

BOOKS *in* CANADA

a national review of books

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 12

DECEMBER, 1976



WORLD NEVER ERRIED

David Lewis covers the second coming of Dietl's memoirs

Richard Lubbock
doesn't remember

Bill O'Rourke
opens his books to
Shirley Gibson

Brian Vincent
scales a tower of
GUT BOOKS

PLUS REVIEWS BY

Eric Arthur, I.M. Owen, Sylvia Fraser, Chris Scott, Len Gasparini,
Ellen Godfrey, David Helwig, and Morris Wolfe

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SHORT TO REIGN O'ER US

Short, but oh how sweet. And Dief can taste it still

by David Lewis

One Canada: The Years of Achievement **1956-1962**, by John G. Diefenbaker, Macmillan, 320 pages, \$15 cloth (ISBN 0-7705-1443-X).

THIS BOOK, THE second volume of **Diefenbaker's** memoirs, presents a full end fulsome view of the accomplishments of the **first two Diefenbaker governments**. It covers every area at home and abroad. It gives a great deal of **space** to foreign policy as well as domestic programs. The Chief holds our attention as he paints vignettes of his world **tour** or describes some of the world leaders he met. He then gives us valuable summaries of conversations he had with them. On **occasion** he is didactic, outlining the **prerogatives** of the Monarch and of the Prime Minister, the **processes** of Parliament and of the cabinet, always lovingly.

Mr. Diefenbaker is obviously an imaginative observer and **colourful** raconteur. Whether he defends policy, describes **events**, or delineates personalities, there is drama and anecdote in the telling. The book makes interesting reading.

Whatever one's opinion of the **Diefenbaker** era, it produced at **least** three events in which all Canadians can take pride. One is the former Prime Minister's speech to the **General Assembly of the United Nations** on Sept. 26, 1960. His challenge to **Khrushchev** was forthright and impressive:

Another equally admirable act was Mr. Diefenbaker's **part** in opposing apartheid and demanding a declaration **against racial** discrimination at the Commonwealth Conference of **1961**. This led to South Africa leaving the **Commonwealth**. Present events in southern Africa make this even more significant.

Third, but not least, is the enactment of the Canadian Bill of Rights. Undoubtedly if such rights could be entrenched in the constitution, they would be safer. But in view of the immense obstacles to such entrenchment, **Mr. Diefenbaker** was right. Both in the schools and in the courts, the law has **already proven** to be of great value.

These **were** not the **only** actions of the Diefenbaker governments that even a political opponent could applaud. One **thinks** of ARDA (Agricultural Rehabilitation and **Development Act**), the fiat **major** program of **rural** and, later, **regional** development. Similarly, the provision of assistance for technical and **vocational** training was the germinal idea for the **present manpower** training program. **There** were the introduction of simultaneous **translation** in Parliament and the **franchise** for Indians and Eskimo; **The** book **deals** lyrically with all these and **more**.

As one might **expect**, a **great** deal of space is given to **Diefenbaker's** **Vision** of the North. The former **Prime Minister** saw it as the continuation of **Macdonald's** historic task of **nation-building** within the context

of modern requirements and circumstances." He envisioned huge reserves of oil and gas in the North, industrial **development** and new **communities everywhere**.

One would have thought **that**, writing in 1976, Mr. Diefenbaker would acknowledge that there are serious problems about imposing this **kind** of development on the North. Not a word of doubt does one **find** anywhere. He still writes of the program **with fervour**. The Vision is **alive** and well and continues to live in Mr. Diefenbaker's rhetoric.

As one reads the book one becomes increasingly sceptical about this unrelieved self-congratulation on every page. If one were to accept the author's version of events, 1957 did not merely see a change of government; it saw the Second Coming.

However, as one reads the book one **becomes** increasingly **sceptical** about the unrelieved **self-congratulation** on every page. If one were to accept the author's version of events, **1957** did not **merely** see a **change** in government; it saw a **Second Coming**. **Only once** in 320 pages is there an admission of failure. (He thinks he should have acted more quickly on **Davie Fulton's** formula for **patriating the constitution**.) The rest is an **unbroken catalogue** of **flawless** achievements.

The book is equally **marred** by gross partisanship. In the heat of political battle this is understandable, **but** in a chronicle of past events it is somewhat **annoying**. Everything B.D. and A.D. (Before and After Diefenbaker) was unspeakable. His **partisanship** goes so far as to castigate Tommy Douglas as a political trickster because as **Premier** he brought **medicare** to **Saskatchewan** in 1961-62 when Diefenbaker **had appointed the Hall Commission on health** care the year before. The facts are that the **Saskatchewan** government appointed a commission on health, headed by **Dr. W. P. Thompson**, **president** of the University of **Saskatchewan**, early in 1960, which began its hearings in May, **mow** than a year before the Hall Commission was announced. Indeed, a pilot project had been set up in the Swift Current area years earlier.

I deal with the above incident not because it is particularly important, but because I have personal knowledge of the sequence and could spot the fallacy without research. This highlights the difficulty of commenting on the contents of this book as distinct from style. The author describes **events** in such "Grit equals black, Tory equals white" **terms** that **one** has to go to original sources to find **the grey** or even the pink. **Indeed**, Diefenbaker is so obsessed



David Lewis

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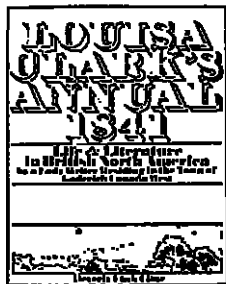
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with Grit and Tory rivalry that he expresses regret that he agreed to recognize the third parties as such when he was Prime Minister.

Paranoia, particularly about civil servants, stalks the pages.; The appointment of new members to the Civil Service Commission shortly before he took office, persuades Mr. Diefenbaker that it must have been a plot to frustrate the Conservative government. Later he admits that he became so impressed with Arnold Heeney, the new chairman, that he appointed him ambassador to Washington, but this does not prevent him from casting doubt on his loyalty and that of the other commission members. At one point the author states categorically that a number of senior civil servants "had simply been underground, quietly working against my government." He does not say who they were and gives not a shred of evidence for so sweeping an accusation. For a defender of civil rights, this is questionable indeed.

I happen to hold the view, and have often expressed it publicly, that a new government should change the top advisers, especially if it has not been in office for a long time. But I argue this not out of fear that the former advisers would be disloyal or work against the government. Simple common sense suggests that if the new government has innovative ideas and new approaches, it should have advisers who are in sympathy with those ideas and approaches. But this is not the thinking Mr. Diefenbaker expresses. For him the top civil servants were Grits and therefore ipso facto not to be trusted. The danger is that when one starts on the loyalty route, one may go on without end. Thus, when the author discusses some of his cabinet colleagues, he makes the following distressing comment: "Unfortunately, I trusted my colleagues; but, then, in the period of my prime-ministership I had no reason not to." I find this sad.

Mr. Diefenbaker leaves no doubt about his attachment to the Monarchy and the Commonwealth. In his enthusiasm he makes some extreme statements. He says: for example, "that historically allegiance to the Crown has provided Canada a raison d'être, and that but for it, Canada might have ceased to be an independent nation and become part of the United States." At another point he states: "The Queen... is perhaps the most knowledgeable person in the world in the fields of Commonwealth and foreign affairs." It takes faith for a grown man, let alone a leader, to make such assertions.

In my review of the first volume of these memoirs, I objected to statements that suggested that Mr. Diefenbaker had actively opposed the King government's treatment of the Canadian Japanese during the Second World War. I know of at least one other reviewer who made the same point. It is a measure of Mr. Diefenbaker's approach to historical perspective that he attempts to reply to these criticisms by reference to a statement he made in the House of Commons on April 23, 1947 — almost two years after the war ended. By then, even those responsible recognized that they had perpetrated an injustice against the Japanese Canadians.

The present volume, like the first, is well worth reading. There are titillating phrases, interesting anecdotes, as well as much solid thought and analysis. They are the author's version of the Coyne affair, of certain exchanges with the Americans, of relations with the provinces, particularly Quebec. Mr. Diefenbaker's statements about his concept of Canada, of Canadians, and of nationalism are moving, if sometimes rather simplistic. However, one should not look for objectivity in this book. From my own knowledge of some of the events, I have no doubt that they have been coloured to suit the author's framework and his conviction that righteousness clothed all his actions. No doubt the next volume will show that if righteousness was defeated in 1962 and 1963, it was because of the treachery of some of his colleagues and the perfidy of the Grits. □

BRIDGE OF TONGUES

Why an Arabic-speaking, Baghdad-born Jew is a perfect guide to the modern Canadian experience

by I.M. Owen

Farewell, Babylon, by Naim Kattan, translated from the French by Sheila Fischmao, **McClelland & Stewart**, 192 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7710-4470-4).

THE PRINCIPLE OF massacring whole communities because of their religions was first introduced to the Middle East on July 15, 1099, when the flower of Western European chivalry entered Jerusalem and put to the sword the Muslim and Jewish populations, who had lived in amity and courtesy with each other and with their Christian neighbours for 461 years and five months. So what we have been seeing lately in Lebanon has been the light of Western civilization, still burning. And as the flames continue to leap up here and there throughout the region, don't dismiss it as the curious behaviour of inscrutable orientals; it was our crowd that started it all.

Indeed, so alien is the custom to the Middle Eastern mind that it was another 841 years and 10 months before it seeped over the desert and crossed the Tigris into the streets of Baghdad. At that date, 1941, the immediate Western source of inspiration was naturally Nazi Germany. A group of Iraqi nationalists had seized power in January, their object being to throw off the British suzerainty which, though it had ended *de jure* in 1932, continued *de facto* and had inevitably tightened since the outbreak of war. The new government proclaimed itself a belligerent on the German side. It didn't last long: at the end of May the nationalist prime minister was already in flight from Baghdad and the regent was about to return with a British army at his back when there was one last flare-up of the borrowed Nazi spirit: a full-scale pogrom, known in Iraq & Jewish history as the *Farhoud*.

The Jewish boy who is the central figure in this autobiographical novel was 13 at the time of the *Farhoud*, and it was the turning-point in his life, though that was not fully apparent to him at the time. Becoming a published writer at 14, he continued for some years to think of his life as dedicated to the building of an Iraqi literature. (In spite of the immense age of its society, Iraq as a nation-state is even younger than Canada.) But it was too late; the Jewish community of Baghdad suddenly had no future, and knew it. Inevitably, the young man would emigrate to the West, and would not return. The point of the novel's title is that Baghdad, the Abode of Peace for Jews as well as Arabs for 13 centuries, had become the Babylon of their captivity.

The reader who picked up this magazine in order to read about Canadian books may be getting restless by this time. When are the moose and the maples coming into this story? Restless Reader clearly doesn't know — and it's time he did — that Naim Kattan, one of the most significant of Canadian literary figures, is indeed a Jew from Baghdad whose native tongue is Arabic. Extraordinarily, he is now a leading literary critic in French Canada, and as the principal literary officer of

the Canada Council he exercises an extensive and wholly benign influence among writers and publishers across the country. His name, I am told by the Semitic scholar Frank Newfeld, means "pleasant small person," which argues singular foresight on the part of his parents. He married a Montrealer and is the father of another very pleasant, very small person whose existence holds a promise that in a couple of generations the name Kattan will be as fully naturalized in French Canada as Ryan, Johnson, Burns, and other exotics.

The opening chapter sheds a light I have long sought on how Kattan could fit so beautifully into our world at this moment in our history. The young men are discussing the future Iraqi literature, whether foreign models should be used, and if so should they be Saroyan and Hemingway or Balzac and Maupassant? That's familiar, but an even more familiar note is struck when the language of the discussion becomes crucial. While all Iraqis speak Arabic, there are three dialects—Muslim, Jewish, and Christian—which are so different that they are almost separate languages. And "the presence of a single Muslim in a group was enough for

... in a couple of generations the name Rattan will be as fully naturalized in French Canada as Ryan, Johnson, Burns, and other exotics.

his dialect may be imposed." At once one thinks of English in Montreal and Ottawa in recent times.

On this particular evening Nessim, one of the two Jews present, takes an unprecedented step. His advocacy of French literature is expressed, without apology, in the Jewish dialect. His friend the narrator, deeply embarrassed, takes refuge in silence until Nessim puts a question to him directly:

I chose a middle course. My words were neither those of the Jews nor the Muslims. I spoke in literary Arabic, the Arabic of the Koran. Then in a supercilious tone and with contained anger, Nessim corrected me: "You mean...?" And he translated into perfect Jewish dialect. "Nessim was forcing me to take a stand against the solidarity of the group. I could not reject our common language without humiliating myself.

Nessim's obstinacy prevails:

By the end of the evening we had won the game. For the first time the Muslims were listening to us with respect. . . . In the heat of the discussion, Jamil and Said borrowed some of our familiar expressions. They stammered over words they had heard so often but never allowed to cross their lips. They apologized for their awkwardness.

As the evening progressed, Jewish words came more frequently to these foreign mouths. It was decidedly uncomfortable to carry on a long conversation in two distinct languages.

That last sentence brings back the memory of many long meetings in Ottawa that Naim Kattan and I have sat through together, "carried on in two distinct languages." They

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always ended in a headache for me, and now I know why youth in Toronto was less adequate preparation for this particular Canadian experience than youth in Baghdad.

To have a door opened on such a totally unfamiliar world as Baghdad is bound to be fascinating, especially when our guide is one who belongs there but has also belonged here for more than 20 years, so that he knows precisely which of these

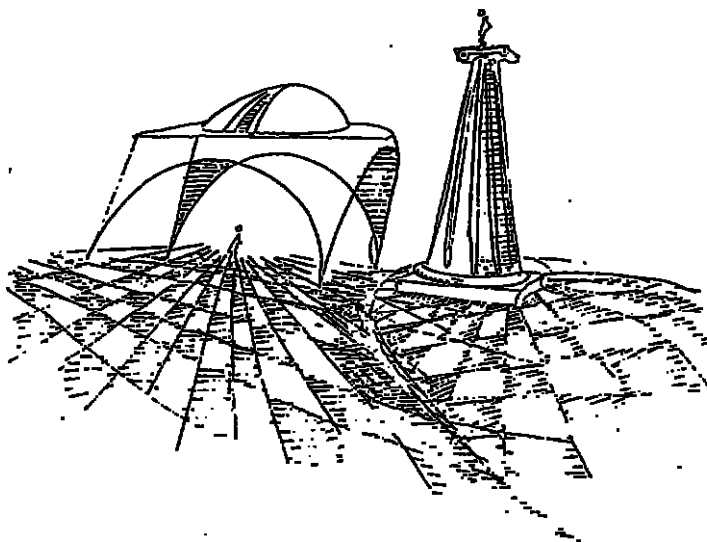
Now I know why youth in Toronto was less adequate' preparation for this particular Canadian experience than youth in Baghdad.

things, so familiar to him, will be interesting to us. But apart from that, the novel is an account of a universal theme, a boy's growing up. His fascination with the mystery of sex is handled both tenderly and humorously — and, to the male reader at least, very recognizably; but the exotic setting heightens the experience, and we realize how the mystery, the longing, and the fears must be enhanced in a world where women are so thoroughly wrapped up and for so much of the time hidden away.

Sheila Fischman's translation makes us forget that it is a translation most of the time, which is a translator's object. I admire it particularly because I have made two attempts to translate Kattan, one (I think) successful, the other — well, I burnt it. His French prose is beautiful but not (to put it mildly) limp.

In the early pages, only a couple of minor Gallicisms break the flow of the English — when we meet "Nordic Muslimin" (like Leif ben Eric?) and when "the British soldiers found themselves at the gates of the city." But toward the end some of the sentences strike me as less than natural English. I won't quote chapter and verse because I haven't looked at the original and am not certain that I could suggest improvements. But I mention it in order to make a point about translation.

The great occupational hazard of the translator is that after you have spent some weeks immersed in your author's style it inevitably comes to seem to you the most natural mode of expression. Hence the later pages of a translation tend to be progressively more literal and less English. Both as translator and as publisher of translations, I have seen this happen in a number of typescripts. I think publishers are inclined to take translations on faith, and not to realize that every translator urgently needs a fresh editorial eye cast over the typescript, and a knowledgeable editorial voice to say, "Look, is that sentence really the way you'd say it in English?" I don't think Sheila Fischman has had that help with this book. All the more glory to her for doing such a fine job. □





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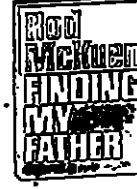
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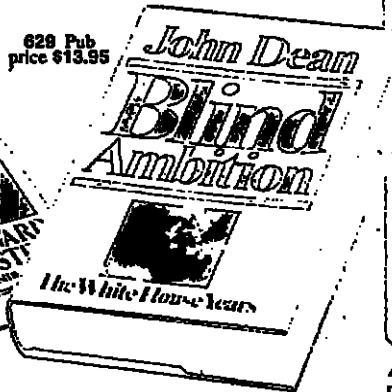
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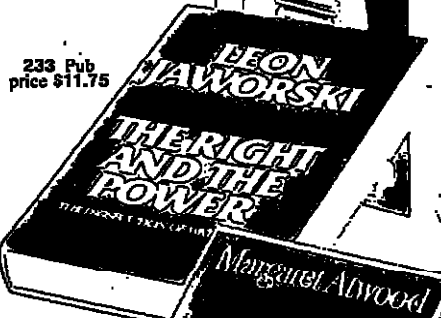
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DAVID GAGNE

LIFE TO WRIGHT...

...or the observer-observed. Five revealing hours with Canada's proud, gun-shy comic novelist

by Shirley Gibson

RICHARD WRIGHT's publishers thought he'd be "delighted" to have me interview him. I wasn't sure.

In the past six years Wright has published three first-rate novels. *The Weekend Man* was acclaimed in Canada, Britain, and the U.S. and is being translated into French and Japanese. His second, *In the Middle of a Life*, won the Faber & Faber award for fiction. *Farthing's Fortunes*, his new larger-than-life picaresque novel, has just been released both here and abroad (see the October issue of *Books in Canada*). Wright is that rare creature, a comic novelist who, to quote Walter Clemons of the New York Times, "writes with the apparent ease of breathing, and he is both touching and very, very funny because you do not catch him trying." He lives close to the Toronto literary scene but while many readers know and admire his work, the man remains a mystery. At a time when Canadian writers are promoted as national resources, how come we know so little about Richard Wright? Obviously because he wants it that way.

So when I phoned him I allowed for the possibility that he'd turn me down cold. He's too courteous for that, but he *did* hedge. "I don't know... I don't go for all that hype." I told him I didn't either. He tried again: "I'm gun-shy." I said I could understand why. Had I read his books? Yes, I had. How did I like his new one? I suggested that a writer who makes me laugh can't be all bad, and on that reassuring note we set a date.

I was waiting when he came into the bar at Toronto's Four Seasons Motel — the unofficial CBC watering hole. We shook hands tentatively but by the time his dry vermouth arrived, we'd started to talk. Five hours later, when we finished, I felt I'd learned at least something about the engaging paradox that is Richard B. Wright.

How do you pin down a man who is shy but arrogant; a "loner" but a devoted friend and family man; a comic novelist whose books are taught in several departments of religion? A writer who is intensely Canadian but expects his books to be read everywhere; is proud of his working-class background but teaches in a select boys' school; who values elegance and style but has no patience with affectation? A man with passionate respect for some things but an outrageous irreverence for most others?

Wright, who is 39, was born in Midland, Ont., the youngest of five children. His grandfather came here from Ireland during the famine and there's a trace of Pennsylvania Dutch in the family. Early in the conversation he told me: "When I was born my father couldn't pay for the hospital room. So he did some painting in the building by way of exchange." He doesn't say much about his childhood but concedes that he was something of an outsider, an observer perhaps, as far back as he can remember. After studying communications at Ryerson, he worked for a time at CFOR in Orillia. But he wanted to be a publisher. or though the did,

and joined Macmillan in Toronto. He stayed with them for eight years but meanwhile he had started writing. I asked him why.

"I think, maybe I always wanted to be a writer. Even as a child I seemd to be looking at things or watching the life around me. And I like words. I love the English language the way some people have a deep and abiding affection for sailing or skiing. Why does a person write? I don't know. I like writing: actually enjoy creating characters and incidents out of words in the way that another man might-enjoy working in wood or stone."

He left publishing and for seven years he and his wife Phyllis lived on the income from his novels, two Canada Council grants and some part-time teaching. They tried a "return to the land" but it didn't work. He describes those years as difficult — "almost heroic:" then withdraws the word as excessive but we agree that a writer's career places heavy demands on his family. I asked if his wife resented the sacrifices. He thought not but said I should ask her myself.

When they tired of their hand-to-mouth existence, Wright taught for a time at Trent University in Peterborough, then moved on to Ridley College, a private boys' school in St. Catharines where he's head of the English department. Why isn't he writer-in-residence at some university? He's been invited but considers it too temporary. His sons are five and nine now and need the security of a settled place. He loves teaching, even though he doesn't get any writing done during the school year. But in the three summer months a novel can be blocked out and already he has one underway. It's clear that this arrangement suits him, providing an ordered environment for his writing while meeting the needs of his family.

I suggested that many of his views were pleasantly old-fashioned. This was dismissed on the grounds that he hates labels. He is radical in some respects, but agreed that he's suspicious of modernism and "Edwardian in spirit," perhaps even conservative in the original sense of the word. "I am also arrogant and irascible and self-righteous — but not pompous. I hope I'm not pompous!" A writer's dedications can be revealing and I'd noticed Wright's at once. The first novel carries a formal dedication to his mother and father; the second a discreet but loving tribute "to P."; and the third, in bold capital letters. "This book is for my two sons."

He planned to finish three novels before he reached 40 and he's done that. After nine mows in 10 years he's content to stay in one place. Wright thinks he's the intuitive partner in his marriage, admitting that his wife is far more practical and level-headed, and wondered if this left him playing what is conventionally the woman's role. The possibility didn't distress him: he looked like a man storing away a useful piece of knowledge. His only regret is the lack of privacy in his present life. "I enjoy solitude and wish to Jesus I had more of it." This is heartfelt and I wonder what I'm doing there, interviewing him.

You can't talk to Wright without involving his books. His subjects, themes and images, his characters and his relationship to them were woven into our conversation. He resists the suggestion that his novels are autobiographical even though there are parallels with his own life. *The Weekend Man* is set in a Toronto publishing house and Bill Farthing, in his latest novel, is the youngest of five children. Yes, of course he draws upon his own experience but, going through his three books, he does not have a retarded child (although people still ask if he has), his mother did not die giving birth to him, his father is not in a nursing home, he is not separated from his wife, and he does not pursue a chimera. With the completion of *Farthing's Fortunes* he considers himself primarily a story-teller and the book confirms it.

Wright is a very funny man. It's not surprising that he's gun-shy when he draws such a sharp bead himself. But like the best comic writers, there's a gentleness and a sense of decency underlying his wit. His observation is so acute that

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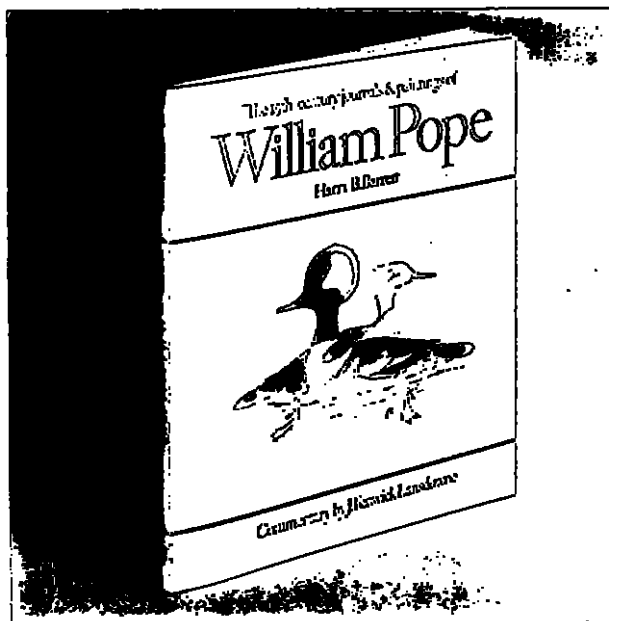
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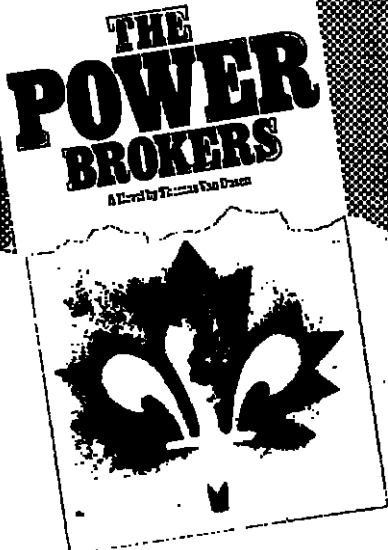
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I asked how he gets through a day. He laughed at himself: "Often I don't. The ability to observe is both a blessing and a curse, but you can't turn it off even if you want to."

I mentioned the overwhelming "sadness" that pervades his work. He defined it as a sense of loss, the loss of God and all our gods, which leaves us like Landon in *In the Middle of a Life*: "surrounded by the awfulness of life, the brute facts of living — the terrible day-to-day griefs which must be borne." It's easy to detect Wright's own sensibility in these lines. His new novel is an hilarious cock-and-bull story, intended "to take the mickey out of Canadians, Americans, Irish, and British," but in it he continues to touch down, albeit more subtly, on his powerful theme of loss.

I mentioned another more frivolous preoccupation in his work, and this one took him by surprise. His women characters are physically strong, with strapping thighs, fine knees, stout calves: even the waitresses are "big horsey girls." One exception is Sally Butters in his latest novel, who we never really see; the other is Vera, the fashionable, angular, estranged wife in his second novel and the only totally unsympathetic woman in his books. Wright looked startled, but agreed I was on to something and sat there thinking it over. Later he confided that strapping thighs are line, knees don't do much for him, and he really prefers a tapered calf. In any case. "I like women generally. They're far more interesting and civilized than men."

Believing that you are what you read, I asked what writers he prefers. "I read history and a fair amount of poetry and I find myself going back to a few writers who have become old friends. People like Years, Donne and Blake, Coleridge, George Herbert and Chaucer — God be good to that merry old Englishman. Novelists? Bellow and Malamud and Walker Percy, a fine under-rated writer. Some of John Updike, like *The Centaur*. A few Canadian writers, but I won't bother mentioning their names. I always go back to Swif?. Twain, Mencken, Smollett, and other nay-sayers and scoffers. I have a temperamental attachment to funny pessimistic writers."

And what does he teach? "No mickey-mouse courses at Ridley." His students get Yeats, Auden, Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Chaucer, the Romantics. Novelists such as Joyce, Camus, Faulkner, Hemingway. A course on the classical tragedy — *Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Lear*. And Canadian literature, including Atwood, Laurence, Munro, Richler, and Callaghan. "And no, I do not teach my own books."

He's a member of the Writers' Union but "you don't hear me spouting off." He sees books of our own as important, but acknowledges a debt of gratitude to his New York editor and admires the energy and professionalism of his American publisher. Wright questions government subsidy as a way of life for writers and publishers, and while supporting Canadian content in core areas in the schools, he sees quotas in bookstores or libraries as interfering with fundamental freedom. Does he think *Farthing's Fortunes* will win the Governor General's Award? No, he doesn't, but the thought doesn't trouble him. It's a statement of fact from a confident, professional writer who has set his own goals and reached them.

Wright is happy with his three novels. He sees his writing as a talent to be used, a gift to be valued. He accepts that he must earn a living and enjoys his teaching. An evening with a friend and a bottle of Bushmill's is okay too, but anything else that distracts from his writing he considers a betrayal of his gift.

We finished talking. I moved to pay the bill but Wright moved faster. He likes Toronto — "the provincial capital of the world" — and as I left he headed for the Yonge Street strip to take his wife to dinner at a favourite trusting spot. He complained to me later: "The food was no lodger as good, the service is lousy, the prices are outrageous, and the place was filled with people in overalls. For Christ's sakes!" □

And now, over to a book you've paid for already

by Richard Lubbock

As It Happened, by Barbara Frum, McClelland & Stewart, 188 pages, \$10 cloth (ISBN 00710-3195-5).

THERE **MUST** have been about 10 of us there that historic evening, packed into a pair of stuffy green boxes that make up CBC's Toronto radio studio K. It was Monday, Nov. 18, 1968, and we were gathered to witness and participate as, for the first time, the *As It Happens* roller coaster tottered uncertainly round the bend, creaked up the mountain, and then roared into the depths.

Barbara Frum had never been thought of.

The host that evening was Toronto journalist Phil Forsyth. His second banana was staff announcer Harry Brown, fresh in from Newfoundland, who nowadays stars on *Morningside*, in Peter Gzowski's old morning slot. Val Clery (later to help establish *Books in Canada*, and serve as its first editor) presided nervously as executive producer. I recall that one of our story editors was the glamorous, bilingual journalist, Penny Williams. Judy Brake, who sent on to serve with distinction in the trenches of *This Country in the Morning*, was production assistant. And I stood by in my capacity as reporter of baroque special events.

It was a magical night, a night to remember. But it is not remembered in Barbara Frum's memoir of the show, *As It Happened*. Indeed, the historical passages of her book would be belter suited by the title "As It Didn't Happen." For example, Val Clery, who devised, developed and shepherded *As It Happens* into existence, has been expunged from the record entirely. In his place Ms. Frum dishes up some vague rumour about how the phone-out format originated in Germany. That's not quite the way others recall it, and it seems strange that Frum, who thinks nothing of placing transAtlantic calls to the Pope, did not try to reach Mr. Clery on the internal phone system of the CBC, where he works as a radio producer.

Her unperson in the Version According to Frum is painter and broad-

caster William Ronald, who nobly hosted the show for at least two years until Ms. Frum was parachuted down on to him. They co-hosted the show for a while, and then Ronald was brutally dumped and Ms. Frum had it all to herself. Bill Ronald is not exactly the sort of personality who merges with the wallpaper, and I am surprised that a woman of such alertness and intelligence would fail to recall his name or notice his burly presence around the studio.

To put it bluntly, Frum gives the impression that the show didn't exist until she descended upon the scene in a blaze of glory, bringing forth light where darkness o'erruled before. Yet *As It Happens* and its fraternal twin, *Radio*



Barbara Frum

Free Friday, had run for three years before her coronation, building good audiences and proving the format. She belittles the years of work that went into those shows, dismissing them as "a couple of experimental efforts." If I didn't know better I would be inclined to suspect she is a graduate of George Orwell's "1984" School of Journalism.

But these are mere cavils. Let's look at the book.

As It Happened consists mostly of lightly edited transcripts selected from the thousands of interviews amassed by Frum during her incumbency, linked by passages of explanation and comment. It represents a staggering performance. Unless you have spent time in that hot seat (as I have), headset clamped to your

ears, plugged into a crackling phone line to Guam, trying to converse live-on-air with a horde of rock-eating starfish in the middle of the Pacific, barely able to make out what is said, let alone respond to it appropriately, you will find it hard to appreciate the energy, acuteness, and moxie required to carry out this assignment as well and as consistently as Frum does.

And what interviews! *As It Happened* is an invaluable archive of verbatim responses from the most outstanding thugs, nuts, spies, creeps, sneaks, klutzes, and sages of the past five years. In these pages you can meditate on the insane ratiocinations of whaleophile Sandra Good, a disciple of Charles Manson, and devoted friend of would-be murderess "Squeaky" Fmmme. There's Jots of stuff on sex, reported in the original words of Mickey Spillane, Malcolm Muggeridge, and others — including Jan (formerly James) Morris, who sees both sides of the question, and Mr. Alex Comfort, who animadverts on monogamy ("penile servitude").

You will meet the UFO buffs, and the UFO anti-buffs. You can study at leisure a sales pitch from His Holiness Maheshi Mahesh Yogi (who is not such a bad fellow as Frum seems to think). There is a satisfying account of how the oily prestidigitator Uri Geller was rendered impotent by Barbara's baleful glare. Mel Brooks delivers "The Sermon on The Matzo." And there's one informative interview, which for some inscrutable reason never got on air, with a gentleman in Los Angeles who runs a sado-masochistdungeon, in which he offers his clients such delights as fruit-flavored enemas.

And then there are the serious bits. The book plays, down Ms. Frum's habitual lofty-lefty obsession with the "oppressed." But she takes care to confirm her ideological purity by including a righteous probe in the misdeeds of those villainous scallywags, General Motors and the other multinationals; and she includes a ritual disparagement of the dreadful, dreadful rotters at the FBI and CIA. In this connection, it's interesting to note that

From admits that the splendid warrior for liberty, Dr. S.I. Hayakawa, categorized her as a "knee-jerk liberal." She tries to laugh it off, but I sense she is a little too choosy about criticism of anyone. I can't think why she should resent his comment. In my opinion, Hayakawa, a semanticist of not inconsiderable distinction, chose his words with surgical precision.

It's all good fun, for those of us who enjoy that sonofthing. But I am obliged to remark on a disturbing feature of the book that brought itself to my attention as I riffled through the pages for the first time. I immediately noticed that an on-seemly proportion of Ms. From's text consists of great undigested chunks of tape transcripts. In fact, eyeballing the pages and totting up the column inches of print on my minicomputer as I went, I estimated that approximately 62 per cent of the significant text has been simply typed up from tapes made and owned by the CBC. Three fifths of the test! Yet on the fourth page we are warned. "Copyright 1976 by McClelland and Stewart."

Now, even allowing for From's prodigious talents and formidable creative inputs to the show, we must remember that it had been running successfully without her for years before she came on the scene, and that the book could never have existed without the enormous, publicly funded apparatus of the CBC—the story editors, the horrendous phone bills, the technicians, a worldwide network of informants, elaborate electronics. Yes, and also the prestige of Canada and the CBC. The utterance of those magic names, as every story editor knows, can haul even hostile desert bandits to the phone to plead their causes. With all her gifts, could From and her publisher have assembled this book on their own, without drawing upon those massive public resources? Ha ha! Ah ha ha ha, ha ha!

The CBC accounts to no human being, let alone a shareholder, so I have to hazard a guess that during Ms. From's reign at least \$1.5 million and perhaps as much as \$5 million in taxpayers' funds were distilled drop by drop into the *As it Happens* tapes. Since I can find no trace of a CBC claim to copyright anywhere in the book, I have to assume that CBC officials gave author and publisher carte blanche to mine this rich lode freely, as they wished, and lay it holus bolus on the page. I am not accusing author or publisher of impropriety. I am simply drawing attention to the matter and wondering who gave permission for the profits from public materials to be disposed of in this manner.

The same strictures apply to Peter Gzowski's *Book About This Country in the Morning* and similar books in the same genre. *This Country*... is a mere scrap-book, a collage of tape extracts.

letters from listeners, and what appear to be publicity stills, all linked by a bit of chat. A scissors-and-paste job. It would have no occasion for existence were it not for the platform erected for the author at great expense by the corporation. Yet the book carries the stern reminder, "Copyright Peter Gzowski." Good grief! If anything such books should bear the device "Copyright The Unknown Canadian Taxpayer."

Acknowledgements, no matter how fulsome and smarmy, are not enough. It is the public that (involuntarily) puts up the risk capital for publishing ventures such as these. Why should one or two people be allowed to grab all the profit?

When Barbara Walters decided to earn a little cash on the side from her experience on NBC's *Today* show, she wrote a pleasant little book based on her adventures, telling you how to talk to the high and mighty. It was all her own work. Imagine the heartburn and belly-

aching had she chosen instead to "write" a book lifted substantially from NBC's choicest *Today* tapes. No private broadcaster, with shareholders' interests and profits to uphold, could realistically permit an author or publisher to benefit that way, without demanding a substantial piece of the action. But the CBC slobbers in the fleshpots of public loot, and like all those creatures of government that are unjustifiable and hence destructive, it just couldn't give a damn about waste.

Despite my churlish reservations, I am compelled to recommend *As It Happened* as a horrifying, fascinating, funny document, a storehouse of some of the most melodramatic-hyperdogmatic-aristocratic-undiplomatic-axiomatic-dysaromatic-newdemocratic-paradigmatic thoughts that have flitted through the ether during the past five years. It's worth the price, even though you've paid for most of it already. □

Grabbing us by the tale

My Country: The Remarkable Past, by Pierre Berton, McClelland & Stewart, 320 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7710-1393-0).

By DOUGLAS HILL

I'VE WATCHED *My Country*, Pierre Berton's television show, on occasion, realizing that as an inquisitive immigrant I'd better take my Canadian content when and where I could get it. Berton's work seemed civilized and intelligent — probably reflecting the man, I thought. None of the irritations peculiar to most televised history of the documentary son: no portentous music; no precious camera-work and editing; no struggles to force either poetic or mythic coherence upon that which was often mundane and disjunct. And none of the horrors of *University of the Air*, either. Just Berton and a good story. I'm pleased to report that the book he has now created out of the research for the show — 18 of his favorite tales reworked and considerably expanded — capitalizes upon those same virtues.

Berton calls *My Country* "informal history... informal geography," and the low-key approach holds his really quite disparate materials together well. One third of the tales come from the schoolroom, another third from the underbrush of popular culture, the remainder from the regions between. Berton seems to feel no pressure to raise the relative value of his low stories, or to lower that of the high. Certainly he has

had to reduce everything to a son of narrative common denominator, but since he thus treats each subject on its own merits, simply looking for what is interesting and entertaining, his method is unobtrusive and effective.

As far as content is concerned, much of the appeal of the collection, on the surface at least, is in its absolute structural illogic. Most of the stories are from the 19th and early 20th centuries, but in the book's chronological hopscotch, Steve Brodie, organizing the Depression sit-in that results in Vancouver's Bloody Sunday, reaches out from his old age in Victoria today to beckon across Ned Hanlan's triumphs of the 1870s to the Chevalier de Troyes capturing the English forts on James Bay in 1686. The adventures range in space from St. John's to Dawson City to all but one of the oceans; the first, "The Great Cross-Canada Hike," sets the rough terrestrial limits? if not the actual direction, for the stories that follow.

But besides Berton himself, and the "theme of country" he announces — both words of his title demand to be given equal weight—how much can an outsider, or for that matter a concerned insider, find of the elements that cohere in a Canadian identity, the unique yet kindred experiences that make this country and its past distinct? How is Berton's country different from anyone else's — mine, for instance?

If you look at the sorts of stories Berton chooses to tell, and assume that they fairly represent the diversity he had

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to select from. youcandetect at **least one** underlying pattern. Nearly one half the **tales** are about figures who **were** not native Canadians. who **for one reason** or another found Canada the suitable stage **for their** memorable performances. And though the **stories can** be separated into categories of travel narrative, condensed biography, and incidental history. they are all focused on people, on the **human** character visible through and **beyond** the events. Often these men (**only** two stories involve women) are true **heroes**, tragic or otherwise: always they are a bit larger than life, if only temporarily. This may reflect simply **Berton's** own ego. or the **cliché/truism** that history is people. **It could, however, also suggest,** and in an uncontrived way, that pervasive image of **Canadian** experience as a vast and intimidating **landscape in the mind**, an **idea waiting** to be challenged by the exceptional person — the **daring**, the talented, the **resolute** — at the **right** moment. Thus **Blondin** high-wiring Niagara Falls. Service rhyming the Yukon, **Heame** traversing the North. Surely Canadians can still feel the itch of this possibility, with an intensity and an immediacy that can no longer exist for **Americans**.

There's no reason, with narrative history, **why an** informal approach has to be **less** significant or less useful for a country's knowledge of itself than a

formal (read "academic") one. The **National Dream** and **The Last Spike** speak to this point without-need of assistance. Both **approaches**, however, deserve to be judged by the **same criteria**: style, design and pace, accuracy. My **Country** holds up well. Now and then-notoften-the-writing-gives-the-effect-of-journalistic-cover-simplification — the ranks of declarative **sentences**, the verbal repetitions, the exaltation of the obvious, the bits of jarring slang. Sometimes, too, **Berton's** attempts to locate his adventures in their cultural and historical context seem artificial, seem like padding. But usually **the prose is clear and strong, precise and evocative** in its description, insightful in its psychology, instructive in the **range** of its attention. Two stories that show **Berton** at his best are those on Charles **Chiniquy**, the bizarre Quebec temperance priest turned Presbyterian minister and **Orangeman**, and on **Joshua Slocum**, the **solitary sailor**. In this latter, **Berton's** obvious idealistic attachment to **his subject** gives the tale a **haunting and** elegiac power.

I do have a complaint about **Berton's** almost total assimilation of his source material. I don't question the accuracy of his details and dates at all: a few random glances at **Britannica**, **John Robert Colombo's Canadian References**, and Jack Batten's **Champions** turned up no inconsistencies. But it would be helpful to **have** some sort of guide or appendix that pointed to further reading, that gave some indication of the printed **resources** — narratives, journals, biographies, whatever — that are readily available. One of the **reasons** behind this project must have been to **make readers curious about Canada**, and not to encourage this curiosity to the limit seems unfair.

It's impossible to quarrel seriously, with **My Country**, as regards either intention or execution. The book will not **enthral** every reader, though **I** can't imagine anyone not finding in it something of interest, something of surprise. And if he considers the implications of its open-handed yoking of the familiar with the recondite, the light., with the 'serious, a thoughtful reader can touch more than surfaces. **Berton** has made these stories of **Canada's** past accessible: it's **the reader's** job to apply them to the Babel of the present, to look for essences, listen for echoes. □

CORRECTION

TYPOGRAPHICAL gremlins launched a mass attack on our review of **Fred the Red Cat in Three in a Tree**. (Summerbird Books) in the November issue. The author's name is **I. J. Snider** (not **Sinder**); the correct price is \$5.95 (not \$4.95). If Fred's face is red, so is ours.

Portrait of a Tory burg

To Reserve & Defend: **Essays on Kingston** in the Nineteenth Century, edited by Gerald Tulchinsky, McGill-Queen's University Press, illustrated, 402 pages, \$18 cloth (ISBN 0-7735-0214-5).

By ROGER HALL

MOST OF THE essays in this weighty compilation are **worth preservation**; the balance, however, require considerable defense, and, as with Kingston itself, there seems **little** middle ground.

Editor Tulchinsky has assembled a **composite** picture of **19th-century** Kingston comprised of **five** segments: "The Shape of the City"; "Fortress Kingston"; "Economic Development"; "Politics . . ."; and "Social Change." With minor exceptions, the middle categories contain the strengths **of this group** effort whereas the **first** and the last, especially the last, exhibit its **weaknesses**. It is **wearying but worthwhile** to **catalogue** the contributions.

The special **debt** (or burden) that Kingston **owes** to the **military** is **well-surveyed** by George Stanley, and Richard Preston's analysis of British influence as perpetuated by RMC is both thoughtful and engaging. Indeed, the latter renders **unnecessary** John **Spurr's** superficial look at "Garrison and Community." Concerning economic development, J. K. Johnson vividly **fleshes** out Kingston's most notable citizen, John A. **Macdonald**, exposing his considerable **involvement** in the town's business world. The late Max **Magill** scrutinizes the destructive **collapse of** Kingston's Commercial Bank with style and reasoning that is as tight **as a** balance sheet, and in so doing contrasts the poverty of **George Richardson's** **account** of the Canadian Locomotive Company. We **learn** precious little of this important **firm**. What, for example, **was its capitalization?** Who were the shareholders? Why the **constant failures?** And what of the social implications of this large employer in a town of Kingston's size? Is a **"sense of loyalty"** adequate explanation for its relatively few **labour problems?**

political Kingston gets **superior treatment**. S. F. Wise's masterful understanding of **John Macaulay** and his **Tory circle** reminds us of the differ-



ing regional features of the family compact, and H. P. Gundy shows that even in deep, dark conservative Kingston a reforming voice could occasionally be heard. George Betts on municipal government is informative, as is J. D. Livermore's glimpse of Orangeism in Irish Kingston, and Donald Swainson's portrait of prominent Kingstonians in high (federal) places.

In "The Shape of the City," an attempt has been made to reveal the character and appearance of Kingston and its environs. Arthur Lower's analysis of the "character" of the place is appropriately magisterial but both J. Douglas Stewart in his rigidly narrow sketch of George Browne's derivative architecture and Brian Osborne in his treatment of Kingston's 'confining hinterland' fail, for this reviewer anyway, to give the place any sense of reality or moment beyond the confines of technical language.

But it is Kingston's social side, the last segment of the editorial composite, that requires some sort of scholarly surgery. Patricia Malcolmson's breezy view of Kingston's poor is itself impoverished. And that is too bad, for here is a side of smug, Tory Kingston that has been too frequently overlooked and could provide a splendid opportunity for some methodological innovation — perhaps a quantitative analysis of court,

hospital, jail, and House of Industry records. Unfortunately what we are given is a slim, impressionistic survey, a contribution neither to history nor historiography. Alan Green, on the other hand, promises much regarding "Immigrants in the Census Manuscripts of 1871" and shows a keen appreciation of the techniques of wringing out social trends and attitudes, but he delivers only a microscopic slice regarding Kingston's labour force, and suggests and intimates more than he ever demonstrates. Nevertheless his evidence that sudden influxes of "foreigners" (in Kingston's case, the Irish) increase and help perpetuate the inequality of income distribution is persuasive and should be compared with studies of other Canadian towns and cities. Regrettably, neither of the final two essays, D.M. Schurman's "Trollopian" episode concerning John Travers Lewis and the Anglican See of Ontario and the late Hilda Neatby's early history of Queen's University, come near the high levels these historians have generally achieved. Schurman effectively describes Lewis's missionary zeal but doesn't account for its origins, nor does he explain the social disruptions that must have rocked the diocese as a result of his single-mindedness. Hilda Neatby's study of Queen's foundations' is

interesting but would have been much more helpful in explaining Kingston's uniqueness had it incorporated some of the reign of Principal Grant, the man who may be responsible more than any other for Kingston's present prestige. After all, were it not for his uplifting of Queen's to a national stature, Kingston might today be a largely forgotten, although largish, river town.

Tulchinsky and the Kingston Historical Society should be applauded for their efforts in conceiving this volume; certainly the skimpy shelf of Canadian urban history is much in need of extension. And it is a most handsome book, well laid-out with large, readable type, and, most unusually, relevant photographs and other illustrations (here in abundance) perfectly mated to the text. There are occasional slips and typos — Marshall Spring Bidwell did not die in 1836 (page 11) but lived on to harry both Canadian and American Tories for another 30 years; and the poor, sophomore Sir Wilfred (page 164) should of course be Sir Wilfrid. But this would have been a much better book had its social side incorporated cultural and literary interests as well, and had the city's complex and varying social structure been probed by quantitative methods. Perhaps this book will spur that effort; at the very least, it shows that Kingston deserves it. □

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Voice of the turtle

The Tenor of his Time: Edward Johnson of the Met, by Ruby Mercer, Clarke Irwin, 336 pages, \$13.50 cloth (ISBN 0-7720- 07365).

By BRUCE SURTEES

MY FIRST encounter with the name Edward Johnson was in *The Victor Book of the Opera*. The photograph of an earnest-looking woodsman was identified as "Edward Johnson as Dick Johnson." The only thing that attracted my attention was the two Johnsons. Edward Johnson as Dick Johnson was eclipsed by Enrico Caruso as Canio, Lawrence Tibbett as The Emperor Jones, Lauritz Melchior as Siegfried, Richard Crooks as Cavaradossi, and by scores of other more-recorded artists in their operatic make-up.

Most of these singers have a new role. They have walk-ons in Ruby Mercer's *The Tenor of his Time: Edward Johnson of the Met*.

Miss Mercer is not a professional biographer but a former singer (she sang at the Metropolitan Opera) and broadcaster whose life seems to be devoted to opera and everything to do with opera. Her radio program *Opera Time* is always produced and conducted with enthusiasm.

This enthusiasm is carried over into her biography of Johnson. She happily tells us all the "nice" things that can be remembered about the Canadian tenor whose name is perpetuated by the buildings, the library and the foundation that bear his name. Unfortunately, in her enthusiasm to tell us of how popular and what a great fellow he was, she has avoided letting us in on any act that was less than noble or any encounters that would make him look less than perfect. We are shown duly the best side of the face, the side with no blemishes. This is not really a thorough biography, merely the work of a popularizer. Johnson's life unfolds like a story out of *The Boy's Own Paper*. On page one, after the seven-year-old Eddie had just sung "Little Annie Rooney":

"Someday," he thought excitedly. "there will be thousands of people out there in a great big auditorium, clapping their hands just for me." And he bowed resin.

"You're going to be a big star someday, Eddie," people told him. He grinned, but said little. Deep down inside, he was sure he was destined to become famous; but he knew it was best to keep such ideas to himself. People would only laugh.

In this chatty book; Johnson is referred to as Eddie, except in important statements such as: "The following week Wolfsohn offered Edward Johnson an exclusive contract which, needless to say, he accepted." Johnson is unfailingly honourable: "If it's honest work, I'll do it." And since this book is about him, he is always centre-stage while other great singers and characters merely enter and exit, usually without saying a word, although the exact date of almost every encounter and event is given.

Unfortunately, although Johnson did interesting things, met interesting people, and travelled the world, he himself emerges as a boring fellow. Perhaps he was not. There must have been more to the man who did all these things and ran the Met for a dozen years: to do that successfully requires more strength and shrewdness than he is credited with here. He must also have had personal relationships with some particular people. But we are privy to none of this. Could it be that Ms. Mercer does not know, or was not told of any more than she has written? (I recall speaking to an NBC executive in the late 1950s who told me of the fear the Toscanini family had of a biographer digging up details of any of Arturo Toscanini's alleged affairs. Everyone has been discreet and nothing racy has found its way into print, presumably to the satisfaction of the children and grandchildren.) Surely one person from the nearly four pages of acknowledgements in Mercer's book must have said something that would add a little bitterness to all this sweetness, if only for balance?

The Tenor of his Time is a simplistic eulogy for Edward Johnson, superlative artist, manager of The Metropolitan Opera, and a force in Canadian Music. It is easy to read, and suitable for fans of all ages. □

History on a paper plate

Charles Nègre, 1820-1880, by James Borcoman, National Gallery of Canada, illustrated, 262 pages, \$15 paper.

By RICHARD G. LANDON

DESPITE A resurgence of world-wide interest during the past decade in the history of photography, large public collections of early photographs are still uncommon and the careers of many

mid-19th-century photographers have yet to be adequately documented. In 1967 the National Gallery of Canada began to buy photographs and James Borcoman was appointed as Curator of Photographs. Among the early acquisitions was a collection of about 100 examples of the work of a neglected artist called Charles Nègre, a history painter who pioneered the use of salted-paper



prims for reproduction of photographs and invented a photogravure process.

Using the collection at the National Gallery, supplemented heavily by the private collection of André Jammes, Borcoman assembled an exhibition of Nègre's work for the National Gallery in June, 1976. The resulting catalogue, lavishly illustrated and beautifully produced, now is a primary source of information for its subject and an important reference work in the history of photography.

Nègre, at the beginning of his career, attempted to school himself as a painter in the grand tradition by attaching himself to Paul Delaroche, the most popular "history" painter of the day. The "Death of Saint Paul," illustrated here by a photograph Nègre made of his own painting, was exhibited in the Salon of 1848 and he enjoyed a considerable success in this genre. In the late 1840s he began to experiment with photography, picking up the paper-negative process (as opposed to the daguerreotype) from French commentaries on the work of Fox Talbot. In common with many other early photographers, he originally perceived photographs as aids to painting but he shortly became aware of the possibilities of photography as an art form in itself. His statement in about 1854 (published here for the first time) that "if art is the poetic interpretation of nature, photography is the exact translation; it is exactitude in art or the complement of art" indicates an important shift in emphasis.

Nègre also realized early the significance of photographs as historical documents and embarked on a project of photographing the great architectural monuments of Paris. His photographs of buildings, however, are carefully composed in the manner of a drawing. Perhaps his best-known photograph (called "The Vampire") is a view of Paris from the balustrade above a gallery of Notre Dame. A corner of the cathedral's north tower,

the buildings in the distance, the sky, the figure of a man, and the "vampire" itself (a large grotesque figure designed by Viollet-le-Duc) are all balanced to create contrasts of shapes and shading and give the picture a dynamic tension.

Between 1854 and his death in 1880, Negre worked to perfect a photogravure process using a technique called galvanoplasty. It ultimately failed because of the extra work required to prepare the plates: compared with other processes; but Negre believed that photogravure was the true goal of photography because of its possibilities for mass production of prints.

This catalogue was designed by Frank Newfeld and his method of surrounding each photograph with a thin frame works beautifully. The quality of the reproductions varies considerably, presumably owing to the varying physical condition of the originals. But in general the photographs are clear and properly identified (with measurements), and useful notes are supplied by Borcoman in the introduction.

It is not always realized that the National Gallery has a significant photography collection. This exhibition, and particularly this catalogue, will assist in the promotion of the gallery's primary educational function and record permanently a splendid national treasure. □

Hasta la viscosus

Oil and Politics in Modern Brazil, by Peter Seaborn Smith, Macmillan. 289 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7705-1286-0).

By **ALEXANDER CRAIG**

OIL IN BRAZIL, one experienced Canadian observer has noted, is like bilingualism in Canada—basic, always present above or below the surface, and always a matter of contention. There is, in other words, much more to oil than simply oozy liquid and money; there is a whole gamut of public opinion, myth, and controversial history.

Peter Smith, professor of history at the University of Waterloo, has set out to examine how oil has influenced political activity in Brazil. It has played a very significant part in the turbulent politics of that vast and populous nation, and the author gives a good picture of the changing constellation of forces relentlessly supporting or opposing

the domestic exploitation of natural resources.

This is a difficult subject, but it is clearly and helpfully presented: maps and a glossary at the beginning are particularly welcome; and the author handles geological and other technical matters confidently. The subject is treated in an academic manner. extensive footnotes bearing witness to the lengthy and detailed research. A bibliography is given, and there are long appendices on petroleum statutes.

It need hardly be said that the style is neither jaunty nor riveting; some important subjects reject such treatment. More comparison might have been made with the politics of state-run enterprises elsewhere—such as ENI in Italy, which apart from any other similarities, has also been very closely involved in the highly partisan politics of that country. This study is largely concerned with public opinion with regard to oil, so it tends at times to take too much at face value the apolitical protestations of foreign interests. The focus on micro-economics is sound, but more might have been offered on macro-economic factors, such as the place of oil within the overall picture of Brazil's fuel requirements.

Yet there is much that might interest Canadians here: the identification of the people with natural resources; the dif-

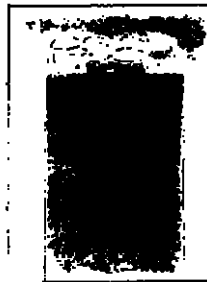


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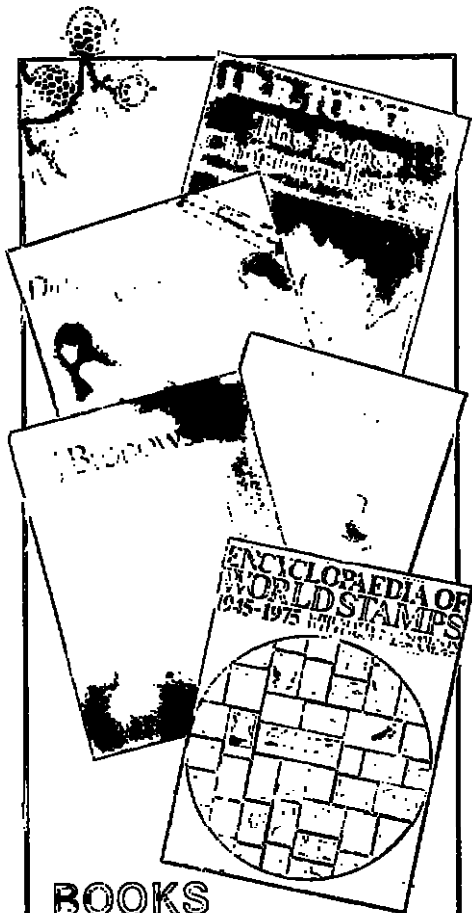
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ferent types of nationalist manifestations of this; the forms and problems of bureaucratic organisation devised to deal with all this. These and numerous other basic issues are investigated closely.

There are many differences, of course. Political activity is much more uncertain and unstable in Brazil and the role of certain actors, particularly the military, is of course much greater. Taking all this into account, however, there is still much of comparative interest in Brazil's historical development of this resource "so vital to Brazil's quest for modernity." □

Letters from a pioneer remittance man

Lifelines: The Stacey Letters, 1836-1858, edited by Jane Vansittart, Peter Davies (William Heinemann), 180 pages. \$1 1.95 cloth (ISBN 432-17500-3).

By DONALD SWAINSON

GEORGE STACEY was a young Englishman who got into serious trouble in the 1830s. He incurred large debts and chased after loose women in London. His wife forgave him his sexual peccadillos, but his creditors were hardly as kind. The resultant difficulty was serious, and George was spared a session in jail only by his father. Edward George Stacey, who paid his son's debts. The elder Stacey exacted a price for his very considerable generosity: George Stacey Jr. was ordered to leave England. In March, 1836, the father explained to his son:

After much consideration Mr. Dobson, your poor wife's anxious father, and myself, your distracted parent, agree that you should immediately go to Canada. I have mortgaged my future in borrowing several hundred pounds to keep you out of the Debtors' prison, and I am determined for you to leave England in order to keep you out of the clutches of that wretched woman in whose toils you so foolishly became entangled.

George and his wife Eliza obeyed. They left two of their children behind and sailed for Canada where they settled on a farm in the Eastern Townships near Sherbrooke.

The Canadian Staceys corresponded with their English relatives, and by a stroke of good fortune much of this

correspondence for the years 1836-58 has survived. Jane Vansittart, who has edited the letters, purchased them after they had been advertised in a postage-stamp catalogue. They have been edited for publication in a careful and, for the most part, unobtrusive manner. While some connecting passages are not well informed, the Staceys are usually allowed to speak for themselves through their letters.

The result is interesting; we are given glimpses into the lives of both parts of the Stacey family. Edward George Stacey, the father, was an ordnance clerk in the Tower of London. With his post went an official residence within the Tower grounds. He reported regularly to his son on ordnance business, Tower life, great events in England, English society, public life, and international politics, as well as on family affairs. George thirsted for this kind of knowledge. As he explained to his father when appealing for more letters from home: "They are a life line between me, an exile, and the country of my birth." The reader is treated to some unusual perspectives on English and European matters. Particularly vivid are the elder Stacey's descriptions of the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace and the fire at the Tower of London in 1841.

But the real interest in the Stacey letters is that they tell us about settlement life in Canada in the 1830s; 1840s, and 1850s. It is a miracle that the Canadian Staceys survived. George had no knowledge of agriculture or frontier life; he was simply dropped into a pioneering society. His family was tortured by Canadian winters and weakened by lack of adequate nourishment. Initially there were no schools, and social life was crude and unattractive. George and Eliza were forced into backbreaking labour in order to produce subsistence quantities of potatoes, wheat, and maple sugar. Meat was rare, hunger by no means unknown. Only regular remittances of cash from home kept George Stacey's family from disintegrating. Much of the correspondence is concerned with money; George and Eliza were constantly asking for loans, advances and modifications in estate arrangements. They were often successful. But their labours — and generous support from home did not produce success. At best the Canadian Staceys were only marginally prosperous.

We have a substantial body of genteel immigration literature. Works such as Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* and Samuel Strickland's *Twenty-seven Years in Canada West* are deservedly well-known examples of this genre. The Stacey letters are in some ways equally instructive and interesting. They deserve a wide readership. □

Her breasts are done

The Mistress Condition: New Op-
tions in Sex, Love & Other Female
Pleasures, by Catherine Breslin,
Clarke Irwin, 248 pages. \$11.50 cloth
(ISBN 0-8415-0431-8).

By SYLVIA FRASER

THE LAST TIME I went to a summer resort, I was struck by the fact that it was the married couples who seemed to want to hook up, fast, with another couple. To sight-see. To golf. To play bridge. Afraid of the insecurity of being by themselves. Of loneliness. Of boredom. The singles, more confidently, drifted in and out of contact: In twos. In threes. In a bunch—nor evenly divided by sexes.

Nonh America is going through an important social shift. Single is *in*, especially for women. Check that infallible index of popular taste, your television set: there's Mary Tyler Moore, a bachelor girl: Phyllis, a widow; Rhoda, about to become a divorcee; and even super-erocer-girl Wonder Woman is back, along with the Bionic Woman.

The Mistress Condition is about the new breed of woman who is trying to make it on her own, outside the traditional haven of marriage. Author Catherine Breslin—a former contributor to *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*, now a freelance journalist in New York—interviewed 200 single women, with widely varying backgrounds.

Breslin begins by repatriating the word "mistress," which she uses in the sense of "a woman who is mistress of herself, of her life." Her ideal mistress is someone who adapts enthusiastically. Who takes risks. Who *learns* from pain, rather than just enduring it. She may have an important career, but is not a career junkie. She prefers sexual relations that are open-ended, often multiple, rather than permanent and exclusive. If she finds herself hung-up in the torments of love, she regards it as a neurotic state, and cures herself. Even if she has children, her, basic lifetime commitment is to herself.

Breslin is incisive in disposing of the romantic "heirlooms" that mothers pass on to daughters, and which she calls "garbage." These include the belief that parents know best because they've been there first. That marriage is a solution rather than a problem. That children are a woman's greatest fulfillment.

She also is good at documenting the current role-reversal that has women looking for sex, adventure, freedom, at a point when many men have flipped

back to love, romance, and permanency. As one cynical male chauvinist put it: "In the old days, women felt they couldn't suck anybody's cock, but they could get married. Now they can suck anybody's cock but can't get married."

Other quotable quotes from the mouths of many mistresses:

On loneliness: "The fruitful pains are an essential ingredient of the Condition. . . . What begins as fear of living alone, for instance, becomes the genuine pleasure of privacy."

On loving: "Once the idea of the White Knight was shucked, even scruffy men seemed to make more interesting company. In place of that plastic ideal, I was free to take a man—any man—in 'as is' condition, and relish him for whatever random qualities he had to offer me."

On sexual freedom: "Women have to get unprogrammed. . . . A certain amount of fucking around is important, mostly because it's so much a part of what screwed you up initially."

On monogamy: "I've become addicted to monogamy in this perverse way, like a hard drug—not because I liked the drug, but because I was conditioned to it . . . even if I finally couldn't stand the man."

On impotence: "Men have reacted to every -wave of feminism . . . by withdrawing their sexual favors."

This book could have been a blockbuster. The flaw—and it is a serious one—results from Breslin's decision to organize her research under topics, supported by snippets of opinion, rather than to select a few women as examples, or even to create prototypes—to go broad, rather than deep. After 248 pages of ambivalent testimony, I felt as if I had crawled through underbrush guided by a map scrawled on an envelope. The worm's-eye view, rather than the bird's-eye view.

Here is her description of an interview with Betty Friedan: "When I interviewed Betty Friedan in 1965, she was researching her never-finished second book; the second thing she said to me, after hello, was, 'And how many children do you have?' When I said none, she reacted with a sulky pique that lasted through the four-hour interview."

That paragraph lacks the milk of human kindness. It also lacks—for me—the ring of truth. As Breslin explains her standard: "My favorite mistresses had no common denominator. . . . They were simply the ones I had most fun with." Well, yes.

B&N's contribution in *The Mistress Condition* is to focus in on the lifestyle of the autonomous woman as being *different in commitment* from the traditional, rather than *without commitment*. Given the skyrocketing divorce rate, her mistress is likely to be the prototype of the future. This is a pioneer work. □

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Prose to the grindstone

The *Mill*, by William Fox, William Brooks, Janice Tynvhiitt, and Helen Fox, McClelland & Stewart, illustrated, 224 pages, \$29.50 cloth (ISBN 0-7710-3193-9).

By ERIC ARTHUR

I AM SURE I have never reviewed a book with more pleasure than this one on the mill by William Fox (who produced and designed it!), Bill Brooks (whose photographs are among the most beautiful I have seen on architectural subjects), and Janice Tynvhiitt (who wrote the text). Having read *The Mill*, I am not surprised to learn that Ms. Tynvhiitt is a graduate of the University of Toronto with first-class honours in English language and literature. The team was an extraordinarily happy combination of talents and included the contribution of Helen Fox, whose exquisite drawings appear throughout the book.

When I was asked if I would review *The Mill*, I said I would with only one misgiving — it was described as a “coffee-table book.” If size is a criterion, it fits the bill; but it is not remotely connected with the popular, often expensive, album of photographs to which someone has provided an introduction. *The Mill* has a first-class, lucid, informative text that runs through the book from beginning to end, and ample margins allow space for comments on drawings and photographs.

The Mill differs from the coffee-table book in many ways, but one really sets it apart: the interest of the reader never flags. Though one cannot absorb it in a night or a week, it will remain as *the* book on North American mills and will, I am sure, be required reading in the humanities in the universities on this continent. That, I think, will be an achievement that a coffee-table book has rarely attained in the past.

I am one of many who, with a fairly broad knowledge of our heritage of rural buildings, had seen the need for a book on mills, covered and uncovered bridges, and barns. They are all structures that had evolved over the centuries without, until the 1890s, any real disturbance in design or material from the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. When you think of the materials with which they were built—shingles, clapboard, board and batten and stone, and the hardware of wood or beaten metal at the local forge—and compare

them with the artifacts that were exhibited at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851 or Chicago in 1892, the resistance to change and the continued reliance on the products of the forest and the earth are remarkable.

Unless I missed it, the authors don't compare the mills with the domestic architecture of the period they are discussing. But doorways called Georgian or Colonial in the mills can be matched with the finest in New England and the older areas of Canada; and windows, whether casement or double-hung, were undoubtedly modelled from contemporary houses. The doorway that opened into the office of the Pepperel Cotton Mill at Biddeford, Maine, could be matched with equally elegant ones in houses in New England and the Maritimes in Canada, each with side lights and muntin bars, fanlight and six-panelled door. The house preceded the barn without influencing its design, and the mill followed with a direct recognition of the house in proportion, compactness, fenestration, and, generally, materials and pitch of roof. The windmill and the sawmill, I think, are the only exceptions.

The authors make a good case for preservation of the mills that are left, some of them derelict. Quite a few, I learned with surprise, “dropped out of history because they never worked and had to be abandoned or rebuilt. The most handsome are not always the most efficient.” I would not have given a beautiful full page to the Mill of Kintail at Almonte (page 17). It is one of Bill Brooks' best photographs but, in the restoration, the divided sash windows were not replaced and large Victorian sheets were substituted. Worse, if possible, are the aluminum frames and screens in each window. I saw the building myself, and sought refuge at the river behind, which runs on flat, stepping muck with islands of fireweed in full bloom.

So closely do the mills (and there are many) have to be careful because there are mills in *The Mill* that I have never heard of) resemble the compact Georgian or Colonial house, that I was surprised to read that “mills were usually designed from the inside out.” With all respect, I think they were not (except at times, for an irregular window arrangement) and the example demonstrating the point, the Isaac Ludwig Mill in Grand Rapids, Ohio, is one of the few that could be dispensed with in the book.

I am most impressed with the scope of the book, not only in types but also in the coverage of Canada and the U.S. and the research that went into the project.

The mills are infinite in their variety and I wonder whether, for people like myself, a glossary should have been included. Some immediately suggest their function — sawmills, woollen, cider, wind, textile, and feedmills. The serious reader will learn the difference between corn, grist, and flour mills. I looked up smocking mill in my *Oxford* and found that it has nothing to do with the chemise (archaic) or the “field-labourer's” outer garment of shirt-like shape, and upper part closely gathered. Rather, a smocking mill is one where “the cap only and not the body revolves.” That made the whole thing comprehensible.

The reader will find something to interest him on every page, and I found, among so much else, the fascinating story of the Du Pont powder works. I didn't know that Eleuthère Irénée Du Pont came to the United States to escape the violence of the French Revolution, and stayed to become the most successful manufacturer of gunpowder in America. In 1802, he built a factory for “military and sporting powder” on the Brandywine River in Delaware. His plant had features that the allies were slow to profit by in the last war. Many plants were constructed with four solid walls and a minimum of windows; when explosions took place, everything was contained and loss of life was considerable. It took time to persuade the manufacturers that light construction was desirable. Mr. Du Pont's powder mill had three walls of heavy masonry, and a fourth wall and roof of light construction “to vent the explosion harmlessly to the river behind.” It would take more than the art of Bill Brooks to make our wartime high-explosive factories beautiful, but the photographs of Brandywine are among the finest in the book.

We architects know Vitruvius as the one who gave the definition of great architecture as containing “firmness, commodity, and delight.” Even Le Corbusier has quoted him, and his definition applies to mills as much as to St. Peter's in Rome. It is interesting to see him quoted for a description of a water wheel that transmitted the energy of water through a series of gears to drive a pair of horizontal mill stones in 15 B.C. We learn that Roman loaves were round, flat, and so heavy that they sank in water. According to Pliny, the finest flour was “destitute of all flavour.” To which the authors add, “A quality some still prize today.”

A great book that I strongly recommend whether you have a coffee table or not. I found the lap a first-class substitute. □

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IT'S BEEN BEDLAM these past few weeks in my apartment. **Courier services arriving, the phone going, taxi drivers banging on the door. The neighbours have been muttering and** the superintendent's not happy with the jiffy bags stuck in the garbage chute. **I tell you, if you need to feel wanted let it be known you're writing an article on gift books for the Christmas market.**

The end result of this time of turmoil is a **tower on my work table** like a stack of odd plates ready for an auction. The gift book **format** doesn't change: heavy, **Rat slabs;** a dazzle of pictures weighted for gravity with a text often meant to be ignored. Periodically, while putting order into **this mass of material, I envied** those English monks their pragmatic natures. **Such a glut of great tomes in the abbey, so why go without a bread-board or stepping stones through the mud of the yard to the closet of elimination?**

Here, then, is Christmas 1976. And don't forget it's better to give than to receive. Though either would suit the publishers quite well.

PLACE BOOKS

TO IMPRESS and be really sure you won't be out-gifted there's Canada (Gage, \$29.95), a boxed volume of picture sheets in National Film Board styled designed to advertise the country to foreigners. Ideal for display where it's important to put our rosiest foot forward, like the libraries of Canadian embassies **abroad.** Homebodies, on the other hand, **won't** find much of **substance** here. **Least of all the Maritimers, whose** entire region is disposed of in a couple of nondescript **photographs leaving space for a generous and memorable spread on the Arctic.**

Two books from Vancouver were prepared to coincide with the Habitat Conference held there earlier this year. **Chuck Davis's The Vancouver Book (J. J. Douglas, \$10.95) is an almanac.** It looks like the telephone directory and is already out of date. The City of Vancouver (J. J. Douglas, \$29.95) is a glossy that tries to **express the essence of the city in an essay of joy by Barry Broadfoot.** He likes Vancouver because it's got mountains and the sea. The book's illustrations aren't any more specific. Most are the impressionistic, mood kind and might have been taken almost anywhere.

A much **more concrete** idea of this city is given by John Richmond in **Discover Toronto (Doubleday, \$12.50), a collection of his drawings, bitty folk history, and comments.** These latter have a eutesy, gossipy **humour** not everyone will appreciate. On the other hand, his drawing style — the "messy" kind much in vogue these days — **works well** for the ramshackle shops on Queen Street though it seems inappropriate for composed and elegant buildings.

Books celebrating Ottawa as a city are rare, so residents might be grateful for **La Salle Academy: New Life for a Heritage Building (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, \$5.95 cloth and \$3.95 paper).** The old school on Sussex Street was recently restored to its 1890 state for use, as the Ministry of Urban Affairs. An interesting review in words and pictures of Ottawa's **history is** included and should convince even the most cynical that the capital really does have a past and didn't spring ready formed from the head of some **civil servant.**

NATURE BOOKS

MOST IMPRESSIVE in this area so well beloved of publishers of lavish books is Frank L. Beebe's **Hawks, Falcons and Falconry (Hancock House, \$24.95).** Though turgid and formal in style, this **encyclopaedic** volume tells everything Beebe knows about the ancient sport of hunting with birds. And **that's** a lot. Though I can't think in whom you could give it, except perhaps a **friend** who keeps a pet hawk. But the book is certainly the authority on its esoteric subject.

Another authority, but in a less exclusive **field,** is **Blood, Hall, and Baumgarten's Rocky Mountain Wildlife (Hancock House, \$19.95).** No surprises here since you get exactly what the title says. **Lots of pictures and a clear, knowledgeable text,** half of which consists of the facts and figures for each individual species. **A good bet for bright boys and girls. It helps,** of course, **if they live in the Rockies.**

Similar in intent and design is Sea Life of the Pacific Northwest (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$14.95) by Stefani & K. Gilbey Hewlett, but the text is weak. It can't decide whether it's going to be popular or authoritative and the pictures, though colourful in a slimey way, do nothing beyond confirm what most of us suspected all along—that the ocean floor is mysterious and scary and we wouldn't be caught dead anywhere hear it.

Far more accessible is another bird book. Doug Gilroy's Prairie Birds in Color (Western Producer Prairie Books, \$14.95, \$9.95) is directed at bird photographers like the author himself. They'll find details of how and when and with what the pictures. But don't let the book's title mislead you. Most of the birds can be found anywhere in Canada, some right outside your window.

From Information Canada come two books in the gift style. Albert Potvin's A Panorama of Canadian Forests (Information Canada, \$13.50) is good for its pictures if you like nice trees. The text won't unset anyone though the book does make the salutary if somewhat obvious point that the forests are good to us



Photograph by Stephen Taylor from *Beyond the Road: Portr Van Nostrand Reinhold, 143 black-and-white plates, 144 pa.*

GIFTS BY

Braving perilous
wastes forlorn, or
hunts down a season

by Briar!

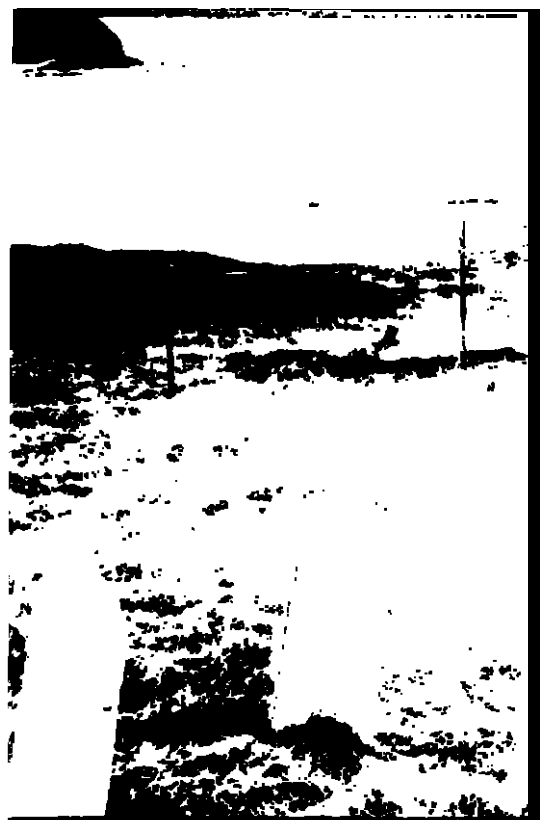
and we should be good right back to them.

Not really a nature book (but where else can you file it?) is Don W. **Thomson's Skyview Canada (Information Canada, \$10),** which calls itself "A Story of Aerial Photography in Canada." This seems a full description of its contents so no more need be said. Air Force people might be interested but few others, since the book is too much a **Who's Who of the aerial photography world for general appeal.**

And now a flower-arranging book. Or does it really belong in this Nature Book section? Perhaps not. See under Cook Books below.

ART BOOKS

ARE ART BOOKS more modest this year? The ones I've seen are thin and not too pricey. **The Kurelek industry continues**



Views & Visions of Newfoundlanders, text by Harold Horwood, \$17.95.

THE SLAB

heights and Arctic
intrepid reviewer
herd of gift books

Vintcent

ofcourse. The publishers sent him to the Arctic with a request to paint it the way it used to be. Which disturbed Kurelek's integrity, as he is honest enough to reveal in an introduction to *The Last of the Arctic* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$19.95). He couldn't find any igloos and saw skidoos instead of sleds. The result of this friction is a book that portrays what seems a never-never Arctic, an imaginary land in which sleds take off into the heavens or a man jumps in the mouth of a polar bear.

4 second Kurelek this season is *Jewish Life in Canada* (Hurtig, \$9.95) which illustrates his idea of that community's customs. Jews will certainly feel that the history of their people in Canada has more drama and interest than Abraham Arnold's accompanying essay manages to give it.

One of the most satisfying art books this year is another Arctic one. *People of the Willow* (Oxford, \$9.95) is an unpretentious and valuable collection of watercolours painted in 1933 at a community in James Bay by Winifred Petchey Marsh, the wife of the Anglican missionary there. Few people knew of these colourful and delicate representations of Eskimo ways until recently and Mrs Marsh adds to them a description of life in that remote village at that remote time that is of great human and historical interest.

{And of course, the Group of Seven. *Lawren Harris* (Macmillan, \$14.95) published in 1969 and now reprinted in paper, matches colour reproductions of his work with excerpts from his writings. These latter are interesting certainly, but demonstrate how a master of one medium can be an amateur in another. Also reissued, though in a slightly modified form, is *Harry Hunkin's A Story of the Group of Seven* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$10.95) which has its use in the schools as a primer to introduce the group and its personalities. More sophisticated readers will find its tone of vulgar chauvinism unappealing.

From Ottawa comes *Karsh Portraits* (University of Toronto Press, \$24.95), his fourth volume of portraits of the great. Many of the studies, such as those of Churchill and Hemingway, we've seen before. Among the few new ones are Cousteau, Prince Charles, and Castro. Karsh, as always, provides a discrete reminiscence of his encounter with each subject. There are no surprises here. Karsh is Karsh.

One of the year's most beautiful art books is also one of the most obscure. *Beatrix von Ragué's A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (University of Toronto Press, \$35) is the standard work on the subject, published in Germany in 1967 and now translated. Too few of the reproductions are in colour, but the text is surprisingly interesting and readable. It used to be that every middle-class family in the Western world had at least one piece of lacquerwork in the house, so perhaps this book has a wider potential audience than might at first appear.

Church architecture is getting good exposure of late. *Hallowed Walls*, a study of church architecture in Upper Canada, took the Governor General's Award last year. John de Visser and Harold Kalman's *Pioneer Churches* (McClelland & Stewart, \$25) is unlikely to repeat the performance. It's a confusing book that tries to cover all of Canada and the U.S. and all manner of pioneer church building from the beginnings up to the latest place of worship erected in the Arctic. Some of the photographs are impressive, some are unskilled blow-ups of pictures raided from elsewhere. The text is poorly organized and riddled with repetition.

COOK BOOKS

I CONFESS TO a weakness for cook books. They're like Hydm Bonds — you can never have too many. Then's a new and elegant affair From Mme. Jehane Benoit — *Complete Heritage of Canadian Cooking*. (Pagurian Press, \$14.95) — complete with *Gourmet Magazine*-style illustrations, the sort of cook book you feel should never see the inside of a kitchen. Still, her hints are as useful as ever, her manner as endearing. Though I wish some one would tell me where she gets the classy ingredients for those "comfortable Farm kitchen dinners" she describes. Anyone acquainted with the grocery stores in the villages around her remote farm in Quebec's Eastern Townships will know just what I mean.

Ethnic cooking is the subject of *Sondra Gotlieb's Cross Canada Cooking* (Hancock House, \$8.95). It could do with less gossip about the nice people who provided the recipes; but for new adventures in cooking from seal flippers to pimshki, this is the book.

It's unusual, to say the least, that the year's most intriguing and delightful cook book comes from two academics. In *Pleyn Delit* (University of Toronto Press, \$9.95). Constance B. Heicat and Sharon Butler adapt medieval recipes to modern times without losing any of their fearful fascination. Thus one learns how to gild a fowl, prepare rose petals for eating, and make "garbage." Clearly, for really adventurous cooking, this is the book.

And now, as indicated above, *The Art of Decorating with Flowers* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, \$14.95) slipping into my cooking section by a hair because Pamela Westland tells you how to make chervil soup and thyme jelly and other interesting things as well as how to arrange weeds and field flowers attractively in any old pot. The book is more enthusiastic than clear, but it's particularly detailed on how to dry and press flowers after which, if you're not worn out, you're supposed to go on to make complicated plaques and pictures with the results. Something for grannies with artistic flair.

And finally, left over from last Christmas is a Canadian *Christmas Book* (Tundra Books, \$4.95) being an evergreen scrapbook of pictures and written snippets gathered by Caroline Carver from the newspapers of Victorian Canada to illustrate how our forefathers celebrated the holiday. Not very differently, as it turns out. Lots of sleigh riding, tobogganning, and skating and a Santa Claus at every turn and sentimental pictures of innocent children and increased vigilance against the perils of strong drink. And People giving and people receiving. Just like now. A publisher's paradise, I tell you. □

Well made in Orleans

The Madman, the Kite and the Island. by Felix Leclerc, translated from the French by Philip Stratford, Oberon Press. 153 pages, \$11.95 cloth (ISBN 0-65750-175-3).

By CHRIS SCOTT

IN 1946, AFTER publishing a volume of poems called *Adagio. Allegro and Adante* and already with a burgeoning reputation as a singer, Felix Leclerc retreated to the Ile d'Orleans, where his family roots go back to the year 1662. The result of this inner migration was the tint draft of *Le Fou de l'île*, which remained unpublished long after its author emerged from his self-imposed isolation. It was not until 1958 that the Paris edition appeared, another four years before publication in Quebec, and now — 30 years after Leclerc returned to his ancestral home—we have the first English translation. Philip Stratford has faithfully rendered the lyric cadences of the original, and has written a useful introduction for anglophone readers of *The Madman, the Kite and the Island*. He also makes large claims for the novel, calling it "an original, beautiful and timeless book."

The plot is deceptively simple. Salisse, the fisherman, finds a madman washed up on the island shore. The madman, who is never named, reports that he has lost something. To Bérêt, the blacksmith, it's a woman: "I tell you it's always a woman who drives a man out on the road and out of his mind." Bérêt's advice is to get rid of the madman: he may be dangerous. Catherine, Salisse's wife, agrees, but her husband is not so sure. When the madman wrecks his nets in an attempt to prevent the island floating away (it's high tide), Salisse thanks him "on behalf of everyone on the island." The next day, the fisherman and the blacksmith build a kite for the madman to lore. As Salisse explains: "He'd go out of the reeds and go after it. And looking for it on the roads and in the villages, up the cliffs and in the lighthouse tower, he might find the real thing he's lost."

In his search for the kite, the madman gathers a nucleus of disciples. (Stratford is correct to point out, and reject, the New Testament parallels.) Seven in all, they include, as well as Salisse and Bérêt: Henriot, the son of the local miser, Bouclé, nicknamed "The Terror of the Island"; Yose and her brother, the children of the lighthouse; and the hunchback Jubiau. The

latter — odious, cynical; yet given to outbursts of lyricism — will turn against the madman, inciting the villagers to violence and betraying him to the miserly Barnabé, who fears revolution; atheism, and the English geography books that the madman is reputed to have.

Beneath the idyllic surface of island life, there is an undercurrent of darkness and despair. Jubiau is finally forgiven, not for the harm he has done the madman (he is beyond that), but for the all-too-human malignancy that invades the earthly paradise. The book's ending, as it has to be, is equivocal. The madman disappears, the tide wiping out his tracks and leaving Salisse to wonder, "each time he goes out to one of his traps at low tide ... if the sea hasn't brought him a talking fish, a packet of love letters, a queen's shoe, or a mirror you can watch the whole life of cities in."

The Madman, the Kite and the Island is one of those rare books that demands and defies comparison. Its sense of place resembles Clarence Gagnon's illustrations to *Maria Chapdelaine*; its moral philosophy, *Candide*; its evocation of childhood, *Huckleberry Finn*, *A High Wind in Jamaica*, *Lord of the Flies* — all "island" books, all timeless. It is sentimental; there is even a strain of quietism (the madman points to the legend above the graveyard, with its intertwined words *pulvis* and *caritas*), yet for all this, one must agree with its translator. It is a masterpiece — one between sickly mauve boards, alas, and overpriced. □

Beautiful whozit?

Leonard Cohen: *The Artist and His Critics*. edited by Michael Gnarowski. Critical Views on Canadian Writers series, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$11.95 cloth (ISBN 0-07-082179-8) and \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0-07-082180-1)

By RON WALDIE

LEONARD COHEN. Remember him? For a whole generation of Canadians Cohen's poetry, novels, and songs seemed to express in a unique way those strong but vague aspirations of innocence that haunted so much of the 1960s. But Cohen was important in a way that Dylan and The Beatles were not: he was ours. To recall what Cohen meant 10 years later becomes a somewhat disquieting experience when one realizes that he has faded into an obs-

curity from which he will probably never re-emerge. On reading through this collection of articles on Cohen, however, I cannot help but conclude that his obscurity is appropriate. To go back to Cohen is to evoke a nostalgia for times past rather than to rediscover a voice that is vital and needs to be heard.

The collection, edited by Michael Gnarowski, is divided into three sections: a group of brief reviews of his poetry and novels, journalistic articles and interviews treating his astonishing popular career, and a more substantial series of academic studies that attempt to assess Cohen's work. Gnarowski has chosen with care and the book presents a catholic selection of views and approaches ranging from the adulatory journalism of Burr Snider's "Leonard Cohen: Zoey Glass in Europe" to the more solid and skeptical stance of George Woodcock's "The Song of the Sirens: Reflections on Leonard Cohen."

In spite of the care which Gnarowski took in assembling the anthology and in spite of the generally high level of critical writing in the articles, the book tends to be monotonous and repetitious. The problem with this anthology is its subject. Cohen's work is simply too thin to support prolonged critical investigation. His most substantial work is *Beautiful Losers* and it receives the bulk of critical attention. It is, however, a formula novel that, having been deciphered, does not provide much else for the critic to do. His poetry and songs are conventional, mellifluous, and minor and, while many lyrics succeed brilliantly, they require little critical support.

Consequently, when a group of critical articles on Cohen are assembled into a collection such as this, they end up saying the same things. While there was disagreement about the value of Cohen's work, with George Woodcock and Sandra Djwa on the negative pole and Desmond Pacey on the positive, there were virtually no divergent opinions about the interpretations of the work itself. These disagreements are what make such collections interesting because they allow the reader to become a participant in a critical debate.

To assess this problem with the collection is not to dismiss it as a wasted effort. There are some excellent articles and interviews that will be useful to future Cohen students. Frank Davey's analysis of Cohen and Dylan is especially interesting and Gnarowski's introduction to the book is a finely written and thoughtful assessment. The problem is perhaps that the book succeeds too well. There is nothing more to say about Cohen. Cohen's silence in the 1970s suggests that he has nothing more to say about life or art. His time has passed. That is the message of this anthology. □

Faustian fustian

Frankenstein, the play by Alden Nowlan and Walter Learning, the novel by Mary Shelley, Clarke Irwin, 181 pages, \$9.50 cloth (ISBN 0-7720-1058-7).

By LDENNIS DUFFY

NONE OF THE myths of industrial man remains as reverberative as that of Frankenstein. The mad scientist and his pathetic creature stalk through our images of what scientific/technological creativity demands. While the first (1931) Karloff film recreation of the

creature achieved a rough consonance with the spirit of the original (creature-as-victim), later versions, especially from Hammer films, bogeyize creature into monster. To find a process in which a culture moves from pitying a victim to sympathizing with his Faustian creator offers adequate grounds for pessimism. How fitting then, for Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder to have turned the whole thing into sexist farce.

Myths am ma& to be retold and reworked, even a Christian poet as devout as John Milton saw nothing untoward in adding significant variations to the Genesis account of the Fall. The trouble with this Frankenstein version is that it fails to progress beyond mere rehash. Rather than retell the myth of Frankenstein and his creature, it simply subjects it, to the strait jacket of 19th-century stagecraft, proscenium arch, naturalistic sets, the works. It seems out of the

same mould as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

The jacket proclaims that *Frankenstein: The Man Who Became God* has been "claimed" by theatre audiences from St. John's to Vancouver," which I can well believe. The subtitle makes things a little more moralistic than Mary Shelley's (*The Modern Prometheus*) and theatre audiences, uncomfortable with the avant-garde, generally have no difficulty lapping up meller-drammer. Who could remain unmoved at a scene like this:

FELIX: Father!

DE LACEY (warning): Felix.

CREATURE: This is not your affair. (FELIX launches himself at the CREATURE who picks him out of the air and throws him back against VICTOR.) You fool! (When FELIX collides with VICTOR, the first thing his hand falls upon is VICTOR's gun. FELIX tries to take it from VICTOR who fights to keep it.) Put down that gun. I have no desire to harm you.

DE LACEY: No! (He turches himself into the path of the ball just as FELIX wrenches the gun from VICTOR and fires.

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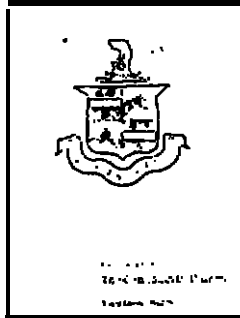
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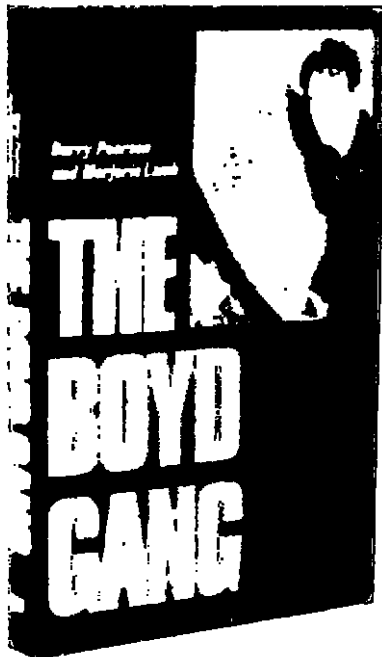
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CREATURE: (*Holding DE LACY up*): Not you.
FELIX: Father! (*The CREATURE lets go of DE LACY who falls into FELIX's arms.*) Merciful God!

The question remains as to what a writer of Nowlan's stature is doing in churning out and then publishing fustian like this. If a theatre company needed a campy restaging of a classic novel, surely someone of less importance could have perpetrated this text. Nowlan's stories and poems display an unremitting concern with the affairs of real people; there are enough demented Frankensteins and their pathetic creatures running amok in our imperial zod today to have inspired a writer to a genuine reworking of a still-relevant myth. Merciful God, indeed! □

Early smite from the liar

The Master Mason's House, by Frederick Philip Grove, translated from the German by Paul P. Gubbins, Oberon Press, 243 pages, \$15 cloth (ISBN 0-88750-207-51).

By MARK WITTEN

FICTION DID NOT end on the page for Frederick Philip Grove. As judicious a critic as Northrop Frye put it this way: "Of course, Grove was a pathological liar." As a young man, Grove lied for money and for love and went to jail for it. Later, to escape from debts he had accumulated, the writer faked suicide and fled to Canada, where he lived out the rest of his life under his assumed name. So cleverly was he able to mingle fact with fiction that the lies of a lifetime were still being ably perpetuated nearly 40 years later with the publication of his autobiography, *In Search of Myself*, in 1946. Only within the past five years has Grove's original identity as the German novelist and translator Felix Paul Greve been revealed. Now his early German novel, *Maurermeister Ihles Haus*, originally published in 1906, has been translated into English.

The novel ends with a short but dramatic scene in which the master mason, Richard Ihles, comes perilously close to strangling the eldest of his two daughters, Susie. For her this is the final awakening. She is forced to recognize the absolute necessity of escape. Although not in any direct way a prison memoir, *The Master Mason's House* portrays life in the Ihles' household as a prolonged slate of psychological imprisonment. Much of it is caricature, some coldly vicious. The brooding presence and outlandish fumings of the master mason clomping restlessly in his

heavy, German clogs ultimately drive his wife, Bertha, to madness. She attempts suicide by plunging onto a solidly frozen river and is then promptly packed off to end her days in the Frauentdorf Asylum. The tortures of the skilfully executed, naturalistic novel continue as we watch the younger daughter, Lottie, slowly turn into an insipid, Barbie-doll witch for whom the author can barely disguise his contempt. Only Susie moves painfully towards some form of emancipation.

But what an emancipation! What can we make of a woman for whom the one mad to liberation is marriage to a man she feels is a simp? Regarding Consul Blume, Susie concludes that "he was of no interest to her, he was simply to be a means!"

Susie is the only character in the family who commands the respect of both author and reader. Determined and defiant even as a child, she lives and survives by her wits alone. Her early schooldays reveal her to be a girl who knows how to please and who to please, with little effort, and above all, to have fun doing it. She is a confidence woman, but subtle enough in her ways usually to avoid detection. Whether taunting her targets or impressing those whose favour she hopes to gain, Susie does it with flair and charm. However, as things worsen at home, her family life threatens to count her among its victims. When in an act of grand buffoonery her father em in choosing his second wife, the daughter's will to order her own destiny triumphs and she dictates marriage on her own terms.

Although his respect for the importance of money never faltered, F. P. Greve-Grove clearly intended this tale of a wealthy but uncultured German artisan family to be a condemnation of the plodding conformity of an exclusively materialistic way of life. All his admiration is reserved for the qualities of the heroine, whose predicament resembles that of any obviously talented outsider frustrated in the pursuit of attaining his or her goals. The peculiar morality that results intrigued more than one man who encountered Greve. The most famous of these was André Gide, author of *The Immoralist*, who at first meeting with him received this answer to a question about Greve's imprisonment: "It had one good effect on me in that it completely killed in me any remorse, any scruples." It can be assumed that to impress Gide, Greve played the role of the criminal to the hilt. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that this secretive man was a most seductive and flamboyant character. Surely in his case the skills of the con artist complemented those of the literary artist. In that ignoble moral lies a riddle worth pondering and, incidentally, one of the more fascinating annals of Canadian literary history. □

Frissons of our own

Where Do the MacDonalds Bury Their Dead?, by Ronald Sutherland, General Publishing. 258 pages, \$5.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7736-00043-4).

By ELLEN GODFREY

CANADIAN popular fiction has always been dealt with roughly by Canadian critics. Books obviously written to entertain, to provide an hour or two of pleasure, a glimpse into a life where more exciting things happen than one is accustomed to, and which perhaps give us a *frisson* of perversity or violence, are judged by the rigorous standards of serious fiction and found to be second class.

As well, Canadian authors find that they are criticized for failing to live up to American standards of suspense and violence. These usually involve a level of decadence hard to achieve for authors who don't live in New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles. [It is interesting to note that the classic British thrillers of the 1930s kept to a neat average of three to four corpses per novel. The Americans, on the other hand, often found it necessary to kill off whole towns, which in such books as *Red Harvest* was considered a sort of moral tidying up.)

And although I tend to agree that much of the light fiction written by Canadian authors fails to achieve either the tight elegance of its English competition or the violent and thrilling suspense of the American genre, I have come to believe that this is more a problem for the critic than for the writer. So far, we have not seemed to notice what is happening here: the beginning of another kind of popular fiction that has its own form and its own standards.

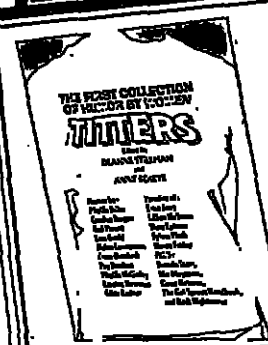
A writer with any sense of his own place and any skill in creating a plot will soon discover that the violence and passion he needs as the engines will be fuelled, in Canada, not so much by crime, corruption, and paranoia — though of course these are always part of things — but by the social dysfunctions and pressures hidden under the placid surface of Canadian middle-class life. It seems to follow naturally that anybody who ends up in a Canadian thriller is going to have a political consciousness lacking in his British or American counterpart.

Ronald Sutherland's novel, *Where Do the MacDonalds Bury Their Dead?* is his second work of fiction. The first, *Slylark*, (*Lark des neiges*) dealt with a Quebecois, Suzanne Laflamme, and her

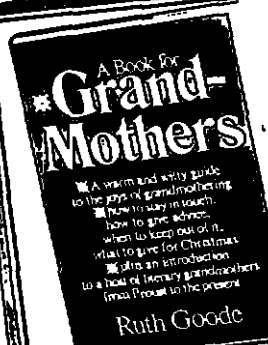
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problems in coming to terms with the split between her Francophone and Anglophone halves. What seemed to be an entertaining novel about a woman's sexual and human development took a peculiar cast from the way the political and cultural themes kept intruding on the personal one. At first glance one might think that Suzanne's troubles were meant to be symbolic of Quebec-Canada problems. But this would be an oversimplification of what was happening.

In *Where Do the MacDonalds Bury Their Dead?*, Sutherland's hero, Ti-Mac, is one of Suzanne's relatives. His parents, low-land Scots, have raised him in Francophone Montreal; and he finds himself, at an early age, involved in the street battles of his neighbourhood. He grows up unsure of his place, unsure if it is better to fight or to run, unsure of how to relate to women, unsure of who he is, and not certain that it matters if he finds out.

Drifting down to the U.S., he eventually ends up in a weird commune in California, similar to the Manson family's, where beautiful women are available, too available. Frightened by the violence he suspects and bizarre perversions he discovers, he turns his hosts in to the police and flees back to Canada. Then he lives in a strange limbo, fearing the American's revenge, unable to fashion his own life until he plays out the drama of the final confrontation he knows is inevitable.

As was true of Sutherland's earlier work, this book can be read as socially symbolic, as entertainment, or as a novel with characters real enough to learn that, because they live in Montreal in the 1960s and 1970s, social problems drive and direct their lives.

A suspenseful plot, engaging characters, some very funny scenes, and well-delineated social realism all combine to produce a book that readers are bound to enjoy and booksellers bound to sell, whether the critics like it or not. □

ON BRIEF

The *Little Emperor*, by John S. Galbraith, Macmillan, 232 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7705-1389-1). The most unattractive people sometimes make most attractive subjects for biography, particularly if they are also successful. It is satisfying to have one's baser instincts vindicated. To follow a cad's career step by step, as he womanizes, cheats, ruthlessly kicks competitors aside, and ultimately wins is a cathartic experience. Not that this preamble really does justice to Sir George Simpson, the "Little Emperor," or to his most recent biographer, John S. Galbraith. As Governor of the Hud-

son's Bay Company from 1820 until his death, some 40 years later, Simpson displayed a high degree of business acumen and a rare flair in the management of headstrong men. His prodigious feats of travel and physical endurance are impressive even now. And his rise to eminence, from humble and obscure beginnings to the status of statesman and ruler of vast territories, must inspire admiration. Galbraith impartially describes Simpson at his best and worst, and in the process usefully elucidates a large chapter in Western Canadian history.

JONATHAN WEBB'

Dots, stars, and diapasons

Revenging Language, by Ken Stange, Fiddlehead Poetry Book No. 195, 40 pages, unpriced, paper (ISBN 0-919197-94-9).

Stardust, by Bill Bissett, Blewointmentpress (Box 48870, Station B, Vancouver), 144 pages, \$11 paper (ISBN 0-88971-000-7).

Westerns, by Maxine Gadd, Air Publishing (Box 8688, Station H, Vancouver) 82 pages, \$5.50 paper (ISBN 0-88964-001-7).

By GREG

GATENBY

KEN STANGE's second book is a small collection of poetry with a bizarre title. *Revenging Language* suggests language of the past has come to revenge the inadequacies of present language, much as a ghost might haunt its murderer. Ironically, by far the best poem in the book, "I've Been Dreaming Of My Dead Grandmother," begs to be read aloud in one's most horrific Boris Karloff intonations.

Unusual for a Fiddlehead Poetry Book is the annoying design of *Revenging Language*. Not content with ordinary line spaces to denote verse breaks, each stanza is spotted with dots (a useless holdover from Stange's first book, *Wolf Cry*) that left this reader wondering if a trip to the ophthalmologist was called for.

Stange, the editor of the respected poetry magazine *Nebula*, is a resident of North Bay. This would be incidental information were it not that so many of the poems in this book are almost Wordsworthian in their nature imagery. Indeed, the opening poem, "Natural Law," deals with love and the four seasons, while poems such as "Aged Tamarack" and "Spirit-Lady of the Autumn Night" deal reveren-

tially with the communion between nature and man. This honoured sense of the old, slightly reminiscent of the young Bimey, is occasionally coupled with antiquated syntactical inversions and seemingly unnecessary ellipses.

But these are small matters. For the most part the poems are typical of early work, involved as they are with love happy, unrequited, or lost. Particularly lost. Images of especially horrible or decayed death abound, making Stange a poet to be soon looked for in the tradition of Atwood, Ondaatje, and Newlove.

Only the die-hard fans of bill bissett will feel it worthwhile to pay the outrageous \$11 blewointmentpress is asking for this latest effort of the British Columbia chanter. However, the book does have redeeming features that would make it a more attractive buy at a lesser price. For example, *stardust* is much better printed than any other blewointmentpress title to date, and comes complete with an 8½-by-11-inch poster of bissett garishly painted as the star of a movie by Michael Norman with the same name as the book.

Of the poetry, it can be said that it represents no new stylistic departures for bissett. Thematically though, it is more cohesive than other bissett books of a similar nature — books such as *Labanon Voices* or *Drifting Into War*.

After discussing his childhood stays in hospitals where he first discovered the god-like attraction of Hollywood movie stars, bissett moves into long poems, talking happily and sometimes disappointedly about the various ways his idols have entered and affected his life. Jane Powell continued to smile down at bissett in his hospital bed from her wall picture even

*whn my belly xplodid sum stuff
that came out uv me just missed her
face nd she was still smiling
nd I really dug her ok.*

There are equally unique homages to Geraldine Page, Elaine Stewart, Dean Martin, Enrico Caruso, and a host of other stars that would read like the cast of a new MGM retrospective.

Surprisingly perhaps, because bissett is using such a visual medium for the subject of his poetry, there is no purely concrete verse in *stardust*. There are collages of the author's sketches and stills of several stars, but the convoluted word diagrams we have come to expect of bissett give way here to a nearly traditional narrative form.

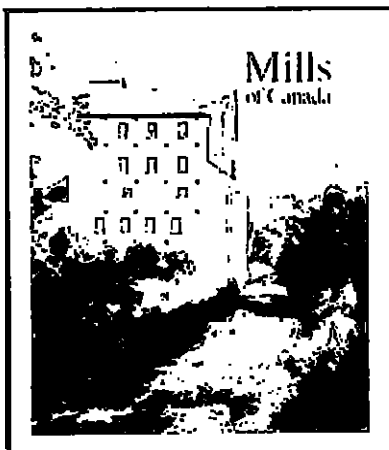
Maxine Gadd's new book is really not new at all, but rather a collection of three booklets now out of print. These were *Guns Of the West* (1967), *The Book Of Practical Knowledge* (1969), and *Hochelega* (1970). The first and last of these were published by

blewointmentpress, while the second was printed by the author at Intermedia.

It would be nice to believe these poems were worth reprinting; but, in fact, they only serve to remind us of how a lack of apprenticeship and discipline, coupled with only insular criticism, can render a writer ridiculous and sophomoric in her observations. *Westerns* is a hodge-podge of first-person obsessions, meaningless line breaks, and childish playings with upper and lower cases. This is not so much poetry as the pampered diapasons of a distraught heart. And at \$5.50 it should be reported to the Anti-Inflation Board. □

IN BRIEF

The Stars Belong to Everyone, by Helen Hogg, Doubleday, 274 pages, \$12.50 cloth, ISBN 0-385-12302-7. When a professional who has for 25 years produced a weekly astronomy column for Canada's largest newspaper writes a book on her subject for the general reader, one expects the result will be both authoritative and readable. And this one fills expectations. It is up-to-date, reliable, and comprehensive, as well as being understandable to someone without training in the field. Dr. Hogg emphasizes phenomena that can be observed with the naked eye —



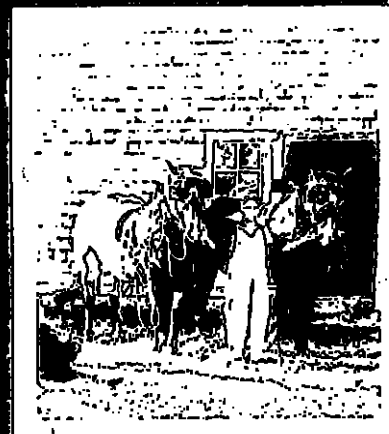
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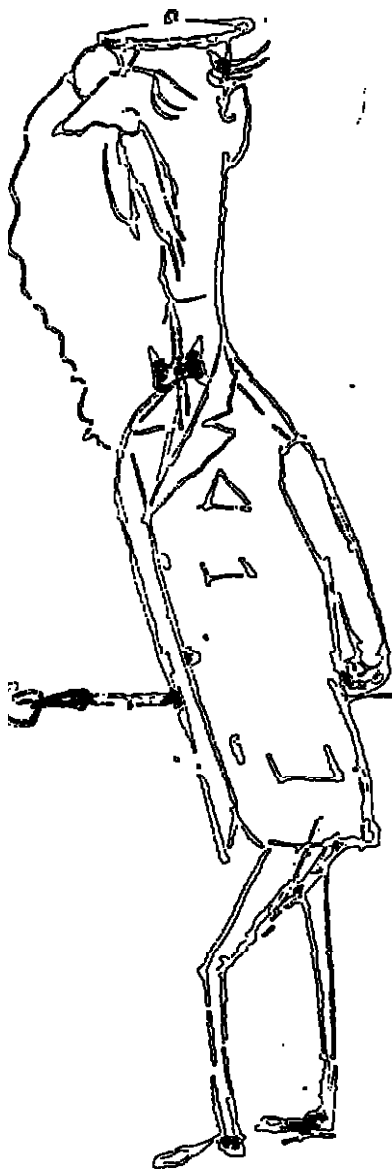
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aurora, meteors, comets, eclipses, the sun, the moon, the visible planets, and bright stars. Interest is heightened by the interspersed historical information on astronomy and astronomers, and on events such as "The Great Moon Hoax" of 1835 (when Richard Adams Locke wrote a series for the New York Sun reporting that creatures had been discovered on the moon, as an immediate result of which the *Sun* acquired the largest circulation of any daily in the world). The last 50 pages of the book discuss 20th-century developments, including attempts to establish communication with intelligent extraterrestrial life. This book could have been more visually appealing, and a glossary would have been useful. Those wishing more specialized information, or those whose interest is in more speculative areas such as UFOs, will find other sources more rewarding. But for its emphasis on celestial phenomena that can be observed without sophisticated equipment, and as a general introduction to the subject for the lay reader, this book is excellent.

CHRISTOPHER BLACKBURN

This wonder has seven days

Orphan Street. by Andre Langevin, translated from the French by Alan Brown. McClelland & Stewart, 287 pages, \$10 cloth (ISBN 0-7710-4682-0).

By LINDA SHOHEP

THE GATES OF the orphanage open to release Pierrot into the great world under the shadow of Jacques Cartier Bridge in east-end Montreal. Within the walls, 400 little boys had lived an unloved existence, watched over by "the crows" and disciplined by Pig-foot, the biggest crow of them all. But there were rules to play by. If you stood up to bullies and never let anyone see your softness, you survived. And if you were a Pierrot, you made another world for yourself where no one could intrude unless you invited him in; a world where Balibou, the great yellow cat, could slip at will through the walls to harrowing adventure; a world where The Blue Man always appeared in time to rescue you when you were in danger. In both these realms, there was order — the first, a repressive, stultifying one, the other, a liberating one that reflected justice. Outside the gates, there is no discernible order to the eyes of the

nine-year-old. He has seven days to make sense of the absurd universe in which he is cast and those seven days serve as the skeleton of Andre Langevin's *Orphan Street*, the richest and most satisfying of all his novels, translated with infinite sensitivity by Alan Brown.

Langevin novels burgeon with orphans, prisons, chains, and priests, but they also offer the possibility of redemption and love. *Orphan Street* continues his quest through the mind of a precocious nine-year-old who transcends misery through word magic and finds that in addition to violence and ugliness, there is warmth, expansiveness and music in the world for those who perceive it.

Pierrot is released to the custody of his late mother's family — fat Uncle Nap, "the educated one," and three maiden aunts, consumed by their own sterility and dedicated to the destruction of tenderness wherever they find it. The child is lost, overwhelmed. "For the first time the Blue Man had given an order without warning him." On impulse, he had thrown himself into his uncle's arms to be rebuffed ("A real savage! Just imagine") by Aunt Maria and berated by her brother ("Now what kind of a way is that to come into a person's place?"). Pierrot learns

quickly that caution is essential if he is to decipher the code that binds these adults against him.

On his first morning, sent into the unfamiliar street by drunk Aunt Maria, Pierrot meets the Rat, an ugly man-child, dying of galloping consumption, who introduces himself with a kick as a friend of Marcel, Pierrot's older brother, away in the U.S. Navy. The Rat is a key figure in the novel. Free under surveillance because of a criminal record and his illness, he is condemned to an early death. He is a thief, a receiver of stolen goods, a rebel, but also a secret artist. On the back of a pick-up, he plays his guitar for passersby.

When his uncle played, he knew the worst that could happen was that he'd close the music book. The Rat, reading nothing but the empty sky, purr his whole being into the vibration of the notes, and you stop asking if he's a grown-up or why his voice is high as a girl's, you're just afraid something might happen to him, that his fingers could be stilled.

Pierrot recognizes a Rat that no one else knows and acknowledges a kinship between them, though he still shudders if the older boy lays a clammy hand on him. The Rat carries a chain with a fend plumb on the end which he twirls until it becomes a blur of tight. The original title was *Les chaines dans le parc*.



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Rat's chain is the symbol of all the chains binding the characters to their fates. It is a sign of his artistry, his control; it is also a sign of his revolt and becomes the instrument of his revolting death.

Against the Rat stands Jane, the exquisite child next door, daughter of a prostitute and an "anglais" pilot, but as much an orphan as Piermt. Piermt has not known girls. Despite his precocious insight into adults, he is totally naive and uncomfortable about sexuality. Jane provides his sentimental education, for she learned early how to manipulate men. Forbidden to see one another, they spend stolen hours together plotting their getaway. Pierrot admits Jane to his imaginary world of adventure and escape; Jane initiates Pierrot into her universe of sensuality and love. She takes him to the Pouf family, the only source of warmth and compassion in the book. Mama Pouf, a fat, fertile mother, stands opposed to the three barren aunts, offering Piermt his one glimpse of a home. Papa Pouf, a shoemaker, is a foil to educated Uncle Nap. One of the many finely etched scenes is a visit by the two children to the Dickensian offices of Abdoula and Sicotte, Spice Merchants, where Pierrot discovers that Uncle Nap is one of an endless row of aged grey men in green visors, sitting in the dimly lit office, keeping the ledgers. Now he understands the inner humiliation that his uncle must live under his enforced coldness that melts only when he sits alone at the piano.

After seven days "in the park," Pierrot is returned to another institution. But he has lived a lifetime in that week and has been the repository of gifts from everyone he encountered. From the Rat, he has the guitar with an on-

spoken promise that he learn to play it so the Rat's death will not have been in vain: from Jane, he knows the possibility of love, different from her mother's cold sexuality; from the Poufs, he has gained an awareness of family and knowledge of his own parents to counter the venom of his aunts, who fear the probing questions of a child.

When Piermt enters the walls, he hears not the trampling boots he first heard as a tot. Now "the sunlight is the colour of a juicy pear and birds are singing in the silence." No walls, inside or outside, can ever contain what Piermt will offer the world.

The triumph of this novel lies not only in its structural perfection, the sense that it could not have developed in any

other way, but in the beauty of its language, which has not faded in translation. As with many novels of childhood, there is occasionally the danger that Pierrot's perception might be too subtle for his age, but these are minor lapses and Langevin avoids the too-easy descent to the maudlin that threatens lesser artists. Some enlightening comparisons might be made between Jean le Maigre, the child-poet of Marie-Claire Blais' *A Season in the Life of Emmanuel* and Piermt, and Gabrielle Roy's *The Tin Flute* could also be contrasted to this novel in terms of the social background of poverty and war in a Montreal slum. Like those two novels, *Orphan Street* should become a modern *Québécois* classic. □

first impressions

by David Helwig

Simenon may have something to worry about but Updike doesn't

The Tetramachus Collection, by Philippe van Rijndt, Lester & Orpen, 287 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0-919630-58-8).

Take a **Winning Hand**, by Anthony Dunham, TrendSetter series (General Publishing), 283 pages, \$5.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7736-0052-3).

THE CANADIAN editor and critic Robert Weaver once remarked to me that he thought that the thriller and the detective novel developed within a literary culture at a fairly late stage, after the pioneer

work had been done. They are, I suppose, sophisticated games that can be played only when the land has been cleared. While an increasing number of Canadian writers seem to be turning to popular forms and producing good books, no one, in my knowledge, has invented a Canadian detective to rank with Maigret or Philip Marlowe. Or a really memorable spy. Nor has any Canadian writer created, within a group of thrillers, anything like the Paris of Simenon or the California of Raymond Chandler, though John Buell uses



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Montreal well in *The Pyx* and Tom Ardies makes the landscape of Vancouver important in *Russian Roulette* (or *Kosygin Is Cowing* if you prefer the hardcover title).

The spy thriller, almost inevitably, has an international theme and some relationship to "a big issue." in order that the stakes may be high enough for all the skulduggery to matter. *The Tetramachus Collection*, a fine thriller which is the first novel of Phillippe van Rjndt, takes as its theme Vatican complicity in Nazi war crimes during the Second World War.

The book opens with the theft of a collection of documents from the Vatican secret archives. The collection is stolen by an idealistic but embittered priest who turns it over to an Italian socialist publisher. The documents have the power to destroy careers in a number of countries, to alter the succession of the papacy, perhaps to cause a revolution in Italian politics, and end the separate economic and political power of the papacy.

High stakes, indeed. And the complex political and social background is well researched and intelligently analyzed. I found that the book had the ability to make powerful and sophisticated characters seem real and fallible and complex. The Pope, Cardinal Meyerchuk, the publisher Sabatini, all

share something with real historical figures, yet have an inner life and fit their function in the plot.

Now and then there is a certain creaking of machinery. In the middle of the book, especially, there are so many characters that there is little time for us to know them. In particular, a beautiful girl called Heidi Seppes, who is "one of Europe's top freelance killers," seems a bit like a character tented from an agency specializing in spy props. In a lesser book, one mightn't notice her, but there isn't enough depth of character in *The Tetramachus Collection* that she stands out.

The book's central spy figure, Alexander Players, works for an organization named ISIS, which is an international espionage business created and tolerated by the espionage establishments of Russia and the U.S. In an introductory note, the author says "I have chosen ISIS as the fictitious name for an existing semi-private espionage organization whose name is also derived from mythology." The book's dedication reads: "This book is dedicated to the wives and families of men who have chosen espionage and, in particular, operational work as a way of life. My personal thoughts are for the one woman I knew who suffered because of her husband's profession and who finally chose to change her life rather than have

it become a tragedy." The publisher's note says of the author: "Philippe van Rjndt is a Canadian with an intimate knowledge of the inner workings of intelligence organizations."

Whether all this is fact or partly dramatic hocus-pocus, it gives the book an extra fascination. Certainly, the author seems to know what he's talking about; but I. F. Stone has proved to us that you can learn a lot by a careful reading of the newspapers.

Whatever kind of spy Phillippe van Rjndt may be or have been, he's a good writer. I started reading *The Tetramachus Collection* on trains and buses, but I was involved enough that I had to make time to sit down and finish it.

Another book that I started to read on the run is Anthony Dunham's first novel, *Take A Winning Hand*. The way it is presented by General Publishing in their TrendSetters edition made it seem like the son of popular novel that's meant for a wide audience. The book opens with a businessman named Nicholas Richmond starting out at a new and exciting job. It seemed a bit old-fashioned, like one of those challenging new novels of 1954, but I'm interested in big business (probably because I know nothing about it) and I was quite prepared to like the book.

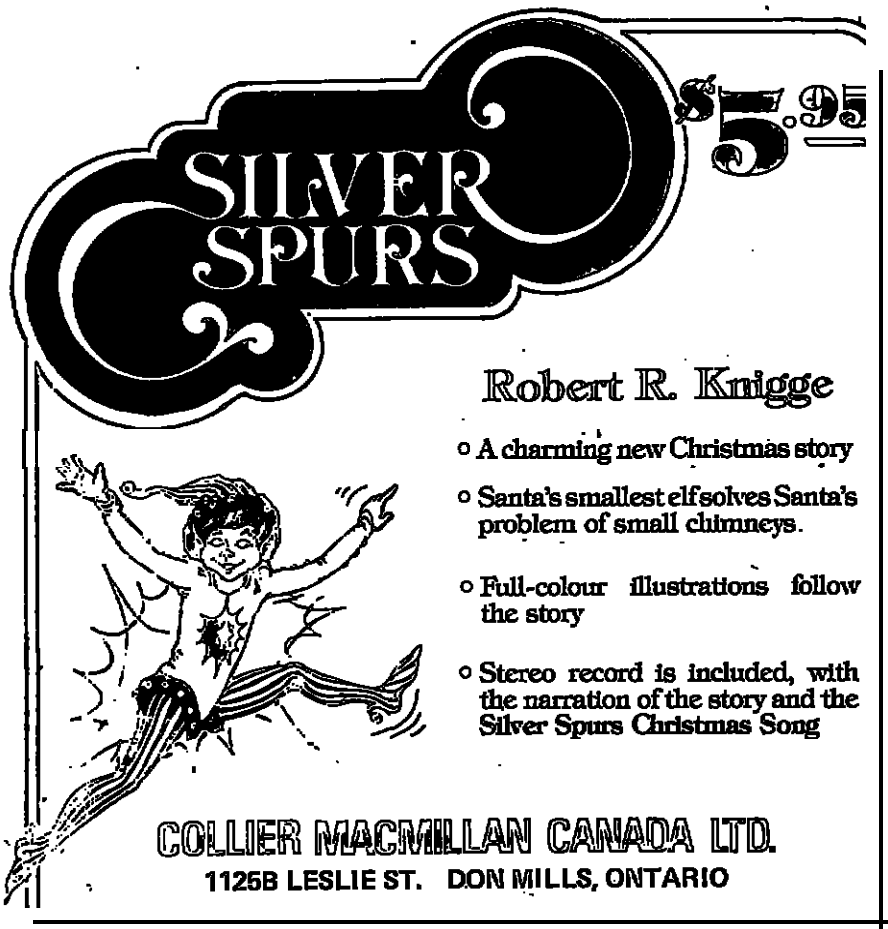
So much for my expectations. The novel turned out to be preoccupied with a tiresome love affair between Nick Richmond and a certain Belinda Castaldi. John Updike country, but done without any of Updike's stylistic brilliance or insight. The book makes gestures toward business and the generation gap but without offering anything interesting or dramatic about either one.

The author does one thing very well. His evocations of time and place and weather are excellent, with the result that *Take A Winning Hand* is the only novel I can remember in which I waited impatiently to get away from the dull characters and into a descriptive passage.

I struggled through the book to the end, only to find that the few hints of plot or dramatic confrontation were thrown away, and that even the simplest questions were left unanswered. I was left frustrated and angry, not because the book had imaginatively justified these emotions but because it had cheated me and wasted my time.

On the book's cover is a quotation from Hugh MacLennan. It says: "A formidable performance, ... a work of exceptional social importance, ... the first Canadian novel since the war to deal with what is destroying the soul of this country."

I can only assume that someone in the publishing house attached MacLennan's comments to the wrong manuscript. □



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Finnigan's awake, others too, but there is still a helluva lot of Tish around

THERE'S A STACK OF poetry books a foot high on my desk. I do not intend to review them in any meritorious order, such as the **best one** first. This would not only be ponderous but also indicative of a **critical** bias on my part; moreover, the space of this column demands a **certain expediency**. Therefore, let us begin.

Living Together by Joan Finnigan (Fiddlehead Poetry Books. 114 pages, \$5) is a" impressive but uneven collection, spiked with mordant satire and a tincture of **pure lyricism**. This is her eighth book, and it represents a **considerable** achievement in her cmft. She knows people and her themes, and though she writes in **irregular** lines, she keeps close control on **manner** and matter alike. Her vocabulary shifts fmm colloquialism to **quite elaborate diction**. Perhaps the most moving piece in thii volume is a beautiful love song called "The **Killdeer** Have Come to the Fields

Again." I must quote a stanza from it:

*The killdeer have come to the fields again:
Last fall we sat on the stoop in the rain
and the mist and I gave him their name:
Never again.*

John Trachuk's Whistling (Borealis Press) is appropriately titled. His terse little poems are **more** homily than ode, more of a warbling ditty than a grand **exploration** of consciousness. No fluff here, just the kernel of people and **what makes them live**.

Angels Have No Hearts by Wayne McNeill (Catalyst Press) is a book that **has no body**. The poems are so short that all of them could have **been written on** one page.

There are some good travel poems in Going Down into History by Doug Beardsley (Oolichan Books). The attractive format of this volume complements Beardsley's peripatetic style and vision.

Pomegranate, edited by Nellie McClung (Intermedia Press), is a small anthology of Vancouver poetry.. Thirty-six poets have contributed 36 poems. There must be some other way of **looking** at a pomegranate.

Elk Lake Diary (Highway Book Shop, Cobalt, Ont.) is Dorothy **Familoe's** fifth book of poems. Her themes are nature and ecology, but her style is too pedestrian. **Occasional use** of irony, and a freshness of imagery.

Nisan by John Asfour (Fiddlehead Poetry Books) is the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. The poems in this volume are somewhat prosaic. There is too much verbosity and not enough lyrical **colour**.

John **Tyndal's** **Howlcat Fugues** (Applegarth Follies, 83 pages, \$4.95) contains a few poems that are **scintillatingly surreal**; but for the most part, they read like Bob Dylan's **liner notes**.

Songs & Speeches by Barry **McKinno**" (Caledonia Writing Series) is an **amateurishly** printed flap-book of non-poetry. There are almost as many punctuation marks and numerals as there are words.

Much revision and a **certain** amount of poetic discipline could have rounded the **rough edges** of Harvey Chometsky's **The Drinking God** (Repository Press). As it is, the poems **sprawl** haphazardly, and everything is vague.

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Manshapes, Moonscapes by Walter Orlovich (Fiddlehead Poetry Books. 45 pages. 531 seldom rises above the barely adequate. His poems are little observation pieces, haiku-like in imagery. Two excellent examples are: "The great heron wing/An archer leans/On his bow./Night/Dies slowly." "I wish I had/All the years I wished away/So I could/Wish them away again."

Face to Facet Centennial Printing) is an anthology of New Brunswick women writers. The contents are conducive to yawning. Two notable exceptions are M. Travis Lane and Lakshmi Gill. Gill's "Modular Woman" is a cleverly constructed concrete poem.

Tish No. 1-19, edited by Frank Davey (Talonbooks) is an obsession with Davey. Ever since the Black Mountaineers invaded Vancouver in 1961, the so-called Tish poets have had delusions of poetic grandeur. Davey has lovingly collected all these "poetry newsletters" in one bulky volume, and penned a tribute to himself and his former co-editors. Literary incest was never more blatant.

Lampman's Bonnets, edited and with an introduction by Margaret Whitridge (Borealis Press. 200 pages. \$14.95 cloth and 169.95 paper) is a labour of sheer love. Whitridge is undoubtedly an authority on this post-Confederation poet, and she has collected 177 sonnets from Lampman's manu-

scripts and arranged them chronologically from 1884 to 1899. Her long introduction is quite scholarly; she has done her research well.

Pierre Coupey's Four Island Poems (Caledonia Writing Series) are poignant and lyrical. Each one supplements the other with a chain of metaphors anchored to love, art, and loneliness:

*we speak love & poetry
though our bodies ache for that other touch
so we might know the elements of our world*

The following three books of poetry were published by Reshard Gool's Square Deal Press in Charlottetown, P.E.I. Cavalier Carcass by Larry Leclair; Of the Swimmer among the Coral, and of the Monk in the Mountains by John Smith; and Red Clay Soil by A. P. Campbell.

Although these poets live in the same island province, each one's voice is stylistically distinct. The quality of their work is exceptional, and I think they're already knocking on Milton Acorn's door.

Little magazines are flourishing in Canada. Never before has so much contemporary poetry and prose been so readily obtainable. Every province has more than one masthead. I'm looking at five litmags right now.

The first issue of Versus (Box 503, Outremont Station, Montreal, Quebec)

arrived during the Olympic Games. It will appear seasonally, and feature both traditional and experimental writing. The format is clean-cut, and the editor, Fred Louder, informs me that subsequent issues will be "typeset in a good face." Each copy is \$1.25.

Poetry Toronto Newsletter, edited by Darina McFadyen and Pier G. DiCicco (224 St. George St., Apt. 709, Toronto-or- 35 Walmer Rd., Apt. 1209, Toronto) provides an invaluable service as regards the poetry scene.

Waves (Rm. 128, Founders College, York University) has been out for a few years. Some good poetry and fiction. Published tri-annually. Subscription is \$5 per year.

Poetry Windsor Poesie (Box 6, Sandwich P.O., Windsor, Ont.) is published three times a year. It is a lively mag that features poetry and interviews in English and French. Subscription is \$2.50 per annum.

Repository (R.R. 7, Buckhorn Rd., Prince George, B.C.) is a beautifully designed magazine that prints poetry, fiction, photos, and sketches. The contents are always good. Editors: Margaret Cameron and John Harris. Subscription is \$3 per year.

That covers the poetry trial balance for this column. Even as I write this, more books and magazines are pouring in. See you next year. □

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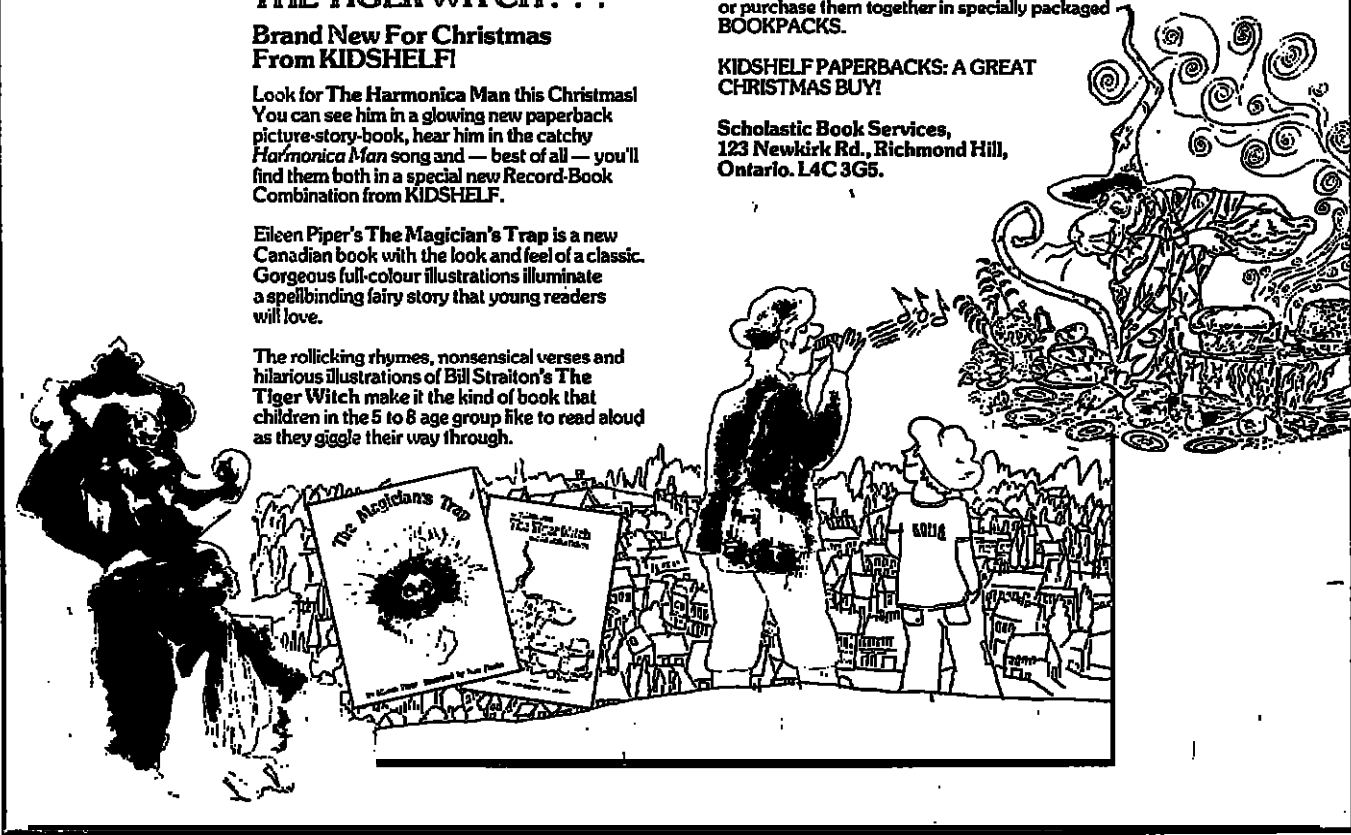
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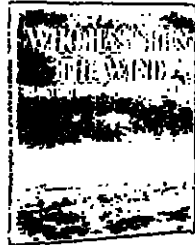
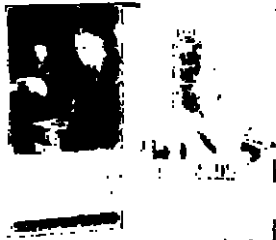
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From social reform' to quilts, via 'the planets and the dreaded mediascan

JAMES LORIMER is one of the more important figures of this period. He is a good social critic (*Working People* is probably his best book) and a fine publisher. But his greatest contribution has been (and continues to be) as the driving force behind some of the major reform movements of the past decade — the Association of Canadian Publishers, for instance, and the urban-reform movement. There are a lot of people who complain of being memoed to death by Lorimer, but he gets things done. Two years ago he was responsible for organizing *City Magazine*, a journal devoted to printing articles about the urban-reform movement. Now we have a selection of pieces from the magazine in *The City Book: The Politics and Planning of Canada's Cities* (James Lorimer & Co., 223 pages, \$5.95 paper). The book, which is co-edited by Lorimer and Evelyn Ross, will be extremely useful to town planning students across the country.

ALTHOUGH THE phenomenon has really just begun, I'm already weary of textbooks that attempt to be print analogues of TV programs. Their authors and publishers seem to work on the assumption that readers have an attention span of about 13 seconds and that if you don't keep them entertained they'll push a button and have somebody else's textbook appear in their hands. *Mediascan* by Jim Henderson (Thomas Nelson, 159 Pages, \$6.50) is such a book. It's full of such words as "mediacy," "media-scantics" and "electronvironment." We get lots of pictures (mostly of American media personalities), cartoons, mirror images of the word "activities," switches among various print sizes and colours, and questions such as: "Why is MEDIASCAN published in print form?" (damned if I know) and "Are jeans a fad? If not, why not?" One of my own questions: Could it be that the pointless interviews with such people as CBC announcer Margaret Paesu are

them as a kind of joke? (*Mediascan*: "Do you think radio is fulfilling its role in our society?" Paesu: "That's a very interesting question.") The author of *Mediascan* is co-ordinator of the Language Study Centre for the Toronto Board of Education. All I can say to that is, hmmm.

* * *

ONE OF THE most intriguing self-published books I've seen in a long time is Gerald Baton's *The Crowd Chooses* (unpriced, 120 pages). Baron teaches astrology at Toronto's Humber College and his book is an attempt to demonstrate (with the aid of a computer) that there is a relationship between planet positions and horse-race results. Baron's conclusion is that "the planet pattern that was statistically the most significant win indicator, was the Moon's northern node ... approximately 90 degrees ... from the Midpoint of Mars and Pluto. ..." What this means, he adds dramatically, is "that some combination of jockey(s), horse(s) and crowd have formed an alliance to cause the favourite to win." Sounds reasonable to me. The book is available by writing to the author at 231 Soraburen Avenue, Toronto, M6R 2G3.

* * *

ONE OF THE standard British histories of quilt-making, Averil Colby's *Patchwork* (1958), states boldly that: "Most of the designs of patchwork made in Canada are common to both England and America and have gone to Canada from either. Certainly, nothing has gone to either of them from Canada." Mary Conroy of Sudbury was so infuriated when she read that statement that she spent the next five years collecting information that would disprove it. The result is 300 Years of Canada's *Quilts* (Griffin House, 133 pages, \$7.95 paper). I'm not sure whether Conroy actually does disprove Colby. But what she's done in telling the story of quilting in this country is produce a fascinating bit of social history. It's full of information about quilts in the life of such people as Nellie McClung's mother-in-law. I only wish more of the reproductions of quilts in the book were in colour. □



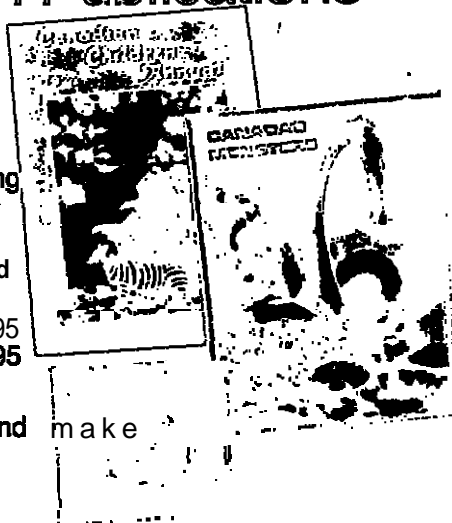
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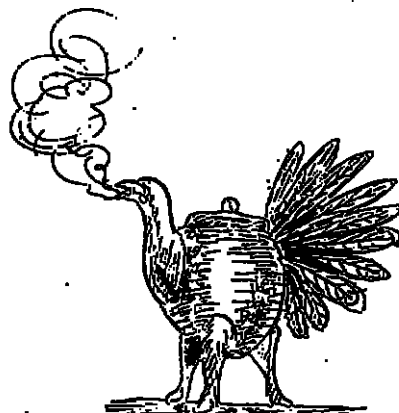
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Ann Wall explains why the t-louse of Anansi hasn't fallen

ANN WALL is the president, major shareholder, and principal chatelaine of the House of Anansi. She has been involved with Anansi since the firm was founded in 1967 and has so far managed to keep her house safe from the two tigers that menace small publishing ventures — takeovers or bankruptcy. To find out how, Books in Canada asked poet **Stephanie J. Nynych** to interview Ms. Wall:

Books in Canada: What's it like to be a woman in publishing?

Ann Wall: I'm not aware of being discriminated against. When I first began at Anansi my life was difficult because I was an American, but that's something else. In any small company you tend to be treated as people, if you do your work. There are very few women running publishing houses, however, unless they're somebody's wife.

BiC: Did Anansi spearhead a renaissance or a birth in Canadian literature?

Wall: I would say a birth. In 1967 it was an oddity for Canadians to be published, except for a few writers. We had to create a public, because the writers were there. Except for the occasional graduate course, there were almost no courses in Canadian literature even at the university level. In the 1960s a lot of us were trying to change the climate in Canada: to change the life of the spirit here. Canadians are far more aware of themselves as a people now, and of having their own lives to lead.

BiC: What was the reaction to the founding principles of Anansi?

Wall: People said it would never work. Other publishers especially thought the writing talent wasn't here, and that concentrating on poetry and novels that weren't best-seller material — the least profitable part of any publishing program — was crazy. We were interested in books that were good and would stand up and tell us something about ourselves. And we published Atwood, Grant, Lee and Carrier.

BiC: What is your present policy in considering manuscripts?

Wall: We're looking for books that will last, books that are important both for literature and the author's development. The last is particularly true when we're dealing with new writers.

BiC: What is the state of Canadian publishing at present?

Wall: I don't think it's healthy. We've always had that hunch, but without the statistics to back it up because, until now, the Statistics Canada surveys were not asking the right questions. The forms were revised in 1975 under prodding from the Association of Canadian Publishers, so this year's survey should produce some real information. An analysis of *Canadian Books in Print* made by Harold Bohne, vice-president of ACP, is far from encouraging. This showed that of all books published in Canada between 1973 and 1975, almost 80% were published by



Ann Wall

Canadian-owned houses, yet sales accounted for only 50% of what Statistics Canada calls "publisher's own books." And considering the overall book market, including agency titles and books the branch plants bring in from their parent companies, Canadian publishers accounted for only 37% of sales in dollar volume.

BiC: What are the functions of literature and publishing in a society?

Wall: To try to show people who they are and what they might become. Especially in Canada, a publisher should be offering Canadians a true picture of themselves in history books, novels, books of poetry — books of our own, in Dennis Lee's phrase, not someone else's idea of who we are.

BiC: Is House of Anansi in a healthy economic situation.

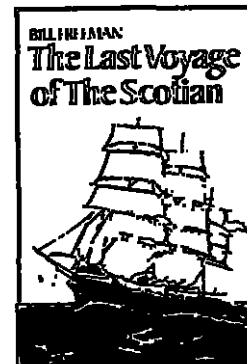
Wall: Yes. Our sales with our new distributor, Burns & MacEachern, have been very good. I don't think we'll ever make a million dollars, because as an experimental publisher; we take too many risks. But we're happy to break even.

"An absorbing success . . ."

is Sheila Egoff's comment on Bill Freeman's new adventure story for children, *The Last Voyage of the Scotian*.

She writes: "I gulped it down in one sitting. It really held me."

"Books about boys being shanghaied are common enough but they are mostly British and so I found the Canadian background most refreshing, even thrilling. . . Mr. Freeman's forte is authenticity and his details are controlled and always help to advance the plot — as such details should be used."



Other comments from librarians are equally favourable. Says Callie Israel of the Windsor Public Library: "Freeman is writing better with this book — his conversations are more natural and his ability to describe the complicated and unfamiliar activities of early sailors aboard ship is extraordinary."

Roger J. Smith, in his *Books in Canada* review reminds readers of Freeman's Canada Council prize-winning book *Shantymen of Cache Lake* and says: "Together these books offer a delightful and substantial reading package."

Shantymen of Cache Lake is in stock in both cloth and paper. *Last Voyage of the Scotian* was released on November 4, in a large first printing in both cloth and paper. Author Bill Freeman travels from St. John's to Vancouver in a nation-wide promotion tour during late November and December. Both titles contain complete Cataloguing in Publication data. Find them at your local bookseller; library customers may order from Belford Books at 11 Boulton Avenue, Toronto M4M 2J4.

James Lorimer & Company, Publishers

EtC: Finally, how did you ever hit upon the name Anansi for an English-Canadian publishing house?

Wall: Well, Anansi is the name for a West African spider god. The legend goes that Anansi created the world and then it got bored, and then it began playing tricks on the world; and telling stories. Dave Godfrey came up with the name; he had been teaching in Ghana, and got the name from there. Anansi stories are all over West Africa and probably came over here via slaves, so that now they are quite common throughout the West Indies. Of course, whenever I meet black people in the States, they immediately assume that Anansi is a black publishing house. □

Letters to the Editor

LOOKING AT LOVE ...

Sir:

I would like to thank you for the excellent October issue. I have been looking for a reason to support your publication. The article by Sam Ajzenstat on Watters' *Compulsory Parenthood*

gives me that reason. Congratulations on publishing it! With that kind of quality you may yet be able to have a Canadian counterpart to the *New York Review of Books*, or the *Times Literary Supplement*. I hope very much you will follow that route, with reviews of substantial length, tapping the resources of the universities (which have many able and willing reviewers).

Randal Marlin
Assistant Professor
Carleton University
Ottawa

... FROM BOTH SIDES NOW

Sir:

In your October, 1976, issue of *Books in Canada*, Mr. Sam Ajzenstat states in his negative review of the book *Compulsory Parenthood* that "we desperately need a discussion, especially of the moral concerns, honest and wise enough to keep us alive and responsive to the real truths on both sides of the political battle." Bearing this in mind and being aware that there have been several positive reviews recently of the same book, I feel the public has a right to "both sides" in your publication. Attached are two reviews giving the "other side" for publication in your November issue.

I trust you will find these helpful in your efforts to ensure complete, unbiased reporting to the reading public.

Mary J. Mills
Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada
Ottawa

Editor's note: *Ms. Mills' point would be well taken were we a news magazine. However, we are a review magazine and our reviewer's opinion must stand. Naturally any correspondence taking issue with that opinion would find space in this column.*

VIVA DE SANTANA

Sir:

A few days ago in Montreal I was pleased to be given a copy of your September issue at the Double Hook Book Shop, Greene Avenue. Congratulations to the magazine, to Richard Outram, and to Hubert de Santana on Santana's article about Outram and his work. I am deeply impressed by Santana's estimate of Outram's stature and his advice that Outram "shuns the medic fanfare."

I expect that Outram must be pleased and gratified that his work has elicited such high praise so well and so considerately expressed.

Please convey my best wishes for ever-increasing success and satisfaction to Richard Outram and please continue to publish Hubert de Santana.

Frederick Taylor
San Miguel de Allende
Mexico

THROUGH A CLASS DARKLY

Sir:

George Melnyk's hostile comments about *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*, edited by G. S. Kealey and Peter Warrian, in his review of it, and *Working in Canada*, edited by Walter Johnson, exhibit the reductionism and reverse elitism all too common among leftists (for such I take him to be). On the one hand, he presents us with the "involved, self-sacrificing, and critical" workers of Johnson's book; on the other, with the academics, vitiated by "economic self-interest" and jargon, of the Kealey/Warrian book. But, where, in the real world so dear to Mr. Melnyk, do we find such pitiable caricatures? One indeed grows tired of pointing out to such strident champions of the working class as Mr. Melnyk that Marx and Engels were hardly proletarian; or that such leftist academics as the historian David Mont-

gomery or the social theorists Stanley Aronowitz and Harry Braverman, began their lives in the working class. It is surely the worst kind of conceit to measure a person's ability to contribute to the struggle for human liberation by his occupation.

Mr. Melnyk's review betrays another conceit when it falls victim to the very condescension towards workers he attributes to the "middle-class radicals." By complaining that the Kealey/Warrian book is too specialized for even the "educated reader," he implies that a worker would be unable to understand or appreciate its arguments. Would Mr. Melnyk have had the book written at "a Reader's Digest level"? Which approach would then have been more condescending?

Mr. Melnyk's essential complaint with the Kealey/Warrian book seems to be that it is not, unlike Johnson's book, concerned with "daily work experience." This is judging the book for a crime it never intended to commit. The Kealey/Warrian book does not, set out to study daily work experience; it is historical, not sociological. But Mr. Melnyk's complaint ignores both the extent to which the present is a result of events in the past and the fact that one's ability to change the present, and thus the future, depends, to a degree, on one's ability to understand the past. For this reason, there is a need for the Kealey/Warrian and Johnson books both.

The real pity about both books, which is not mentioned by Mr. Melnyk (perhaps because it might have called into question his own revolutionary work as editor of the *West View*), is that few workers will read either one. This is only a guess on my part, and one in which I would gladly be proven wrong. But somehow, I doubt that I will be.

Gus Richardson
Toronto

LIMERICK BLUES

Sir:

*A county in Ireland called Limerick
And a mag (B in C) that is pretty slick
Made a terrible mess
At least by this witness
Who read CanWit 14 and felt really sick.*

William Silver
Dalhousie University
Halifax

YAFFLE ON THE WING

Sir:

Books in Canada purports to be a "national review of books."

We at Breakwater regard with some dismay what appears to be *Books in Canada's* view of what comprises this nation. Presumably the nation confines itself to that territory between Halifax and Vancouver. Newfoundland is often the case — is excluded. Readers of the Canadian best seller *Between Friends* who have recovered from their ecstasy of seeing such a magnificent gift from the Canadians to the Americans will probably have discovered by now that Newfoundlanders and their homeland have been totally excluded. That, in spite of the fact that Newfoundland had ambassadors in Washington when Toronto was a trading post.

Surely, Mr. Editor, *Books in Canada*, a magazine funded by Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, will not be guilty of such narrow concepts of what comprises a nation.

Let it be known then, sir, that we do exist. We have existed for three years. We do publish books. Our books are read by Canadians from Petty Harbour to Nanaimo and we think that Canadian readers would be interested in your reviews — good or bad. In case you have the last batch in the bin, enclosed is another yaffle.

Clyde Rose
Managing Director
Breakwater Books, Ltd.
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P.S. Our house is built of bricks so you can huff and puff all you like.

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This Christmas, give your child a *Holiday* in the Woods. In the jungle of ordinary books, it makes a most refreshing change.

\$6.95

FROM CLARKE IRWIN

CanWit No. 18

WHAT DO YOU make of IRVING LAYTON? Well, if you're inclined to play games with letters, you might make NOT ANY VIRGIL. The illustrious ranks of CanLit must be loaded with similar telling anagrams. We'll pay \$25 for the wittiest selection and \$25 also goes to Carla Wolfe of Toronto for this idea. Address: CanWit No. 18, Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is Dec. 31.

RESULTS OF CONTEST NO. 16

AFTER *Separation*, what? Contestants were asked to provide the title and plot outline for Richard Rohmer's fifth political thriller. Many readers took the contest quite seriously and gave us plots that a copyright lawyer might consider infringements of Rohmer's intellectual property. Several other possible winners were rejected because their entries were more in the nature of jacket blurbs than plot outlines. The winner is Philip Walsh of Ottawa, who receives \$25 for this fascinating farrago:

CANADA DRY

Nation-wide drought threatens Canada when U.S. declares weather embargo, preventing rain from crossing border. Rivers, lakes are so polluted as to be useless. Canada becomes giant dustbowl. Arab nations send advisers to convert country to desert economy. The price: annexation of Canada to Arab federation. Newly arrived British immigrants move to Australia; Irving Layton moves to Miami. The RCMP Musical Ride starts training camels. Alberta's premier anticipates better relations with Arabs than with Eastern elite.

CLASSIFIED

Classified rates: \$3 per line (40 characters to the line). Deadline: first of the month for issue dated following month. Address: Books in Canada Classified, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. Phone: (416) 363-5426.

INDEXING/COPY-EDITING. Free estimates, references. C. Lederer, Toronto. 357.0375.

CARNIVOROUS bullfrog Joe Rosenblatt would like to immerse himself as writer-in-residence at one of the many academic swamps in Canada. This green creature is also available for readings and lectures. He can be reached at 15 Greensides Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M6G 3P5.

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Honourable mentions:

ERECTION U.N.

When nuclear catastrophe devastates the earth, the U.N. erects a 50-mile-high building to accommodate all survivors, but foolishly rents out floors as "national territory" to individual countries. Canada occupies the bottom 400 storeys and unaccustomed caustrophobia makes her turn world aggressor. She jams long-distance elevators and basemen, washing machines, plugs mail and garbage chutes, gradually forces the 149 other countries on the remaining 20,000 storeys to capitulate.

— Gordon Black, Toronto

CANADA-CARIB

The tall, dark, handsome and reasonably conservative F M tries to combat the U.S./British domination of the tourist trade by using nuclear devices to separate Nova Scotia from the rest of Canada, then floating it to the Caribbean. Problems arise only when the U.S. and Britain launch a joint, blockade, but when the Puerto Scotians (or Nova Ricans) rebel against imposed bilingualism (English/Spanish) and being forced to trade their bagpipes for steel drums.

— Michael R. Carlson, Montreal

ALBERTA

Repatriated constitution allows Albertan government to reduce provincial population growth by prohibiting intra-provincial immigration and saturating drinking water with Edmonton-developed vaccine ensuring abortion unless antidote administered. Antidote available only with certification of parental health, economic and moral responsibility. Ballooning wealth and dwindling population within five years results in two-million-strong airborne Ugandan invasion by Idi Amin. Invasion repelled only by arrival Quebec Liberation Army.

— Derrick Murdoch, Toronto

HIBERNATION

A fanatic biologist-ecologist plots to return the North completely to the animals and Eskimos. He plans to use hypno-chemo-psycho-therapy on bears to gain control of key centres. He encounters a female bear, asleep in a cave. Whereupon, a sensuous bond of affection develops. In the final scene, the bear heads back to civilization to sacrifice herself to the cause while the scientist has fallen into a deep, trance-like sleep.

— Georgia B. Sullivan. Oyen. Alta.

EVACUATION

A newly independent Quebec stops arguing and splits the atom, with consequences that leave everywhere south of the Mid-Canada Development Corridor unfit for human or Yankee habitation. The day is saved by a visionary, if kinky, household-appliance tycoon and armed forces reservist from Saskatoon, after he regains his youthful vigour through the judicious use of a Montreal mistress and colonic irrigation.

— Harvey L. Shepherd, Toronto

EXASPERATION

The Canadian literary world, alarmed at the government's increasing use of initials and jargon to obfuscate policies, establishes the Symboles Liberation Army, dedicated to formen, cultural revolution. Their leader, a novel-writing brigadier general, Harold Hohmer, flies about in an Aurora je, (complete with detailed diagrams) smuggled to him by Defence Canada sympathizers. A, last, as Hohmer and the Prime Minister confer in an isolated Arctic outpost, a nearby major oil pipeline bursts, spewing tons of black ooze to slither south.

— Betsy Struthers, Ottawa

MAGNETIZATION

A., Arctic-bound RCAF pilot, noting strange navigational rid disturbances, determines that Russia is slowly moving the magnetic North Pole toward Northern Siberia by utilizing mammoth magnetic generators and nuclear satellites. Because of the North America, earthquakes and tidal waves expected to result from such a traumatic shift, the United States and Australia (whose proximity to the South Magnetic Pole makes it equally vulnerable) help Canada engage in a giant magnetic tug of war.

— M. J. Lewin, Ottawa

Books received

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

Stories from Pangnirtung, by Amaktuyok and Stuart Hodgson, Hurtig Publishers.

Declining Gracefully, by John Sandman. Coach House Press.

Rural Boots, by M. Byers, J. Kennedy, M. McBurney and the Junior League of Toronto. U of T Press.

Baffles of Wind and Tide, edited by Clyde Rose, Breakwater Books.

The Blasty Bough, edited by Clyde Rose, Breakwater Books.

That Far Greater Bay, by Ray Guy. Breakwater Books.

This is the Law?, by Nigel Napier-Andrews. Doubleday.

Rudolph Valentino, by Alexander Walker. Thomas Nelson and Sons.

Marlene Dietrich, by Sheridan Morley. Thomas Nelson and Sons.

Film Canadiana, edited by Pin-s Handling. The Canadian Film Institute.

Norman McEwen, by Maynard Collins. The Canadian Film Institute.

Northlight, Lovelight, by Jacques Folch-Ribas. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Saul and Selected Poems, by Charles Heavysege. U of T Press.

The Search for an Ideal, by S. E. D. Short. U of T Press.

South Sea Journey, by George Woodcock. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Nature Quizzes for Canadians, by Vty and Mill McMillan. J.I. Douglas.

The Strongest Man in History, by Ben Wcida. Mitchell Press Ltd.

Fair Days Along the Talbert, by Dennis Patrick Sears. Musson.

Astrological Warnings & the Stock Market, by Thomas Rietter. Pagurian Press.

A Child's Introduction to the Outdoors, by David Richey. Pagurian Press.

Mastering the Art of Winning Golf, by James Haber. Pagurian Press.

Canada 1576. Statistics Canada.

Elk Lake Diary, by Dorothy Farmiloe. Highway Bookshop.

Eileen McCullough, by Alice Boissoneau. Simon & Pierre.

Inflation: It's Your Bag, by Bernhard A. Frischke. Simon & Pierre.

The Land of Open Doors, by J. Burgon Bickersteth. U of T Press.

The Leacock Medal Treasury, selected by Ralph L. Curry. Lester & Orpen.

When I Was a Boy, by David Trumble, edited by Glen Ellis, J. M. Den, & Sons.

Cross Canada, by Sondra Gottlieb. Hancock House.

Bonding of Bone, by W. K. Thomas. The Pasdeloup Press.

The Colours of Love, by John Alan Lee. New Press.

CANADIAN LIBRARIES IN THEIR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

FEBRUARY 24—26, 1977

You are invited to attend a national conference designed to provide Canadian librarians with a better understanding of the organizational milieu in which we carry out our professional responsibilities. Twenty-five authorities on Canadian librarianship have been invited to present papers on topics of major concern to the profession.

The papers will be published as conference proceedings which will be distributed to participants. Given the present dearth of knowledge about Canadian libraries, the proceedings will make a significant contribution to librarianship in Canada. The conference will generate important information for library administrators and practicing librarians.

The conference will seek to implement recommendations of the recent report of the Commission on Canadian Studies by providing Canadian librarians with an opportunity to "know themselves" by coming together for this conference. The format will be that of the Learned Societies.

Participants will be given an opportunity to hear and discuss papers in an academically stimulating forum to increase their understanding of Canadian libraries in their changing environment.

TOPICS AND SPEAKERS

Thursday, February 24, 1977

Historical Framework

Atlantic Provinces

Patricia A. Lotz — Consumer Consultant, Nova Scotia Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Halifax, N.S.

Quebec

Daniel D. Reicher — Professeur, Ecole de Bibliothéconomie, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Québec.

Ontario

Jean Kerfoot Allen — formerly Legislative Librarian, Government of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario.

Prairie Provinces

Marian E. Richeson — Librarian, Legal Services Commission, Vancouver, B.C. and Harry E.

Newsom — Director, Cariboo-Thompson Nicola Library System, Kamloops, B.C.

British Columbia

Samual D. Rothstein — Professor, School of Librarianship, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

Yukon and Northwest Territories

Garth Graham — Director, Library Services Branch, Government of the Yukon, Whitehorse. Yukon and Patricia L. Smith — Chief, Public Library Services of the Northwest Territories, Hay River, N.W.T.

Institutional Framework

Public Libraries

Lois M. Bmky — Professor, School of Librarianship, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

Canadian University Libraries

Bruce B. Peel — Librarian to the University, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

School Libraries

David H. Jenkinson — Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Friday, February 25, 1977

Institutional Framework (continued)

Special Libraries in Canada

Beryl L. Anderson — Head, Library Documentation Centre, National Library of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

Canada's National Library Services

F. Dolores Donnelly — Professor, Faculty of Library Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario.

Canadian Library Associations

Lorraine Spencer Garry — Librarian, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario.

The Library Profession

Recruitment and Selection

Carl G. Garry — Professor, Department of Administrative Studies, Atkinson College, York University, Toronto, Ontario and Lorraine Spencer Garry — Librarian, Registered Nurses'

Association of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario.

Socialization to the Profession

Kenneth H. Plate — Professor, Faculty of Library Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario.

Professional Library Education in Canada

Mary E.P. Henderson — Professor, School of Library Science, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta or Delegate.

Education: Practitioner's Response

Olga J. Gil — Reference Librarian and Consultant, Edmonton, Alberta.

The Library Technicians

Ilean Riddle Weihs — Director, Library Techniques Program, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Willowdale, Ontario.

Cocktail Party and Banquet

Keynote Speaker

Richard Rohmer — a Canadian novelist and a member of the Royal Commission on Book Publishing in Canada.

Saturday, February 26, 1977

The Library and Its Internal and External Environments

Organizational Problems in Libraries

Victor V. Murray — Professor and Chairman, Department of Sociology, York University, Toronto, Ontario.

Unionization of the Profession

Carl G. Garry — Professor, Department of Administrative Studies, Atkinson College, York University, Toronto, Ontario.

Library Administration

Carole Weiss — Head, Reference Department, John P. Robarts Library, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario.

Libraries and the Canadian Book Trade

Frances G. Halpenny — Professor and Dean, Faculty of Library Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario.

Technological Change in Libraries

C. David Batty — Professor, School of Library and Information Service, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, U.S.A.

Conclusion of Conference

CANADIAN LIBRARIES IN THEIR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT — CCE 496

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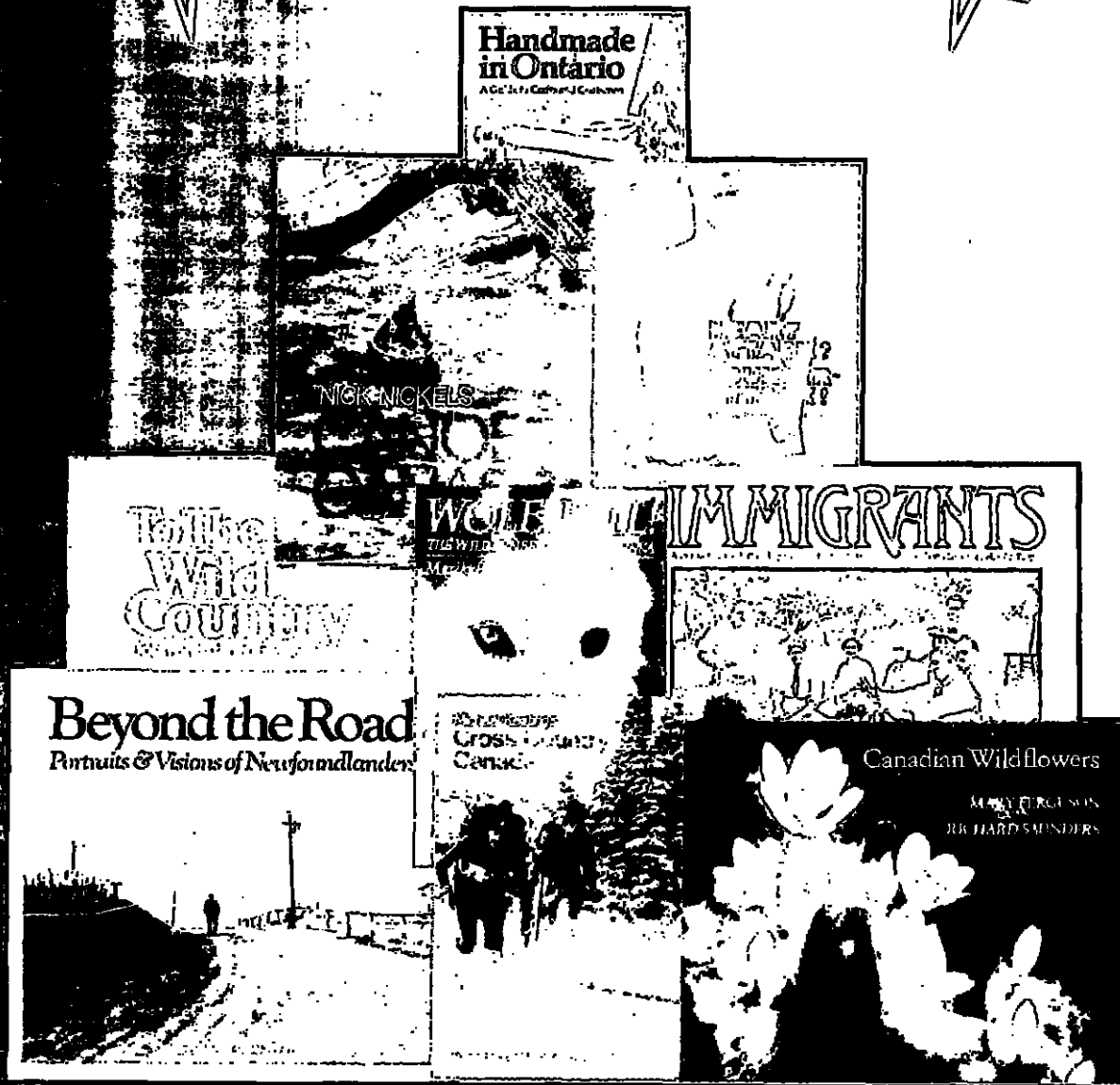
February 26

Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued automatically in February, 1978. Please forward this pre-registration form, fully completed, together with your cheque to:

Canadian Libraries in Their Changing Environment, The Centre for Continuing Education
York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ontario M3J 2R6

The conference will be held at The Sheraton Centre, 123 Queen Street West, Toronto. For further information and brochures call (416) 667-2524.

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