existence of an "apprehended insurrection," even using "insurrection," on one occa-

sion, in quotation marks (page 127). By contrast, this question is vital to the entire argument of *Rumours of War*. The only "mention" of the "provisional government plot" is in a boxed quotation from René Lévesque (page 194), which is not commented upon in the text at all. Similarly, there is no mention of the Montreal civic elections and their relationship to the crisis, nor to Jean Marchand's comments on FRAP and his allegations concerning the existence of 3,000 armed revolutionaries and an FLQ presence in the most sensitive areas of Quebec's social and economic life.

Haggart and Golden, on the other hand, have been reproached for ignoring those voices in English Canada who criticized the actions and explanations of the Federal and Quebec governments concerning the crisis. One might add that the authors of *Rumours of War* can't decide whether these latter acts and statements were honestly motivated, or whether they were calculated to spread fear among non-violent supporters of Quebec's independence. While leaning to the latter view, and sometimes stating it categorically, they then fall back to qualifying and conditional

expressions which leave one confused. The title, though, taken from St. Matthew, evokes the idea of false prophets.

As stated above, *Quebec in Question* deals only marginally with the recent FLQ crisis. The author, Marcel Rioux, a prominent Quebec sociologist and one of the signers of the so-called "personalities' statement," which urged flexibility and compromise in dealing with the kidnappers, is an open *indépendantiste*. His view is that the governments in question and the FLQ took extreme positions which complemented each other. He feels that it is the workers' and citizens' committees, and not the bombs of the FLQ, which will lead Quebec to political and economic liberation. The value of Rioux's work is less in his summary analysis of the recent turbulent happenings than in his popularized presentation of the economic, social and cultural evolution of Quebec, from the French régime to the present. While his approach is sometimes simplistic, it has the merit of rejecting the traditional conservative-nationalist view which glosses over the responsibility of French-speaking élites for Quebec's backwardness in many vital areas.

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ROUGH DRAFT

THE ART OF MAKING BEER

Stanley Anderson with Raymond Hull: Longmans. Cloth \$5.50.
Paperback \$1.50: 119 pages; DDS - 641.873

by Al Purdy

RAYMOND HULL HAS made saki at his apartment in Vancouver for the last 15 years. I have sampled this brew, sparingly of course, and must now applaud his wisdom in finding a collaborator for his book on beer. I've known all along he needed help. Anyone who made the kind of saki he did needs help; although his mere survival after drinking it, faculties impaired or not, continues to astonish me. And the simple heroism of his friends in consuming Hull's saki is evidence of human qualities for which I have the highest admiration.

Stanley Anderson, Hull's collaborator here, operates a chain of stores that supply equipment for wine and beer-making. His expertise is thus without blemish. But the book resulting from this melding of amateur and professional lacks something which I consider important: there is no hint of empyrean joy which suffuses the being of a man when he first samples his own beer. Some may scoff at this creative ecstasy, even pointing out the dangerous explosive propensities of home brew in the hands of amateurs. These maintain that only cold calculation should govern the stern mechanics of beer-making: but those who say this lack soul.

As a wine and beer-maker from way back, the recipes and methods outlined in this book seem exemplary to me, but I am troubled by the aforementioned lack of soul in the book. By mentioning a few of my own experiences, I hope to add a human dimension to beer-making, and thus increase the sales of the Anderson-Hull book.

I have to admit I was a lousy wine and beer-maker in the beginning, perhaps resembling Hull. The peculiarly potent plum wine I made in Vancouver had some spectacular effects on a fellow worker who sampled it. He went back to his rooming house after imbibing and ripped out the toilet fixtures in the bathroom. He didn't show up for work next day, and I was in some danger of being sued by his landlord who unfortunately worked in the same factory I did.

Neither was the beer I made recommended for human consumption, but my friends had strong stomachs. Most of them were writers, and such was our joy in alcoholic creation that we used to drink the stuff right out of the crock before it matured. It is perhaps significant that all of them but myself gave up writing shortly after I left Vancouver, except for one who writes an obituary column for the Vancouver *Sun*.

In 1955 the first play I wrote was produced by John Reeves on CBC Radio. Feeling that literary recognition of my genius was more likely elsewhere, my wife and I moved to Montreal. Acquiring new and durable friends there, we decided to make beer on a larger and more professional scale. One of my friends who worked in a drug store obtained malt extract intended for invalid consumption wholesale. (This man later became a kidney specialist in Vancouver, that profession being necessary due to the deleterious effect of beer on his own kidneys.) And we bought a wooden whiskey keg for five bucks.

At the full peak of production, we had 15 gallons of beer working in the keg, another batch maturing in bottles, and a third batch ready to drink at all times. What this means was that we had 15 gallons of beer (and there were three of us) every five days, and no matter how you slice it, this is over-production.

For three men to drink 15 gallons of beer every five days is equivalent to Hercules cleaning the Augean stables in whatever time he took. We had to have help. Salesmen who knocked on my door in the Cote des Neiges district of Montreal seldom returned to their offices sober, sometimes minus their sample cases. Postmen and milkmen unaccountably disappeared along their routes.

My wife, who was never notably meek and mild, began to feel that her own happiness and status as a woman was at stake. Feminine hygiene was involved. She hadn't taken a bath for weeks, since the tub was always full of beer bottles being washed in readiness for the next five-day batch.

These are problems, but they are problems the beer-maker of true dedication will meet and surmount. Friends fall away, wives depart muttering maledictions on the noble brew and its masculine makers, bottles burst from too much sugar content, enthusiasms for other things wane and vanish: BUT IR only remains for solace. In the time of our time on this planet, dedication for The Brew remains, as faculties diminish, sexual capacities wane to nothing, this noblest thing in life supports us in various directions on our march into the dark beyond.

Anyway, you see what I mean by Soul?

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Al Purdy, Governor-General's Award winning poet and editor of the recent success, *Storm Warnings*, is an experienced home-brewer. He is currently spending eight weeks in Japan, writing and travelling.

NORTH FROM OTTAWA

THE CLIMATE OF POWER

Irene Baird, MacMillan, Cloth \$6.95; DDS - F

by Dorothy Body

IRENE BAIRD COULD be a much better novelist than she is willing at the moment to let on, at least in *The Climate of Power*. We take a very jaundiced approach to novelists who presume to write about the northern experience, we who have gone up there to live expecting little more than an interesting change of scenery and a bit of adventure, and have returned stunned. We require a master to do our experience justice, and a master Mrs. Baird quite clearly is not.

But when she finally does get out of her Ottawa dance school (run by a lady called Miss Brazen and guess what she is like) and into the Arctic, she evokes an atmosphere that hits home. The ticky-tacky administration buildings and native and government housing (in rainbow hues) plopped down in the middle of the tundra; the whiteout - a sudden storm of driving snow that reduces visibility to absolutely nothing so that you really can fall down exhausted and freeze to death, lost, one foot away from your door; the

thousands of miles of barren land in magnificent, muted colours that is the Arctic seen from a plane in summer; the feeling of the power of the land.

The climate of power and the effect it can have on man's psyche, the power of that peculiar federal institution known now as DIAND (the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) is what Mrs. Baird is clearly writing about and for which she worked for some 25 years. DIAND for too long was able to give to some of its people, quite literally, the power of God over other people's lives. Ask an Indian on an isolated reserve what the Agent could do. Ask an Eskimo in an isolated settlement about the Administrator. Read between the lines in *The Climate of Power*. The relocation projects, the housing, the school - had it occurred to anyone to consult an Eskimo on any of these?

But what might happen to a man who has become used to and dependent on that kind of power, and is threatened with its loss? For these forces come together in the character of George McKenna, bring him to violence and then back to the land for atonement. He is the old-style individualist, paternalist to the core, who undoubtedly did a great deal of damage but did know and respect the land and shared at least that with the people who lived on and off it. McKenna is not a petty man, but he is dragged into the petty power struggles of the petty bureaucrats, set up against the technocrats, the "systems men" who, when you get right down to it, couldn't care less.

Now Mrs. Baird was beginning to get somewhere with George McKenna. If only she had simply given up on his silly, sexy young wife Flo and her dance school and her friends. They were not needed and they did not work, but Mrs. Baird apparently did not have the self-confidence to

concentrate on the people she did know well. And that is sad.

It is certainly a very Canadian novel. The role the physical environment plays in the story, as do the land and the weather. The protagonists (excepting Miss Brazen, who for some strange reason is a Yank), the bureaucrats, the politicians, are all Canadians. Other countries have their muck-rakers and their bright young Ministers-on-the-Make, but Mrs. Baird's come through as Ours.

And as an historical footnote, the struggle between the old-timers and the new (probably at its height during Mrs. Baird's last few years with the Department) was won unequivocally by the "systems" people, who then sat smug and impenetrable until they found themselves faced with talented and effective, organized opposition from the one quarter from which it was least expected: the Indians. And gradually, now, the Eskimos. And even the non-native, non-government Northerners. Heavens!

Someone who worked for 25 years in that bureaucracy and left with her integrity and perspective intact, someone who can understand and sympathize with men in the midst of such struggles and can begin to convey them to others, someone who can be deeply moved by the magnificent country that is our Arctic - someone like that who can write, should be able to write very good novels.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Dorothy Body lived and worked in the Northwest Territories for two years with a branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Subsequently, she wrote for the newspaper, *News of the North*, and did free-lance public affairs broadcasting. She has had a life-long interest in matters concerning the Canadian Indian.

Paul Kane's Frontier

J. Russell Harper

(Author of *Painting in Canada*)

A large, magnificent volume both visually and historically, *Paul Kane's Frontier* includes 48 colour plates and 204 black-and-white illustrations. It is divided into four main parts, each independent and interlocking: a biographical account of Paul Kane's life and work, a reprinting of the first edition of his book *Wanderings of an Artist*, the beautiful, illuminating reproductions, and a *catalogue raisonné* listing all his known works. This comprehensive volume demonstrates Paul Kane's increasing importance as an artist-historian; indeed he emerges as a giant among North American artists of the nineteenth century. For the coffee table or the history buff, *Paul Kane's Frontier* is a must. Publication date: 24 April/11 x 11 1/2 inches \$27.50 (limited, deluxe edition \$75.00)

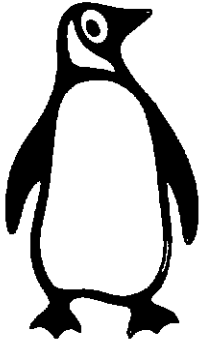
Old Niagara on the Lake

Peter John Stokes

Illustrated by Robert Montgomery

Niagara-on-the-Lake was Upper Canada's first capital and is Ontario's oldest community. Its architecture reflects all the pressures of government, commerce, and war which shaped the town's history. This volume, beautifully produced and illustrated, gives a nostalgic glimpse of the evolution of the town. Its structure is that of a guidebook - organized into three tours. Fifty-eight drawings, works of art in their own right, present the buildings in their original state, a lively and well-researched text gives the history of each building and places it in the context of the town's development, and an illustrated glossary examines selected architectural detail. A delightful book for visitor and armchair traveller alike. Publication date: June, \$15.00

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BIRD OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER

RED ON WHITE

*The Biography of Duke Redbird:
Marty Dunn; new press; Cloth \$4.95;
121 pages*

by Laird Orr

While I was studying symbols in Indian culture, I found out a bird is always a messenger, and red, of course, is representative of the redman. So my chosen name meant that I was an Indian messenger of some sort. It wasn't until later, that I found out the Thunderbird is usually a red bird . . .

DUKE REDBIRD, AN energetic and talented young Indian, has for some years been active in the struggle for the rights of the Canadian Indian. His biography is not really so much a biography as an extended interview, with the author providing biographical background. The book also contains collages and some of Redbird's poetry; it is decorated with a dazzling array of

type-faces in the approved manner.

The title really has two meanings. The first is obvious, since the book comprises Redbird's wide-ranging comments on North American society. But perhaps the more interesting meaning derives from the fact that Redbird was raised from the age of nine months in a white, middle-class home as a foster child. Indian culture is really a learned, second culture for Redbird — the result of a tragic fire that killed his mother and broke up his family.

They wondered whether I was an Indian or not. I had some idea in my mind of what an Indian was, and I was trying to play that role. I was faking. People didn't know exactly what was wrong, but they knew something was. That doesn't happen any more, because now when I go into a community, I am just myself, and myself is an Indian, but now I have all the background I didn't have at the time.

Redbird's struggle to achieve an Indian identity has thus been a much more intense version of every Indian's battle to maintain his culture. Redbird did not discover his own "Indianness" without many years of desperate searching. His highly-developed sense of the Indian's place in North America has found expression in Redbird's life as a political organizer, artist, actor, poet,

playwright and entrepreneur. The sense is well-expressed in one of his poems. He describes what he imagines to be the exquisite joys of being completely Indian and at home in some wild forest, regretting that he has never experienced them. He concludes:

Yet
My dreams are of these
My heart is one of them
The scent of them caresses my soul . . .

A disturbing aspect of the book is Redbird's description of the efforts of revolutionary groups, including the FLQ, to persuade him to influence Indians to join in a common violent solution to political problems. He seems to have refused all comers, largely because he mistrusts purely political solutions. In the case of the FLQ he felt that French cultural aspirations would undoubtedly predominate over Indian.

I was listening to what they had to say, and what I picked up from both the separatists and the black nationalists was that the Indians would be the little brown brothers of these big brothers. It was obvious that when the revolution was over, the Indian would still be just a little brown brother, and I didn't like that idea.

Red on White has a delightful organic quality. So called serious politi-



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cal matters are treated with no more solemnity, or for that matter space, than Redbird's romantic affairs. Everything is an anecdote. And this seems to be an accurate reflection of Redbird's life-style — all an effort to give expression to his laboriously discovered self. But egotism has its more benevolent forms as well: he wants all Indians to share his pride.

The book would have been much enhanced had Marty Dunn kept himself at a greater distance from his subject. There is little attempt to evaluate the material. The book is worth it, but it's not, except in the technical sense, a biography. It is an autobiography. LO

CAMPING IN CANADA

FAMILY CAMPING IN CANADA

*Canadian Family Camping Federation.
Methuen; Paperback \$2.95. 150 pages*

ONTARIO CALLS YOU CAMPING

*Enid Mallory; McMillan, paperback
\$2.95. 180 pages.*

ONTARIO TRAVEL

*edited by Marilyn Field-Marshall;
new press; paperback \$2.95; 390 pages.*

by Philip Sykes

ONCE YOU HAVE taken a summer camping holiday in Canada, you know the secret dimension of its empty horizons: there are people inside them somewhere. There are mornings that remind you of gray old film scenes of Hitler's Operation Barbarossa, when the snouts of a thousand tanks burst from haystacks and barns in the early light. In the peaceful camouflage of our summer landscapes, in the copse at Rivière-du-Loup and the dense wood by the road to Fundy, it is the clatter of pans, smoke and the whiff of bacon, then the lumbering emergence of our armies of the night — motorized columns of families in cars pulling box-like tent trailers, camper vans and long luxury trailers with showers in them and fridges stocked with soft drinks and beer.

The convenience of modern camping gear has opened the countryside

and wilderness in our time — two million people camped in Ontario last year. Some, like me, would take the road in a burst of enthusiasm and pay the price. I rented a camper van that proved in the end no more economical than a family suite in the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, started in dense traffic, camped where all the gnats of the St. Lawrence held assembly and, generally, staged a *Hulot's Holiday* on wheels. Later, as burns, bites and family abrasions healed, I made a campfire with driftwood from the beach and, drowsing by the embers, kidded myself I was at last coming to terms with outdoorsmanship.

Some campers aren't a bit like Hulot. Nothing impulsive, no Barbarossa lightning about their attack. They move rather with the deliberation of the late Count Alfred von Schlieffen, who worked out detailed logistics for the German invasion of Belgium 15 years before the event and, when shown the beauty of the river Pregel sparkling in the rising sun, looked hard through his monocle and judged it: "An unimportant obstacle." The von Schlieffens of campsites always come well prepared. Lean, practical men, they know the interior dynamics of stoves, read compasses and systematically pitch their tents back to the wind, away from trees and 25 feet above river level, to be clear of the morning mist.

They will enjoy *Family Camping in Canada*. It is produced by the Canadian Family Camping Federation and has the right methodical scoutmaster tone: "The single most important item that a prospective camper must acquire is his shelter . . ." It goes on with this leaden logic, but is undeniably useful about equipment, clothing, food, house-keeping, hiking, canoes, wilderness and winter camping: a good reference to keep in the glove compartment.

Ontario Calls You Camping is, by contrast, an enthusiast's book. Mrs. Mallory has been exploring Ontario with her family for more than 10 years and she has seen some of the best of it. Her accounts of the northland parks, Quetico, Algonquin, the canal systems and the Bruce and other hiking trails are full of information and of her sense of delight, lapsing into occasional family gossip, like letters from an observant friend. She not only tells how you should see Quetico or Flowerpot Island, but also shows you why you should.

Travel Ontario looks like a cheap popular encyclopaedia that somehow survived the 1930's. It's a sprawling compendium of scruffy little maps,



very uneven essays and facts of varying consequence about towns in Ontario — many of them facts you find in the Ontario Motor League's excellent handbook. The information is sometimes tantalizingly incomplete. Under What to See and Do in Whitby, for instance, it features "fishing for rainbow trout." But where does one find them? Whitby, after all, is a sizable place. I was pleased to find there is in the province a village called Oompah, population 53, but, for me, the point that Bolsover, population also 53, is 10 miles from the nearest beer store served only to confirm a long indifference to its existence. Still, somebody loves it, no doubt.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Philip Sykes is a former editor of MacLean's and currently sits on the editorial board of the Toronto Star. His first foray into the world of camping was last summer.

BAD MAN OF ALCATRAZ

PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE

*The Alvin Karpis Story — Alvin Karpis as told to Bill Trent. McClelland & Stewart.
cloth \$6.95, 256 pages. DDS-364.*

by Doug Fetherling

IT IS AT FIRST surprising to learn that, like Saul Bellow and so many others, Alvin Karpis — one of the most notorious hoods of the Thirties and a big name in the overall annals of American crime — is Canadian by birth. And in Karpis' case the fact is significant. For native convicts are paroled in the States only after swearing they will refrain from writing memoirs. But having been born in Montreal was a loop-hole for Karpis, let go in 1968 after thirty-three years in prison — twenty-five of them in Alcatraz with seventeen in solitary.

It is misleading to think of Alvin Karpis as a Prohibition gangster. He was not one of the lads returned from the Great War with little but a working knowledge of the Lewis machine gun.

continued on page 29

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MERLIN *continued from page 4*

fiction. They will sometimes lay out money on a good solid book that they think has a lot of value but they won't buy novels. And yet, what does a novel cost them? It costs them between \$5 and \$6.50. They'll go to a restaurant and eat that before they've begun to pay for their hooze. *But they will not buy books* and I don't know what in the world can ever persuade them to do so."

Predictably, Davies has even less use for librarians. "We hear so much propaganda," he snorts, "an enormous amount of it from librarians, about the marvels of our library system. But nobody seems to face the fact that our library system *chokes* authors." He fervently believes libraries should develop a system for paying royalties to authors (such a system, long advocated by A. P. Herbert, is now being considered by the British parliament) and dismisses suggestions that it would be too costly and complex to administrate:

"I don't see that it's really beyond the whim of man to devise. Admittedly, it's difficult. And it's a nuisance to librarians, who regard themselves as in a class with clergy and YMCA secretaries as public benefactors. Why shouldn't they do a little bookkeeping? *They* don't work for nothing. Their anxiety to get books into the hands of the public is not so great that they do it cheaply."

Davies is also extremely annoyed by the modern tendency of educational institutions to Xerox any books they want. "The fact is," he says, "however much people want to write, they are not going to do it if they're put in an inferior and disadvantaged position. Nobody expects painters to give their stuff away or allow anybody to reproduce it. And musicians have taken a rigid and hardnosed attitude to copyright regulations. But it's still thought that authors are simple, unworldly fellows who are just delighted if somebody will read their work and never think of getting paid for it.

"I think of the author as somebody who goes into the marketplace and puts down his rug and says, 'I will tell you a story' and then he passes the hat. And when he's taken up his collection, he tells his story and just before the denouement he passes the hat again. If it's worth anything, fine."

Robertson Davies is about to go into the marketplace and put down his rug again. He is at work on his fifth novel. As usual, he is writing on a typewriter ("You can see quite clearly what you've said in cold and impersonal print: I think it was J. B. Priestley who pointed out that there is nothing easier than to fall in love with all those pretty pages of calligraphy"). He will polish up his story with three very extensive revisions before he hands it to his publisher. And then it will be time to pass the hat.

Judging by *Fifth Business*, it will be a good story. It might even be so good that a few more Canadian readers will be tempted to pay money for it. But if you're one of those people who still feels that Canadian authors are simple, unworldly fellows who should be happy just to have their works in a library, don't go up to Robertson Davies at a party and tell him. The Merlin of Massey College is beginning to lose patience with petty-minded mortals. Remember, he can always wave his wand and whisk you into his next story, meanness and all.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Douglas Marshall is Managing Editor of *Books in Canada* and a free-lance journalist. He is one of the few people still concerned about the correct use of the English language and, to that end, is at work developing a style guide for *Books in Canada*, which should be available shortly.

His was the generation immediately after and he did not get into crime in earnest until 1929, the year the Capone-Moran era ended with seven men against the wall of a Chicago garage, four years before Repeal. Karpis was never a Syndicate man. He was free lance. Though he knew Frank (The Enforcer) Nitti, Capone's successor, and others of the kind, he was strictly a bank- and train-robber and kidnapper with none of this organized Unione stuff.

He was probably the last of the big ones of the Thirties to go. When he was captured by the F.B.I. in 1936, Nelson, the Barkers and Dillinger (who was the second Public Enemy Number One, after Capone and before Karpis) had all been killed. That Karpis survived at all, after being so many people's premier target and after a third of a century in jail, is astounding. And most of the background information is con-

tained in this volume of reminiscences, written with Bill Trent.

Trent has written the book in the prose style of the magazine that employs him. *Weekend*, a periodical I dislike with the intensity some people dislike polio. And gossip has it the manuscript was touched up by probably the finest journalistic stylist in the country, Robert Fulford, so it must have been downright drool before. And yet the reader cannot help liking Karpis' story, fascinating in its remove from everyday experience. It has gun-play and women and action of other kinds and humour and pathos and hate. It has just about everything going for it, including refutation of two commonly-accepted bits of ganglore.

Firstly, Karpis claims that, contrary to accounts in all the "standard works," he was not personally apprehended by J. Edgar Hoover, but by a disorganized crew of his agents who summoned their chief only after all possibility of

danger had passed. And secondly, he claims that he and his one-time partner Freddie Barker did not bring Ma Barker in on their crimes and that she was, in fact, something of a kindly old woman who was altogether ignorant of dastardly particulars.

It is a good, light book for (as they say) the general reader. And one with much information for (as they continue) the serious student.

And gossip further has it that Karpis is at work on a second book, this one about Alcatraz. On which, after all, he should be the recognized authority.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Doug Fetherling is a free-lance writer and author of several books of verse. He is also the editor/publisher of a new Toronto tabloid called *Tabloid*. Because *Tabloid's* office is next to that of *Books in Canada*, he borrows our telephone and we steal his writers.

A WORLD OF BOOKS

THERE MIGHT SEEM to be a twist of irony for a country like ours, whose writers and publishers are virtually drowning under waves of imported books, in the idea of an International Book Year. In reality, however, given its true intention – the promotion of writing and reading books – the IBY could not have occurred at a more appropriate moment for Canada. The idea that everybody should feel books to be as much an everyday necessity as bread has been one of the basic ideas in the founding of *Books in Canada*. In the following release, sent to us by David Bartlett, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, there is an appeal for suggestions of how Canada should contribute to this Year. If you feel about books as we do, sit down with a piece of paper now and work something out:

"The General Conference of Unesco, meeting last fall, proclaimed 1972 Inter-

national Book Year. The resolution proclaiming the IBY invites member states to initiate programmes which will promote the writing, production and distribution of books; to carry out activities which will stimulate the habit of reading; and to celebrate the IBY at the national level. It is in this connection that the Book Year becomes of particular concern to us. The problems of Canadian publishers, writers, booksellers are well-known and the relevance of the IBY to Canada is obvious.

"As a first step towards establishing a programme, the Canadian Commission for Unesco called an informal meeting of interested people on April 15. The group agreed that priority in planning should be devoted to expanding the audience for books. This activity would complement other programmes – for example in support of publishing – which are in prospect under other auspices.

"Some preliminary planning concerning co-ordination of IBY activities was done, and the Commission hopes that an official announcement will soon follow.

"A number of specific proposals were discussed, although final decisions have not yet been taken. Interesting ideas include:

- a contest for schools involving the production of books. The Peel County (Ontario) school library service has some experience with this;
- a programme of community seminars featuring Canadian authors;
- an organized approach to the mass media looking towards the production of films, TV programmes and the like featuring authors and their work;
- a programme to encourage translation, and particularly the production of graded reading intended for students of a second language;
- some special awards for creative people, other than authors, who are involved in book production. Illustrators and designers were mentioned in particular.

"If IBY is to have an effect in Canada, it must involve initiatives and imaginative programming through all the networks – public and private – concerned with books. The foregoing proposals are only a beginning: other suggestions will be very welcome and may be forwarded through the Editor of this magazine."



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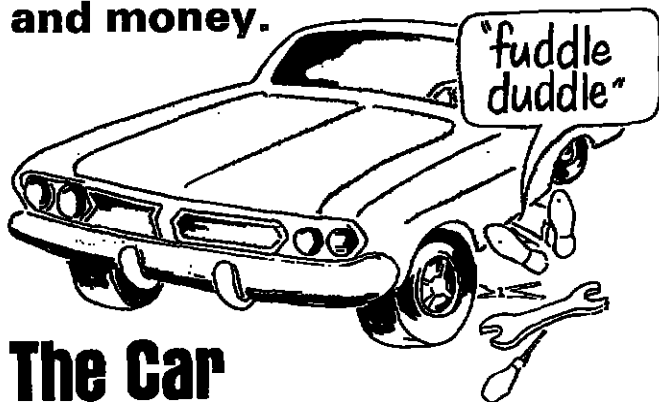
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EDITOR REGRETS

EDITING BOOKS IS a very pleasant way to make a living. Not, of course, as pleasant as rumour has it: an editor's life is not one long round of sumptuous expense account lunches and glittering cocktail parties overflowing with martinis, beauty, witty epigrams and laughter. But it is undeniably pleasant to spend one's time helping authors to bring out books. And every editor, of course, loves books.

There's just one dark corner in this bright picture of unrelieved happiness — an editor's life seems to be designed to make him hate books. It's not so inevitable that an editor will end up hating books as it is inevitable that, say, an old boxer who goes on too long will become punch-drunk. But it is a real occupational hazard that he may lose the love of books that brought him into publishing in the first place.

For one thing he spends most of his time reading. Manuscripts. Truly terrible manuscripts. Manuscripts of the sort that should be required reading for all Canadian teachers and politicians who feel that our schools have been doing a pretty good job. Manuscripts of the sort that should be fed occasionally to savage reviewers, who would promptly begin to slobber praise over everything that actually was published, suddenly aware of how gallantly the publisher was protecting the public.

When the poor editor staggers home after a day with these manuscripts, does he sink gratefully into an armchair and immerse himself in the timeless wonders of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, glorying in the stately progress of Gibbon's studied prose? No. He watches "Mannix." After particularly bad days he finds himself singing along with Firestone commercials.

It's even worse if he has been copy-editing. After hours of poring line by line over the proof sheets of a forthcoming book checking that every comma and apostrophe is in place, the last thing he wants to do is read a book. Because from bitter experience he knows that even old man Gibbon's prose is only going to get a tenth of his attention. The other nine tenths are going to be engaged in studying the text to check that every comma and apostrophe is in place.

When he has been actually editing a rough manuscript, reading a book is out of the question. Anything he reads is regarded as rough material ready for his editorial polishing. When the lust is on, he'll edit anything — from Conrad ("Have Jim tell the whole story in the first person"), to letters from his mother.

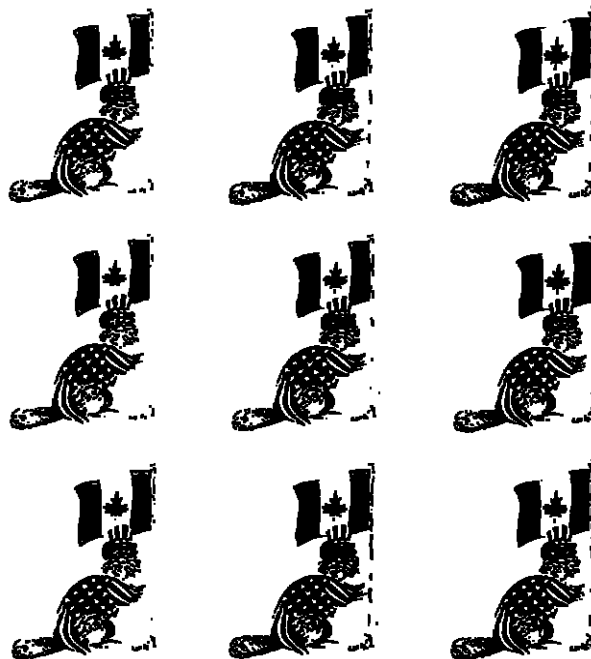
Above all, it's unthinkable that he should ever want to read one of "his own" books after publication. By that time he will already have read it at least five times. So the only novelty he can look forward to consists of the surprises the ever-ingenious printers have managed to slip in. A page printed upside down, a few "nots" cunningly deleted, the odd caption hilariously switched — no printer worth his salt will fail to come up with something. But the editor will wisely decide that in this case ignorance is bliss and will put the book, unread, on his display shelf.

Somehow, against all these fearful odds editors do seem to manage to read books — and to enjoy doing so. This is just as well; an editor who hates books is about as much use as, say, a sea-sick sailor. But then didn't Nelson always suffer from sea-sickness? Hmm.

REVIEWER'S BIOGRAPHY

Stet is the pseudonym of the editor of a large publishing house. He wishes to develop his theme in coming issues and would like to hear from our readers about aspects of book editing they would be interested in learning.

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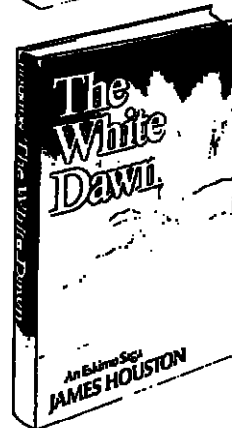
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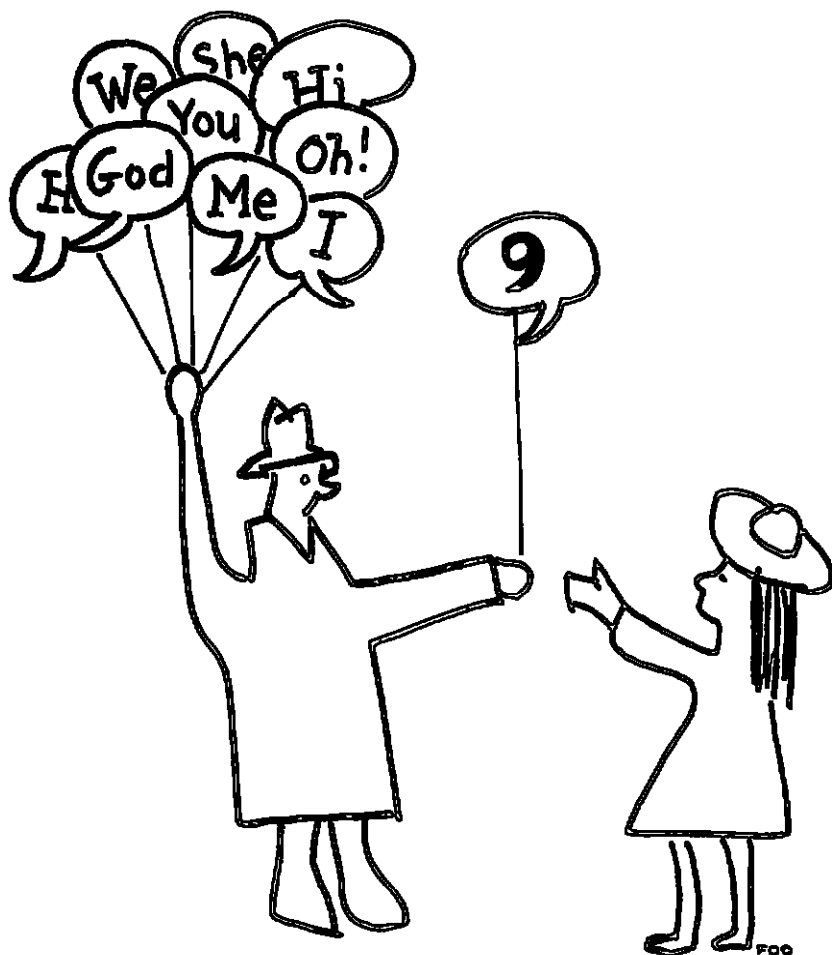
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No. 1

AS A GLANCE at our list of current
Canadian books (see page 34) will con-
firm, a new trend is developing in Cana-
dian fiction. More and more novels
about the north are making their ap-
pearance. They could be called North-
erns or perhaps, when turned into
drama, Huskie Operas. This was a liter-
ary landscape first explored extensively
by Jack London and then all but ig-
nored. We can't help feeling it's a pity
that great writers of the past never got
a chance to produce Northerners and that
most modern novelists have tended to
eschew the genre (yes, yes, we know
about *The Incomparable Atuk*). Read-
ers are invited to produce a passage,
maximum length 100 words, from any
one of the following might-have-beens
of literature: *Midnight Sun's Dream*;
Pride and Permafrost; *The Ookpic
Papers*; *Portrait of the Artist as a Young
Eskimo*; *To the Norway House*; *War and
Peace River*; *Across the Muskeg and
into the Booze*; and *Suet Thursday*. The
usual prizes will be awarded the winner.
Address entries to: Lit. Wit No. 1, *Books
in Canada*, 6 Charles St. East, Toronto
5, Ontario. The deadline is June 30.

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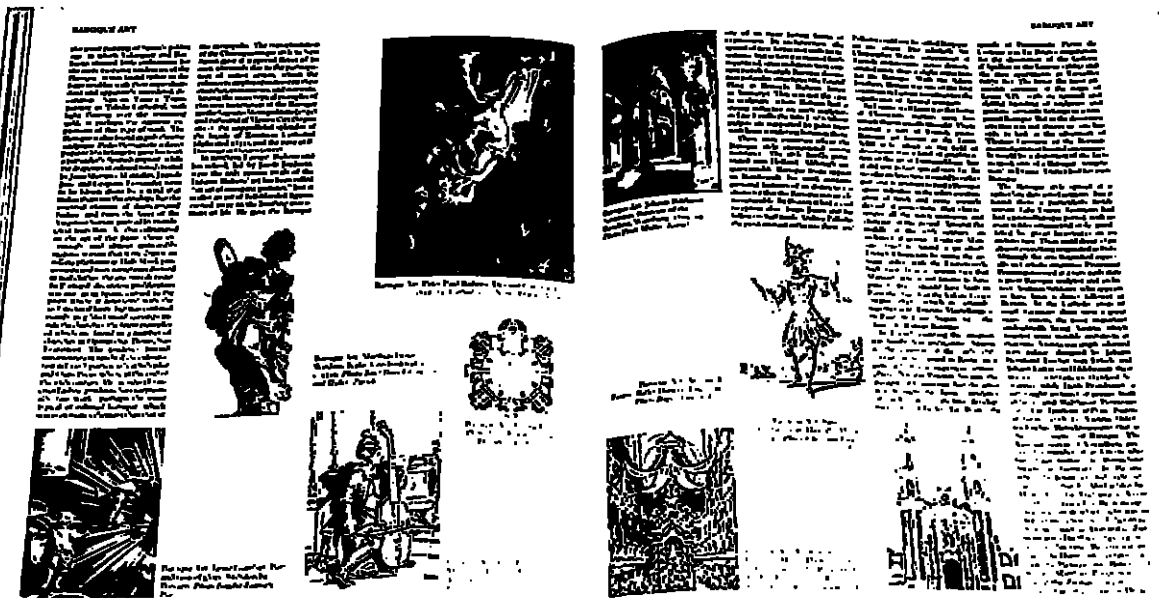
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