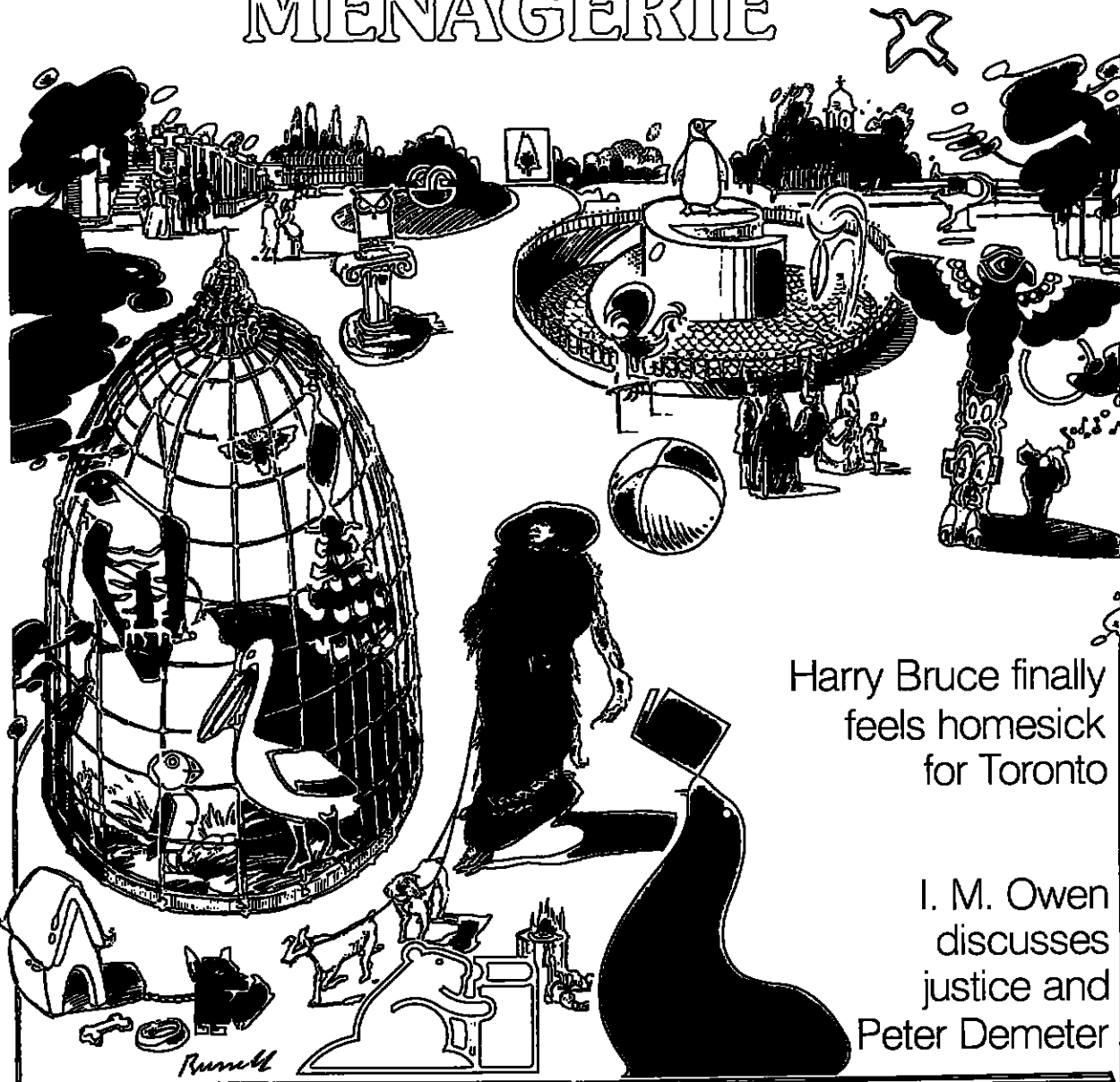


# THE PAPERBACK MENAGERIE



Harry Bruce finally  
feels homesick  
for Toronto

I. M. Owen  
discusses  
justice and  
Peter Demeter

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## CONTRIBUTORS

Christopher Blackburn is a Toronto freelance editor. Harry Bruce took a Max Macpherson pseudonym was born and raised in Toronto but rumbled down the road to Halifax some years ago. Wendy Campbell is the executive Director of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. Art Cuthbert is a Toronto freelance writer and broadcaster. Howard Eisenberg is a Toronto psychologist. Howard Engel is a CBC-Radio producer. Noted ursupnik Marian Engel is the author of *Beur* (M & S, 1976). Archie Graham teaches philosophy at the Ontario College of Art. Alan Horne is a U of T librarian and collects the art of W. Heath Robinson, an exhibition of Robinson's work is currently on display in the university's Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library and Richard Landon is the new head of that library. Barry Lord is the author of *A History of Canadian Painting: Toward a People's Art* (NC Press, 1974). Richard Lubbock is the scriptwriter for the new CBC-TV game show *Beyond Reason*. Poet Jay Macpherson teaches English at

U of T's Victoria College. Tom Marshall is the poetry editor of *The Canadian Forum* and teaches English at Queen's University. David McFadden is a poet based in Hamilton, Ont., and the author of *Laughing Devil Plains* (M & S, 1975). Duncan Meikle recently completed a Ph.D. thesis on the history of the U of T and now drives a school bus in eastern Ontario. I. M. Owen is a Toronto editor, writer and translator. Bill Russell is a graphic artist based in Toronto. Linda Shoheit teaches at the Montreal-St. Concordia University. Paul Stuewe runs the Nth Hand Book Store in Toronto. Alastair Sweeny is the author of *George-Etienne Cartier: A Biography*, which after several misadventures is finally reviewed on page 25 of this issue. Phil Surguy is a Toronto freelance writer and sometime actor. Eleanor Wachtel is a Vancouver freelance writer. Brian Young teaches history at McGill University and is working on his own biography of Cartier. Ian Young is the editor of Catalyst Press.

EDITOR: Douglas Marshall. ASSOCIATE EDITOR and CIRCULATION MANAGER: Pier Giorgio Di Cicco. ART DIRECTOR: Mary Lu Toms. GENERAL MANAGER and ADVERTISING MANAGER: Susan Traer. BUSINESS MANAGER: Robert Farrelly. CONSULTANT: Jack Jensen.

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# YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, JACK

New! Exciting! First time in print! The true, absorbing story of why 97% of the paperbacks on our mass-market racks are by foreign authors

by Phil Surguy

THIS STARTED AS a relatively simple assignment. I was to find out what's happening this spring in the Canadian end of the mass-paperback market. It was soon evident, though, that not much at all is happening. That is, few Canadian books are appearing among the 400 to 500 new titles that go on the mass market every month. The next step was to try to understand why.

The significant Canadian paperback companies are PaperJacks, Pocket Books, Seal, Harlequin, and Totem. These firms specialize in inexpensive, paperbound, rack-size books that are generally reprints of works that first appeared in hardcover. Rack-size is approximately four inches by seven inches. Larger and/or more expensive formats are called quality, or trade, paperbacks. Most mass-market paperbacks are adult fiction.

Totem, a branch of the British giant, William Collins and Sons, distributes Pan, Fontana, Corgi, and Picador in Canada, about 50 titles a month. Under their own imprint they also publish one or two Canadian paperbacks every month. Their latest is Betty Kennedy's *Gerhard*.

Harlequin, the house of romance, owned by the Toronto *Star*, brings out 12 titles a month with annual world-wide sales of around \$35 million. Their printing is done in the U.S. and nearly all their authors are British. Someone once said Harlequin doesn't really publish, it just responds to market research. A sneer; but there are still many people in the Canadian book trade who haven't grasped that the mass-paperback market is exactly what its name implies — a system that regularly supplies a mass of people with a mass of books. Mass is the key word.

Seal Books is the new mass-market house owned by McClelland & Stewart (51 per cent) and Bantam Books. Although the final impetus behind the formation of this company came after the ownership of Bantam's parent company changed hands, and the federal government decided that, in terms defined by the Foreign Investment Review Act, an automatic change in ownership of the Canadian subsidiary was not in the best interests of Canada, negotiations between M & S and Bantam had been in progress for some time. As Jack McClelland explained in an interview, research had clearly shown that his company could only cuter the mass market successfully if it did so with an established distributor. He picked the most firmly established distributor there is, Bantam (350 titles a year) has been described as being so far ahead as number one that there is no real number two. Under the Seal arrangement, M & S will do all the editorial work, prepare the books for

publication, and Bantam will funnel them to its 12,000 outlets in Canada. For its first year of operations Seal will publish one book a month, starting in April with *The Canadian Establishment* (an initial print run of 100,000 copies), followed by editions of recent M&S best sellers and, in November, its first paperback original, *Firespill* by Ian Slater of Vancouver. With characteristic enthusiasm, McClelland told me he expects Seal to be outselling Bantam within five years.

Until a year ago Pocket Books was a subsidiary of Simon and Schuster in New York. Along with its *regular* monthly run of mass-market originals and reprints, the company also published several Canadian paperback originals. Then S&S in the U.S. was sold. The Foreign Investment Review Agency ruled that the Canadian subsidiary could not automatically change ownership, and Pocket Books was bought by General Publishing of Toronto. General was already the owner of PaperJacks and Canadian distributor of a line of English paperbacks: Coronet, Dragon, Futura, Knight, Mayflower, Paladin, Panther, Quartet, and Teach Yourself. Under the new system, General is the publisher of, and not agent for, the 30 American Pocket Books titles a month it puts into the mass market; and all Canadian paperbacks now will appear as PaperJacks. Paul Fulford, the editor at S&S for the two years preceding the ownership change, is convinced that he was overseeing the only genuine access Canadian authors had to the real mass market. He's afraid that only a few of the writers he handled at S&S will reach the public via PaperJacks, and that the latter firm will do little more than reprint General's backlist.

Jack Stoddan is the head of General Publishing and one of the Jacks in PaperJacks (the other is his son Jack—there

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The mass-paperback market is exactly what its name implies — a system that regularly supplies a mass of people with a mass of books. Mass is the key word.

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are a lot of Jacks in prominent positions in this industry). He says his firm is bringing out 60 titles a year, half reprints and half originals. He hopes to publish more originals; but is encountering resistance from authors who want to be published in hardcover first. Stoddan told me that, until his acquisition of Pocket Books, he'd found it difficult to tit into the mass-market system operated by Canada's 38 geographical wholesalers. But he has recently reached some

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accommodation with the system and says it now is up to the wholesalers to show they are as willing as they claim they are to handle Canadian paperbacks. So far, the best results have been seen in Vancouver and Halifax. Stoddan is confident of the growth of his Canadian paperback line and he is proud of his deal with S&S. He is critical of the M&S-Bantam deal; he says M&S has given away 49 per cent of the paperback rights of the finest hardcover list in Canada, and points out that Seal will not share any of Bantam's profits. For his part, McClelland is certain he has the best deal, both for himself and the country as a whole. While Seal is totally independent, he says, Stoddart's success is tied to the performance of the American Pocket Books company and, if it fails, General will still have a large debt to pay. However, neither man seems too upset by the other's criticism and their rivalry is a friendly one.

Totem, Seal, and PaperJacks then are the main Canadian firms capable of supplying the mass market with Canadian paperbacks. Yet among them now they are turning out only nine books a month, hardly two per cent of the market. That's a disgraceful figure; and to try to understand what it means and why it's so low (when about 30 per cent of the

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The racks are the *only places* where the majority of people ever see new books: and the absence of Canadian books on the racks means that the majority of people never encounter any literary reflection of their community and culture.

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books sold in our book stores are Canadian) it is necessary to look at the basic structure of the mass-paperback market. Search for reasons why 97 per cent of the books on the racks are American, examine questions raised by various nationalistic points of view, hear what the wholesalers have to say, and consider the Canadian paperback market as a whole.

Most of the Canadian mass market is supplied by 10 American-owned national distributors who in turn supply 38 geographical wholesalers with magazines and paperbacks. In their turn, the wholesalers supply the racks in smoke shops, milk stores, news-stands, some department stores, and so forth. It should be noted here that magazines account for about 80 per cent of the distributors' and wholesalers' business, and that paperbacks have always been handled as if they were magazines—which in the main means that only the covers of unsold books are returned to the publisher. In Canada there is an 11th large distributor, HAR-NAL, owned jointly by Harlequin and New American Library, and four smaller ones: William Collins, Penguin, PaperJacks, and Maclean-Hunter Distributing. Maclean-Hunter owns Metm Toronto News, perhaps the largest geographical wholesaler in the country.

Nationalists claim that distributors have always deliberately kept Canadian paperbacks off the racks, mainly by pressuring the 38 wholesalers and threatening their lucrative supply of books and magazines. Furthermore, it is argued that the unlimited returns policy, the tear-off system, to which a publisher must submit before a wholesaler will handle a book, makes the publication of paperbacks exclusively for the Canadian market economically impossible.

Anyone connected with the publication and distribution of American paperbacks denies there has ever been a conspiracy to kill competition from Canadian publishers. But only a mooncalf would believe the American publishers and distributors are not anxious to protect the near-monopoly they have had up till now.

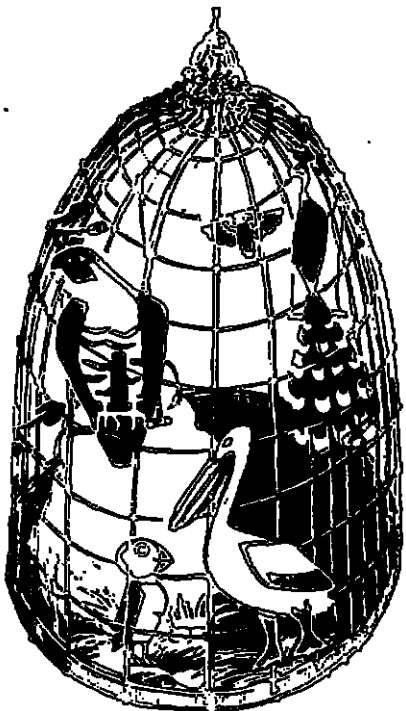
Things are changing, however. Indications are that the tear-off system is starting to fade away. Until recently, the industry considered 50-per-cent returns an acceptable aver-

age; but Bantam now is gradually pushing its returns down toward the Z-per-cent level. (Someone must have finally figured out that books and magazines are not necessarily the same thing.) Moreover, in Canada, pressure from nationalists, government action, the threat of more government intervention into the publishing industry, and the increased interest Canadians are taking in their own country are all factors that suggest a fair proportion of Canadian paperbacks may someday be found on the racks.

Someday, Paul Audley, executive director of the Association of Canadian Publishers, calls the wholesalers' declarations of desire to see Canadian paperbacks on their racks "crap." He told me the mass-paperback market is still the most effectively closed business he has ever seen. This has obvious economic results for Canada. But he said there are even more serious cultural consequences. The racks are the *only places* where the majority of people ever see new books; and the absence of Canadian books on the racks means that a majority of people never encounter any literary reflection of their community or culture. Audley also says that the current condition of the paperback market in Canada frequently precludes the hardcover publication of many Canadian books. The final factor in a publisher's "buy" decision is often the likelihood of a future paperback sale: yet if the publisher knows that the paperback market is closed to anything Canadian except a sure best seller, he's going to turn down many books, even though they could be expected to do moderately well in hardcover.

Jack Shapiro, owner of Regina News and chairman of the Canadian publications committee of the Periodical Distributors of Canada, says he has never seen one American publisher or national distributor say or do anything to restrict Canadian exposure on the racks. I asked him why, 10 years ago, the Canadian Best-Seller Library, M&S's last foray into the mass market, failed. He replied that trade and mass-market books are very different from each other. Then he added that he has often encouraged McClelland to put some of his New Canadian Library line into the mass market.

McClelland's response to that statement was a chuckle. Then he elaborated. He said he hadn't followed Shapiro's suggestion because he wasn't anxious to get burned again. He said the Canadian Best-Seller Library had begun well and some books were even reprinted; but then he started getting returns, mainly of books that had never got onto the racks at all. This, he said, was confirmed by people in the



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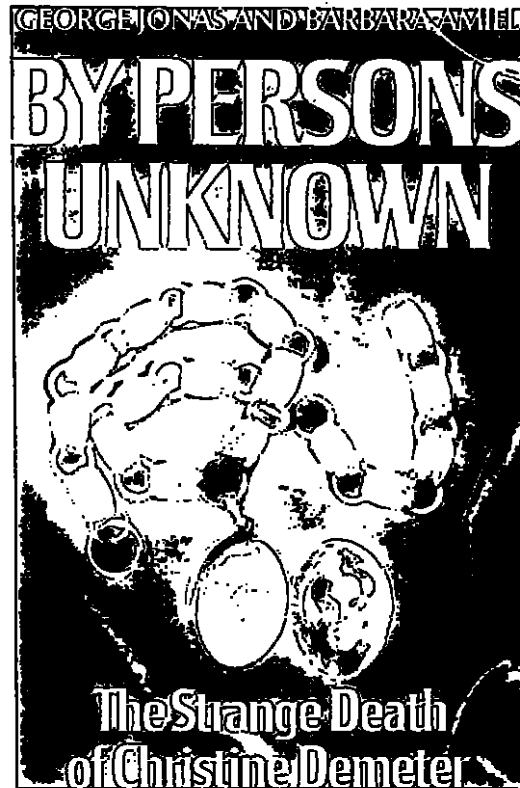
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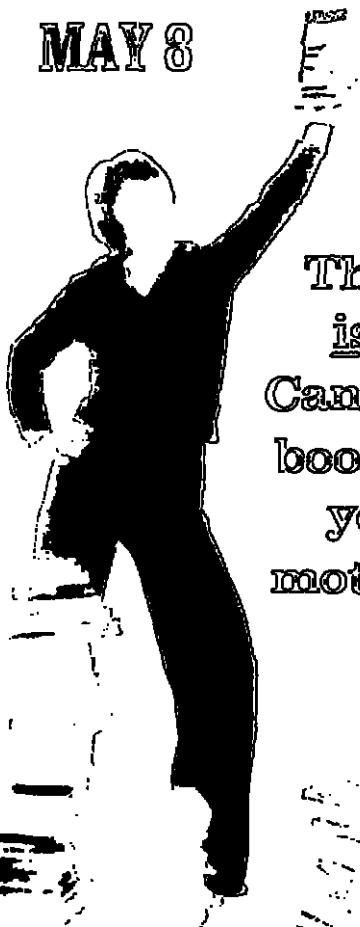


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field. He suspects word went round that sales of CBL books would have to be cut down or magazine supplies would suddenly be impaired. However, McClelland concedes that the failure of CBL was only partly owing to interference from the distributors; he says he and his people were not as professional then as they are now.

The Canadian Best-Sellers Library was, I believe, largely an attempt to inject trade, or quality, paperbacks into the mass market, where they didn't really belong. And this has caused me to wonder if the major Canadian publishers have, until recently, ever really seriously tried or wanted to get into the mass market. This is an important question that must be approached by a study of the other half of the Canadian paperback industry — the marketing of trade, or quality, paperbacks.

The mass-market racks and their impulse-buying customers account for slightly less than one half the paperback sales in this country. A major part of the rest are sold, generally in more expensive quality formats, to libraries and schools and to habitual readers who frequent book stores. A study prepared last year for the Secretary of State reports that, in the 1972-73 period, Canada's English-language publishing industry issued 1,950 mass paperback titles, 165 of which were written by Canadians; but the industry also published 2,586 other sorts of paperbacks, and 2,159 of these were written by Canadians. This indicates that the Canadian-owned sector of our paperback industry is, title for title, almost as lucrative as the part controlled by the Americans and British.

M & S's New Canadian Library is the hugest quality paperback house in the country and its sales figures (only available for the years following 1972, when a computer was installed to keep track of things) are astonishing. *The Stone Angel* has sold 200,000 copies. *The Tin Flute* has sold more than 160,000 copies. The boxed two-volume edition of *The National Dream* has sold more than 100,000, as have many other books, including *The Edible Woman*, *Owls in the Family*, *The Apprenticeship Of Duddy Kravitz*, *Roughing it in the Bush*, and *A Jest of God*. As for *Me and My House*, *The Fire Dwellers*, and many others have sales up around the 50,000 mark. And it's clear that few, if any,

it shouldn't be forgotten that Canadian publishers are businessmen too; and many, with their agencies, have a vested interest in the continued flow of American books into this country.

of these books could have sold as well on the racks, where a title is given from one to four weeks to establish itself as a seller. It also should be obvious that steady access to a school system or a good book store is worth far more than all the little milkstore racks for miles around.

The paperback editions of two recent Macmillan of Canada titles offer further insight into the teal economics of the Canadian paperback scene. *Gerhard*, a natural best seller, was very popular in hardcover. The reprint rights went to *Totem*, who brought out a first edition of 60,000 copies that will be distributed everywhere, including Loblaws and Dominion stores as a book-of-the-month. On the other hand, there is C. P. Stacey's *A Very Double Life*, one of this past year's most widely publicized books. If properly distributed, it would probably do quite well as a mass paperback, but there is no guarantee that it could become a runaway best seller. So Macmillan has reprinted it as one of its own Laurentian Library series, with a first edition of 10,000 copies that are selling for \$3.95 each. In other words, when a book has only limited mass-market expectations it is much more profitable for the company to sell it as a quality paperback at an inflated price to schools, libraries.



and proper book stores. At the same time, *Gerhard* is doing exceptionally well in the mass market. Macmillan is, in effect, doing what nationalists rightly say American publishers do when they bring out mass editions of Canadian books that have proved their popularity — skimming the cream off the market and thereby stifling the development of a national mass-paperback industry that can offer the population a wide variety of books catering to the needs of a comprehensive range of tastes and interests.

It doesn't cost *that* much more to print a quality paperback; and the publisher's rewards for doing so are increased profits from an inflated price, no special reason to spend money on a competitive cover, low promotional costs, almost negligible returns from the dealers, and what amounts to a captive market of schools, libraries, and stores patronized by serious book readers. There is no pressing need for many Canadian publishers to supply the mass market. For example, movie versions of *Who Has Seen the Wind* and *Don't Shoot the Teacher* are about to be released, but the publishers of the paperback editions of these books are making no real effort to get special editions to places other than their traditional outlets.

So, given that Canadian publishers can do very well elsewhere, I think it's fair to wonder if, when they say they can't afford to participate in the existing mass-market system, they are saying they'll go *broke* if they try it, or are really saying that they can make more money in the quality market. A desire to make money should not be held against them, of course. But their methods should be questioned if we are, as Paul Audley suggests we should be, truly concerned about the importance of the mass-paperback market to the cultural health of our nation.

The huge American presence in the mass market is still the main rock to move if we are ever to have a popular literary culture of our own. It's likely that the distributors and wholesalers won't really start treating us fairly until it seems likely that someone is actually going to use the government stick on them. But it shouldn't be forgotten that Canadian publishers are businessmen too; and many, with their agencies, have a vested interest in the continued flow of American books into this country. There is talk in some quarters of government aid (quotas or monetary help) to make our mass paperbacks more competitive. If money is to be provided, care should be taken to ensure that it goes to publishers who can prove they genuinely need it and know how to use it. It should *not* go to publishers who are crying for grants and loans because they are reluctant to muss the symmetry of their balance sheets while they expand but rather to true entrepreneurs who are hunting for the right authors, developing the right line of books, taking real risks, and accumulating the editorial, production, and promotional expertise needed to survive and do well in the mass-paperback market. Ultimately it will be healthier and more satisfying if our writers and publishers *take* their share of the market, rather than having it handed to them by the government. That is still a long way off, though. Shortly before starting to write this article I checked out a newsstand in the Bloor-Yonge interchange, Toronto's busiest subway station. The main rack held 180 titles. Only two of them were Canadian books. □

# NEW FOR SPRING

## Sandbars

*Oonah McFee*

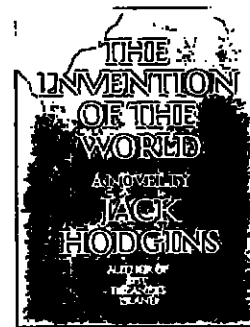
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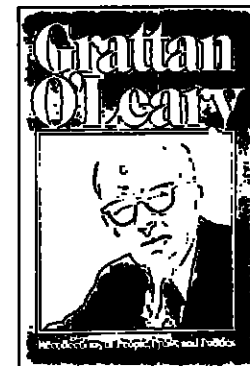
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Foreword by Robert Stanfield

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# EXPORT, EH?

Listen you guys, once we had a big-time paperback doll we could call our own

by Paul Stuewe

*All right Johnny, grab some air! Louie's going to bring the car around back and then we're going to take you and the bimbo for a little trip down memory lane. You've got us mad, you and all your talk about distributors and mass markets and government subsidies, and we think it's time you found out about the guys at Export Publishing. Never heard of them? No, they didn't make what you call your impressive literary splash, but they were the first company to prove that Canadians could play in the paperback major leagues with the rest of the big boys. Interested? O.K., but first you got to settle back for a little history before we get to the really seamy stuff. Like, this here is one of your class publications, know what I mean?*

IF THE PRECEDING article in this issue has left you with the impression that the paperback book has just recently been discovered by Canadian publishers, rest assured that in this, as in most other fields, we do have a tenuous tradition of



Raymond Souster's pseudonymous contribution to Export Publishing's quickie list.

false starts and shattered hopes. In the second half of the 19th century the country was flooded with cheap American and British paperbacks of the "dime novel" variety, and despite this unregulated competition, a few Canadian examples of such material were produced. After 1891, when Canadian books began to be protected by effective copyright arrangements, the situation improved significantly, and during the first decade of the 20th century the Toronto firm of McLeod & Allen established a successful line of 25-cent paperback novels. For the most part, however, Canadian publishers were handicapped by a small domestic readership that made economies of scale difficult to achieve, and this in conjunction with the much greater number of titles available to foreign firms meant that most Canadian companies simply avoided the paperback market.

The Depression supplied a sharp but effective spur to the production of paperbacks, and the modern era of soft-cover publishing began with the establishment of Penguin Books in Britain in 1935 and Pocket Books in the U.S. in 1939. In Canada, the British-owned firm of William Collins Sons & Co. inaugurated its White Circle Pocket Edition line in the early 1940s, and by 1949 was competing for the mass audience with such titles as *Dangerous Honeymoon* and *Murder Among Friends*. In that same year the trade journal of the domestic publishing industry, *Quill & Quire*, ran a story on White Circle books that provides both an interesting sidelight on the period and indications of a stirring national consciousness: in describing the use of photogenic-young ladies for cover illustrations, the Q & Q writer commented: "The girls are carefully chosen from Canada's collection of beautiful models, so that with the wide and ever-growing circulation of these books, Canada's particular type of beauty will be known all over the world." Say "maple leaf," sweetheart.

Thus there were lots of paperbacks being sold here in the late 1940s, but only a few were being written by Canadians and none was being published by Canadian-owned firms. The opportunities were obvious to a group of Toronto businessmen who had already established a successful chain of suburban newspapers, and so in 1949 Export Publishing Enterprises Ltd. was born.

Export Publishing was a phenomenal success right from the start. Although there was a strict paper quota still in effect in 1949, its founders had access to the substantial supplies allotted to their newspaper operations and thus were one jump ahead of any potential competitors. A trip to book-starved Britain produced orders for all the paperbacks they could print, and with the resulting letters of credit the firm was able to arrange financing for a plant in New Toronto and to begin producing books.

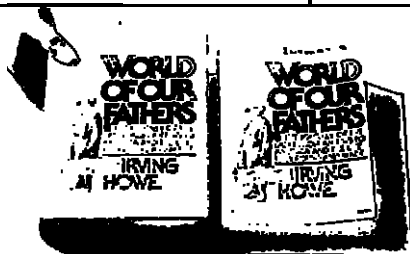
At this point, with all systems purring nicely, Export found itself in desperate need of publishable titles. It would



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352. Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape. Susan Brownmiller. Hardcover: \$10.95 QPB Ed: \$4.95

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have been easiest to purchase the paperback rights to best-selling Canadian hardbacks, but two factors made this impractical: there just weren't very many Canadian-authored best sellers around in 1949; and those that did exist were in almost every case unsuitable for the mystery/adventure/romance requirements of a high-volume paperback publisher. So Export did the next best thing. While holding the fort with such flashy American imports as *Call House Madam* and *Red Lights in the Village* (Greenwich, and not about its traffic problems), it began a frantic search for home-grown talent with the ability to knock off a novel and an appropriate number of characters at breakneck speed for a flat fee of \$400.

Those who answered the call were quite a mixed bag: Raymond Souster penned *The Winter Of Time* under the pseudonym of "Raymond Holmes," and Hugh Gamer contributed *Waste No Tears* as "Jarvis Warwick," a name that reflected an earlier period of residence at the Warwick Hotel on Toronto's Jarvis Street. Perhaps the most amusing alias was affixed to a book by playwright and novelist Ted Allan, who as "Alice K. Doherty" loosed *Low Is a Long Shot* upon an unsuspecting world.

These familiar names were joined by another group of writers who were more closely associated with the operation of Export Publishing and, having no literary reputations to protect, tended to use their real names. Al Palmer, a Montreal newspaperman, took two walks on the seamy side with *Sugar-Puss on Dorchester Street* and *Montreal Confidential*, and Danny Halperin, a specialist in pulp fiction of the "true confessions" variety, tried his hand at a sports novel with *Seconds to Go*. The most prolific member of the group was managing editor Tedd Steele, who used his own name for *Artists, Models and Murder* and *Trail Of*

*Vengeance*, and assumed the identities of "David Forrest" for *Torch Of Violence* and "Jack Benedict" for *The Pagans*.

Export spent a lot of time on its titles—in some cases, more than seems to have been expended in writing the books—and Tedd Steele remembers many an editorial conference devoted to finding a catchy moniker for an acceptable but dully titled manuscript. His own *Artists, Models and Murder*, for example, began life as "The Portrait Murder Case," and there is no denying that the revised version presents three potentially engaging concepts where there was only one before. Who knows, perhaps *The Tin Flute* would have sold even better as *Blow. Man. Blow or My Instrument Ain't Made Of Wood*; and what could have been done with *As For Me and My House. The Nymph and the Lamp* and *Roughing It in the Bush* certainly staggers the imagination.

But Export Publishing never had the chance to go on to bigger and better things. In December, 1950, the New Toronto plant was destroyed by fire, and for a business where speed and volume determined performance this was a catastrophe that simply could not be surmounted. Although Export had only a very brief time in the sun, it did demonstrate that a Canadian publishing company using state-of-the-art techniques could more than hold its own with foreign competition. Tedd Steele recalls the high point of his career at Export: "One day I got onto the Bloor streetcar and noticed that the motorman was reading one of the books I had written, *Trail Of Vengeance*. He was so absorbed in it that he tried to keep reading it between stops, and I thought to myself that this was the highest compliment anyone would ever pay me. It really made my day." □

## RARE AND SOFTLY

That yellowed paperback you're tossing  
out may be touched with green

by Art Cuthbert

IF IT HASN'T happened, it will: some occasional reader of science fiction will drop in at a second-hand book shop and spot a remembered paperback. He'll pick it up and head for the counter, feeling nostalgic and fishing for a quarter. And the book seller will say, "That's \$10 please."

If the buyer's curiosity overcomes his indignation, he may become a collector of first-edition paperbacks. Nostalgia is often the prime motivation of such converts, and fantasy and science fiction are the areas of the trade where most collecting is done, just because more of those titles appeared first in soft covers. "And a first edition is a first edition, however it's bound," says Norman Hart, a Toronto dealer.

10 Books in Canada. May, 1977

When mass-market paperbacks infiltrated the exotica of collectable first editions, they brought a motley of curious values. Consider the personal paperback trove of Steve Temple, built up during his several years in the Toronto second-hand book trade. There's a first edition of A. I. Liebling's classic *The Press*; in spite of its popularity, it never did have a hardcover printing as far as Temple knows.

An early Tarzan novel, *At the Earth's Core*, is valued for its cover illustration by Frank Frazetta, an artist widely admired by fantasy fans. And Temple likes the Art Deco cover on an old Dell "crime map" mystery (remember the page that showed where all the clues were discovered?) and the lurid artwork designed to sell an early Harlequin novel,

*Blood of the North* by James Hendricks. Harlequin didn't always restrict its publishing to romances, and Temple says he knows of two early titles by Brian Moore. though his years of watching have failed to spot either.

It's not necessary that a collectable paperback be the first edition of its text. Temple values his copy of Robert McAlmon's *There Was a Rustle of Black Silk Stockings* because he believes the original hardback version was a very small edition printed privately in Paris in the 1920s. In this case the paperback was the lint to have general distribution.

Most of the books mentioned above would bring only a few dollars. The bigger money, as this trade goes, is in first

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The fragility of paperbacks will cause the prices of rarities to rise even faster than those of comparable cloth-bound editions.

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editions of the work of Jack Kerouac, a cult figure to his generation. *Maggie Cassidy*, first published in 1959, is now worth \$15 in good condition, and the price is rising. But like any market, this one can move either way. "In the cold light of critical history, Kerouac may be torn to shreds, like Kipling was," admits Temple. "But his first editions will remain valuable as long as there are people who can be sentimental about him. He means something to my generation."

He means a lot to Nicky Drumbolis. If Temple is a commercial collector, Drumbolis is a passionate one, and his passion began with Kerouac. "There are a lot of parallels in his life and his writings that brought writing off the page and into the mind, into the soul, for me. Kerouac was the door. If I can find one of his books in a cheap edition, it's the content I'm after. But *Tristessa* isn't available in any edition but the first, and it's a paperback." (Collins Publishers has been bringing out new hardback editions of Kerouac, and the list now includes *Maggie Cassidy*, but not *Tristessa*.)

Drumbolis confesses to a gluttonous appetite for books: "But now I've reached a point in collecting where if I don't have the book it's almost as enjoyable as having it, a sort of excruciatingly lovely dilemma." His collection of 20 Kerouac paperbacks has come to him almost by osmosis. Friends know of his interest, and the books appear. Drumbolis says he *does* sometimes pay premium prices—but the determining factor is usually his relationship with the seller. "If I'm intimidated, I'll usually pay the money and run."

Steve Temple has assembled his collection of first-edition paperbacks without any large investment. He found most of them in the boxes of old softcover books that came into his former store and ended up on the low-priced rack out front. Temple culled them carefully and kept what he knew to be valuable and what he thought might become so. "The market is not really established now at all," he adds. "Most rare-book dealers ignore paperbacks entirely."

This turns out to be generally true among the antiquarian shops in the high-rent district, although they're aware of the market and have long dealt in a parallel commodity: unbound and paperbound ephemera of many kinds — uncorrected proof copies, playbills, broadsheets, and other material valued for its social and historical importance, if not for its literary interest.

The same values can apply to mass-market paperbacks. Penguin, the first paperback publisher, has long commissioned "Penguin Specials," works by well-known writers on matters of immediate interest. H. G. Wells's *The Comma Sense of War and Peace*, published in 1940, wouldn't attract a large audience for any new printing and so the original paperback is apparently the first and only edition.

## The University of Western Ontario President's Medal Awards

\$1,000 plus a gold medal will be awarded in each of four categories for work done in 1977. Prizes will be awarded in the Spring of 1978.

- 1 Literary award for poetry or short story in English published in a Canadian periodical.
- 2 Scholarly award will be for an article in English for the general reader published in a Canadian learned journal.
- 3 & 4 Two articles, one in French, the other in English, of outstanding excellence published in a Canadian general interest magazine.



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\$2. (good for **last** two days)

It's valuable **now** to scholars of Wells, of course, but also as a document of its time. However, it was printed on cheap wartime stock that has already turned yellow and would crack **if the** pages were bent. Temple **believes the fragility of paperbacks** will cause the prices of rarities to **rise** even faster than those of comparable cloth-bound collectables. He thinks the uptown dealers are ignoring paperbacks at their peril.

**First** editions can still turn up in the remainder **racks** of the big retail chains and in the bins of used books kept by second-hand dealers. This makes it a game anyone can play at negligible cost. Temple's own copy of *Tristessa*, which he values at **more than** \$15, shows it was once on somebody's three-for-a-quarter rack. Such racks are filled

## HAPPILY IN A BIND

The luf so short, the  
craft so long to lerne ...

by Richard Landon

**IN A SMALL**, crowded workshop in the Ontario countryside near **Woodview** a **highly** skilled **craftsman practises** an art that is as old as the **book itself**. **Michael Wilcox is a fine bookbinder** and from his hands emerge some of the most exquisitely designed and executed bindings ever **produced** in Canada. He also refurbishes older books that **have** deteriorated through age and use and thus has developed his skills to include the restoration of paper, leather, and cloth.

Wilcox has operated his **one-man bindery as a master craftsman for the past eight years**; but **tine binding is not a craft quickly or easily acquired**. In 1955, at the age of 15, he **began a six-year apprenticeship** in Bristol, England, transferring to the large English **firm** of George **Bayntun** in 1960. During the first five years of his apprenticeship, in addition to his work, he attended classes at the Bristol College of Technology and studied subjects related to book-binding. After completion of his apprenticeship, he worked for a short period as a journeyman and attended further classes in **drawing** and design. In 1962 Wilcox emigrated to Canada but found that he could only utilize his skills through a series of temporary bookbinding jobs. He then obtained employment with the Royal Ontario Museum and spent **six** years doing no professional binding at all. By this time, however, the demand for line bindings and delicate repair work **from** private book collectors, antiquarian book-sellers, and university libraries had become large enough to support a commercial operation. Wilcox now is employed

12 Books in Canada, May, 1977

**with other people's** discards, and it might pay to check before you dump your next load of tired books. Not every dealer will **warn** you **when** you're about to pan with an unsuspected gem.

Paperback collecting offers an extra challenge to those who like to discover new authors whom others miss. **Mass-market** softcover books don't usually have an **extended** opportunity to catch on. If they fail to sell in their first two weeks on the racks, most are turned into pulp. **And so there aren't many copies around of *Canary in a Cat House*, Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s first and scarcest book**, says Temple. His copy is the only one he's ever seen. It's a paperback, bearing its original price: **35** cents. Temple doesn't place a value on his copy. It's not for sale. □



*Michael Wilcox with a rebound copy of the Kelmscott Chaucer, printed by William Morris and owned by Monk Bretton Books of Toronto.*

part-time by the Thomas Fisher **Rare Book Library** at the University of **Toronto** to restore a large collection of books in the history of medicine, with funding provided by the Jason A. Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine and Related Sciences. **Private** collectors and dealers **are** clamouring for his services and he has far more work than he can **comfortably** handle.

Fine **bookbinding is a** slow and deliberate art, steeped in tradition, and **each** of the several steps required **must** be completely and **properly** finished in turn. Basically there are two main processes involved: "forwarding" and "finishing." What the customer sees **when his book has** been rebound is the result of finishing: new leather, decorated with a design and beautifully tooled. Underneath, however, and hidden **from view, is all the meticulous repair work**. The book may have **required** painstaking repair of its paper, each leaf restored with thin tissue that can be stained to match the paper of the book. Each leaf may have required washing to remove old dirt and stains and, as part of that process, the paper will have been de-acidified to neutralize acidic deposits that cause paper eventually to crumble. **All the gatherings of leaves must then be resewn by hand over thick cords that will eventually form the raised bands on the**

spine of the book and be laced through the boards to hold the covers in place. The covers, of acid-free mat board, will be cut to size and fitted. The leather (morocco goatskin or calf), also acid-free, will be fitted over the covers and back of the book and then the forwarding process will be completed.

Finishing, the decoration and tooling of the binding, can only be performed after a design has been created and the drawings for it executed. This is the most creative aspect of the binder's work for he will attempt to design a binding that harmonizes with the book itself. This requires a detailed knowledge of the history of binding, since different styles have evolved in different countries during different historical periods. An 18th-century medical text may require a binding of panelled calf, tooled in a restrained and simple manner, that will imitate the style and materials used by an 18th-century binder. If, at the opposite extreme, the book is a modern French literary work with illustrations, a very different kind of design will be required and he may decide that morocco, decorated with different coloured leathers in a design that reflects one of the illustrations, will be most appropriate. Each book will present a different design challenge.

Some collectors will have their own design ideas and discuss them with the binder. But when having work done by an artist such as Michael Wilcox, most collectors are content to trust his taste and judgement. Virtually every prominent collector in Toronto will confirm that there are never disappointments.

When the design is completed, it is transferred to the leather-covered boards and tooled, using hand finishing tools of various designs. Ideally, a binder should have a large selection of tools so that he can create a variety of designs; Bayntons, where Wilcox worked in England, has 10,000. The tools are engraved brass pieces with wooden handles and, unfortunately, the design and manufacture of

them is even more specialized than fine binding. Michael Wilcox has been forced to design and cut his own finishing tools, using gravers and needle files, and thus his skills embrace yet another ancient craft. Often he will cut special tools for specific books: a tiny, exquisite fox, for instance, to decorate the binding of an edition of *Reynard the Fox*, or delicate rods and creels for Walton's *Compleat Angler*.

Fine bookbinders, as master craftsmen and artists, prefer to spend their time on the most creative aspects of binding: the designing and finishing. Traditionally sewing was done by women and Michael's wife Suzanne helps him with that process. The other tasks of forwarding were carried out by apprentices and Wilcox could usefully employ some assistants. The difficulty is that there is no real apprentice system in Canada and few young people are willing to commit themselves to the long period required to learn the craft properly. As Wilcox points out, you can tell a 15-year-old to perform a task and keep him at it until it is right; it is much more difficult to use the same technique with a university graduate in his 20s, and most of the enquiries about apprenticeships have come from graduates. Wilcox would also need to expand his operation considerably to accommodate any assistants; he would need a new larger shop and would be forced to become an "employer." Much of the personal satisfaction of Michael Wilcox is derived from being able to work on his own, at his own pace, accepting work if he thinks the job will be interesting.

From the window of his shop he overlooks a beaver pond and can pause in his work to watch the industrious craftsmen of the animal world. He is able to practise an art and a craft; to derive simple but profound satisfaction from being a good workman, and also realize the aesthetic satisfaction of a creative, artistic process. Every day he achieves what many people, caught in the complexities of modern society, only dream about. His work rests on the shelves of collectors and libraries all over North America, testifying to his skill and creativity. □

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# Yonge and beautiful

by Harry Bruce

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**Toronto Short Stories**, edited by Morris Wolfe and Douglas Daymond, Doubleday, 352 pages, \$12.50 cloth (ISBN 0 385 12848 7) and \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 385 12849 5).

WHEN PETER C. Newman worked for Beland Honderich as the senior man on the Toronto *Star* editorial page, the paper ran a series in which such distinguished non-writers and part-time writers as Mayor Bill Dennison, Ed Mirvish, Morton Shulman, Floyd Chalmers, and Claude Bissell declared Toronto to be a great city, a growing city, a fun city, a swinging city, a cosmopolitan city and, over and over again, a city "where the action is." The series was called "My Toronto" and, when it appeared in paperback (complete with a 132-word foreword

by Newman), a *Star* editor asked me to review it for \$65. I said, "Sure," and promptly gave it the merciless stomping its mushiness invited.

The series had struck me as an exercise in both small-town boosterism and sucking up to celebrities, but I did acknowledge that the real writers in *My Toronto* — June Callwood, Doug Fetherling, George Jonas, Fred Bodsworth and, yes, Gordon Sinclair, to name most of them — had rescued the book. I said: "It's the people who give you a piece of themselves, those who confess the experience of living, that make *My Toronto*. It's the trying to be wise, it's the trying to pronounce on why the city is the way it is, that almost breaks it. There ought to be a lesson in that for some smart editor."

Maybe there was. Some smart editor killed my review. I got my \$65 all right but not the satisfaction of ever seeing my low opinion of a *Star* series appear on the *Star* book page. The *Star* had published at least 100,000 of my words before and, in years to come, it would publish 100,000 more; but, in this case, perhaps my prose was just not up to the standards of the politicians, professors, ad men, and businessmen who had adorned Honderich-Newman's editorial page with emissions about their Torontos. That was eight years ago, and why do I tell it now to you, a perfect stranger? It's to introduce a book that, as a captor of the moods and smells and very soul of my home town, is everything that *My Toronto* was not.

The book is *Toronto Short Stories*.

It's fiction by 20 men and women "ho give you pieces of themselves as **Torontonians**, "ho not only confess, but also create and radiate the experience of living in Toronto. Editors Morris Wolfe and Douglas Daymond, however, did not choose the stories simply because they said something about the city. After all, bad writing can do that. "Each story had to work first of all as literature," they say in their introduction. "It had to offer some fresh insight or perception: most of all, it had to provide enjoyable reading." **Toronto Short Stories offers no lectures; it is all seduction.**

Some of the authors were born in Tomnto, went away, returned, settled in for good (**Morley Callaghan**, David Lewis Stein). Some were born in Toronto but settled elsewhere (David **Helwig**, Queen's University; Hugh Hood, University of Montreal; Don Bailey "ho, for a while, "as a prisoner in Kingston Penitentiary). Some arrived in Tomnto by way of other birthplaces: the Soviet Union (**Irena Friedman**), Barbados (Austin Clarke), England (**Hugh Gamer**), Virginia (**Jim Christy**), New Brunswick (**Raymond Fraser**), Wingham (**Alice Munro**).

Some of them (**Callaghan**, **Gamer**, **Margaret Atwood** and, as an editor and writer, **Robert Fulford**) are institutions in modern Canadian literature. The names of others are household words only in their own houses. Some of the stories are small classics. Thousands of Hugh Hood connoisseurs, for instance, already know his "Recollections of the Works Department" as a gentle masterpiece of nostalgia. But eight of these stories have never before appeared in a book. "Home Grown in the East End" - a delicious tale about the hideous fate of a fat voyeur - is **Marilyn Powell's** first piece of published fiction.

But I'll not classify the stories by type, or rank them, or recite favourites. I'd rather describe their strange cumulative power. As the Toronto details pile up, as the Toronto people do good Toronto things hut mostly bad Toronto things to one another in assorted Tomnto locations, the city itself becomes a character and it finally dominates every page. Some of the stories, such as Margaret Gibson's "The Butterfly Ward," do not heavily depend for their effectiveness on their having happened in Toronto. But in company with stories that are dense with Toronto aroma, such as **Irena Friedman's** "The Neilson Chocolate Factory," even these become the city's creations. The butterfly ward becomes an inescapably **Torontonian butterfly ward**.

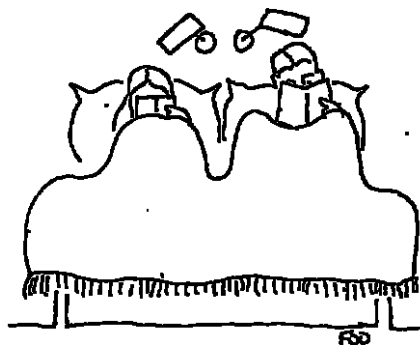
This happens even with images and phrases. Snow melts and sidewalks steam in northern cities around the 14 Books in Canada, May, 1977

world and yet, when "the snow "as melting and the sidewalk steaming near the main entrance" to a department store in Callaghan's "A Wedding Dress," the thaw is peculiarly a Toronto thaw: and this is not just because Callaghan's Lena Schwartz lived in a Wellesley Street boarding house.

It is also because Don Bailey says. "The summer "as dying so beautifully we decided to take the ferry to the island and sort of see it off," and you know the island, don't you? It was also because Raymond Fraser's down-and-out New Brunswickers' mom "as on Jarvis Street. "on the top floor of an old brick house with weeds in the front yard, the bricks soot-blackened and the windows filmed over with dust." It was also because Man Cohen knows "those late summer heatwaves that sometimes hold Toronto to ransom"; and David Lewis Stein knows about Front Street at Union Station, "the glamorous heart of the city, the taxis wheeling and swerving, their passengers dashing out of the windy streets to catch trains for distant places or disappearing into the warmth and music of the Royal York Hotel."

Alice Munro's "Dance of the Happy Shades" needs no help in its evocation of Tomnto atmosphere, but gets it anyway. The knowledge that Hugh Hood's "coal-ass" gang might well have patched her "cindery summer street" on a long-gone "hot gritty summer day" distills her Toronto flavour. The book works that way. If you have ever let Toronto push a long way inside you, you'll not be able to read **Toronto Short Stories** without feeling the old town barging back into your gut.

For nine years, I haven't been in Toronto for more than a few days at a time. I've not wanted to stay longer, and I do not want to live there. And yet, **Toronto Short Stories** has given me my first surge of home-sickness since I left for good. It reminds me of one of the rare fine sentences in the abominable **My Toronto**. It "as by June Callwood and it said: "I came to the dazzling and healing realization that I love this big, dirty, noisy and ornery city very much, and for more reasons than I will ever know." □



## Two ladies not for burning

The **Malahat Review**, No. 41: A Margaret Atwood Symposium, edited by Linda Sandler, general editor Robin Skelton, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C., single copies \$2 (Atwood issue no" sold out), annual subscription \$8.

Canadian **Fiction Magazine**, No. 23: A Special Issue on Jane Rule, edited by Geoff Hancock, Box 46422, Station G, Vancouver, annual subscription \$9.

By **MARIAN ENGEL**

WRITING is the cheapest of the arts, which is why so many "omen are able to practise it and have been for so long. Film and darkrooms, points and studios, advanced music lessons and practice rooms are out of reach of people with pan-time jobs and babies; but paper and typewriters ate cheap, easy to find, and operable at odd hours. Therefore we no" have a culture where "omen are among the predominant writers.

Actually I don't feel it's very safe for us to predominate this way: some day it's going to occur to someone like Pierre Trudeau or Bill Davis to clap us back in the genie bottles "here we belong. Perhaps a beginning has been made in these two special issues, **Canadian Fiction Magazine's** tribute to Jane Rule, and **Malahat Review's** denser but still rather strange **Festschrift** for Margaret Atwood.

Of the two, the Atwood magazine is much the more ambitious. It runs to 228 pages compared with **CFM's 144**, contains tribute-poems by Gwendolyn MacEwan, Linda Sandler, Tom Marshall, George Woodcock, and George Jonas: poems I do not as easily connect with Atwood by Janis Rapoport, Al Purdy, and Susan Musgrave; an interview with Atwood as well as examples of her manuscripts; a poem and a short story by her; critical articles by Rick Salutin (wherein **Survival** is taken as a Marxist work), Robin Skelton, and George Woodcock; and a good deal else. There are photographs of Atwood rampant, passant, guardant, hatted, bicycled, Niagara Fallsed, and similarly displayed on ceremonial occasions. The most human and Atwood-like are by Graeme Gibson.

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A section of photographic collages seemingly erected to the memory of the 1974 image of what we thought of Atwood, by P. W. Jarrett, strikes me as sexually menacing-nude approached by blunt male fingernails; breasts and binoculars: nude, avocado and hard-boiled egg: butterfly-woman at the end of mine-shaft; Venus with bomb. These images of what men seem to want to think of women don't have anything to do with Atwood as I know her. But then I'm no good at thinking of women as sex-objects.

In her interview with Linda Sandler, Atwood talks about the object she has become for other people. "Poems by men," she says. "about the wicked behaviour of women are part of a venerable tradition going back at least as far as the Elizabethans' Cruel Mistress. . . . We don't bat an eyelid when we read about bitch goddesses or when we see portraits of women with big tits and no heads. But women aren't supposed to say nasty things about men. It's not nice and it's not conventional.

Hence the inmy of the collages.

Jane Rule's body of work is not as extensive as Atwood's, but as a writer she has been the victim of distortions of image too. A recent controversy has raged over whether, as a lesbian, she has been deprived of critical attention. I have a strong feeling that her neglect was caused rather by the tub-thumping nationalism a lot of us encouraged for a while in order to get things like *Books in Canada* and the Writers' Union going: it wasn't her lesbianism but her Americanism that made her work irrelevant for a time. She has a right to be indignant about that, as Bharati Mukherjee has, although the compensation for both has been. I think, access to American markets a lot of us were denied when Canadian writers were thought of as dull beyond consideration.

Rule, in this special issue of *Canadian Fiction Magazine*, comes off very well, although Geoff Hancock's interview is too long and diffuse. The opening chapter of *The Young in One Another's Arms* is better than recent savage reviews led me to expect, and it is pleasant to journey through Rule's novels in the company of her friend Helen Sonthoff. Her short story, "Outlander," is not the best she has done; it covers 20 years in 20 pages and would probably work out better as a novel. On the other hand, Atwood's story, "The Resplendent Quetzal," is flawed as well - or perhaps I am just becoming an old formalist as far as the short story goes.

Both these issues are interesting tributes, though they leave me with the queasy feeling that, for a writer, "By their works ye shall know them" is still the best motto. □

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## Flash- Author robbed on way to book fair

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**The Correspondence of Erasmus**, Volume III: Letters 298 to 445, 1514 to 1516. translated from the Latin by R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson, annotated by James K. McConica, U of T Press, illustrated, 392 pages, \$25 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 2202 2).

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By RICHARD LANDON

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**VOLUMES OF** this magnificent edition appear with commendable regularity. Eventually the "Collected Works of Erasmus" will include all his correspondence and his principal works, translated into readable English and annotated in a scholarly fashion. It is one of the most ambitious publishing projects currently being carried on in Canada and richly deserves the generous support of the Canada Council it has so far received.

The amount of Erasmus correspondence available to the editors of this third volume has increased dramatically, reflecting the permanent establishment of his reputation as the leading scholar of his time. Here presented are 151 letters, covering a period of only two years, and there is a nice balance between letters from Erasmus and those sent to him. For most of this period Erasmus was engaged in editorial work for the press of Johann Fmbett at Basle. Froben had contracted with him to publish his edition of the letters of St. Jerome, his revised text of Seneca and a new translation of the New Testament. The speed with which these works issued from the press is an eloquent tribute both to the academic industry of Erasmus and to the efficiency of Renaissance publishing.

Interesting facts concerning publishing and bookselling in the early 16th century continually emerge from these letters. Beatus Rhenanus, an important editor who supervised the publication of many of Erasmus' works, refers in a letter to Erasmus to an edition of 1,800 copies of the *Praise of Folly* - a much larger edition than is considered normal for this period. Erasmus records his attendance at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1515, already well-established as the foremost book fair of Europe. He also complains that money he had planned to spend on books had been stolen from his belongings en route.

Interspersed with learned commen-

tary on his editorial projects are the usual complaints about food and lodgings that are characteristic of Erasmus' correspondence. He seems to have been accident-prone and something of a hypochondriac. On a journey to Basle in 1514, half-way between Roeselare and Ghent, his horse shied suddenly and severely twisted his back. His predicament was such that he felt the need of divine intervention and so made a vow to St. Paul that if he escaped from his perilous situation he would complete a commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, an appropriate vow for an editor. He managed to reach Ghent and eventually recovered but his completed four volumes of commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, ironically, has been totally lost.

Erasmus, during this period, established himself in the only permanent home he was to know but continued to travel widely. His most influential contacts were made in Upper Germany where he found that he had unwittingly become a hem of German letters. The men that he met, and corresponded with, were evangelists of a patriotic tradition from an area alive with regional self-awareness and a resentment of the cultural domination of Italy. One of the correspondents introduced in this volume, Ulrich von Hutten, was soon to become notorious for a series of violent attacks on the papacy and an important influence on a man Erasmus had yet to meet, Martin Luther. One is inclined to think that one should stay tuned for the next exciting episode.

This volume is, sadly, the last that will benefit from the scholarly abilities of Prof. Beatrice Corrigan, coordinating editor of the edition from its inception until her recent death. □

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## On the weave of St. Agatha

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**The Agatha Christie Mystery,** Derrick Murdoch, Pagurian Press, 192 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88932 034 9).

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By CHRISTOPHER BLACKBURN

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**REPORTING** Agatha Christie's death in January, 1976, *Publishers Weekly* stated that her books and short stories "have sold in excess of 400 million copies." At the time of her death her last *Hercule Poirot* story, *Curtain*, was number one on U.S. fiction best-seller lists, her play *The Mousetrap* was the longest-running play in the history of theatre, and the film *Murder on the*



*Orient Express*, based on one of her stories, was still gathering box-office receipts as "the most successful British film ever made."

In *The Agatha Christie Mystery*, Derrick Murdoch attempts to solve the puzzle of how this gentle, dignified English lady, who disliked personal publicity, became the most successful author in the history of literature (her book sales "are surpassed only by those of the Bible").

This book is divided into two parts of roughly 80 pages each, one on "writer," and one on "writings." A chronological list of every Agatha Christie book, and of every play or film based on her works, is also included. Agatha Christie's life divided rather neatly into two periods, the first of them including the years of her youth, her first marriage to Archibald Christie, her start as a writer with the publication of *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in 1920, and the growing response to her work. This part of her life reached a climax in 1926 with the literary furor aroused by the publication of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, by the breakdown of her marriage, and by her sensational disappearance.

Her disappearance, in which murder or suicide was suspected and which had hundreds of police officers searching for clues as to her fate, was described by Ritchie Calder in a *New Statesman* article after the author's death as producing "a suspense thriller as bizarre as anything she ever wrote." She was eventually discovered about 10 days later, apparently suffering from amnesia, registered in a hotel under the name of the woman her husband was later to marry when Agatha divorced him. Murdoch attempts to conjecture as to Mrs. Christie's state of mind at the time, and to elucidate the reasons for her mysterious disappearance, by referring to episodes in *Unfinished Portrait*, one of the romantic novels written by Agatha Christie under the pseudonym Marv Westmacott.

An "interlude" of several years was followed by Agatha Christie's long and happy second marriage to Sir Max Mallowan, the archaeologist, whom she accompanied on a number of expeditions. (Murdoch points out that many of the best Christies from the 1930s were "pounded out in the desert on a portable typewriter.")

Derrick Murdoch has had to write this book without the assistance of Dame Agatha's family, publishers, or literary agents. Accordingly, many of his comments in the first section are conjectural, and such phrases as "It seems a tenable assumption," "It is probable that," or "One suspects that" recur often. In the second section, discussing the writings, he is on surer ground, although here he is also hampered by being denied permission to give extensive direct quotations

from the works. What he has done instead, and done well, is to fit Agatha Christie's writings into a historical and comparative study of the development of the detective story.

Murdoch distinguishes the "classic detective school," to which Christie belonged, from other trends in crime fiction. Critics saw the classic detective story as a game between writer and reader for which rules could be laid down. It was the feeling that Agatha Christie had broken one of the rules of the form within which she was working that led to the uproar over *Roger Ackroyd*. Yet, Murdoch suggests, it was this very feeling that anything could happen in a Christie mystery, that nothing could be taken for granted, that led to her great popularity. "Her audacity in pulling the rug from under the unsuspecting reader's feet usually (but not necessarily always) from a different direction was her most identifiable characteristic."

Murdoch suggests it was the combination of ingenious puzzles and surprises with a "comfortably homely, non-literary style," that accounted for her great popularity. He also points to her superb timing and skill in concealing verbal ambiguities as reasons for the critical acclaim she received.

"I write books which are meant to entertain people, and to sell for that

reason." was Agatha Christie's simple explanation of her career. She succeeded superbly. □

## WHOdunit? You solve it

In a Lady's Service, by Tom Ardies, Doubleday, 202 pages, \$7.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 04583 2).

By PHIL SURGUY

TOM ARDIES' first four novels — *Their Man in the White House*, *This Suitcase is Going to Explode*, *Pandemic*, and *Kosygin is Coming* — were fairly good examples of the rash breezy spy novels that followed the James Bond craze. The movie *Russian Roulette* was based on *Kosygin is Coming*.

In a Lady's Service, Ardies's fifth, is not a spy novel. It's a poor comic-book-without-pictures about the presumably picaresque and farcical adventures of one Winston "Slippery Slick" Buchanan, an American gigolo who



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works a posh hotel in Mexico City. Buchanan is recruited by a pointlessly beautiful young woman named Marina McKenzie to go with her to a remote village in search of a miraculous salve that 6 reported to cure almost any ill and preserve a person's youth forever.

Marina turns out to be an agent of the World Health Organization. Also after the salve are agents of a ruthless German drug company. The resultant contest for possession of the wonder paste is too tedious to describe, except to say that the action is complicated now and then by various amusingly impoverished, stupid, and corrupt Mexicans of the kind who haven't appeared in Hollywood movies for at least a decade. One also has to endure Ardies' and Buchanan's humour. At one point Buchanan describes his sexual appetite to one of the drug company's agents: "I'd hump a cupcake if there was a dead fly in it. . .

Not that I'm proud of it, of course. R's a crumby thing to do." Admittedly, Buchanan is drunk when he unleashes that gem; but it's typical of the entire book. Which is unfortunate.

The salve proves to be unusable because it also makes people who are exposed to it uncontrollably happy, and we can't have that. As the Mexican scientist who discovers this side-effect explains: "It is our greed and ambition that keep the wheels turning. Let happiness spread its vicious tentacles -and the world would grind to a halt." But the behaviour and dialogue Ardies has chosen to demonstrate the salve-induced happiness is too similar to the rest of the funny stuff with which he has peppered his book and so any surprise, or moral irony or revelation, heintended comes off without effect, lost in the chatter. □

Top Thirty, at least not this year. So you have to be philosophical about these things, Dudley. as do hundreds of other Canadian poets who didn't make it, such as Pier Giorgio Di Cicco. John Robert Colombo, Bill Biissett. Gerry Gilbert, Christopher Dewdney, and D. G. Jones.

Actually, Dudley, if it makes you feel any better, I imagine even those who made it into the Top Thirty — including John Newlove himself — would privately agree the notion of a Top Thirty in poetry is slightly repugnant, if not ridiculous. The notion represents an individualistic, capitalist-classicist orientation rather than an interdependent, communal-romantic way of thinking. The notion though has been in the air for some time, hanging like a black cloud over Southern Ontario, and John Newlove should be given serious credit for having given it concrete (bp Nichol is among the Top Thirty) form. For instance, in the Feb. 3, 1977, edition of the Vancouver Sun, Miriam Waddington's *The Price of Gold* was being reviewed. The reviewer, in summing up Waddington's life work, stated that while she "is not among the Top Ten of Canadian poets, [she] is solidly entrenched in the Top Thirty." Checking *Canadian Poetry: The Modern Era*, sure enough, there she is, Miriam Waddington, solidly entrenched. Sounds like what the Mafia does to corpses before dropping them in Hamilton Harbour.

Actually I've been fooling around long enough. This isn't a bad anthology and should sell well, particularly to "Canadian literature instructors in universities across the country," to quote from the introduction. These were the people who were surveyed to determine exactly what was needed in an anthology. "They were asked which modern poets . . . should be represented in an anthology, and to what degree. The response was overwhelming," says Newlove in the preface (I suppose it was Newlove though the preface is unsigned). And the idea seems sound from every point of view, including merchandising. It's called market research and it's the sort of thing McDonald's might do in trying to introduce a new fish sandwich ("It mustn't taste fishy").

As for the degree of representation, it's interesting but not earth-shattering to see that Al Purdy appears to be on top with 13 pages, followed closely by Irving Layton and Margaret Avison with 12 each, P. K. Page, James Reaney, and Leonard Cohen with 11 each, and Margaret Atwood, Alden Nowlan, and Earle Bimey with 10 each.

Without doubting the thoroughness of the survey (Newlove appears to have done a fine job) what we have here is an historically interesting cross-section of the current Canadian literature tastes of Canadian academics. It would be in-

## On not making the Top Thirty

Canadian Poetry: The Modern Era, edited by John Newlove, McClelland & Stewart. 270 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 6731 3).

By DAVID McFADDEN

THERE ARE A lot of sad things in this vale of tears but saddest perhaps of all is a poet who feels he has not been sufficiently recognized. "Writing poetry is like working on the railroad," Dudley Fuddington, who has done both, has been heard to remark. "It's all seniority."

Well, Dudley. I hate to tell you this but I guess you just haven't been writing long enough. How long has it been? Ten. 15 years? Not quite enough to have made it into John Newlove's "Top Thirty." If only you had started churning out your charming little fables just a little earlier. Then you could have been tight up there with your lucky but no more talented colleagues such as Milton Acorn. David Helwig, George Bowering, Gwendolyn MacEwen, and even John Newlove himself.

On a train last week, an over-friendly fellow traveller wanted to know what I did for a living. "I'm a poet," I blurted out, adding (to myself). "But not among the Top Thirty." As if he could read my thoughts the fellow asked "Who's your favourite Canadian poet?" "I am," I said. "Of course, but besides yourself I mean," said the guy. And Dudley, believe it or not, your name popped out. Yes it did. "Dudley Fuddington," I said.

Now this was the milk run heading out of Nowhere, B.C., and quite frankly, 18 Books in Canada, May, 1977

Dudley, I didn't think the guy would have been familiar with your name, never mind your work. I know you've published 27 books but none of them has sold more than 300 copies. I know there was going to be a big article on you in *The Canadian* magazine but when the editor dropped the idea you were relieved because you didn't want your father-in-law to know how many Canada Council grants you'd received. So I was really surprised when the guy shot back, "Yeah, Dudley Fuddington, he's pretty good, But what about W. H. Drummond? What do you think of him, eh? Man, that guy can really write a poem."

The guy was quite shocked when I told him Drummond wasn't even among the Top Thirty. He'd been beaten out by such seemingly less lively poets as Ralph Gustafson, Dennis Lee, Michael Ondaatje, and Jay Macpherson. I didn't bother explaining how the 30 were chosen from among those poets active since 1945 and poor Dr. Drummond has been dead 70 years. "Listen," said the guy, taking another slug from his mickey and shuddering. "W. H. Drummond will always be in my Top Thirty, maybe even my Top Three." And I looked out the window and saw a guy working on the railroad.

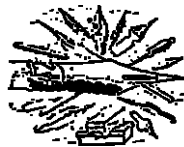
And then I remembered back a month or two to the Barrie Public Library where I was giving a reading with Ted Plantos. "Who is your favourite Canadian poet?" some Top Thirty-minded guy in the audience asked Plantos. "Uh, let me think now," said Ted. "I guess it would have to be Hans Jewinski." Alas, there are no Poet-Cops among the

teresting to compare book sales of individual poets with the degree of representation in this anthology. The academic popularity of the poets concerned probably relates closely to their book sales. For the sale of poetry books to people who are not heavily influenced by academic tastes in this country is probably negligible, except of course for such thoroughly subterranean poets as Robert Fones and Gerry Gilbert and such greeting-card poets as Terry Rowe.

The appearance of this book just might signal a trend towards a greater degree of business sense among Canadian publishers. a streamlining, an Americanization, in a positive way of course. But what does it really mean to the people who are actively engaged in the serious business of writing serious poetry, the people who are busy creating a language, a way of being, that will serve the 21st century? Probably very little. We're far too young to be fossilized. Dudley. Finding out you're not in the Top Thirty is about on the same level as being called "peripheral" by the *Globe and Mail* or being told by some English prof in Windsor that your book *Intense Pleasure* is pleasant but not really intense.

The only really serious criticism that can be made about this book is the fact that nowhere, except for a brief passing allusion buried deep in the preface, is

reference made to the fact that the book only represents poetry written in one of the two Canadian languages: English. "Sure to stand for years as the definitive anthology of Canadian poetry from the '40s to the '70s, *Canadian Poetry: The Modern Era* is compact, authoritative, and thoroughly enjoyable," reads a blurb on the back cover. This probably won't bother many English-speaking readers. Nor will it bother many Québécois, most of whom have long been aware that Canada in a way has already separated itself from Quebec, and most of whom are separatists only by default. But it bothers me because it will seem strange to people from other countries who may stumble upon the book: Americans, Britons, Russians, Australians. Mexicans who have heard that Canada is a bilingual country, enjoying a marriage of the best and worst of English and French culture. To them, the book will seem to deliver only one half of what it promises. As Greg Cumoe says in a recent painting: "What country do you want to separate from: Quebec or the United States?"



## A hairy time in old Baldoon

Selected Longer Poems, by James Reaney, Press Porcépic, illustrated. 95 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88878 091 5).

Baldoon, by C. H. Gervais and James Reaney, the Porcupine's Quill, illustrated. 120 pages. \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88984016 4).

By JAY MACPHERSON

PRESS PORCEPIC has completed its three-book paperback publication of James Reaney the poet with *Selected Longer Poems* — or rather, mainly lyric sequences. Germaine Warkentin, the editor of the 1972 collected *Poems*, has each time found fresh and illuminating things to say in her introductions. Three sequences are illustrated, by Reaney and by Jack Chambers, bringing the book's exuberance to the outward as well as the inner eye. (Alas, emblem two is mutilated in reproduction.)

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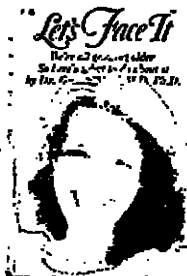
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Still more visually enticing is *Baldoon*, a play written by James Reaney in collaboration with Windsor poet C. H. Gervais. Designed like the 1972 *Poems* by the dedicated Tim Inkster of Erin, Ont., the book is small, flexible, and sewn: it invites handling as a beach stone does. Paper, type, and layout are a pleasure; 13 very atmospheric photographs from the play's Toronto production appear a illustrations; the wrap around cover is a woodcut by Gerry Brender à Brandis of Carlisle, Ont., that was used as the production's poster, and there is a surprise under the front flap. Unfortunately production was somewhat rushed in order to get the book out for the play's late-winter Ontario tour; consequently typesetting errors abound and the notes at the back, contributed by the cast, have a hurried quality. Still, the contribution of the NDWT company, like that of all those mentioned in the colophon, reflects the way in which increasingly Reaney's works have come to generate or align creative communities around themselves, the opposite of the demonic and imprisoned societies that they portray. "What troubles him/troubles us all/It is something about/the way we fall." as the Chorus says in this play.

The task of writing the play and working on it with the actors seems by all accounts to have been a genuine collaboration between Reaney and

Gervais, who has had a long-standing interest in the story and in the life and traditions of southwestern Ontario. The recorded history of the poltergeistish doings at *Baldoon* in 1829 revolves around both a Selkirk settlement of kirk-ridden Scots and a solitary Pennsylvania Dutch visionary and his daughter. The authors have added local Indian warlockry, a feud situation with complex causes, some assorted visitors, some old songs and hymns, some puppetry and models, smidgens of Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, Blake, Bums, and Monk Lewis, and a whole playbox of simple but vivid magic tricks.

The effect, for all the symbolism, stylization, and poetic gadgetry, is a rich and rounded sense of life. "What noble courage must their hearts have fired," commences Goldsmith's poem of 1825, speaking of earlier immigrants to the Canadian wilds: so indeed one feels from the outset of this play, seeing the house of the gentle Dr. Troyer made a fortress against evil spirits, and the play's protagonist! John McTavish of *Baldoon*, along with a friendly minister, chased through the night forest by witches.

The real darkness, naturally, is not that of the encircling woods, but of the heart. McTavish, beset in his house with washings, trappings, flying objects, fireballs, and a ghostly flailer,

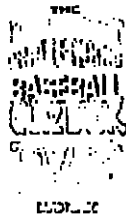
has to learn to recognize in these happenings not a visitation of outside malice, but emanations from his own disclaimed past — which is involved in turn with the old-country past of the settlement and its dispossession of the Indians and the pattern of their imaginative landscape in making good its claim to the "new" land. Dr. Troyer, on the other hand, to whom the new world means religious freedom rather than economic security, is a reconciler, whose white-magical apparatus includes a "pow-wow hat" that gives true visions, from the native magic of the land.

Doubled parts and other kinds of mirroring make for, beyond the evident romance pairing of characters, an intimate interlinking of places and persons, a participation of almost all in legalism, vengeance, and the other meannesses of the hard heart. There is no unmotivated, starkly looming malignity in *Baldoon*; its evil is natural and believable and its victim-child at the same time is a classic unconscious trouble-actor. Thus the play is no melodrama: that kind of simplifying energy is reserved for the tricks and special effects that constitute the ordeal through which the characters must pass in this particular journey through the wilderness. And for its one larger-than-life figure, the magician: "I fly, I disentangle, I release you all." □

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## The way of this world

Free Time: Industrial Poems by  
Tom Wayman, Macmillan. 82 pages.  
\$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 7705 1522 3).

By TOM MARSHALL

TWO POLES of poetic vision and possibility are the existential and the transcendental. I had reason to reflect a" this two years ago when, as soon as I had completed a sequence of poems (and books) that moved, gradually, some way toward the latter pole, I found myself — in some sort of instinctive reaction — writing quite concrete and discrete poems about people and immediate events. I guess I suspected (while generally pleased, in another way, with what I'd done) that to take readers to "another planet" (as I had intended, especially in *The White City*) might be a somewhat dangerous enterprise. Certainly, many readers — among them a couple of earthbound Toronto reviewers — can't handle it. (Fortunately for me, many others can.)

I begin thus, not to waste time quarrelling with my critics (who have their own honest lights to see by), but to indicate my perspective on Tom Wayman's work; for if I am sometimes in danger (as I am accused) of floating off altogether into the transcendental ether, the other Tom may have the opposite problem: he doesn't always make it off the ground.

Let me add immediately that Wayman is a very good poet, as I have observed publically before. Those who have enjoyed his work should definitely buy this book. It's just that he has manufactured so many fine examples of the same reliable if increasingly predictable product in such a short time that it's become difficult to say anything new about his work. His poems about a day in the life with the guys at the factory aren't all that varied. And while the contents of his toolbox are interesting up to a point, and the poem cataloguing them an effective one, he does tend to pile on the details and to run on.

But the occasional whimsical and surreal effects are as delightful a relief amid all the documentary realism as in Wayman's earlier books, and the social concern as moving:

*I think if the vegetables controlled  
the world*

*there would be enough for all, since even  
a vegetable  
knows its duty is to feed the earth.  
Something lower than that  
must have its hands on things: some  
sickness  
that decrees some people will eat and  
not others.*

I" such passages as this a larger vision does begin to surface.

And there's a lot to be said for the workaday, ordinarily beautiful world, as Wayman knows. If a Wayman poem can be novelistic and even prosy, it can also be quietly powerful in its fictional development of an incident, as in "Saturday Afternoon in Suburban Richmond" and "Another Poem About the Madness of Women." The nine-part love sequence "Sugar on the Rim" is a moving short story in free verse, as is the account of the last days of Pablo Neruda, whose final collapse was exacerbated by news of the overthrow of his friend, Salvador Allende.

Neruda himself, of course, moved from the transcendent — in "The Heights of Macchu Pichu" — to his poems on the lives of the wretched of the earth. It is the latter Neruda that Wayman attempts to emulate. He is not on the heights or on the battlements of Duino castle with Rilke (or eve" at Casa Loma with Irving Layton). But surely there can be no alteration of the conditions that oppress the mass of mankind without a general enlargement of human consciousness (that is, of all the potential of what it is to be human), and in this respect Rilke, mad as right, is as revolutionary as Neruda. Wayman admits in this book that he is confused and a trifle foggy about what the brave new world after the end of the "owners" might involve. ("The Country of Everyday" in *Blues, Yells and Chuckles* gives one an idea of what he is "for," though.) He prefers to articulate the conditions of here and now, and for the most part he does it very well. So we'll just have to wait a while longer, I guess, for another, larger, less egocentric Wayman.

I'll give the present one, generous, loving and honest as he is, the last word:

*each of us goes into another house, the  
house of dreams  
and we become our own film-maker,  
artist, musician.  
So much is within us, in that other world  
which is also ourselves, that many writers  
on this side  
go there for the source of their poems.  
That is fine with me.  
But for now I have found the world here to  
be what I want to say.*

And:

*... there is the house of dreams  
about which I have written so little.*

□

1977 A TOLKIEN YEAR

## The SILMARILLION



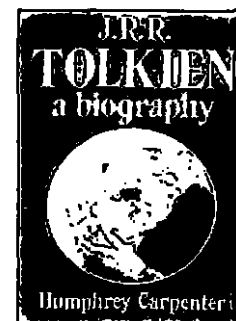
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# A hit-the-missis saga

by I. M. Owen

By Persons **Unknown: The Strange Death of Christine Demeter.** by George Jonas and Barbara Amiel. Macmillan. illustrated. 347 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1437 5).

**TRUTH IS NOT** necessarily stranger than fiction. but it's often a great deal untidier and more ambiguous. No **writer** of detective novels would find a publisher for a story so full of loose ends and **non sequiturs** as the **curious tale** of the murder of Christine Demeter and the investigation that **led** to the conviction of her husband for having **caused** it to happen. However, readers **are** more tolerant of sloppy plotting in real life than in fiction, and the trial of Peter Demeter fascinated a wide public not only in Southern Ontario but, we are told, **all** over the world. Now it makes a good and interesting book — though, as I shall indicate later. I wish it had been better.

If you didn't follow it at the time, and if you live in the hinterlands west of the Great Lakes or east of Kingston, you may not even have heard of the place where the murder happened: **Mississauga**. This is a recently invented **community** that, though it is in **area** the largest city in Canada and has a population of 250,000, is essentially a prosperous dormitory suburb of Toronto and by no means a natural haunt of criminals. Here in July, **1973**, the beautiful Austrian-born wife of a handsome Hungarian-born real-estate developer had her brains brutally beaten **out** in the garage of their **expensive** suburban house. Only **two things** were and **are** certain about this: it **was** murder, not accident or suicide; and the actual killer couldn't possibly have been Peter Demeter, who **was** on a shopping trip at the time with their **five** house-guests and **even** the family dog.

Except in fiction, murder is unusual among the **prosperous** classes. Hence the ensuing investigation was a **rare** opportunity for the **Mississauga** police, and they **ma&** the most of it. The real killer has never been identified: but a **story** rich in **colourful detail** was uncovered: the unlovely personalities of those two beautiful people the **Demeters** (the evidence suggests that they were both trying to hire people to kill **each other**), and of Marina **Hundt**, the girl Peter left behind him in Austria;

22 Books in Canada. May, 1977

Peter's "**friend**" **Csaba Szilagyi**, who claimed to have come to Canada 5% years before the murder in order to prevent it, who reported **numerous** conversations in which Peter had **proposed** obviously nutty plans for killing Christine, and who between the murder and Peter's arrest had several more conversations with him while equipped with a police tape-recorder inside his clothes; and various Hungarian underworld figures such **as** a petty **crook** known as "The Dock" and a **six-foot-four** enforcer who readily **broke** arms and legs for a fee, **nod** once set **fire** to himself while committing arson, but claimed that he drew the line at killing **people**.

The wealth of improbable characters and incidents, **real** and alleged, keep our attention riveted on this very full **account** of the investigation and trial.



...ter Demeter ...

but the authors' real purpose is to present it as a case history in the way **our** judicial system works in criminal matters: and we find that it doesn't work **quite** in the **way** we have been led to believe.

That **favourite** folk-hem of the Common **Law**, the Reasonable **Mao**, is unlikely to feel much doubt, **after** reading what is known of the story, that Demeter was guilty. On the other hand, he is surely bound to feel that none of the evidence **was** as conclusive as we have learned to think necessary for a conviction. Certainly the evidence on which Demeter was committed for trial seems hopelessly inadequate — and seemed so, we learn **now**, to Mr. Justice Campbell Grant, who tried the

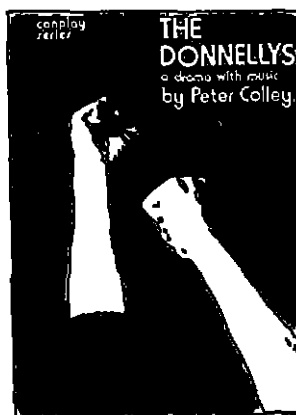
case. Demeter was convicted on evidence unknown to the police at the time of his arrest and committal, so that it can be argued that it **was** only the delaying tactics of the **defence**, stretching out the **voir dire** stage to three weeks, **that** made the conviction possible at all, since it gave the **police** time to **pursue** the investigation and **turn up** all these curious characters. It seems hard to disagree with the **defence** (though the appeal courts have managed to **do so**) that this mass of new evidence suddenly **thrown** at them in the midst of the trial **pot** them at such a disadvantage that a mistrial should **have** been declared. In other words, while justice was **probably** done, it can't be clearly seen to have been done. Whether it **was** or not, the ease shows that the tendency in **our** courts is quite the opposite of the tendency that has been evident in the U.S. courts **from** the Miranda case on; **our** courts can and do convict on evidence that has **been** questionably obtained. The charges against Daniel **Ellsberg**, for instance, wouldn't have been dismissed by a Canadian court; since **Ellsberg** had certainly done what he was accused of doing, this isn't necessarily a reflection on Canadian **justice**. The fact remains that, for better **or worse**, we have not got such careful **weighting** on the defendant's side as we tend to assume.

A minor mystery that emerges as we **read** this account is how **two** such line and **elegant** writers as George Jonas and **Barbara** Amiel could have produced such a badly written book. Perhaps the **research**, which must have been long

... and victim Christine.



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and arduous. **left** them short of time and they did the actual writing in a hurry. But nothing can excuse the opening paragraphs, in which we are shown Christine waking up in the morning of the day of the murder and are told exactly what she did, felt, and thought, even to: "Soon Christine felt the familiar change in rhythm and thrust of her husband reaching climax, which always

reassured her." This hokum **raises** inevitable questions about later passages in the book where other people's thoughts and feelings are reported, **probably** quite legitimately as the result of interviews. Beyond this, there are far too many passages written in a meretricious slick **style** quite unworthy of the **authors**. □

United States (because of government interference, just as in the saccharine foolishness). However, sprays of water **produce** lots of neg-ions, and the **authors suggest** that this may account for the **popularity** of fountains in cities and for the attraction that Niagara Falls has traditionally had for newlyweds. (This makes me wonder if it is altogether wise to enjoin oversexed adolescents to "take a cold shower.")

At the very least, this absorbing narrative should make us all think twice about the air-conditioned, overheated, carbon-monoxidized de-ionized air we breathe. And yet ... and yet a doubt **remains**.

By its very passion, and by the **very** weight of the evidence it marshals, **The Ion Effect** inevitably invites comparison **with** many of the other hot, best-selling panaceas **we've** been offered **lately**: Transcendental **Meditation**, Pyramid Power, Biorhythms, Acupuncture, Quick Weight Loss Diets, and Ginseng mot extract. Not to mention Bermuda Triangles.

Somehow or other, **The Ion Effect**, admittedly a book for the layman, fails to reassure this science-trained skeptic that the experiments reported are altogether scientifically kosher. Since I **was** unwilling **to** check through 5,000 learned papers in assorted languages **to** allay my misgivings, I went and bought an ion **generator** to experiment for myself. I shall not prejudice you by **reporting my** results, but the authors do note that **25** per cent of people are not responsive to ions at all. I suggest you perform your own scientific test. **First**, read the book. Then, visit Niagara **Falls and** see what happens to your sex **life**. □

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## Striking while the ion is hot

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The Ion Effect, by Fred Soykn with Alan Edmonds, **Lester & Orpen, 181** pages. \$7.95 cloth (ISBN 0 525 13480 8).

By RICHARD LUBBOCK

**SUPPOSE YOU** suffer **from** anxiety and depression, headaches and insomnia. Your stomach is volcanic, your thyroid is under-active, and your gall bladder is under suspicion. Your sex life has the blight, you've had two years of psycho-analysis, and you **live in Geneva**. **What's** the diagnosis, Doctor?

These symptoms plagued Fred Soyka **a** few years ago while he was managing the Swiss end of an American corporation. He trailed **from** doctor to doctor, collecting prescriptions and explanations, but in the long run only one thing seemed **to** help. His troubles vanished whenever a business trip took him out of Switzerland. Finally he came **across** a Geneva GP who had a large practice among foreigners. The doctor offered a tentative explanation of **Soyka's** Geneva syndrome. "Sometimes I think there's something **electrical** about the air here in Geneva," he sighed.

Alerted by this clue, Soyka began to collect instances where atmospheric changes were linked to physical and mental distress. He found quite a few. Switzerland has the Foehn wind that blows in the spring and fall; the Swiss blame everything **from marital** discord to automobile accidents on its malign **influence**. Many other countries have their ill winds. Canada has the warm dry Chinook, **which** flows east **from** the Rockies at the **start** of spring, spreading coughs and sneezes. Southern France grumbles under the Mistral. And the Santa **Ana** wind is said **to** blow murder and mayhem into Los Angeles and Hollywood.

As Soyka burrowed assiduously **into** the literature of these "witches' winds" he discovered that their common factor is a preponderance of so-called "positive ions" in the **air**, and he examines the implications of this fact in

**The Ion Effect**, which he **wrote** with Toronto journalist Alan Edmonds. Ions are electrically charged atoms. There are about 2,000 of them, positive and negative, in **one cubic** centimeter of air, in a ratio of about five negative **to** four positive.

The authors report speculations that life may have evolved in air of this ionic balance, and present a mass of citations **from** scientific literature that indicate **plants** and animals thrive in relatively negative air, but wither and die under **pas-ions**. (It's difficult **to** ignore the coincidence that "**pos-ion**" is **an** anagram of "poison.") From such studies, Soyka and Edmonds draw the conclusion that for human beings, negative **ions** are relaxing; whereas positive ions cause undue **excitation** and consequent exhaustion.

In a typical study, Japanese scientists subjected some unfortunate movie audiences to alternating doses of positive and negative ions. In one case they piled on the neg-ions and "after 90 minutes of the movie those who had reported headache and perspiration said that both symptoms had disappeared." One can't help wondering whether it was the ions or the film that did the trick.

In his search for the **roots** of his unfortunate experiences in Geneva, Soyka (and later, Edmonds) traversed the world, interviewing **researchers** in London, New York, California, Israel, Denmark, and of course Switzerland. There are at **least** 5,000 scientific papers published on the subject of the physiological effects of atmospheric ionization, and these are distilled into this well-documented account of the odyssey. The authors certainly make a **strong** case for the importance of the ion effect, and the **gravamen** of their advice seems **to** be: accentuate the negative, in all things, including your sex life.

If the reader is curious to know **where** he **can get** a breath of invigorating negative air, the authors point out that ion-making machines are available in Europe and Canada, but not in the

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### IN BRIEF

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A People's **History** of Prince Edward Island, by Errol **Sharpe**, Steel Rail Publishing, 268 **pages**, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0-88791-001-7), \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0-88791-003-3). Support **for** the view that the Canada Council mis-spends its funds may be inferred from their subsidization of this **mercifully** short volume by Errol **Sharpe**. The thesis that the "people" (meaning, presumably, individuals who are not politicians, rich, or otherwise privileged) deserve the attention of historians is sufficiently innocuous. Nor can one quarrel with the right of an author to infuse **his work with a declared** Leftist **bias**. But one may still **reasonably expect** in the result a **measure of scholarship and a coherent development of theme**. A **People's History** yields neither. Mr. **Sharpe's** commitment to **accurate** historical revelation may **be inferred from the selection of material included and its proportionate distribution**. Seven



pages describe native peoples to the 16th century ("The **Micmac** lived in harmony with nature"); some 30 pages describe the "people's" struggle against the Campbell government since 1966. Seventeen pages are appropriated for the reproduction of the farm diary of the author's father in a chapter that is charming, but profoundly unrelated to the purportedly historical material that

surrounds it. Much the same may be said of the essay on co-operatives: it is interesting and seems, for once, to reflect a depth of knowledge on the writer's part; but the whole does not cohere. If this is the "people's" history, the reader is well advised to stick to the other kind; it at least makes sense.

JONATHAN WEBB

## The Old Man's best friend

**George-Etienne Cartier:** A Biography, by Alastair Sweeny. McClelland & Stewart. 352 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 8363 7).

By BRIAN YOUNG

IT IS NOT just coincidence that this is the year of the French-Canadian biography. Panicked by threats to Canadian unity our sages are frantically trying to buttress English-Canadian faith in French-Canadian leadership and institutions. In the last few months we have had the reverend René, a reformed Duplessis, and now Alastair Sweeny's George-Etienne Carder. "the great statesman and political prophet." Sweeny began his biography on the centenary of Carder's death in the hope that his hero's "love for Canada, his work for her future and his desire to ensure her survival might be an inspiration and a challenge to English-speaking Canadians." His Cartier is bold, "an exploding star," "a new Napoleon," who represented "a truly national, deep-rooted and vital way of life." Sweeny writes broad-brush, moralistic history. French Canadians are good. Americans are bad; above all. Confederation must be defeated.

Sweeny's Cartier moves effortlessly through the crises of the 19th century. After cold chills in the rebellion at Saint Denis, Cartier helped French Canadians decide between "the Virgin" and "the Voyageur" — "between the conservative, religious, passive, essentially static and organic existence of the habitant, and the increasingly vigorous and dynamic, progressive, nationalistic and entrepreneurial nature of the new Canadian professional." Soon Cartier was involved in railways — not for self-enrichment — but to realize his dream of an expanding, transcontinental state. Faced with political paralysis in the 1850s, Cartier "worked like a dog" while his unreliable "siamese twin," John A. Macdonald, "drank like a fish."

Confederation — "a great idea." "totally in the interests of French

Canadians" — was Carder's finest hour. The Lightning Striker was everywhere. He mesmerized the delegates at Charlottetown and his embrace of George Brown in a Quebec City hotel room was a "wordless understanding between the two founding races of Canada." Cartier, Sweeny tells us, had long since decided that French-Canadian aspirations coincided with the aims of the London banking firm of Barings. Accepting the latter's imperial design for a transcontinental nation, Cartier avoided "the trap" of letting Lower Canadians vote on the Confederation proposals.

After Confederation, Cartier began to make mistakes. He complained about the honours granted him by the Queen and offended his more nationalistic supporters by his preference for British drawing-moms. His lucrative legal work for the Sulpicians prompted vicious battles with Montreal's tough Bishop Bourget. His most serious mistake was to sign for a \$110,000 campaign contribution from Hugh Allan, who was lobbying for the Pacific Railway contract. Despite this, evidence, Sweeny brings Cartier through the Pacific Scandal "as a great national hero" who triumphed over Allan, "a greedy, ungrateful fool" who "betrayed his country."

Cartier's career can be explained in terms very different from Virgins and Voyageurs, Lightning Strikers, Siamese Twins and bold Napoleons. He was no prophet; rather he was a tough, cynical committee infighter, party organizer and patronage broker. Often insensitive to the needs of French Canada, his nationalism extended about as far as Montreal's city limits. Essentially a conservative Montreal lawyer, he supported the monarchy, the Union Act, property interests, and an appointed upper house. Sweeny emphasizes Cartier's financial difficulties but this is a relative matter. While always altruistic about the nature of his service to the Grand Trunk Railway, Cartier collected \$10,000 in Grand Trunk legal fees in one three-year period. His work for the Sulpicians was

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sweetened by a \$1,000 a year retainer. With a home in Ottawa, a block of office buildings and a fine house on Montreal's Notre Dame Street, a country home and part ownership of the family estate in St. Antoine, his lifestyle was a notch above that of his Montreal constituents. He bought cognac by the gallon, Madeira by the cask, and his suits from a London tailor. Despite his wife's claims of impecuniousness, she retired to a villa on the French Riviera. Other details get lost in Sweeny's pageant. John Young was hardly a "small-time railway promoter," the Roman Catholic Church did not "come out solidly" for Confederation, and it was Lewis Drummond rather than Cartier who engineered the seigneurial lands settlement.

Nor does Sweeny tell us much about the important administrative and institutional changes engineered by Cartier before Confederation. He diverted the St. Jean Baptiste Society from radical reform into benign Catholic conservatism. Cartier almost invariably sided with the English-speaking minority: it is difficult to interpret his commercial legislation, his education acts or his revision of the civil code in any other way. Alexander Galt and John A. Macdonald understood this and worked with him not because he was a "teddy-bear" French Canadian but because he delivered political power. Far from having "clean hands" in 1872 he was

caught with his hand in the till. Only his slow and painful death in England spared him humiliation before a Royal Commission.

Cattier's private life can give little inspiration to English-Canadian readers. His brother was a hopeless alcoholic, there were fears that his spinster sister would run mad through the streets, his marriage was a disaster, his in-laws detested him, his straightlaced friends were scandalized by his lengthy affair with Luce Cuvillier. Aloof, rude, and sometimes violent, his good humour was reserved for Saturday night parties.

Sweeny — obsessed with national survival, the American "maw," and the need to defend Confederation and its inherent status quo — distorts Cartier and his period: As Canadians flounder with regionalism, referendums, ethnic bickering, and insipid federal leadership, Sweeny harks back to a 19th century of chefs, positive capitalism, and French-English brotherhood. Confederation, he argues, was the product of their shared aims and Cartier by bringing French Canada into Confederation stopped Canada from abandoning its "larger nationality for a mess of Washington pottage." Lionel Groulx must be chuckling under the snow of his Vaudreuil grave at the irony of English Canadians struggling to create a mythology of "survivance." □

## Written in the oracular

The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing, 1900 to 1970, by Carl Berger, Oxford, 300 pages. \$12.50 cloth (ISBN 019 540252 9).

By ALASTAIR SWEENEY

IF YOU'RE THE THE SON OF PERSON WHO believes everything he reads in the newspapers, you'll have to agree that recent literary attempts to mythologize this country have been highly successful. Whether lodged with Marian's bear, or in the water with Joyce Wiand trying to get our long underwear off, or perhaps cultivating our snowy garden in the garrison mentality of Victoria College, or even surviving heartburn in a Sunnibilt cabin, we come off as an awfully interesting nation well worth putting up as preserved. We're lucky we're not like our friends the Americans, so many overeducated Ahabs maimed by a Great White Whale. We're just a rough schizophrenic beast, huddling around a Constitution to keep warm or slouching toward Ottawa to be bored.

We know this because our oracles have spoken, and the Saturday *Globe and Mail* has picked it up. Thereat of the country gets it twodayslate, at airports, libraries, and selected variety stores.

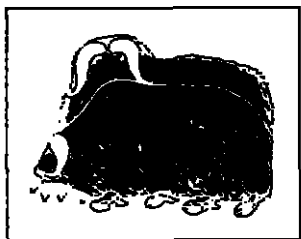
Canada's historians have done their share of myth-making, even though, as we all know, there are only so many things you can do with the facts. As Carl Berger so eloquently demonstrates in this book, the best of them have indeed been creative artists — not academic caterpillars but cultural butterflies — and he has pinned them down like the monarchs they are.

What Berger has really done is go beyond mere historiography in craft a cultural and intellectual history of 20th-century Canada, because as Canada has moved from imperialism and tribalism to nationalism and pluralism, so too have our historians, in the capacity of prophets who not only reflect the cultural fixations of their present but also anticipate and signpost the future.

Such a rich book as this is impossible to review adequately, yet one noteworthy thread that seems to run through the narrative is that the most prominent Canadian historians of this century have donned the scholar's gown only as a disguise. At heart they have all been, to a greater or a lesser extent, nationalist oracles passionately interested in

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defining and shaping their present by learning from the past, from the riddle of our national sphinx.

Concentrating on Wrong, Shortt, Martin, Innis, Lower, Underhill, Creighton, and Morton, Berger has brilliantly illustrated their "central teachings," relating them to their cultural context and to other forms of intellectual expression, especially the literature of the day. Where he really shines is when he judges his prizes. His personal point of view, while it might seem inappropriate to some, is to my mind not at all intrusive but rather fascinating, since Berger himself is one of our present pantheon of historical deities, certainly so after the publication of this delightful book.

His opinions of Donald Creighton could serve as a good illustration. Berger carefully notes that "Creighton's treatment of Canadian historiography bore a striking resemblance to his accounts of Macdonald's encounters with his enemies." But then he is able to describe his subject in this, a most kind and eloquent tribute:

The affinity between Creighton's literary imagination and his predispositions was far deeper than politics and in a way transcended parties. In essays where he made the meaning of his history most explicit, Creighton declared his rejection of self-sufficient and exclusive rationalism. The mysteries of human behaviour and history, he believed, could not be understood by constantly tearing up roots, subjecting the past to clinical dissection, or applying all-embracing ideologies. He spumed ideologies because they began with vast oversimplifications of human character and conduct. He employed religious imagery — "hot gossellers," "authorized version," "revelations," to lace his sarcasm for theoreticians, doctrinaires, reformers, classical liberals, and all who judged by universal standards. He celebrated men like the Fathers of Confederation, who contented themselves with experience and the heritage at hand and did not attempt to plumb the depths of political theory or speculate on the rights of man.

Exactly, but with apologies to the British Constitution.

Unfortunately, because this book deals in part with work that is still unfinished, it is a bit premature, and even incestuous. It is a pity, too, that Berger couldn't have been able to include in his description of W.L. Morton, parts of a recent Morton article in *The Canadian Forum*, where on the one hand he rejoices in the Parti Québécois as "that creative minority which in any society in ferment shapes the future" and on the other hand rages at the possibility that the fate of the country can be "decided by a majority of only one province in a plebiscite timed, drafted and conducted by one provincial government."

With insight like that, it is surprising that the Emperor has any clothes left on at all. □

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## Not by wheat alone

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**A Man and his Mission: Cardinal Léger in Africa.** by Henriette Major, photographs by Ken Bell, Prentice-Hall, 192 pages, \$35 cloth (ISBN 0 13 548115 5).

**The World is Round,** by Jacques Hébert, translated from the French by Sheila Fischman, McClelland & Stewart, 148 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 4063 6).

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By WENDY CAMPBELL

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TRADITIONALLY, volunteers for development have been dangerous for Third World countries; their human kindness has been used by imperial powers to promote their cultural images, innocently introducing harmful conditions and expectations along with advances in health care and technology. As Ghandi said of foreign intervention, "They may have caused more harm by what they've given us than what they've taken."

How is Canada famous for its gifts of surplus wheat — doing in this department? Quite well, if these two books are any indication, revealing as they do the involvement of Canadians in fruitful attempts to help underdeveloped countries improve their health, comfort, education, and convenience without polluting their environment and their values.

**A Man and his Mission**, describing Paul Emile Léger's work with lepers and the physically disabled, is a beautiful photographic tribute to a saintly man and a magnificent country. At 63, Cardinal Léger left the comfort and security of his position as Archbishop of Montreal and travelled to West Africa. Putting himself at the disposal of the people of Cameroon, he discovered with them their needs and priorities and then set about helping to improve the facilities of many leproseries, and to build the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped. Ken Bell, one of our best photographers, has assembled an impressive collection and the text by Henriette Major accompanies the photos well in most sections. As someone familiar with rehabilitation, however, I was dismayed to read her description of the physiotherapist "teaching a mother how to do a massage that will give life to the paralyzed muscles of her child." That's not quite how it works. But her description of Canada's gift of expensive wheelchairs too fragile for the rough terrain, whose parts were unobtainable in Africa

speaks volumes about errors made in international aid. The Cameroonian technicians used the model and built something appropriate to their needs using local materials at about 10 percent of the cost. Cardinal Léger lived in Cameroon from 1967-73. Now he spends most of his time in Montreal soliciting aid to enable his projects to continue and grow, returning often enough to maintain a presence and avoid the discord so often created when gifts are made to underdeveloped countries.

Coming at international development from another direction is Canada World Youth. In *The World is Round*, Jacques Hébert (co-author with Pierre Trudeau of *Two Innocents in Red China* and president of CWY) tells the organization's story in a rambling letter that describes the project with a refreshing enthusiasm and articulates a sensible, feasible philosophy of interchange between Canada and underdeveloped countries. He calls it "giving a human face to the co-operation between countries." Since its beginning in 1972, CWY has each year organized exchanges lasting eight months between young people (17 to 20) from all across Canada who live and work with young people from Third World countries for four months in Canada and four months in the other country. Hébert has many lively anecdotes about the participants, many of whom he visited in Canada and

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in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. A particularly moving section tells about the young Canadians who had arrived in Guatemala shortly before the massive earthquakes in February, 1976. In spite of cold, hunger, and the terror of 1,700 seismic shocks, the majority of group members stayed on to give aid to the Guatemalans and help rebuild their demolished villages.

Since participants have neither the means nor the technical knowledge to take on large celebrated projects, their work is at the lowest level of development - building wells, shelters, irrigation systems, and roads, or by apprenticing in rural medical clinics: Developing countries need to learn intermediary techniques to improve the quality of life for their populations. Canada World Youth is sharing in their learning process.

Some 2,200 young people from Canada and the Third World have taken part in CWY's program to date. Tunisians have lived in Chicoutimi working on community projects along with kids from British Columbia and Ontario. Kamloops and Springhill have met Indonesians and Gambians. Yet, astonishingly, funding for the program remains precarious. I hope that the recently released National Film Board feature on CWY will generate the recognition and appreciation the project deserves. I hope also that a sizable

proportion of the \$35 that *A Man and his Mission* costs goes to promote the Cardinal's work in Africa.

Lastly, I hope Canada has realized that it's a mistake to think that rich countries can change the situation in poor countries by sending surplus wheat or powdered milk. Saint Exupéry said it better: "Do you want men to learn to love one another? Make them build a tower together. Do you want men to hate one another? Throw them some grain." □

water are safe to drink, and that diseases such as tuberculosis, diphtheria, and scarlet fever can and ought to be controlled or isolated. We expect to find qualified people enforcing the rules behind these assumptions and we regard the money spent on the salaries of professional teachers and welfare officers as a necessary expenditure. But the society in which our parents and grandparents grew up did not have the same outlook.

Professor Sutherland describes the development of social attitudes and practices between 1880 and 1920. He begins with the yearly process by which 2,000 to 3,000 abandoned or destitute children were brought from Britain. The way they were treated illustrates adult attitudes toward children, and provides a dramatic base for a discussion of the work of a number of reform movements. In the main part of the book, Sutherland analyzes the changes made over the decades in three fields: public health; welfare (the treatment and prevention of juvenile delinquency); and education. He concludes that the ramifications of the various reform movements were so great that they became the basis for a very different society — one that operated without fundamental challenge until at least the mid-1950s.

Sutherland views Canadian society from a fresh perspective—the way we deal with children and how a change in

## They didn't kid around

**Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus**, by Neil Sutherland, U of T Press, 336 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 5340 8).

By DUNCAN MEIKLE

THERE IS much that we take for granted in our society. We assume, for example, that adopted children are not to be treated as indentured servants, that children go to school daily, that milk and

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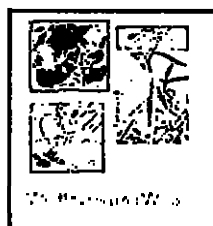
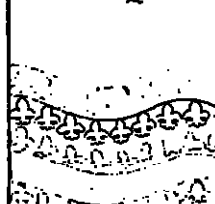
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infant mortality, for instance, required action in a great number of areas. Sutherland describes practices in both rural and urban Canada From the Maritimes to the West Coast, and from time to time in the United States. He provides an extensive array of unusual sources and has used the standard sources in an unusual way. The index includes names, subjects, and many cross-references. His interpretations and synthesis of a huge quantity of material is most impressive.

The trouble is, the book suffers From too much fact and not enough synthesis. Sentence after sentence consists of facts, numbers, or percentages, leaving the reader benumbed. The reader is

never really sure if the Focal point is the need For reform, the work of the reformers, the development of the professions involved with children, the comparison of urban and rural facilities, or the impact of industrialism and immigration. A further weakness is the Failure to deal with questions that were raised in the text, such as the eventual fate of the children brought From England, the implications of well-meaning but occasionally paternalistic reformers trying to impose middle-class values, or the long-term effect of efforts to Canadian & immigrants.

All in all, it is a useful book for reference and a valuable source of ideas about Canadian society. □

## Raisons d'être de Levesque

**Quebec: The Unfinished Revolution.** by Léon Dion, McGill-Queen's University Press, 218 pages. \$15 cloth (ISBN 0 7735 0242 4) and \$7.50 paper (ISBN 0 7735 0279 3).

**The Quebec Establishment, the Ruling Class and the State.** by Pierre Fournier, Black Rose Books, 228 pages. \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919618 28 6) and \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 919618 27 8).

**The French Founders of North America and their Heritage,** by Sabra Halbrook, Atheneum, 256 pages, \$7.95 cloth (ISBN 0 689 304090 0).

By LINDA SWOHET

LÉON DION's collection of incisive essays written since 1960 is not a consoling book. Dion, a respected social scientist at Laval University, analyzes the social, economic, and political problems of Quebec in relation both to the province's past and to the more general crisis of values in Western civilization. The author is close to his subject yet able to maintain the distance that sets events in perspective.

Dion is particularly acute when sifting the undercurrents that preceded and followed the Quiet Revolution, periods of "conservatism" and "progressivism" respectively. The first centred around "the consolidation and defence of existing values and institutions"; the latter aimed at "introducing new or renewed values and institutions." But neither period can be seen in monolithic terms. Before Duplessis' death, conservative leaders used prejudice, rigid attitudes, and lies "to mask the surprising diversity of social situations and of collective and individual leanings." Intellectuals were excluded from power. This book reassesses the impact that Trudeau, Pelletier, and

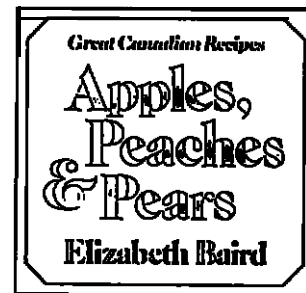
their entourage at *Cité libre* had on the Quebec scene of the 1950s. However, it would be wrong to assume that there was a sudden inversion of attitudes when the Liberals took office in 1960. In a short time the province underwent drastic social and political change, but Dion points out that the critical debate that arose over 'Bill 60 creating a Department of Education in 1964 showed the strength and number of associations and individuals who still abided by the old values and institutions.

Dion frequently addressed political conferences; as early as the mid-1960s he was warning intellectuals against defining situations in the light of slogans devised to create an attractive image of the government in power. "Maîtres chez nous," "politique de grandeur," "nationalism positif" are some of the expressions that masked the realities of various political regimes.

Dion saw and sees the need For Quebec to control her own business and to develop her own research problems instead of importing them. Seven years ago he diagnosed the Canadian crisis as critical, requiring a radical cure. His 10-point program of action included "recognition of the need to maintain a strong percentage of French-speaking unilinguists in Quebec" who should have the same chance as anglophones of other provinces to learn a second language only for considerations of mobility and greater variety in career choice.

Dion acknowledges the enormous difficulties that lie ahead. In 1963 he was predicting that, given the tight conditions, a man of authority and prestige would arise who would coalesce separatist ideals into a powerful political Force. But he also realized that

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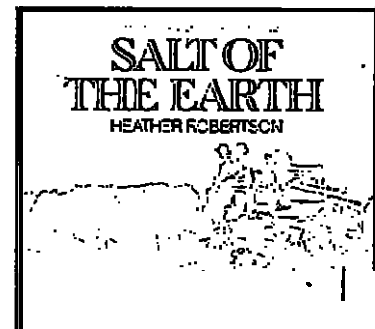
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such a force could awaken "aspirations altogether out of line with our real possibilities." And he reminded all party leaders of a British statesman's words: "As soon as a party leader becomes head of the government, his actions must solely be governed by his view of the general interest of the nation and not in any way by guidelines laid down by his party."

Where Dion is less convincing is in his discussion of the worldwide malaise that serves as backdrop to Quebec's problems. He feels we are already in the midst of a revolution that will transform man's values, leading him to participate more fully in political processes and to bring about legislation embodying the new values. This utopian transformation is the only alternative to violence and domination by a totalitarianism of technology.

Pierre Fournier has taken the relationship between big business and the state in Quebec as the subject of his doctoral thesis. *The Quebec Establishment*, heavily documented, would be of most interest to students of economics and political science, but is also joltingly informative for the curious layman. Fournier obtained his information in 1973 by sending 2.50 questionnaires to business leaders of the 100 major companies in Quebec and by conducting interviews with senior executives of several of these companies and with representatives of business associations to determine the role of corporations and associations in government policy formation.

The thesis substantiated what political observers have been saying for years: Quebec business is dominated by anglophone Canadians and Americans: company ownerships are so complete as to dumbfound the average reader; major decisions are usually made outside the province (often outside the country) without regard to the benefit of Quebec or its people; and provincial governments have passed, and continue to pass, legislation favouring these multinationals and frequently requested by them.

Prof. Fournier uses his study to draw the Marxist conclusion "that the means of production must be taken over and reorganized [and] must be controlled by the working class and the population as a whole." I would have preferred that he allow the study to speak for itself instead of using it to push an ideological stance.

Sabra Holbrook has assumed the difficult task of reducing this complexity of Quebec history for the juvenile reader. *The French Founders of North America and their Heritage* has as its purpose "to acknowledge the North American debt to French pioneers who opened up and civilized a vast section of our continent [and] to show the impact that French New World history has had

30 Books in Canada, May, 1977

on modern Canada." Ms. Holbrook relies heavily on French Canadian books for her perspective. She makes the early years of exploration exciting, never glossing over corruption or venality. There is some difficulty in telescoping the period from Lord Durham until the Quiet Revolution into one chapter. In trying to clarify current turmoil in Quebec, Holbrook focuses on a few individual responses, devoting an inordinate amount of space to Pierre Vallières. However, despite its flaws, this book probably offers a more accurate vision of Québécois history to young readers than they have been given in English up until now. □

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## There once was a union maid

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She *Never Was Afraid*: The Biography of Annie Buller, by Louise Watson, Progress Books, 129 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 91939631 3).

Toward Socialism: Selected Writings 1966-1976, by William Kashtan, Progress Books, 372 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 91939633 X) and \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 919396 32 1).

By IAN YOUNG

IN SEPTEMBER, 1931, the miners of the Souris coalfields in Saskatchewan went on strike when the mine-owners refused to negotiate changes in the appalling working conditions and what amounted to enforced serfdom of the miners' families to the company store. The strikers planned a parade and public meeting to acquaint the other local people with the issues involved in the dispute.

The mine-owners and town officials, determined to stop the parade, called in a squad of RCMP to beef up the local police force. When the miners' march reached the outskirts of Estevan, the police and RCMP opened fire with machine guns. Three miners were killed, about 50 wounded, and when the injured were taken to the local hospital, they were turned away by the doctor in charge since they were unable to pay "a week in advance." The wounded had to be taken 50 miles, to Weyburn. One died on the way.

As a result of the strike, union organizer Annie Buller was tried (twice) on a charge of inciting to riot, and sentenced to a year's solitary confinement in the bleak North Battleford prison. During the first trial, an exasperated prosecutor complained:

"The accused has an obsession; she doesn't defend herself, she defends the whole working class." That was the atmosphere surrounding the labour movement in Canada in the 1930s.

She *Never Was Afraid* (the title is from an old union song) is the biography of Annie Buller, Canadian communist and union organizer, and a fighter of admirable toughness and determination. Unhappily, she cannot be said to have been much of a thinker.

When she was imprisoned a second time, it was — at least in part; Ms. Watson's book is unclear on this point — for opposing Canadian participation in the Second World War. By the time she was released, the Communist Party had done a 180-degree turn and was posing as the champion of democracy in the war against Hitler. Annie Buller strode into the struggle without a qualm! And from the moment she joined the Worker's (that is, Communist) Party in 1922, she seems never to have questioned even one of its proposals (no matter how unworkable), its amazing twists and turns of policy (no matter how contradictory) or its support of Moscow's program of calculated carnage. A sturdy war-horse, Annie Buller had her blinkers firmly fixed in place till she dayshedied in harness.

Miss Buller's blind devotion to the tenets and tactics of the party doesn't bother Louise Watson, whose book is in effect a hagiography of its subject — and also of the party both women belong to. Its style is adequate to its task and more than a little pedestrian. The few articles of Annie Buller's included as appendices are perfectly ordinary in every way, diminishing rather than enhancing one's opinions of Miss Buller.

Even so, it is fine stuff compared to the wearily turgid and cliché-ridden speeches of William Kashtan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Canada. There is at least one speech for each year of the decade 1966-76 — except for 1968, the year of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, which Kashtan's party continues to rationalize, true to its tradition as one of the most slavish of all the Moscow-line parties. Not in this book though, where the only reference to the East European revolts is a one-line allusion to "unsuccessful attempts to restore capitalism in [Hungary and Czechoslovakia]" — an untruth too baldly stated to convince anyone.

*Toward Socialism* is, I suppose, the book to read if you want to know all about the Canadian party's (declared) policies of the moment. General Secretary Kashtan's book could help convince one of the truth of Stephen Leacock's thesis that socialism would only work in two places — Heaven, where they don't need it, and Hell, where they have it already. □

## Of women reborn whole

**Becoming Woman: The Quest for Wholeness in Female Experience.** by Penelope Washbourn. Fitzhemy & Whiteside. 174 pages. \$9.40 cloth (ISBN 0 06 069259 6).

**The Self-Help Guide to Divorce Children Welfare.** by Penelope Jahn and Charles Campbell. House of Annsi. 110 pages. \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88784 612 2).

**Herstory 1977: A Canadian Women's Calendar.** by the Saskatchewan Women's Calendar Collective. 121 pages. \$3.95 (ISBN 0 88830 113 8).

By ELEANOR WACHTEL

THE CRISIS approach to life styles, viewed positively as an opportunity for personal growth, is again becoming a popular notion. Do not despair that your life is in a heap at your feet, that your husband has run off with his secretary, that you've been laid off; it is somehow all for your own good. Among these gloomy yea-sayers we find Penelope Washbourn who teaches religion and women's studies at the University of Manitoba. In *Becoming Woman*, she identifies 10 crisis points in the life of a woman and 'campaigns for greater acknowledgement and recognition of them as symbolic rites of passage.

"The quest for wholeness" is a spiritual one. At each step, there are two options: the graceful and the demonic, growth or self-limitation. In that each life crisis seems to pose the same fundamental problems, Washbourn's approach becomes repetitive, a recurrent refrain of the necessity to die and be reborn, to reassess one's worth, goals, and identity. There is no sense that the acquisition of grace in coming through one crisis is of any help in meeting the next.

*Becoming Woman* is a dense book with heavy doses of Erikson, Jung, and many others. Washbourn displays a rather random approach to anthropology: "primitive people" are trotted out without name or origin to illustrate a point. The gravity is relieved only by her very personal reminiscences, which reveal a more human character than the platitudes and "inspirations" might imply.

For those facing the difficulty of negotiating the actual crisis of marital breakdown, delinquent children, or poverty, an eminently practical treatment is given in Penelope Jahn and

Charles Campbell's *Self-Help Guide to Divorce Children Welfare*. Somewhat mislabelled since it is more definitional than self-help, this vade-mecum through the labyrinth of Canadian family law doesn't assume, expect, or recommend that you do-it-yourself. It does try to tell you what you are up against and what help you are likely to need. The authors seek to make it accessible to laymen and non-middle-class types, with such deliberate colloquialisms as "If the bum's gone and left you" or "Obedience to your social worker is the name of the game" and other attempts at streetwise advice. The result is a slight but useful book, clear and informative. However, because many of these matters fall under provincial jurisdiction and so vary somewhat across Canada, there is an acknowledged Ontario bias.

Even if your year is free from these kinds of crisis, it can still be a time for increased awareness. You'll have to catch up on Abigail Becker, Judy LaMarsh, and Susan Margaret Gunn, but ahead, in the 1977 appointment book *Herstory*, lie Thonadethur, Savella Stechishin, and Margaret Atwood: so it remains worthwhile to pick up this fourth edition of the Canadian Women's Calendar. A whimsical selection of modern and historical women who have contributed in the fields of arts, sciences, and social welfare, pro-

vides the facing pages for your own weekly schedule. And there's an index and bibliography at the back if you wish to incorporate these figures into it. The theme this year is collective action, a kind of theirstory, but happily we can still read about the heroics of the 18th-century Chipewyan peacemaker, Thanadelthur. □

## For suckers, con amore

**Under Protective Surveillance.** by Marlis Fleming, McClelland & Stewart, 317 pages. \$10 cloth (ISBN 0771031564).

By ARCHIE GRAHAM

I AM A layman when it comes to understanding the financial world, but I have yet to be lured by one of those business ads that, for a price, guarantee I can earn \$30,000 while lying in bed with jaundice. Perhaps I don't want money badly enough to be gullible about giving it away to get more. For the con man who runs such ads, however, the money game is easy to

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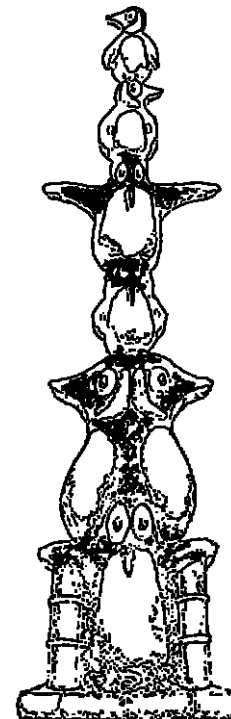
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play. To begin with, he wants money so badly he's prepared to rip someone off to get it. After that the formula is KISS ("Keep It Simple, Stupid"). because there are suckers galore who are just **clamouring** to be bled. And what the hell, why shouldn't he bleed them? Somebody will. If the law doesn't protect them against their own greed and gullibility, that's their **problem**. They should learn to take care of themselves. He **survives** because he works at it. Even when he loses **he goes out** on his own and tries to put it all back together again. He is a "pro with a heart" who believes in "free **enterprise**," which means he uses brain without brawn to empty the public coffers into his own pocket, as if the lack of violence in the execution of the theft somehow obliterates the **criminality** of the act.

Author **Marlis Fleming's** husband is such a believer, and he is the central figure in her book. *Under Protective Surveillance*. **Glen Fleming** was a stock distributor who manipulated the stock market to **produce** enormous amounts of money for his own pocket. But he was captured in **1972** by the RCMP and **currently** lives "under protective **surveillance**" while testifying as a Crown witness in the investigation of organized crime in Montreal. The author writes under a pseudonym and all the names in the book are changed for obvious **reasons**.

Ms. Fleming's work is an informative one. **but it reads** like the Scripts in **all the TV cop shows you have ever seen**. The plot sounds something like this: enter with wife and child from south of the border one **James Colby Danielson, alias J. C. McDaniels, A. J. McCandless**, **Glen Fleming**, the Stock Doctor. **Leaving** a string of unpaid bills **totalling hundreds** of thousands in the **U.S. and a reputation** for stock market "manipulation" that stretches farther than the arm of the law, he bits the Vancouver Stock Exchange like dynamite that explodes all the way to Montreal. The Stock Doctor finds himself in a "hustler's heaven" filled with blue-eyed Canadian angels, and he can't resist the easy pickings. He conspires with another seasoned Yankee ace to revive, by hook or by crook, Pace Industries, a Yankee operation that is running at a loss on the VSE. But not so fast; those Canadian angels are really devils in disguise, and the deal is sabotaged when unaccountable stock is issued and the share prices tumble. Not only that, but another of the red-cheeked boys from the North **actually** demands his investment back with **interest**, or he'll blow the whistle on the whole operation and call in (no, not Columbo, but guess who?) the **Mounties**. So the Stock Doctor **vamooses** it out of the Wild West only  
32 Books in Canada. May. 1977

**to be caught in Toronto. Just like Sergeant Preston**, the Horsemen always get their man.

Between the acts of this outrageous drama, **there** are some important facts revealed **in the book**. The author de-mystifies the stock exchange, for example, explaining sometimes **in** convincing detail how her husband revived moribund companies and set up phony corporations to embezzle public funds. Apparently, Canadian laws are lax enough to permit the totally discreet accumulation of a company's stock to gain absolute control. In this way, organized crime and independent hustlers swindle the nation out of millions of dollars every year.

A less surprising revelation concerns the **RCMP's** method of "protective surveillance." The latter includes 24-hour house guests, a shotgun rider for the children to and from school, the severance of links with **relatives** and friends, and total accountability of all activities from the bedroom to the shopping mall -or wherever else it is necessary to venture. This is not shocking news to most of us, but it is unfortunate, and the author's frequent bitterness towards the federal police is understandable.

*Under Protective Surveillance* has a wider appeal than the title suggests. The revelations of the **RCMP's** methods of loving care, while important, are less significant than the warning this book transmits to prospective investors. The audacity and expertise of the con men, coupled with the laxity of the law, affords too little protection for the stock-market novice: □

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## Hosts and parapsychs

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The **Psychic Mafia**, by M. Lamar Keene as told to Allen Spraggett, Macmillan (St. Martin's Press), 177 pages, **\$8.95** cloth (ISBN O-9000-049-831).

By HOWARD EISENBERG

**THE DECLINE** OF institutional religion and the weakening of the prevailing materialistic philosophy has produced a **recent upsurge** of interest in the "**occult**" in an attempt to find a more satisfactory *raison d'être*.

For some, the occult is but a psychological crotch representing a regression to a more primitive and magical way of viewing the world. **However**, there are also a considerable number of scientists, particularly the **parapsychologists, who** are seriously

**attempting** to research this field. Since by definition the "occult" means the mysterious and hence is intrinsically anti-establishment, it is to be expected that there would be considerable controversy among its **proponents** and detractors.

The title, *The Psychic Mafia*, suggests **an exposé** of a **highly** organized operation that is dominating the psychic scene for its own nefarious interests. As such the **title** is somewhat misleading, for the book **merely** offers the views of a former fraudulent "spiritualist medium" on the conjuring tricks of his particular craft. The book's protagonist, M. Lamar Keene, was an avaricious psychic charlatan who had become a key figure in the mainstream of spiritualism in the U.S. as **shown** by his previous positions as a trustee of both the infamous **Camp Chesterfield** in Indiana ("spiritualism's answer to Disneyland") and of the Universal Spiritualist Association (a major spiritualistic clergy-ordaining and church-chartering organization). The book is basically his confessions as described by Allen **Spraggett**, a noted writer who specializes in covering the occult scene.

Keene had represented himself as a "spiritualist medium" who was able to communicate with discarnate "spirits." In this **book, he colourfully** describes the ingenious tricks his **trade employs to convince the gullible clients of the existence of psychic powers and the spirit world**. He also briefly comments on the pathological personality make-up of both **his fellow fraudulent necromancers and of those whom they succeed in conning-for it takes two to tango**. The term "psychic mafia" is actually used in his reference to the loosely organized network of espionage by means of which "mediums" can often obtain advance information on their clients from their fellow practitioners.

It is to be hoped that Allen Spraggett will lend his formidable skills as an **investigative reporter** to writing a sequel in which he could **cover the even more currently prevalent aspects of psychic charlatanism perpetrated by alleged "psychic healers" and those high-powered hucksters who operate "schools" to teach people how to develop their own psychic powers by means of unethical and potentially dangerous techniques**.

This is certainly not the first **exposé** of the frauds in the spiritualist movement **but** it does additionally provide a good description of their bag of tricks that should be helpful to those novices who have an interest in attempting to consult with a **genuine "medium."** 0



## Ars longa, hers bonkers

**Enjoying Canadian Painting**, by Patricia Godsell, General Publishing, 272 Pages. \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7736-0053-1).

**Dorset 76: Cape Dorset Annual Graphics Collection**, 1976. preface by Alma Houston. M.F. Feheley Publishers, 83 pages, (ISBN 0-919880-05-3).

By **BARRY LORD**

ONLY CANADIANS who enjoy a protracted national insult (and unfortunately there are some) will enjoy *Enjoying Canadian Painting*. The title, inflected in a crisp British accent, ought to be "Enjoying Reminiscences of European Painting, as Suggested by Various Colonial Examples."

English-born and Oxford-trained, Patricia Godsell came to this outpost 25 years ago and favoured the local inhabitants at Carleton University with her lectures on the history of art and its "appreciation." Now, even though she

has moved on to a far less fortunate colony, as the wife of our High Commissioner to Bangladesh, she has left behind her compendium of a British schoolgirl's remarks about our culture.

The colonial put-down has been practised often enough, but Godsell perfects it. Her formula is to introduce a Canadian painting and then pass on quickly to fill her pages with art-historical generalities about the European artist that the Canadian reminds her of. Arthur Lismer's "September Gale," for example, occasions a lecture on Van Gogh; Frederick Verner's picture of a buffalo on the prairie sets her chattering about the saccharine house-pet paintings of the British Victorian artist, Landseer; or William Brymner's large canvases may remind her, for no particular reason, of the miniature painting of the obscure French academic, Ernest Meissonier.

Of course all this imperial free-association must be made to look like the stuff of art history. So each "comparison" has to be qualified with admissions that there may be no direct relation between these artists-in fact, the Canadian artist may never even have heard of his supposed imperial master. No matter: hang him anyway. As she notes after hypothesizing a particularly irrelevant connection between our mid-19th-century genre painter Robert Todd and the British horse painter

George Stubbs. "It is unreasonable to compute Todd with Stubbs, because Stubbs was a great artist and far superior to the average home painter."

The advantage of this approach for Godsell is that she seldom has to strain her eyes to look at "average" Canadian art. Our English schoolmistress is a bit embarrassed by the attention we have accorded to Tom Thomson, Emily Carr, and the Group of Seven. But she minimizes the impact of Thomson by neglecting to mention his brilliant oil sketches, and by reproducing a weak decorative panel he did in an off moment. As for Emily Carr, Godsell complains that we have made her into "almost a national heroine," and assures us that Emily would not at all like being "fashionable" in this way. Our author manages to mis-date an important Carr drawing by us much as 20 years, but us always she is ready with her European "source book" for our notes.

The realism of Thomson, and the fact that realism is at the core of Canadian painting, escapes her completely. Incredibly, the word "realism" occurs neither in her index nor in her six-page glossary of stylistic terms. She deplores the popularity of "genre scenes based on sad, sentimental little stories," such as [George] Reid's "Mortgaging the Homestead." But what is "sentimental" about Reid

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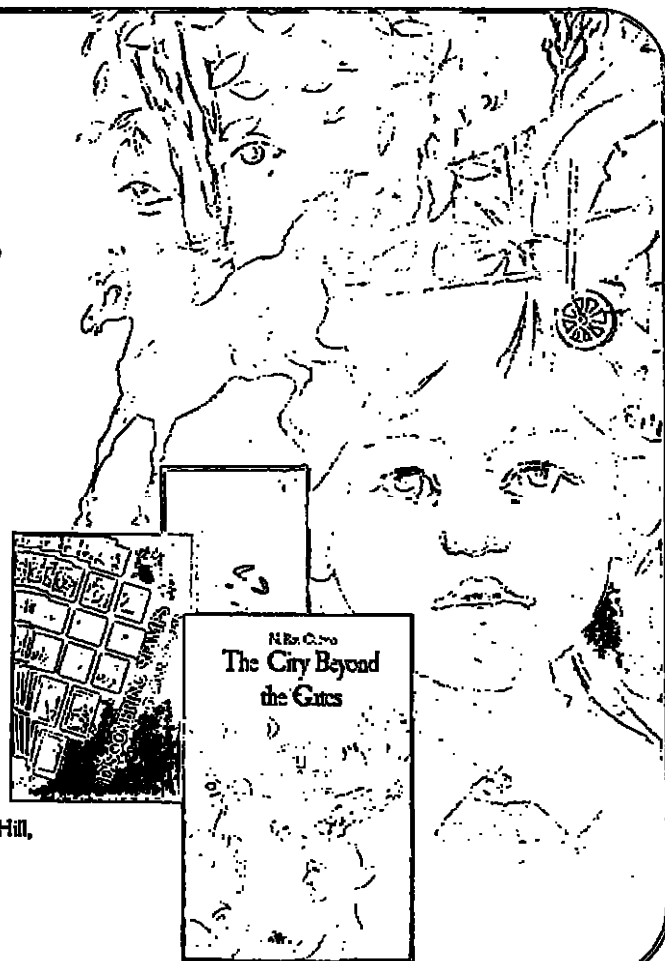
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realistically documenting what actually happened to his own father on the Reid family farm? She deals even more expeditiously with the major social realist of the 1930s. Miller Brithin, simply by leaving him out of her book.

Instead, she continues with the apotheosis of John Lyman, a second-rate American-born artist who was the apostle of "modern art" in Montreal in the 1930s and '40s. Lyman, we are assured, "was an artist of considerable importance in the development of modern art in Canada. In fact, he was the key figure in a movement that led away from the patriotic painting of the Group of Seven." The group, she admits, "was deeply concerned with painting Canada for Canadians." But "in John Lyman's opinion this was a dangerous aim for other artists to follow. It could lead to paintings that were only pleasing pictures and had no serious meaning in the language of art." Even today, our national landscape art certainly is "dangerous" to some people in this colony, and it obviously does, have "serious meaning" in a language other than that of "art," as understood by Godsell.

The Lyman introduction only leads her to wax rhapsodic later on about the advent of American-style abstraction. She is at the service of another empire here, and is not nearly so sure of herself. So, for instance, she wrongly

conjectures that Jean-Paul Riopelle in Paris may have been influenced by New York's Jackson Pollock, and imagines brush strokes where there are none on a canvas by Jack Bush. Errors and misinterpretations abound. Nevertheless, like all comparators, she is delighted to see "modern" Canadian art looking so much like its U.S. model, and leaves us with the comforting lie that "Canadian art can now take its place in the world. Whether or not it can be identified as typically Canadian is open to question, but there is no doubt that Canada has artists today who are respected in every nation." Well, every nation that counts, eh?

There is, of course, no discussion of the art market that regulates this imperial circus. Nor is Godsell so vulgar as to mention sordid patronage and its effects on the artist at any point in our art history. As to the reasonable demands of Canadian artists today that they be paid for reproductions of their work, they are airily dismissed by her remark in the preface that "many artists have most graciously allowed me to reproduce their work without a fee." The colour is lousy anyway (it is mostly too red), but if you do pay \$19.95 for this tea-time conversation piece it is "nice" to know that none of your money is going to any "gracious" artists.

By contrast, *Dorset* 76 offers magnificent reproductions of last year's

lithographs and engravings by the Inuit artists of Cape Dorset. Even so, the most moving pictures in this impeccably designed little volume are the perceptive photographs of the artists by Tessa MacIntosh. The text is skimpy, and you have to ignore such formalist gibberish in Alma Houston's preface as, "One senses his careful and knowing approach to the reality of a piece of paper." But at the back of the book are some telling quotations from the artists themselves. My favourite is Pudlo Pudlat's: "With the money I earn from drawing for the Co-operative, I buy from the Co-operative store. I buy the items I can afford. I do not buy expensive items." There is more reality for every artist in Canada in those three sentences than in all of Patricia Godsell's book. □

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## Body and soul together

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**The Relation Between Physical and Mental Illness**, by Michael Robin Eastwood, U of T Press, 119 pages, \$10 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 3323 7).

**Man and the Biological Revolution**, edited by Robert H. Haynes, York University, 102 pages, \$6.50 cloth (ISBN 0 919604 23 4) and \$4 paper (ISBN 0 919604 24 2).

By RICHARD LUBBOCK

DO "TYPE A" personalities really suffer more heart attacks and does worry actually lead to ulcers? Dr. Michael Eastwood's sober report. The *Relation Between Physical and Mental Illness* is a careful, cautious scientific discussion of a field study that investigates this problem.

The book bristles with the statistical apparatus of chi-square tests and standard deviations, and makes the general reader yearn for what Senator Muskie calls "one-handed scientists," scientists who do not offer inscrutable judgements of the form "on the one hand ... but on the other." In the end, though, Dr. Eastwood does unbend enough to utter gingerly the declarative statement: "There is a positive association between psychiatric and physical disease." This is a stem book for professionals and will shed no light on the aetiology of your sinus headaches. I can certainly see it as a learned paper in a scientific journal, although I am not qualified to judge whether it was worthy of the expense and dignity of publication between hard covers.

If Eastwood's book is hard science, then *Man and the Biological Revolu-*

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don is pop-scientifico-philosophical razzmatazz. It is a collection of York University's Frank Gerstein Lectures of 1973-74. I don't envy the York savants who were compelled to cobble together this unwieldy mish-mash at the behest of the Gerstein Foundation. They chose for their theme the intellectual fallout that followed the scientific "Darwin Catastrophe," and invited four windy superstars of the trendy-lecture circuit to effuse all over it.

Whereas Dr. Eastwood's research is new and unique, each of the Gerstein Lectures gives the impression of having been delivered a thousand times before at a thousand different universities, and simply retouched for the occasion, as though the speakers were stand-up comics adapting their shticks for Al Schwartz's El Flamenco Room in Akron, Ohio.

**on/off/set**

by Len Gasparini

## In the fine tradition of Wystan Hugh, our latter-day show-off knocks a few

IT'S AMAZING how many books of poetry come into this office. There must be a multitude of poets out there. A friend remarked recently: "Throw a stone-bit a poet." Well, I'd like to preface this column with some astute comments by W. H. Auden regarding the reviewing of books that one would prefer to pass over in silence. "Attacking bad books," he said, "is not only a waste of time but also bad for the character. If I find a book really bad, the only interest I can derive from writing about it has to come from myself, from such display of intelligence, wit and malice as I can contrive. One cannot review a bad book without showing off. Aside from the psychological insight contained in this passage, there is much lightcast on the critic. So, at the expense of showing off occasionally, here I go.

**Multiple Choices: New and Selected Poems, 1961-1976**, by Harry Howith (Mosaic Press, \$3.95 paper). There is a great deal of elfin wit at play in this volume of poems. Howith has assembled his favourite poems from five previous collections and grouped them under thematic headings. A sense of bravura strides through his work, and the poetic instinct is always keen. Some of the poems cough and spotter trite lines, but their energy of form carries them, for the most part, uphill. I particularly enjoy his "Study in Mauve and Charcoal." I only wish that more of

Geneticist Theodosius Dobzhanski touches on culture, genetic engineering, and eugenics. Psychobiologist Roger Sperry grapples clumsily with free will and the mind-body problem, veers off into the familiar differences between our right and left cerebral hemispheres, and skids to a halt on a one-sentence attempt to relate all that to education. The master heart surgeon Michael DeBakey wisely sticks to fascinating anecdotes about heart surgery. And economist Kenneth Boulding delivers a lightly veiled plea for even more welfare statism.

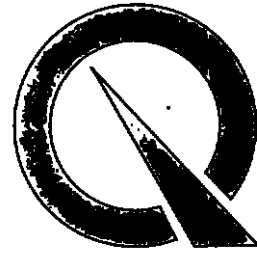
In the Gerstein Lectures there is hardly a thought that has not been better stated elsewhere. And surely Dr. Eastwood's objective monograph can find a place only on the shelves of a few professional libraries. Query: Are these books really necessary? □

his poems could express the same lyricism.

Within the Wound, by Fraser Sutherland (Northern Journey Press, paper unpriced) is a pamphlet that contains some extremely good verse. I'm referring to such poems as "Auden's Face," "Mothers of Small Children," and "Madwomen." Sutherland is a slow, meticulous poet, but his craftsmanship is evident. I'm looking forward to seeing a much larger collection.

**To Feed the Sun**, by Brian Purdy (Three Trees Press, \$3.50 paper). This book is a delightful package of surprises. There is some Dylan Thomas influence in poems such as "Childhood: One." But the joyful imagery and facile rhythm it works with are enough to make one overlook any gnarly shoulder. What most impresses me about Purdy's verse is the unobstructed flow of syntax: "The orchards are big with peaches no-one picks." "City I have you exactly where you want me/in the sooty palm of a love I would not choose." He knows how to use the hendecasyllable line musically and his rich lexical range gives him a certain freedom that is enviable in a poet his age.

**30 (Some Odd) Poems**, by George Miller (Three Trees Press, \$3.95 paper) is another interesting book. It displays a deftly surreal touch that could be interpreted as logic of metaphor opposed to the logic of rational thought. A good



### The Rise of The Parti Québécois 1967-1976

John Saywell

One of Canada's leading historians and political commentators traces the evolution of the Parti québécois from its beginnings up to the present. This account, collected from yearly political surveys originally published in the Canadian Annual Review between 1967 and 1975, provides a complete and objective narrative of the party's history and its context in Quebec politics and society. Saywell draws the story together with a linking narrative and a final chapter on 1976 and the events surrounding the party's stunning victory in the November election. This is essential reading for all concerned about the destiny of Quebec and of Canada. \$12.50 cloth. \$5.95 paper

### Sexual Behaviour in Canada

Patterns and problems  
Edited by Benjamin Schlesinger

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example is Miller's poem "Back to Back LSD." The other poems wear a bit after several readings. But there is great verve and irony here; and the book's cover design is most unusual.

**Octomi.** by Andrew Suknaski, with drawings by William Johnson (Thistle-down Press, \$3 paper). Strictly speaking, this is not a collection of poems but rather a retelling of fanciful Indian stories. Suknaski has probably done more to advance the cause of Indian culture than Stanley Park has done for the totem pole. The government could really use hi. Johnson's fine drawings show a genuine love for nature.

The **Crown Prince Waits for a Train.** by Tim Inkster, and **Poems for American Daughters.** by C. H. Gervais (both Porcupine's Quill, each \$2.95 paper) are unpretentious pamphlets of poesy. The title of Inkster's offering reminds me of a royal itinerary. Some of the stuff is mellow and lyrical, especially "From a Woodcut Found in a Well-lit Room." I like that title. The other poems are too slack and predictable.

Gervais' poetry is strong on sensibility and thin on style. His poems lack rhythm and force. I think that "Charles Atlas," the only long poem in his collection, comes out the best.

The **Land They Occupied.** by John Flood (Porcupine's Quill, paper unpriced). Flood, the editor of Boreal, a lively little mag in Northern Ontario, has given us a series of poems from an historical perspective on the plight of the Indians. In his preface he says: "Today it is evident that what the Indians were giving away was their birthright as well as their right to live according to the design of their culture." In other words, the government swindled them lock, stock, and barrel. Flood's poems are a grim reminder, poignantly expressed. We use the word "Indian," he says.

*as if in defence of a species,  
like buffalo or crane, almost  
extinct.*

*Bushman, caveman, aborigine.  
What next? The difference  
between us is the government  
hunting  
the obsolescence out of us.*

**Words for Love & Hate & the Long Nights In Between.** by Anita Latner (Lester & Orpen, \$5.95 cloth). How a reputable publishing house could put out a book of such pretentious pap as this one is completely beyond me. It should be banned. I have to blame the publishers for this garbage. It is the worst collection of drivel I have ever had to review. Ugh!

**Two Poems for a Manitoulin Island Canada Day.** by Lionel Kearns (Bleuointment Press, \$1.50 paper) is a long satire in which a McDonald's hamburger replaces the beaver as our national symbol. A very funny and  
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readable book: Kearns' invective contains a lot of piquant relish.

I only have one litmag to mention in this column. It is **Black Moss**, edited by Marty Gervais, RR 1, Coatsworth, Ont. This mag comes out twice a year and contains poetry, critical articles, interviews: photos, and book reviews. Subscriptions are \$6 per year. The typeface is tiny but the contents are first-rate.

## first impressions

by David Helwig

### A son rises in the East, a drier from the middle, and a Jung set in the West

**Goodbye Momma,** by Tom Moore, Breakwater, 70 pages, \$7.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919948 19 7) and \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 919948 18 9).

**Lockwood.** by Joseph Suessmuth, Collins, 202 pages, \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 0 00 222085 7).

**Two Strand River,** by Keith Mailard, Press Porcépic, 267 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88878 088 5).

IN MY MIND'S eye, there is a map of Canada, an outline in black and white that is gradually being filled in with colour and texture as the country is created in the imagination of its writers. Parts of the map already have a good deal of colour and texture. Parts are still blank, but these areas are becoming smaller and fewer.

In the last few years, the map of Newfoundland has filled in a lot. Part of the burst of recent publication is **Goodbye Momma**, a first novel by Tom Moore. The book tells the story of Felix Ryan, a young boy born in an outport (significantly named Delight) to a local girl who has married a sailor who hails from the Canadian West.

When his father, at the end of the Second World War, takes a job with a company that specializes in the construction and maintenance of communication towers, Felix and his mother settle with her parents. The grandfather is a great local story-teller:

*Grandpa would never begin a story without prompting and encouragement from his audience. I can see now that he told these stories mainly for Grandma's amusement. He was her true love even up to the cruelest extremities of old age.*

Walt Ryan, Felix's serious and sober Canadian father, is almost an intruder in this household where the boy is surrounded with a warm and undemanding affection.

The boy's mother dies of tuber-

Finally, I'd like to put a word in here for Dreadnaught Press in Toronto. They have been printing some beautiful broadsides of poems in their 52 Pickup series. I've been told that they are going into a second series, and anyone interested should contact Greg Gatenby, 130 MacPherson Ave., Apt. 13, Toronto.

That's all, folks. □

culosis and at first Felix seems almost untouched by her death; he is preoccupied by the complicated politics of his friendships. But when, a few months later, his father returns with plans for remarriage, Felix feels angry, bitter, betrayed. The balance of the book deals with the way he and his father gradually come to terms with their new relationship.

**Goodbye Momma** is a straightforward story that combines an unobtrusive feeling of place with a tender but gritty and unsentimental vision of human life. At the end of the book, Felix says goodbye to the memory of his mother and with it to the link with his grandfather and the past. He accepts a commitment to the future with his humane but humourless Canadian father. His history is perhaps a metaphor for Newfoundland's.

Not just physical regions, of course, are gradually filled in on my imaginary map. Joseph Suessmuth's **Lockwood** moves from Toronto to the U.S. and parts of Europe, but what it adds to my map is a fictional version of a region of society, the spon or recreation or obsession (depending on your point of view) of automobile racing. For the book's hero, Peter Lockwood, racing is an obsession. At the beginning of the book he is in debt, scheming, borrowing, and cheating to put together a car for Group 7 races within his own area. At the end of the book, he is an international celebrity driving Formula 1 cars with the best in the world:

*This was the essence of what they were doing. This was battling to the limits of skill and courage where no mistake was permitted and none was forgiven. It was a psychological battle where terrible pressure might do the work when all else was not enough.*

I know very little about cars except that I no longer enjoy driving one, and

it's a **tribute** to the book's commitment that it made me feel interested and involved in **Lockwood's** career. The characterizations are simple, but the people are **less important** than the machines and not **meant** to be as complex. I don't know what a **better-informed** reader would think of the book, but I found it a pleasant entertainment. I approve of Canadian popular heroes who end up on top.

The physical geography of Keith **Maillard's Two Strand River** is **Vancouver and the northern** wilderness of Vancouver Island, and while he **handles** the places well, he clearly also means the book to be a journey to the interior. not of a landscape, but of human sexual identity. In a note at the end of the book, **Maillard** gives some indication of the extensive research he did for the project. but his information is well digested. **Maillard** works well within the sensibilities of his characters, whatever their sexual persuasion.

The book's two central characters are Leslie. a masculine young woman, and Alan. a feminine young man; but of **course** "masculine" and "feminine" **soon** become inadequate words in discussion of a book that sees all human sexuality as a "**two strand river**" in which distinctions are partial or temporary.

Leslie is a former Olympic swimmer. ill at ease with herself. **her job**, the **remnants** of her athletic career; Alan is a hairdresser who is taking **on more** and more of the elements of femininity, **yet** doesn't enjoy homosexual loving. From the beginning of the book, we sense that Leslie and Alan belong together. but they meet only on the last

page after each has gone through the experience of **confronting** the magic wilderness and surviving some kind of psychic death and rebirth.

There are other **characters** — **Alan's** family in particular — and there is enough plot interest that George Frederick Blurb (you know him, the man who writes the really absurd book jackets for all **our** publishers) is not altogether crackers (though perhaps a little short on literary tact) when he refers to **Maillard's** hook as "**a dam good read.**"

While the book is consistently well written, I find that its statement of the characters' **problems** is more interesting than its solutions. Wilderness magic, psychic **death** and rebirth, confrontation with terrifying totems of the primitive past **are** becoming rather conventional elements in the construction of Canadian fiction. These themes often strike me as expressions of what has been wished rather than what has been lived. They are footnotes to Jung. and Jung is a spiritual sentimentalist.

Two **Strand River** sets out to **cover** a fairly wide spectrum of human sexual feeling. and its greatest success is Maillard's ability to do that convincingly. It's worth mentioning, as comment rather than criticism, that I think the book leans. toward a female or feminine reality. And that the "straight" men are perhaps the least interesting characters in it.

Still, it was a book that for some reason (perhaps the design of the cover) I expected not to like, but once started, I found it won my respect and held, my **interest**. It **opened** up at least one or two new **townships** of the **mind**. □

**soft and recycled**

by Paul Stuewe

Because of the ones that got away, Seal Books will have to think as well as thwim

**ONE OF THE** silliest but most enduring myths about the domestic paperback market is that Canadian authors just aren't capable of writing for it. Although the origins of this attitude can largely be attributed to the economic dominance of American and British firms, as has been spelled out in detail earlier in this issue. we should not overlook the glaring lack of enterprise on the part of Canadian-owned publishing houses. With few exceptions, the latter have behaved as if the cheap soft-cover book was a disgustingly

vulgar object **best left to those pushy foreign types**; how much more satisfying: (and safe) to comply with the requirements of provincial textbook adjudicating agencies, or to **service** the **small but reliable markets** for the memoirs of retired **ministers** and recollections of early days in **Flannelmouth Township**.

As a result, many of our finest authors got away to the friendlier arms of foreign-owned firms. I have no idea as to how strenuously Marie-Claire Blais's agent attempted to find a domes-

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Han Suyin

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tic publisher for *St. Lawrence Blues*, *The Manuscripts of Pauline Archange*, and *A Season in the Life of Emmanuel* (Bantam, each \$1.50), but in any event that person's office should have been deluged with offers from Canadian-owned companies excited by the prospect of publishing a writer of truly staggering excellence. Ms. Blais is so good that a reviewer despairs of finding the appropriate adjectives, but suffice it to say that she writes absolutely riveting prose that presents "colourful" social canvases and the internal workings of tortured psyches with equal facility. and I will be surprised if a Canadian publisher's loss does not turn out to be Bantam's gain.

Along with the authors, a few publishing houses got away as well. Before Ryerson Press was sold to McGraw-Hill, several Canadian firms turned down the chance to acquire a **backlist** that included many of the classics of our literature and history: Now McGraw-Hill Ryerson is beginning to reprint some of these in attractive over-size formats, and you can bet that they're doing it because they think it's a profitable proposition. Selwyn Dewdney's edition of *Norval Morriseau's Legends of My People: The Great Ojibway* and Helen Creighton's collection of *Maritimes* folk tales, *Bluenose Ghosts* (each \$4.95) present eminently readable accounts of fundamental aspects of the Canadian heritage, and one can only hope that those who passed up the chance to acquire such material will lose a few nights' sleep prior to their neat manifesto of demands for increased government grants and favourable legislation.

So is any Canadian company doing a good job in the paperback field? A look at the recent offerings of three of the major soft-cover publishers tends to confirm the less-than-optimistic conclusions drawn in previous manifestations of this column. **PaperJacks** easily leads the field with a varied list that combines broad appeal with reasonable standards of literary quality, typified by the racy popular history of John S. Crosbie's *The Incredible Mrs. Chadwick*, the Gothic-with-a-touch-of-class delights of Phyllis Brett Young's *Psyche* and the war-as-farce musings of Donald Jack's *It's Me Again*, the third volume of "The Bandy Papers" (each \$1.95). The covers are attractive, the price is right, and **PaperJacks** doesn't publish anything you'd be ashamed to read on a medium-length bus trip or a weekend at the cottage.

As for McClelland & Stewart, any comment must be tempered by the realization that the Seal Books deal with Bantam should finally get them into the mass market in a meaningful way. Duly tempered, we may then

proceed to observe that *The Poems of Al Purdy* (\$1.50) does what many of its companion New Canadian Library titles have failed to accomplish: it presents a serious writer in a non-forbidding manner, with a short, pithy introduction by the author replacing the more usual academic noodlings that have probably scared off more readers than even the series' uniformly unattractive covers. Margaret Laurence's

*The Prophet's Camel Bell* (\$3.95), on the other hand, has been issued in an unnecessarily large format that will only serve to limit the sales of a book that would have been a sure best seller as a \$1.95 pocket-sized volume, as is Bantam's edition of *The Diviners*. We'll wish Seal Books good luck anyway, which it will certainly need since it will have to think as well as thwim.

The most disappointing entry in the paperback sweepstakes has been Totem Books. Most Totem releases seem to exemplify a determined effort to find the lowest common denominator of public taste. In the case of *Winged Warfare* (\$1.95), the memoirs of First World War fighter ace Billy Bishop, his bloodthirsty, racist, and in most other respects objectionable narrative qualifies as a minor historical document, and I suppose there is some justification for publishing it; the same cannot be said for Norman Hartley's fictional thriller *The Viking Process* (\$1.95), equally mindless but without the context of a shooting war explain away its viciousness, and about as distasteful a book as you'll find this side of R. Lance Hill, another Totem author. *I Beg to Differ* (\$2.25) collects the *Weekend Magazine* columns of Frank Lowe into a book that reads just as you would expect it to—sort of like starting the day with 87 bowls of cream of wheat—but is at least a relief from the unrelenting nastiness of the above; and the only recent Totem title I can even mildly recommend is David E. Lewis's *A Lover Needs a Guitar* (\$1.95), unpretentious stories of Nova Scotia small-town life that have the same attractions as leafing through an album of old family photographs. It's a dreary record, and one that your reviewer may be unable to continue to follow on grounds of advancing literary indigestion.

The mixed results achieved by some of the larger publishers indicate the difficulties of trying to muscle your way into an already crowded market. But that doesn't seem to be deterring two of our smaller presses. Talonbooks has just brought out a reasonably priced (\$2.95) reprint of Audrey Thomas's *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, a superb evocation of growing up degree by painful degree that you should badger

your bookseller into stocking. **And the fourth edition** of Anansi's *Law Law Law* (\$2.95 compiled by Clayton Ruby, Lynn King, Paul Copeland, and Greg King) updates a volume that is both extremely useful and a convincing

argument for the necessity of a Canadian Bill of Rights with teeth in it. Both are inexpensive, valuable and *necessary* books, and that's the way it should always be in the best of all possible paperback worlds. □

## the browser

by Morris Wolfe

### A bit of humour, a bit of history, and a remarkable theory on the causes of idiocy

I'VE JUST finished the funniest book I've read in a long time. I kept laughing out loud and insisted on reading passages to anyone within range of my voice. (When I'm at home, I have a three-mom range.) The book is **Wanna Fight, Kid?** by Chester Duncan (Queenston Books, 168 pages, \$6.95). Although it was published in 1975, I didn't know it existed until a friend loaned me a copy a few weeks ago. Duncan, who teaches English at the University of Manitoba, is also a composer, but is probably best known for his regular appearances on CBC-Radio programs such as *Critically Speaking* and *Passing Show*. Duncan's reminiscences about his boyhood and his comments about the problems of trying to be a composer in **Winnipeg** are a delight. Here is Duncan, for instance, on the subject of his ineptitude in Manual Training: "For about six months we had been working on a foot-stool for Mum, and I had been hacking away at the thing with chisels and saws and planes until it looked like some interesting archeological find — some kind of battered relic of Ancient Man. When the time came for us to fit the pieces together I had an awful time because hardly anything fit, but I persisted in a kind of panic, pulling and hitting it and violently **gluing** the legs on to the thighs. Finally the thing trembled and was still. In one piece. Gingerly I took it to the front for the instructor's inspection. Mr. Hamm smiled a little and then took my foot-stool in his hands and said **quietly**, 'What's it supposed to be?' 'A foot-stool for Mum.' I answered. 'No it isn't,' he said and with a slight movement he exerted enough pressure on it to break it all apart, and in a moment it was splattered on the floor like a pile of kindling." Or here is Duncan on the subject of his first lecture as a university English teacher: "When I walked into my first lecture-theater I was about as sick and nervous as it was possible to be. I was laden with books and notes which I found difficult to carry in my weakness. I started at a terrific rate and in 15 minutes it was all over. The

lecture period was 50 minutes long, but I had used up all my golden words in 15! Everything I knew about the whole of English literature from Chaucer to Eliot I had lavished on this class, and I had **seven more** lectures to go that week." "Being a composer in **Winnipeg**," writes Duncan "is almost a contradiction in terms, or like that old school problem in physics: is the sound still there if no one hears it?" He says he spent a great deal of his time "trying to get [his] compositions on the air so that all Manitoba could enjoy them as much as [he] did." Great stuff.

\* \* \*

A Man of Our Times: **The Life-History of a Japanese Canadian Fisherman**, by Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi (New Star Books, 135 pages, \$3.95 paper), makes for a fascinating bit of reading. It avoids the stereotype of so many ethnic histories. "The recipe for many such tales," says the introduction, "involves a mention of first settlers (usually pictured as awe-struck peasants), an account of initial hardships overcome by hard work and frugality, an invariable commitment to **political** quiescence and conservatism, and an ultimate pay-off of modest financial security and of increasing numbers of the second generation entering the **middle class**. Further obligatory ingredients include allusions to unique **cultural** values ... descriptions of wonderfully warm and strong family ties, traditional ceremonials ... and **colourful** song and dance routines. Top off with the mention of a few Horatio Alger notables and a reduced list of 'contributions to Canadian culture'." Instead what we have here is an extraordinary bit of oral history — the life story of Ryuichi Yoshida, a man who came to Canada in 1910 at the age of 23. Yoshida worked as a **fisherman**, a logger and as a factory worker; he organized Japanese workers, managed a Japanese **labour** newspaper and fought for years, mostly **unsuccessfully**, against the racism of white trade unions. The book ends with an unnecessary but touching apology: "My life has been sort of trivial. I feel sorry

for the readers. ... I don't think I had a particularly unusual life."

8 \* \*

I RECENTLY rediscovered on my shelves a **marvellous** Women's Christian Temperance Union tract bought some years ago in a junk store. The book, titled *Eugenics: Nature's Secrets Revealed*, was written by W. J. **Truitt**, M.D., and was published in 1920. According to the title page, the book offers "Vital Information for the Married and Marriageable of All Ages; a **Word** at the Right Time to the Boy, Girl, Young Man, Young Woman, Husband, Wife, Father and Mother; Also [in case anyone is excluded from the above categories] Timely Help, Counsel and Instruction for Every Member of Every Home. Together with Important, Hints on **SOCIAL PURITY, HEREDITY, PHYSICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD** By Noted Specialists. Embracing the Story of Life and How to Tell It; Also a Department on Ethics of the Unmarried." Not surprisingly, one of the things the book teaches is the effect of drink, especially on children "conceived at the time the father was partially intoxicated. There is no doubt whatever that **under such circumstances** the child is pretty sore either to be **idiotic, or** to have epileptic fits, or to be of a feeble mind and irritable and nervous system. Think, oh father

Margaret Atwood talks about "Rape Fantasies"

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and mother, how horrible to reflect in after years, that the idiot owes its wretched existence to the intemperate indulgence of the father!" This theory goes a long way toward explaining what's wrong with many of us.

\* \* \*

AVAILABLE textbooks are so sketchy and/or inaccurate on the subject of Canadian Indians as to be almost useless. It's a pleasure, therefore, to come across the excellent set of inexpensively reproduced loose-leaf notes titled **Indians: An Introduction to Canada's Native People**, by Hope MacLean (\$1 pages. \$2.00). It's available from the Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples, 16 Spadina Road, Toronto. The notes are written in a simple, understated style that would work well for both senior-elementary and secondary-school students. We're introduced to the seven different culture areas of the Canadian Indian and offered a close look at the lifestyles of four of them — the farmers of the Eastern Woodlands, the Indians of the Plains, the Indians of the Pacific Coast, and the Inuit. (I hadn't realized there were so few Inuit — only about 13,500.) The book makes no attempt either to gloss over problems or to exaggerate them. It points out, for example, that in 1971 Indian unemployment in the cities was somewhere around 70 per cent — higher than on

some reserves. The reason this happens, says MacLean, is that "many of the Indians who come to the city have little experience working at the kinds of jobs they are likely to find. Although they may be expert trappers or fishermen, this is not enough training to find them jobs. Often they do not have as much education as employers demand. Many do not speak English well, especially if they come from the north where Native languages are still used." Obvious, perhaps, but nevertheless worth repeating. This material deserves wide circulation. □

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## Notes and comments

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PRIME MINISTER Trudeau's warning that the country is living beyond its means came as no surprise to *Books in Canada*. We had already reached the same unfortunate conclusion about ourselves. In spite of generous and sustained support from the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, as well as from our advertisers and subscribers, we are failing to make ends meet. Like the publishing industry as a whole, we are caught in the ironic vise of a literary boom amid an

economic bust. On one side there are pressures to continue to expand and improve the format of the magazine because of the sheer volume of new books being published and the growing interest in CanLit. On the other side there are pressures to cut back because of ever-rising production costs and the adverse effect of the general recession on our projected revenues.

Those pressures won't soon go away and we are exploring long-term solutions to enable us to cope with them. Meanwhile, we have reached the point where immediate economies are necessary.

With great reluctance, therefore, we have decided to reduce the frequency of the magazine to 10 issues a year from 12 — following the lead of several other Canadian magazines, including *The Canadian Forum* and *Saturday Night*. Next month we will publish a double June-July issue, which will appear at the beginning of June. It will be followed by a double August-September issue, which will appear at the beginning of September. Existing subscriptions will be extended accordingly.

There are good practical reasons why a book-review magazine should double up its summer issues. Many of our readers are teachers and students and readership invariably falls off in the vacation months of July and August. Moreover, few books are published during those months — it's the lull before the fall season — and advertising tends to decline dramatically.

However, there is little point in denying that the loss of two issues is a severe blow to our editorial ambitions. It means that, for this year at any rate, there will be substantially fewer pages available to review Canadian books. The economic pressures will be eased but the space pressures will become even more painful. Thus the aim of our long-term planning will be to try to maintain or increase the total number of pages per year with thicker issues despite the reduction in frequency.

A second decision, taken with even greater reluctance, has been to cut back our editorial staff to two persons from three (all part-time). This move has cost us the valuable services of Peter Such, who joined us as Managing Editor nearly two years ago. He will remain closely associated with the magazine while continuing his co-ordinate the Canadian studies program at York University's Atkinson College and working on a new novel.

Some of Peter's duties have been assumed by Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, who with this issue becomes Associate Editor and Circulation Manager.

\* \* \*

**DESERVING PLUGS.** Our profile of master bookbinder Michael Wilcox (page 12) reminds us that the eighth annual



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Toronto Antiquarian Book Fair comes up this month (May 12-14) in the Crystal Ballroom of Toronto's King Edward Hotel. It's a feast for those who love old books. . . For those who love new books, the Writers' Union of Canada is celebrating its fifth annual meeting by staging a benefit show on May 9 at 8 p.m. in Toronto's St. Lawrence Centre. Tickets, at \$10 each, are available to the public at the door and at The Longhouse Bookstore (630 Yonge Street). Called "The All-Star Electric Typewriter Revue," the show will be hosted by Pierre Berton and will star, among others, Margaret Laurence, Don Harron, and Earle Birney. . . And for those who love all books, we would like to draw your attention to The Canadian Writers' Foundation Inc. The business of this little-known organization is to provide monthly cheques to older writers when their income from books has shrunk. Since the Canada Council discontinued support two years ago, the CWF has become increasingly dependent on individual donations. The foundation's motto is: "Good writers serve the nation and they deserve appreciation." We agree. The CWF's address is: Box 3071, Station C, Ottawa K1Y 4J3. □

## Letters to the Editor

### HOT FROM INDIA

Sir:  
When a reviewer descends to personal insult, a writer has an option, to reply. I may be no paragon of modesty — no less than most, and more than many — no, I am far from being the "indelible brag" that your reviewer Mr. de Santana calls me in his March review of *Days and Nights in Calcutta*. His sustained misreading of the text is malicious to the point of perversity.

I am not "bragging" when I quote my father-in-law's call for the Nobel Prize For his daughter (my wife). I am not bragging when I wrote "perhaps one Montreal author per decade is featured in the American weeklies" — it was merely to prepare a scene of bland, polite Canadian literary racism. In both scenes, I am contrasting the mixture of unreal expectation, total approval, and innocence that is part of Indian family-life with the level I know it, with the hostility, incompetence, and blank incomprehension that an India-born author faces in Canada. My half of the book tries to show that growing awareness on my part; beginning with arrogant confidence ("How much do your servants make?"), to a kind of abject helplessness in the midst of the marriage-ritual.

Your reviewer's sentiments on India and Hinduism are as dated and patronizing as his extolling of the virtues of E. M. Forster. A love of Forster may get a colonial through English Honours, but, it's no guide to modern India. My half of the book was about the circles I travelled in, and in the Bengali middle-classes I found few of the puranic sanctions still in effect. Perhaps Mr. de Santana found the old Hessean indie still

functioning; if he ever writes about it, I'll be among the first to read it.

Purely as a literary critic, your reviewer is inept. The purpose of the dual-narrative technique is to give a better sense (in my half) of the bewildering experience India can offer no outsider. Therefore the anecdote of the eviscerated baby is of course flat in my section — I am getting it in translation, after the fact, and I extract from it, a particular lesson. I would be melodramatic for me to "build a scene" from it. Bharati, participating in it as communal tale-telling, can give the full effect of such a story on an insider. The split-handling of a single event is no, offered as an occasion for comparative stylistics, but rather, as a tribute to the depth, texture, end density of (even) middle-class life in modern urban India.

Clerk Blaise  
New Delhi  
India

### COOL ON GLASSCO

Sir:

I was interested in John Glassco's use of the expression "women's-magazine fiction" (March). I wonder how much of the fiction printed in women's magazines Mr. Glassco has actually read. I first discovered the excellent short-story writer, Laurie Colwin, in *Mademoiselle*. *Chateleine* has printed fiction by Margaret Atwood, Joyce Carol Oates, Marian Engel, Jane Rule, and also the first published short story of Robert Fulford, *Ms* has printed fine short stories by Margaret Drabble, Margaret Atwood, Gail Godwin, and many others. I gather that when women's-magazine fiction is good it is called fiction, but when it is bad it is called women's-magazine fiction. Similarly, when women writers are good they are called writers, but when they are bad they are called women writers.

Susan Zimmerman  
Toronto

### OPPOSITE CASE.. .

Sir:

Ron Waldie, in his introduction to the Special Section on Education (March), refers to a recent study commissioned by the [Ontario] Ministry of Education and the Ministry of College and Universities. As one of the authors of two of the four study reports, I was somewhat startled to read Mr. Waldie's six-line summary of our conclusions. I was tempted to suspect that all he had read about the study was the editorial about it, which appeared in the *Toronto Star*, and was retracted the following day.

We did *not* find that "mechanical skills in math, science, and grammar are marginally lower" than they were 10 years ago. To begin with, we were not in most cases testing "mechanical skills." We made no historical comparisons at all in language skills or in Grade 12 mathematics — no, from choice, but because we had no adequate data from the past with which to make comparisons. Granted, teachers of English *felt* that skills in their subject had declined. But so did teachers of mathematics, and the Grade 13 math students did *better* than did their 1968 counterparts. There has indeed been a statistically significant decline in scores on the Grade 13 physics test since 1970; some possible explanations are explored in the reports.

Mr. Waldie omitted from his summary a crucial fact included in the reports. It's not too long ago that only about 40% of Ontario teenagers were in high school. Now 80% of them are there. Most of the new 40% are looking for something quite different from the traditional academic program of the past. They're not planning to go to university; they're headed for community colleges or out to work after Grade 12. It's been necessary to develop new programs for these students, with new standards. The programs aren't perfect — the reports point out some of their problems — but it makes no sense to compare these students to students in the past. We

didn't have students like these in the past.

Given the ramifications of this massive increase in the proportion of teenagers in school, teachers are bound to find themselves in the position of Alice in *Through the Looking Glass* — running like hell just to stay in the same place. The indications of our study are that they've actually managed to get a little further afield. I don't think the government, the schools or the teachers deserve the kind of uninformed putdown administered by Mr. Waldie. I can't say I blame him for not wanting to read the several thousand pages of the four study reports, but he might at least, have waded through the brief summary volume.

Carla Wolfe  
Toronto

### ... AT THE INTERFACE

Sir

Ron Waldie's introduction to your special Section on Education (March) states: "Most simplistic panaceas are based on incomplete and often distorted information." Mr. Waldie's serious and misleading interpretation of the Interface study is similarly incomplete and distorted. To use this study as evidence that the Ontario educational system is producing a "deficient product" is to completely neglect all the positive data collected by the study, and to contradict the conclusions of the study.

Since Mr. Waldie is oblivious to the positive findings of the study, let me mention a few. All statements come from the Summary Report listed in your bibliography on page 38 of your March issue:

1. "... the tests, though not perfect, were valid" (p.57).
2. "Certain popular — or, least widely noised — opinions about the present situation in the secondary schools and at the Interface seem, on the evidence of this study, to be misconceptions" (p.72).
3. Re Grade 13 math tests: "In fact, scores for university bound students were slightly higher than for the 1968 administration" (p.116).
4. "Serious errors in grammar, word choice and sentence structure did not characterize the writing of students above the 25th percentile at either interface, and students generally showed competence in organizing what they had to say" (p.126).
5. "One conclusion, which is carefully documented in the case of Grade 13 mathematics, is that there is no golden era of the past and no greener field far away" (p.130).
6. "... the perceptions of various publics with an interest in education do not entirely correspond with reality" (p. 132).

No, content with distorting Interface, Mr. Waldie proceeds to cite "widely publicized results of tests of grammatical skills on freshmen at URC and Queen's." Why did he not, also mention the widely publicized results of the scores of professors, teachers, and *Globe and Mail* writers who wrote the Western freshman test of grammatical skills? (The experts did do better than the freshmen, but they did not exactly cover themselves with glory.)

Meanwhile, back in the classroom, this sort of

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Welland Centennial Secondary School  
Welland, On.,

**Ron Waldie replies:** While I am not prepared to enter into a detailed chapter-and-verse discussion of the Interface study, I can assure Carla Wolfe that my references are taken from it: "Perhaps of greatest significance is educator's lack of confidence that the system is successfully achieving what is perceived to be one of the most important goals of secondary education: development of first language skills. Secondary school teachers, university and CAAT faculty agree that basic language skills have deteriorated" (page 14). . . . "With respect to skill development in mathematics, about half of the educators believe that proficiency has deteriorated over time" (page 16).

My reference to this study was admittedly and necessarily brief. *Books in Canada* is a national magazine and, while this study is very important to Ontario, it will have little practical value to other areas of the country that also are facing the same problems. I therefore provided a timely reference to a regionally important study. We included the summary report in the bibliography so that Ontario readers would be encouraged to get it, and read it, for themselves.

The problems outlined in my introduction do exist; the public perception is one of deficiency. If that perception is wrong, then the educational system has an information problem. If it is even partially correct, then it has a curriculum problem. The supplement was designed to raise this issue and to encourage public involvement. It was not "blaming" anyone and my raising it is neither ill-considered, biased, nor glib.

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Sir:

Thanks to our advertisement in *Books in Canada's* February issue, we have now received so many orders that *The Malahat Review* issue #41, the Margaret Atwood Symposium, has been entirely sold out. We will not be able to reprint the issue and I thought your readers might like to be told of this situation.

Robin Skelton  
Editor  
*The Malahat Review*  
Victoria, B.C.

## CanWit No. 23

A limited but unspecified number of territorial demarcations within the parameters of, which a certain amount of dry-precipitation activity is the normal situation.

SO MIGHT A self-respecting bureaucrat render Voltaire's famous description of Canada as "a few acres of snow." A \$25 prize is offered for the best translation of any famous quotation from old basic English into sexy modern bureaucratese. Unfortunately, we must limit entries to 75 words. There is, however, no limit to the number of syllables in each word, as long as the word itself can be found somewhere in some permissive dictionary. Address: CanWit No. 23. *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is May 30.

## RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 21

CONTESTANTS were asked to provide reviews, as they might be written by a foreign critic, of the movie version of Joyce Castor's celebrated novel *Resurfacing in Sarnia* (McClarkan & Newspaper, 1975). Parody evidently does not come easily to our readers and the entries we received, although excellent, were disappointingly few in number compared with previous contests. The winner is William Cran of Toronto, who wins 925 for this splendid summary:

*Resurfacing in Sarnia* (All technical credits: Cabbagetown Women's Film Collective. Country: Canada.) Militant feminist re-interpretation of 1960s lyrical evocation of young woman academic's return to home town for father's funeral after marriage break-up and nervous breakdown. Original story on blown-up Super-8 is intercut with discussions between author-person Joyce Castor and all-female film crew transferred from home videotape (some loss of sound quality here). Crew argue against Castor's defeatist view of women's role. STOP PRESS: *R in S* withdrawn from official festival in protest against male domination of jury. Tonight's counter-premiere open to women only, followed by discussion. (From the daily cyclostyled *Festival News* at the Edinburgh International Film Festival.)

## Honourable mentions:

*Noir et blanc* — gris. Basically. Did the running titles need to be in Hoch-luit? Tk Basic Victim Positions, shot through the inner tympanum in wax (sepia — still, you know, a phenomenological indulgence). were good. I just loved the hem-thing's line: "Strawberries, maggots, and in the spring — maybe — flies." This movie teaches us how much we have forgotten. (Judith Crist.)

-Chris Scott, Toronto

\* \* \*

Winner of the Golden Whelk at last year's San Marino film festival, *Resurfacing in Sarnia* is something of a curiosity for the London cineaste. This Canadian film explores the idea that painter Tom Thompson did not drown in an extramarital and watery embrace, but lived to psi... soothe... day. Whether this subject will immediately be comprehensible to English audiences is doubtful as the film has been loaded with ontological and allegorical symbols (prior study of the programme notes is essential). Action throughout is in mime and there is no sound, but the sheer integrity of this black and white print in Super-6 makes compelling viewing. (From Notional Film Theatre programme.)

—Araminta Wordsworth, Toronto

\* \* \*

Films in Brief: *Resurfacing in Sarnia*. This latest example of cultural death wish from our northern neighbours is a gritty, grainy, dreary documentary film about working-class life, rape, and death in a small town in Canada. As one character says to another: "To many people Sarnia is just a place to drive through." Whatever made director Martin Knelman, a former critic, think that many people would want to dwell there, even for two hours of viewing lime, is a mystery as uninteresting as the movie itself. The film has been hailed, in Toronto, as "authentic Canadiana" which, if true, is certainly good reason for no, living there. (John Simon.)

John Hofsess, Hamilton

## 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:

Over 2000 Place Names of Alberta, by Eric and Patricia Holmgren. Western Producer Prairie Books.  
Extra Innings, by Raymond Souster. Oberon.  
Canadian Libraries and Their Changing Environment, edited by Loraine Spencer Garry and Carl Garry. York University. The Centre for Continuing Education.  
Sandbars, by Conah McFee. Macmillan.  
Power Town, by Doris Shackleton. M & S.  
E. K. Brown: Responses and Evaluations: Essays on Canada, edited by David Staines.  
A. J. M. Smith: On Poetry and Poets. M & S.  
The Writing Life: Historical and Critical Views of the Tish Movement, edited by C. H. Gervais. Black Moss.  
To Catch a Viper, by John Wylie. Doubleday.  
Bothersome Bodies, by Max Haines. M & S.  
The Great Atlantic Air Race, by Percy Rowe. M & S.  
The New Society, by Anthony Westall. M & S.  
Report on the Death of Rosenkavaller, by Jan Drabek. M & S.  
Venus in Furs, by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, translated by John Glavco. Blackfish.  
After Survival, by Paul Robinson. Peter Martin.  
The Sunshine Man, by D. M. Clark. M & S.  
Her Majesty's Men, by Norman Ward. M & S.  
Getting Here, stories selected by Rudy Wiebe. McWest Press.  
The Joy Chronicle, by P. H. McNeill. Highway Books.  
Martin Heidegger's Philosophy of Religion, by John R. Williams. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

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