

Val Clery on  
Marian Engel's  
new novel

The true confessions  
of Irving Layton's  
harried editor

Why gays are  
winning in fiction  
but losing in life

# BOOKS IN CANADA



## THE BIG LIT LOTTERY

How and why best-seller  
lists are compiled

# BOOKS IN CANADA

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*Books in Canada* is published 10 times a year, with the assistance of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, by the Canadian Review of Books Ltd., 366 Adelaide Street East, Suite 432, Toronto, Ont. M5A 1N4. Telephone: (416) 363-5426. Available to the public free in subscribing book stores, schools, and libraries. Individual subscription rate: \$9.95 a year (\$15 overseas). Back issues available on microfilm from McLaren Micropublishing, P.O. Box 972, Station F, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2N9. Indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index. Member of the CPPA. Material is commissioned on the understanding that both parties are bound by the terms of the standard PWAC contract. The editors cannot be held responsible for unsolicited material. Second Class Mail — Registration No. 2593. Contents — 1978. Printed by Heritage Press Co. Ltd. ISSN 0045-2564.

# TILTING IN THE LISTS

Best-seller lists are the products of hype, and are rarely accurate. So who seeds them, who reads them, and who needs them?

by Phil Surguy

ONE THING ALMOST everyone in the publishing industry knows for sure is that your average bookseller does not report his best-selling books to the compilers of best-seller lists. Instead, they say, he lists his turkeys, the books of which he has huge unsold piles cluttering up his shop. He is hoping, of course, that the public will see his non-sellers on the best-seller lists and start buying them; then the turkeys will become genuine best sellers, and he won't have been lying after all. He'll have been simply anticipating success.

At least one half of the 30-odd book people interviewed for this article reported variations of that scenario. However, like most conventional wisdom, it reflects only a fraction of the truth. If such blatant dishonesty were the sole foundation of best-seller lists, they could be dismissed as a fraud and forgotten. But most booksellers are in fact fairly honest when making up their lists; yet, paradoxically, they are rarely accurate.

Best-seller lists, you see, are almost totally subjective things.

Rick Archibald, an associate editor at Doubleday Canada, cites as an example the odd case of Barry Broadfoot's first two books, *Ten Lost Years*, which sold more than 30,000 copies in hardcover, was something of a sleeper. Pre-publication orders were light: so, as demand for the book grew, the stores were constantly having to reorder it. As a result, because the book was frequently on their minds, the booksellers put it on their lists and come to think of Broadfoot and best sellers as being synonymous. It was almost inevitable, then, that pre-publication orders for Broadfoot's second book, *Six War Years*, would anticipate heavy sales. Archibald says the second book sold almost as well as the first; yet, because sales didn't match the often unreasonable expectations many booksellers had for it, they reported that *Six War Years* was selling considerably less than *Ten Lost Years*.

Such thinking on the part of booksellers, and the fact that they don't include sales figures in their best-seller reports, can produce ridiculous results. Many publishers have their own true-life versions of this (not too) hypothetical situation: a bookseller orders, say, 100 copies of the latest Margaret Laurence novel and sells 80 of them. That's phenomenal for hardcover fiction, he should be happy. But, when he's asked what his best sellers are, he forgets about the 80. He sees only the stack of 20 unsold books, concludes that Laurence is no longer selling, and puts her down at the end of the list or refuses to include her at all. And he doesn't stop there. Looking around his shop to see what is selling, he notices that all three copies of a first novel he ordered are gone, so he puts it down as number one; after all, he's sold the whole order!

Perhaps the only accurate major best-seller lists in North America are produced by the B. Dalton company, a Minneapolis-based chain of 312 book stores spread all across the U.S. Their lists are built exclusively from sales recorded by computerized cash registers. In Canada, the major best-seller lists are those issued by *Maclean's* and the Toronto *Star*, and neither one receives sales figures from reporting book stores.

The *Maclean's* list first appeared in 1975, a direct response, and challenge, to Time magazine's practice of ignoring Canadian books and running a list of American best sellers in its supposedly Canadian edition. Peter C. Newman says the *Maclean's* list is "as

accurate as we can make it and as national as can be devised." It is based on a complex mathematical formula worked out by parent company Maclean-Hunter's statisticians. The main function of the formula (which includes an appreciation of shelf-space allotment in various shops) is to give a proper value to the reports the magazine receives every two weeks from 51 book stores across the country. Particular care is taken to ensure that the list is not dominated or distorted by reports from the large Toronto market.

The *Star's* list appears in its Saturday editions and is syndicated to 12 other Canadian papers. The *Star* also runs a syndicated list of paperback best sellers. The lists are compiled by Mrs. Heather Gamester. She receives weekly reports by mail from 50 book stores, located throughout the country but excluding Montreal and

The job of compiling a report is a chore, one that most booksellers do out of a sense of duty but don't take very seriously.

Toronto; she assesses those two cities by telephone, calling four stores in Montreal and 10 in Toronto. The stores she calls are different every week.

Mrs. Gamester does not have a sophisticated formula to help her calculate the *Star's* top 10 fiction and non-fiction titles. Her method: on every report, she assigns a value of 10 to the number one book in each category. The number two books are given nine points, and so on down to the number tens, which get one point each. Then she adds up the points accumulated by the various titles. Simple.

If the stores reporting to both lists were doing so according to uniform standards, then it would be reasonable to suppose that *Maclean's* mathematics would produce the more accurate picture of the Canadian best-seller lottery. But, as has already been suggested here, there are almost as many ways of reporting as there are store owners and employees.

Probably no store in the country has up-to-the-minute stock-control procedures, so no report is a precise one. Also, the job of compiling a report is a chore, one that most booksellers do out of a sense of duty but don't take very seriously. In some stores the job is given to whoever has a few minutes to spare. That person may not be familiar with the whole operation and only have time to jot down the books that have recently come to his or her attention. Some booksellers have been known to list titles they feel the public should be reading; and others are suspected of ignoring books they are ashamed to admit their customers are buying (which may explain why *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* never made the *New York Times* best-seller list, or the recent untrue stories that Nixon's memoirs are not doing well).

The variations are endless. Some stores are so small and patronized by such diverse clientele that they have no readily apparent top 10 sellers. Judith Mappin, owner of the Double Hook in Montreal's Westmount, says: "I'm supposed to do a list twice a month for *Maclean's* and I have trouble with it. It's hard to do, except at Christmas."

Dianne Woodman of the Village Bookshop in Edmonton, a store that specializes in children's literature, says activity in her corner of the industry is never reflected by the lists: "The best-selling author in Canada today is probably Dennis Lee, so why isn't he ever on the lists?"

Bill Roberts, co-owner of two Ottawa stores, says the two big sellers he'll be reporting to a national list ("I think it's the Star's") this summer will be a book about NATO and a \$25 paperback about Canada's grain trade.

There are booksellers who completely ignore their local successes and list only national titles. Some only report books that are listed in the New York Times. And cute Western bookseller follows the same "logic" as those people who, at election time, think they'll be wasting their vote if they don't vote for the winner. She says: "We used to send in the list to Maclean's quite religiously, but it never made any difference. We used to sneak in a few books about the West just for hell-raising, to see if they got on. We knew very well they wouldn't, though."

Yet in spite of the vagaries of reporting, the same books more or less make up all the lists. The fiction and non-fiction lists in corresponding issues of the Star and Maclean's some weeks ago (see below) have eight titles in common. Their only precise agreement is that Kalki is the number eight fiction best seller; however, it should be clear by now that a book's exact position on a list is fairly meaningless.

A more remarkable feature of these particular lists is that Canadian non-fiction titles are not as heavily represented as they usually are, which may be a seasonal thing. And an even more interesting anomaly is that Maclean's says Hugh Garner's *Murder Has Your Number* is a best seller, while the Star ignores it and claims that Max Braithwaite's *Lusty Winter* — which isn't on the Maclean's list — is one of the country's top 10 fiction titles. Now the fact that a Canadian book is on one list and not the other may be owing to the whims of the reporting booksellers. However, there is also reason to suspect it may be a sign that strong regional sales are

momentarily disturbing the usually placid surface of the national best-seller scene.

Our publishers and booksellers are generally resigned to the impossibility of a perfect best-seller list. What seriously disturbs them, though, is that the Star and Maclean's national lists ignore local best sellers and thus do not in any way present a true reflection of book sales in Canada. In the U.S., seen beside national titles that often sell in the hundreds of thousands, regional sales are usually minuscule. In Canada, on the other hand, where a few thousand sales (particularly of fiction) can still put a book on the best-seller lists, local successes such as Mr. Roberts's grain book have a much larger share of the whole market. Therefore, the argument goes, lists based on national averages will rarely reflect sales in any of the regions that contributed to them. (For an example of how wild the disparities can be, compare the national lists with those produced by the Yorkville Book Cellar and the Halifax Book Room.)

Randy Ware, retiring executive director of the Canadian Booksellers Association, says the CBA tried to get Maclean's to acknowledge regional differences when the magazine's list was still being planned: "We suggested that they reduce the number of fiction titles and include information about regional best sellers. Our suggestions were considered, but we were finally told that the Maclean's list would be in the same form as those in the New York Times and Time."

Peter Newman denies that they were modelling their list on anyone. He says: "I don't think then's a statistical formula that would allow us to include regional books." He adds, however, that Maclean's compensates for the omission by running reviews of regional books and stories about their authors and publishers.

And that actually might be more beneficial. A lot of booksellers and publishers believe that good reviews are a better sales aid than a position on a best-seller list. They say a book's appearance on a list appreciably affects the public only when it coincides with other publicity, such as an author's tour and items about him or her in

## Lists at a glance

From the Toronto Star, July 8:

### FICTION

1. The Holcroft Covenant, Ludlum
2. The Human Factor, Greene
3. Scruples, Krantz
4. Bloodline, Sheldon
5. Chesapeake, Michener
6. Two Women, Anderson
7. The Magus: A Revised Version, Fowles
8. Kalki, Vidal
9. Act of God, Templeton
10. Lusty Winter, Braithwaite

### NON-FICTION

1. The Complete Book of Running, Fixx
2. The Brendan Voyage, Severin
3. Pulling Your Own Strings, Dyer
4. Trudeau, Radwanski
5. If Life Is a Bowl of Cherries — What Am I Doing In the Pits?, Bombeck
6. E. P. Taylor, Rohmer
7. The Diary of an Edwardian Lady, Holden
8. Metropolitan Life, Lebowitz
9. My Mother — My Self, Friday
10. Memoirs, Nixon

From Maclean's, July 10:

### FICTION

1. The Holcroft Covenant, Ludlum
2. Scruples, Krantz
3. Bloodline, Sheldon
4. Two Women, Anderson
5. The Human Factor, Greene
6. The Thorn Birds, McCullough
7. Murder Has Your Number, Garner
8. Kalki, Vidal
9. The Magus: A Revised Version, Fowles
10. Act of God, Templeton

### NON-FICTION

1. Trudeau, Radwanski
2. If Life Is a Bowl of Cherries — What Am I Doing In the Pits?, Bombeck
3. The Complete Book of Running, Fixx
4. Pulling Your own strings, Dyer
5. E. P. Taylor, Rohmer
6. The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady, Holden
7. The Brendan Voyage, Severin
8. My Mother — My Self, Friday
9. All of Baba's Children, Kostash
10. The Ends of Power, Haldeman

A fiction list compiled by The Book Room, Halifax:

1. A Stranger Is Watching, Higgins
2. The Days of Winter, Freeman
3. Chesapeake, Michener
4. Chain Reaction, Pape and Aspler
5. Death of a Supertanker, True
6. Whistle, Jones
7. Black Marble, Wambaugh
8. Perdido, Robinson
9. Acts of Love, Kazan
10. A Family Fortune, Weidman

A fiction list compiled by The Book Cellar in Toronto's Yorkville:

1. Chesapeake, Michener
2. The World According to Garp, Irving
3. Mo-Mo, Ajar
4. Going After Cacciato, O'Brien
5. Picture Palace, Therioux
6. Altered States, Paddy Chayevsky
7. Green Ice, Brown
8. The Raj Quartet, Scott
9. The Magus: A Revised Version, Fowles
10. Strike from the Sea, Reeman

A fiction list compiled by the 312-store B. Dalton chain in the U.S.:

1. Chesapeake, Michener
2. Scruples, Krantz
3. Illusions, Bach
4. The Silmarillion, Tolkien
5. Bloodline, Sheldon
6. The Holcroft Covenant, Ludlum
7. The White Dragon, McCaffrey
8. The Women's Room, French
9. Stained Glass, Buckley
10. The World According to Garp, Irving

A fiction list for the year 1895, the first list in Alice P. Hackett's 80 Years of Best Sellers:

1. Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush, Ian MacLaren
2. Trilby, George du Maurier
3. Adventures of Captain Horn, Frank R. Stockton
4. The Manxman, Hall Caine
5. Princess Aline, Richard Harding Davis
6. Days of Auld Lang Syne, Ian MacLaren
7. The Master, Israel Zangwill
8. The Prisoner of Zenda, Anthony Hope
9. Regeneration, Max Nordau
10. My Lady Nobody, Marten Martens

# NEW CANADIAN BOOKS

at your favourite book store

- **THE JOY OF HOCKEY** by *Eric Nicol & Dave More*  
A very funny book certain to be Nicol's biggest bestseller ever (12,000 pre-publication copies sold). Joy is a hilarious spoof of the Leafs, Canucks, Swedes, sex and hockey(!), goalies, TV playoffs, etc. Great fun for all hockey and humour fans. Over 90 illustrations, September, \$8.95.
- **FACES FROM HISTORY: Canadian Profiles & Portraits** by *George Woodcock*  
A marvelous collection of 120 full-page, duotone photographs gathered from archives and collections across Canada with brilliant biographies by one of our finest writers. Superb portraits of Grey Owl, Emily Carr, Kootenai Brown, Tom Thomson, Nellie McClung, Poundmaker, Van Home, Gabriel Dumont, Dafeo, Woodsworth, R.B. Bennett, Joseph Howe, Cartier, Laurier, Sifton, Eaton, Papineau, Houde, Fiel, Steele, Father Lacombe, Paul Kane, Aberhart, Innis, Krieghoff, and ninety-five other, famous Canadians. A big, beautifully designed book, ideal for gift-giving and an important reference volume. September, \$24.95 to Dec. 31/78, \$29.95 thereafter.
- **A PICTURE HISTORY OF ONTARIO** by *Gordon Dodds & Roger Hall*  
Four hundred wonderfully entertaining photographs selected by archivist Dodd accompanied by historian Hall's sprightly prose. An outstanding presentation of people, costumes, and lifestyles in a most handsome volume. October, \$15.95.
- **GREAT CANADIAN ANIMAL STORIES** edited by *Muriel Whitaker*  
Sixteen wonderful stories by sixteen masters, including Farley Mowat, Sheila Burnford, Ernest Thompson Seton, Grey Owl, Jack London, and Charles G.D. Roberts. The title is no misnomer for here, also, are Kerry Wood, Fred Bodsworth, George Clutesi, and Roderick Haig-Brown at their best. An attractive gift edition, with sixteen, specially commissioned, beautiful, full-colour illustrations by Vlasta van Kampen. An excellent book for adults and a perfect Christmas present for teen-age readers. September, \$12.95.
- **THE POETS OF CANADA** edited by *John Robert Colombo*  
This fine anthology includes 200 Canadian poets from 1606 to the best young contemporary writers plus a selection of popular verse, including such favorites as Robert W. Service. Each poet is represented by a characteristic poem and a biographical note. Quality design and attractive format. September, \$12.95.
- **THE SUICIDE BATTALION** by *James L. McWilliams & R. James Steel*  
The terrible battlegrounds of the First World War are the dramatic settings for the bloody engagements of the 46th Canadian Infantry. In all, 5,374 men served with the battalion. Of these, 4,917 were either killed or wounded. Well researched by the authors, the poignant story of one of Canadian history's most tragically punished fighting groups makes absorbing reading — an important book, not meant for the weak-stomached. Late September, \$11.50.
- **A LITERARY MAP OF CANADA** by *Graham Pilsworth & Morris Wolfe*  
*Critic and author Wolfe joined popular cartoonist Pilsworth to produce this unique and beautiful item. Printed on cream-coloured antique paper this high-quality, framable map will make a fine gift for anyone who loves books — great fun and brimming with information. September, \$8.95.*
- **THE MOUNTAINS OF CANADA** by *Randy Morse*  
One hundred magnificent, full-colour photographs by twenty-five of Canada's finest nature photographers, plus 20,000 words of fascinating text and introduction by Andy Russell. Top-quality design, colour, and production. Mountain history, famous first ascents, routes, famous climbers, anecdotes and adventure. September, \$24.95 to Dec. 31/78, \$29.95 thereafter.
- **MODERN PAINTING IN CANADA** by *Terry Fenton & Karen Wilkin*  
Fifty-three gorgeous, beautifully reproduced, full-colour paintings by Bush, Colville, Cumoe, Lismer, Pellan, Riopelle, Thomson, et al. plus 18,000 words of provocative text on modern Canadian art history, criticism, and biography. October, \$14.95 to Dec. 31/78, \$18.95 thereafter.
- **COLOMBO'S BOOK OF CANADA** by *John Robert Colombo*  
A big, beautifully designed, illustrated paperback with over 130 colour and black & white illustrations. Here you will find our key documents, poems, plays, statistics, letters, symbols, crests, flags, coins, stamps, and buildings, plus history and humour, and *much* more. Hours of super reading and fun for the whole family. October \$12.95.
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Over four hundred great pictures covering all parts of the province, with captions and introduction by popular western Canadian author Tony Cashman. Making people and events real with a "you are there" effect, this book will appeal to both adult and younger readers. October, \$14.95.
- **THE BEST MODERN CANADIAN SHORT STORIES** edited by *Ivan Owen & Morris Wolfe*  
A fine Christmas gift volume for anyone interested in the best Canadian writing, handsomely designed and produced. This anthology contains twenty-four of the very best stories by top Canadian writers including Margaret Atwood, Mordecai Richler, Margaret Laurence, Morley Callaghan, Alice Munro, Rudy Wiebe, Robert Kroetsch, Hugh Hood, Sinclair Ross, Gabrielle Roy, Dave Godfrey, Ethel Wilson, and a dozen others, representing all regions of Canada. October, \$12.95.
- **LIFE AMONG THE QALLUNAAT** by *Minnie Aodla Freeman*  
The entrancing account of a young Inuit girl — the author — coming "south" to live among the Qallunaat — "the people with the pampered eyebrows" — us. Her encounters with our society comprise a touching, true story unlike anything you've read before. This enchanting book will be "must" reading for all who love the Arctic and Canada's Inuit. September, \$9.95.
- **AISLIN'S MAP OF THE CANADAS** by *Terry Mosher*  
Internationally syndicated cartoonist-illustrator Terry Mosher has done it again! Winner of last year's Canadian National Newspaper Award as best cartoonist, and author of the best-selling *O.K. Everybody Take a Vacation!* Terry has now produced a hilarious, telling map of Canada. Printed on high-quality antique cream paper this map will make a great gift for framing, entertain many, and probably insult some humourless Canadians, especially our politicians. November, \$6.95.

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October 15, 1979, for all disciplines.  
April 1, 1979, for the visual arts and writing only.

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October 15, 1979, for all disciplines, except for singers and instrumentalists in "classical" music.  
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Applications are also accepted at any time for:

Short Term Grants  
Project Cost Grants  
Travel Grants

For brochure, Aid to Artists, write to:

Arts Awards Service,  
The Canada Council,  
P.O. Box 1047,  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8  
613/237-3400

the different media. Gossip, good or bad, always helps sales.

Still, a significant number of book buyers rely on best-seller lists to do their thinking. For them, publisher Malcolm Lester says he's actually seen people in stores clutching lists clipped from newspapers and magazines. Similarly, because many of their customers expect to see it, Eaton's posts the *Star* list in its various book departments; and that's in spite of the fact that, 18 months ago; because the list was not accurately reflecting their sales, Eaton's stopped reporting to the *Star*.

There are few measurable benefits to having a book on the best-seller lists, though Malcolm Lester says that the subsidiary —

**The publisher devotes the bulk of his energy and promotional budget to the two or three titles he feels have the best chance of running away with the market.**

paperback and movie — rights contracts of some of his firm's books have provisions for bonus payments geared to the number of weeks they are on the *New York Times* top 15. Which doesn't mean that Lester believes the lists are accurate. He knows of books that have remained "best sellers" long after their publishers have run out of stock; and, conversely, he says some Lester & Orpen titles (for example, *To You with Love*) have sold exceptionally well without getting on any list.

Vancouver publisher Jim Douglas says his firm's *Blood, Sweat and Tears* sold 30,000 copies but was not acknowledged by anyone as a best seller. He suspects that booksellers report only high-profile titles. "I don't think best seller lists are healthy for the industry as a whole. They direct too many people to buy too few titles. The art of browsing is being lost. When I started out in 1946 — as an apprentice bookseller in Scotland — the covers weren't jazzy. They didn't tell you what was in the book, so you had to browse."

Naturally, a publisher's attitude toward best-seller lists depends a lot on whether they include his titles. McClelland & Stewart probably has more high-profile best sellers than any publisher in the country, so it's not surprising that Peter Taylor, M & S's vice-president for marketing, is generally happy with the lists, though he too has no illusions about their accuracy: "At any given time of the year we have books near the top of the list that we know from our own computer reports are being outsold by other books of ours that are further down the list."

For publishers, Taylor says, the most valuable service rendered by best-seller lists is that "they do keep a book alive. In measurable terms, they don't have a dramatic effect on the public, but a hellish one on the booksellers. They won't return any book on that list." And that — the effect best-seller lists have on booksellers — is central to their real meaning.

Taylor says M & S has many titles that sell very well, and continue to do so year after year, without ever being spoken of as best sellers. For instance, he says *The Colour of Canada* sells 30,000 to 40,000 copies annually. Most other publishers have, or have had, similar successes that never made the list.

But the point is that those books are not supposed to be on the lists. Most of a publisher's titles will sell in a more or less predictable, relatively modest manner. He accepts that. But he is also hoping that one of his titles will be this year's equivalent of *The Godfather* or *Roots*; and in an effort to make that happen, he devotes the bulk of his energy and promotional budget to the two or three titles he feels have the best chance of running away with the market. Therefore, when you get right down to it, all that best-seller lists really are is a public indication of the performance of the various books the large (usually American) publishers have decided to run with for the big bucks.

Booksellers bear the brunt of the hype. Media campaigns are directed as much at them as at the general public. Advertising in trade publications is heavier than anything most of us ever see. (The next time you're in a public library, have a look at the onslaught of ads in any given issue of *Publishers Weekly*.) And

publishers' salesmen *virtually promise* booksellers that certain titles will be an best-seller lists. So it's almost inevitable that the retailers are usually only thinking in terms of a very few books when they make out their reports. Nor should the following case of bandwagon psychosis be too surprising: three years ago, after excerpts had appeared in *Esquire*, Truman Capote's *Answered Prayers* was reported by many stores as a best seller, even though the novel has not yet been finished, let alone published.

It would be easy to conclude this excursion by deploring the fact that Canadian best-seller lists are still mainly recorders of energetic activity in the British and American publishing scenes. It would be reasonable to join the CBA's call for lists that more

accurately reflect regional sales in Canada. And one could also note that, because (except in rare cases) super-hype is still not a big factor in Canadian publishing, the presence of a high number of good Canadian titles on the non-fiction lists is cause for optimism. But what would be the point? It would be impossible to devise a truly accurate list without plugging every cash register in the country into a computer. For people who spend money on Robert Ludlum's books, the lists as they now are constituted are probably one of life's minor necessities. But for people who have developed their own literary tastes, best-seller lists are worth no more than an idle glance. □

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## 'SHAKESPEARE AND I...'

Working with a genius can be trying, confesses Irving Layton's editor. Especially a genius who can't spell

by Denise Buckowski

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IT IS LATE August or early September of any year. Pick a year. The phone rings, and on the line is one of Canada's most famous — and certainly most prolific — poets. He has just returned from Greece. "Hello, Layton here." Even his voice sounds sun-tanned. "I have just written the best book of my entire life."

Irving Layton, 66-year-old author of 38 books published in the last 33 years, has made a literary way of life out of excoriating puritanism, anti-Semitism, Waspism, Christianity, and dogma, injustice, and academics of every hue. If you believe everything you read by and about him, you would agree with critic George Jonas that to disagree with Layton is to be "a spineless, corrupt, unmanly, cretinous shmuck" afflicted with "anæmic gentility." His public image leaves one wondering whether he is more famous for vitriol, lechery, egotism, or poetry.

The paradox in working with Layton is that none of these supposed character traits rear their heads in the editorial process. He is the consummate professional, and the exception in every generalization about writers. For one thing, he is so fat from being poor that he must refuse teaching jobs and move abroad to prevent the Canadian government from chomping off the better part of his every dollar. For another, despite Robert Fulford's dictum that "writing and heavy drinking are closely connected," Irving Layton does not drink. And he is eager to absorb any sort of frank editorial criticism without the raising of an eyebrow. Absent from all dealings with Layton is evidence of writer's *Angst*, so succinctly summed up by Lionel Kearns in "Private Poem for a Manitoulin Island Canada Day":

*In the poem you have exposed your soul  
and it is tender, vulnerable, quivering  
out here in the open  
and you feel it was a grave mistake. Fear  
is what you feel all the time now.*

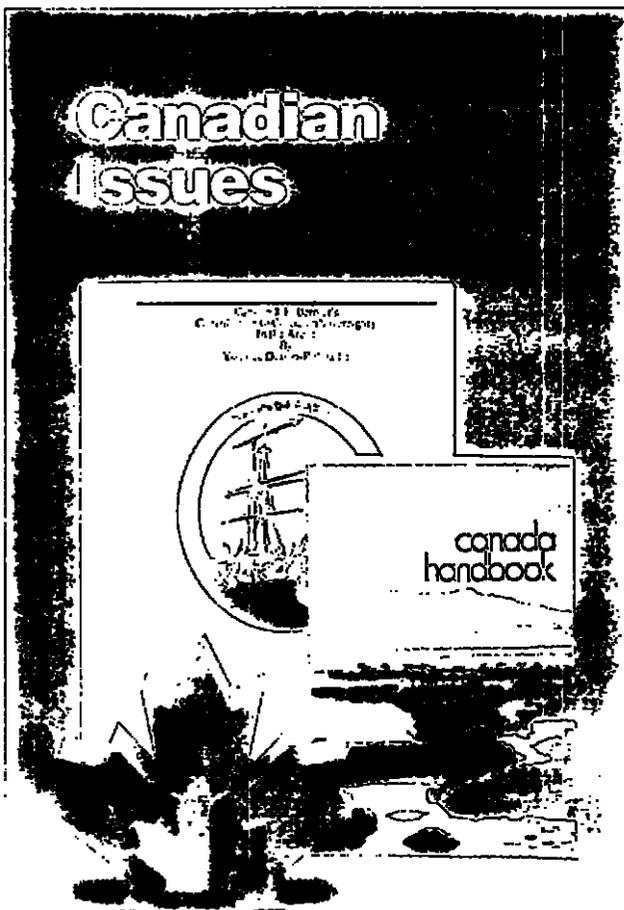
Irving Layton has never felt that he has made a grave mistake. Which makes him easier, not harder, to work with.

The first task after a Layton manuscript arrives is to convince Irving that no, our typesetters and printers cannot work fast enough to publish the book next month: maybe, alas, not even this year. At this point, one must be aware of Irving's infallible cunning. The game plan is to get his publishers to commit themselves to publishing the book a year from now. In order to do so,

Irving must appear to suffer the crushing blow of being told that his book can't be published tomorrow, and then be placated with another date — probably one much sooner than even he had hoped for. This sort of gamesmanship pervades the entire editorial process. It keeps you on your toes.

Once a date has been set, editing begins — in the form of at least one phone call a day, frequently two, from Irving. The first call usually comes at 8 a.m. on weekdays and invariably at 8 a.m. on Sundays: the other call comes just after dinner, when his trusty





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editor has perhaps had guests and may have imbibed too much. The dally phone calls increase in number es the pub date approaches. Most of them deal with minor changes to his poems, or perhaps requests to re-insert deleted poems. Some of the calls begin like this: "Denise. I have just written the best poem of my entire career, end it absolutely must be in this book."

Irving and I had a heart-to-heart talk about this pattern of events a little while ago. I managed to convince him that, much as I wish that I were independently wealthy, I am not; therefore, I must take on other editing assignments, and sometimes his stuff just has to wait, or go away. The same goes for your publishers, I srid. Sometimes McClelland & Stewart publishes other people's books. too. He thought that was reasonable.

"Besides, some of this new material could always go into the next book." Of course, of course.

A few years ago, I approached my first Irving Layton manuscript with what might be celled timidity. Dare I suggest that one or two poems were not up to snuff? With heart-in-threat. I broached the subject. He was delighted. Next year, I tried for half a dozen. Response: "Points well taken. Good, let's do it." This year, *The Tightrope Dancer* (a major reassessment of his life, work, and philosophy) will be published minus 30 of the poems that were in the original manuscript. So the secret is oat: the seemingly intractable, intransigent, arrogant, sexist dirty old man of multi-media hype is really quite a reasonable guy. Almost, in fact, a pussycat.

Or se it would seem. As we all know, pussycats can be very tenacious, when it comes to getting what they want. On that first Layton assignment, which I inherited in *media res*, Irving called me on the very day that he was given my name -to tell me that the previous editor had made a dreadful error: he had left out live poems. They were missing from the proofs. After much panic, I discovered that Irving knew fell well that the book was five pages over the limit and that those poems had to be cut. Nice by.

Next year, Irving produced *For My Brother Jesus* (1976), in which he reclaimed Jesus for the Jews and lashed out at Christianity as the source of all contemporary evil. He had promoted the book to M&S es a completely new direction in his verse, never before published. I discovered -just in time — that the manuscript contained half a dozen poems from his limited-edition book, *Seventy-five Greek Poems*. All six of them bed also appeared in the second volume of his *Selected Poems*. Out they went.

Then there was *The Covenant* (1977), an expansion of the ideas expressed in the previous book. We had agreed on the final manuscript, which was sent off for typesetting before I took an extended vacation. While I was away, Irving called the proofreader to say he had changed his mind. Upon my return, I opened a copy of the printed book to discover some of the poems we had taken out staring et me. Win a Few, lose a few.

By the time we get to *The Tightrope Dancer*, Irving knew that I wasn't just another semi-pretty face. I will never know whether these 30 poems that be so easily and graciously consented to take beck home under his arm were ever really intended for the book, or whether they were just ephemera pat there to make sure that I get to do my editorial thing, without knifing into the meat of the book.

Another cause for anxiety upon first encountering Layton was his reputation for-how shall we say it? — rather outspoken ideas about womankind. I believe it was Maxwell Perkins whose advice to editors was never to let a poet near your wife, because es soon es your beck was turned — or even when it wasn't — his hand would be up her skirt. While this editor has no wife, she does have plenty of skirts; and the thought of meeting after editorial meeting with Irving Layton cost me many \*night's sleep, plotting strategy for reviewing manuscripts and proofs in railway stations, on street-comers, and in my mother's front room. As far as I was concerned, I was damned if I did and damned if I didn't. And friends and fellow professionals were no help. Every time I told people that I was Irving Layton's edimr, I got the same reaction: a raised eyebrow, a sardonic smite, and finally a loud snicker.

The truth of the matter is that Irving Layton has borne this state of affairs with the unflagging good humour of a man confident that he is God's gift to women between the sheets, and that his editor is

doing her valiant and gawd awful best to resist his Hebrew Bymnic magnetism and keep the relationship professional.

Add to that another truth: Irving Layton has never been sexist with toe. Although the publishing and writing fraternities suffer from no lack of male chauvinists, and although I have let Layton get away with calling me "dear" on occasion, there has never been any moment when my editorial judgment was called to question on the basis of gender, never any coarse jokes or sexual innuendo.

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**His editor is doing her valiant and gawd-awful best to resist his Hebrew Byronic magnetism and keep the relationship professional.**

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That paradox is the essence of the pleasure sod challenge of working with him. One can, in the same conversation, discuss the hint of misogyny running through his verse, as well as the ambience of our platonic relationship. AU absorbed, argued, and settled with his charm, wit, and intelligence.

The joy of working with Irving Layton is that he loves to have his own flamboyance and outrageousness responded to in kind. Never a prima donna but always sure of himself (he has often been heard to say, "Milton, Shakespeare, and I"), Layton loves the give-and-take, posh-sod-shove of pummelling a manuscript into shape. It is his unassailable belief in himself as one of the greatest living writers in the English language that makes him (almost) immune to the insecurities and inner torment that plague most other writers, great and small.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges in working on Layton's books is also the most trivial task: Irving Layton's spelling is as execrable as his vocabulary is large. He uses words from almost every language in the Western world and then some, makes passing reference to almost every culture that ever existed on this planet and every historical event, crosses over into most arts and academic disciplines for a metaphor or simile, and never even notices that I have changed most of his spellings: proper names, obscure adjectives, everything from the oft-used "hari-kari" (he means "hara-kiri") to the monks dei Capuccini (not the same spelling as in milky cops of coffee). How can a person spend so much time in European cafés and still spell espresso with an "x"?

This chronic failing of Layton's has necessitated many hours of poring through reference books and, when all is lost, seeking the help of others. I once found myself in the Toronto Jewish Public Library, face-to-face with a very amiable and helpful rabbi, only to glance down at my list of Yiddish words and realize that almost all of them were indelicate, if not downright filthy. But the rabbi bore it all with unshakable equilibrium. The hushed crowd of earnest, yarmulke-capped students working in the utterly silent library didn't even look up when his voice rang out, almost as loud as Irving's: "No, no! He spells everything with a Romanian accent! It's shlang! Not shlong, shlang!"

The same subject, employing English terminology, arose, so to speak, during the selection of poems recently for *The Tightrope Dancer*. (I use this example to show how unique the editing of a Layton book can be.) In one poem (since deleted), Irving claimed to have seen great artists portray Jesus Christ with the features of almost every race and nationality; he professed that if it was the last thing he did, he was going to paint Jesus "with your white robe parted and your circumcised cock showing." When I begged to know the point of this grand finale, beyond shock value, Irving claimed that the circumcision exposed Christ's essential Jewishness.

"But," I protested, "no one will understand. Almost all baby boys are circumcised now." I told him that some cretin in the accounting department of the hospital where I was born had automatically sent my mother a bill for my circumcision, assuming that I was a Dennis. Layton's distinctive chuckle burbled out, and he sputtered:

"So that's your secret. I'll have to write a poem about it." □

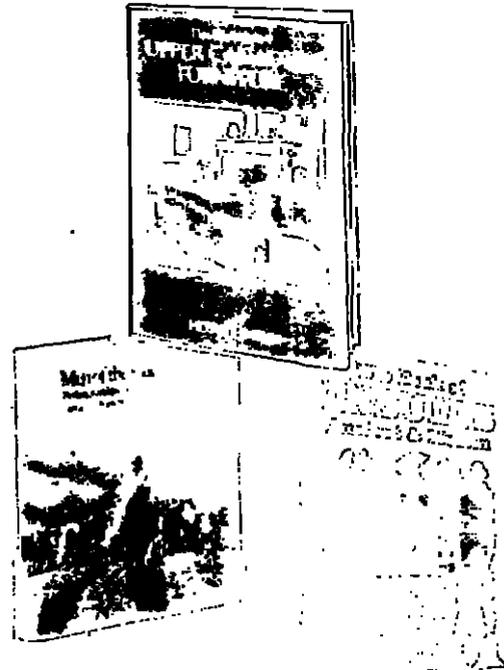
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# GAY ABANDON

Homosexuals are winning battles in the world of fiction but a militant few are costing them the war in real life

by John Hofsess

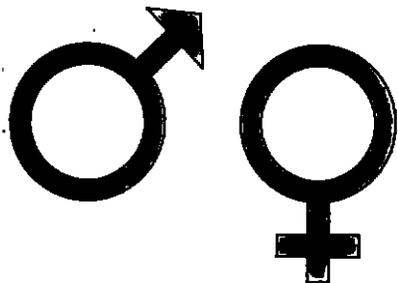
ANYONE WHO HAS read such recent and popular American novels as John Cheever's *Falconer*, Mary Gordon's *Final Payments*, Marilyn French's *The Women's Room*, John Irving's *The World According to Garp*, or Alix Kates Shulman's *Burning Questions*, will know that — in the world of fiction — there is a growing acceptance, even integration, of male and female homosexuality.

These novels are, as society itself is, predominantly heterosexual, but lesbians, transsexuals, bisexuals and gay males play important roles in each one. Frequently the gay character is the best friend of the hero/heroine. Most commonly the bond is between two women: the lesbian has had to survive hostile jibes and discrimination in a male-oriented society for many years and is wise in the ways of survival; the heterosexual woman is shown as just waking up and facing the truth of her social condition.

It is rare, however, to find alliances between gay and straight men: possibly because in most civil-rights struggles the white, middle-class, heterosexual male is said to be the source of oppression. Besides, it has frequently been found that heterosexual men find male homosexuality a threatening subject, whereas lesbianism is regarded as amusing or intriguing. Proof of this ranges from the lesbian sequences that ate practically mandatory in porno movies designed for heterosexual males, to such stories as *The Sea Change* by Ernest Hemingway, *Chagrin in Three Parts* by Graham Greene, *Judge Doolittle* by John O'Hara, and other little-known stories about lesbians by prominent male writers, collected in *The Other Persuasion* edited by Seymour Kleinberg (1977), which express attitudes of tolerance and understanding that the same writers do not extend to gay males.

In *Falconer* homosexuality is a way of relieving loneliness in prison; in *The World According to Garp*, the hero's best friend is a transsexual, a former linebacker, who goes around saying such things as: "I never knew what shirts men were until I became a woman." Both novels have a cautious admiration for their gay characters: they are seen as plucky and resourceful, making the best from a hell of a life.

It is not long ago that the faggot-fairy-fndt character in practi-



cally any novel by a heterosexual writer was used as a symptom or symbol of moral disease. American Jewish writers in particular were the most intolerant: Norman Mailer on many occasions, between *The Deer Park* and *Why Are We in Vietnam?*, depicted

homosexuality as a pathological condition, as "cancerous" (a curious metaphor for a non-reproductive mode of sex); Philip Roth in *The New York Review of Books* attacked Edward Albee for his "pansy prose"; literary critic Stanley Edgar Hyman wrote in *College English*, a widely used university text, that the emergence of gay themes in literature was an "unattractive trend."

While the old stereotypes — such as the sad queer living in a twilight world of booze and anxiety — were boringly predictable and false-to-life, the homosexual characters in recent fiction are hard to believe for different reasons. Like the characters in a Stanley Kramer movie (*The Defiant Ones*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*) during the period when it became fashionable to upgrade the "nigger" in Hollywood movies (partly because black people were discovered to comprise a sizeable film market) the new homosexual image is that of a warm, witty, wonderful human being (ranging from Craig Russell in *Outrageous!* to the gay characters in *A Chorus Line*, or *The Women's Room*) who either tugs at your heart on the level of fiction, or strains your credulity if mistaken for real life. Widely seen TV movies, such as *That Certain Summer* with Hal Holbrook and Martin Sheen, and episodes of *All In the Family*, *Starsky and Hutch*, *Soap*, among other shows, have all preached tolerance to the masses on the subject. Yet despite this sentimentally uplifting propaganda (a stage that many minorities pass through when a culture is re-evaluating, in some cases compensating for, its traditional prejudices) homosexuals have made little progress in recent years in the political and social arena. In an article surveying the defeat of gay rights in numerous communities and states in the last year, the *New York Times* concluded (May 28, 1978): "Few supporters of homosexual rights support them as vigorously as opponents oppose them." In 1978, the status of human rights for homosexuals would seem to be this: for every small hardy band of gay people who believe and sing "We Shall Overcome," there is a larger and better-organized group of heterosexuals somewhere down the road, equally determined to "overcome" them.

The reasons for this backlash are numerous. An easy explanation is that homosexuals are experiencing a backlash for the gains they have already made — that is, in simply getting the mass media to recognize their existence and treat them more fairly. In Canada, for example, Quebec alone has passed legislation to protect the civil rights of homosexuals in the areas of employment and housing; in Ontario, following the July, 1977, recommendation of the Human Rights Commission "in its publication *Life Together* that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation be prohibited, the government began receiving letters of protest, primarily from conservative and fundamentalist religious groups. There is an irrational fear of homosexuality by such groups, as if they believed that heterosexuality couldn't hold its own in a free market. Whatever the reasons, no steps have been taken and no promises made by the Ontario government to accept the recommendations of the report. A Gallup poll released in July 1977, showed that a majority of those Canadians who were inter-

viewed — 52 per cent — believe that homosexuals *should* be protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act. Among the age group of 18 to 29 years, the percentage of support rose to 61 per cent. Despite this evidence, the new head of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Dorothea Crittenden, said in a Toronto Star interview that she doesn't believe the political climate is right for new legislation in this area owing to outraged public feeling concerning the Emanuel Jacques murder case (see below).

It is a common trap, given such examples of prejudice and hypocrisy, for homosexuals to believe that most of their problems stem from heterosexual oppression. It is my view that much of that oppression is — carelessly or deliberately-provoked by homosexuals themselves; by a minority within the minority who frequently choose counterproductive means of achieving "liberation." When the public sees on TV newscasts a band of demonstrators protesting the presence of Anita Bryant at the People's Church in Toronto, marching, and chanting "Two, Four, Six, Eight-Gay is twice as good as straight!," the most likely effect is distaste — not so much for the sexual orientation of the people involved, but for the clamorous simple-mindedness of their slogans and speeches.

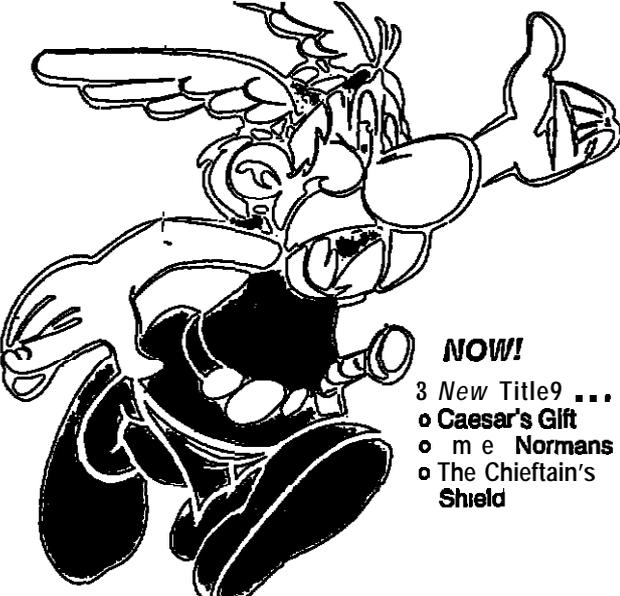
An even more telling example of how gay tights are being defeated from within occurred this year when *The Body Politic* (a national monthly newspaper, edited by a collective of gay militants in Toronto) published an article entitled "Boys Loving Men Loving Boys." The article, currently the subject of an obscenity trial, was an ideologically upbeat treatment of the sexual relationships between four men with various young boys, ranging from seven to 12 years of age. The author, Gerald Hannon, stressed that the sex was mutually agreed on. But nowhere in the article was the basic question raised: What does the "consent" of a seven-year-old mean, especially when the older men do use blandishments — gifts, money — to achieve their objectives?

The article was published several months after the torture, rape, and murder of 8 12-year-old Toronto shoeshine boy, Emanuel Jacques. At the time of his death, *The Body Politic* took the



editorial position that no one should be allowed to "pin the murder" on all gay people, simply because three of the four accused were known homosexuals and one of them, Saul David Betesh, had been active in Toronto's gay community. Several years ago, the same author, in the same publication, caused a furor in the Toronto press when he wrote a similar, but less graphic, defence of loving little boys: for the collective to claim it didn't foresee the political effect of publishing Hannon's latest pean to pedophilia is unbelievably naive. It would take extraordinary analytical precision for the public to distinguish between the benign "big brothers" that Hannon defends, and the men who killed Jacques. For they, too, it was revealed during their trial, had been seducing young boys, without violence, for a number of years. But this one dark night they went over the edge. Pedophiles comprise a minute fraction of the gay community and any attempt to promote their "rights," when even basic civil tights for homosexuals generally have not been secured, is an absurd demand and political strategy. The widespread media coverage given to this article, and the brouhaha its publication caused (the police raid on *The Body*

# Asterix

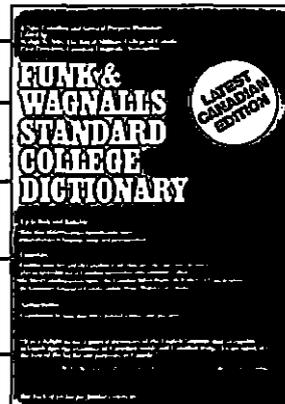


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*Politic's* offices. the laying of an obscenity charge), has undoubtedly complicated many heterosexuals' attempts to understand homosexuals and support their civil rights.

Last year I was involved in an effort to stage a telethon that would raise funds for former racing steward John Damien, who was fired in 1975 by the Ontario Racing Commission on the grounds that his homosexuality could interfere with his job and who has waged a costly court battle, not yet resolved, to be reinstated in his job. I recruited the support of many prominent Canadian performers (Pierre Berton, Margaret Atwood, June Callwood, Barbara Frum, Gordon Pinsent, among others) who agreed to appear on the show. But gay militant groups, such as The *Body Politic*, and GATE (Gay Alliance Toward Equality), tried on several occasions to pass resolutions that would have required "all straight people" to be "coached by a suitable spokesman of the gay community" in what they could publicly say on the air. There was so much internal wangling and amateurish bungling going on that the project finally fell through.

This sort of politically inept, self-destructive behaviour only helps in keeping many elected public officials (who are rarely courageous at the best of times) and public opinion (which has high volatility in this area) arrayed against homosexuals.

What the public gets are two contradictory images. Popular novels, films, and TV dramas deal with the agony of "coming out," of a homosexual's struggle to accept his or her nature, and find "acceptance" in the outer world. They see Peter Finch in *Sunday Bloody Sunday* or Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni in *A Special Day* and go away contemplating the "dignity" of homosexuals as treated in such films. But these warm baths of sentiment are followed by cold showers of irony: the frequent news reports about boy-prostitution rings; the high incidence of VD and hepatitis among homosexuals (a recent report in *Christopher Street* by a gay doctor, stated that gay men are responsible for 55 per cent of all syphilis cases in New York); numerous incidents of violence (playwright Joe Orton, film director Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Variety* critic Addison Verrill, actor Sal Mineo are just a few of the prominent gay men to be murdered in recent years); and other sordid aspects of the gay subculture.

Confronted with this gap between fiction and reality, many people become cynical about and resistant to the liberal messages of novels and films. They suspect-and they are right-that they are not being told the whole truth about homosexuals. While numerous, partial views of gay life are available (ranging from Rev. Malcolm Boyd's recent biography. *Take Off the Masks*, a sincere but philosophically nondescript attempt to reconcile the sensual and spiritual side of his nature within a Christian framework, to John Alan Lee's *Getting Sex - A New Approach: More Fun and Less Guilt*, a badly written rationalization of homosexual promiscuity that has all the cogency of a tobacco industry "spokesman" defending the habit of smoking), there is only one new book that gives a comprehensive, accurate picture of the whole minority: *Homosexualities* (Musson), a landmark study that took 10 years to complete by the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University. The authors, Drs. Alan P. Bell and Martin S. Weisberg, report that considerably more homosexuals feel "lonely, depressed and tense" and have "attempted or contemplated suicide" than their heterosexual counterparts (12 per cent of the gay men and four per cent of the gay women were considered socially "dysfunctional"), but that the majority of homosexuals lead stable, productive and well-adjusted lives. The authors contend that there are five distinct groupings within the homosexual minority, and factors such as education, religion, economic background and status serve to divide gay people into distinct classes with markedly different tastes and behaviour patterns, to a far greater extent that their sexual orientation serves as a common rallying point. As the title of the report indicates, homosexuals are a pluralistic minority. Judging them all by the behaviour of a few (the militant segment is the smallest constituency) only perpetuates a profound and unfortunate misunderstanding. Gay people have won a few battles in the world of fiction but they are in danger of losing the war in real life. As long as the moderate and morally creditable people among them remain silent, and the lunatic fringe is repudiated, there will be little or no gain made in the area of legally sanctioned human rights. □

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# Men, women, and body English in Alice Munro

by Bronwen Wallace

ALICE MUNRO's work, I believe, recognizes that the perceptions of women, the way women order their lives, is not only very different from the way men order and experience theirs, but also powerful because of those differences, because of their situation as women.

In an interview in *Chatelaine* (May, 1974), Munro said: "A subject race has a kind of clarity of vision and I feel that women have always had a clarity of vision that men were denied. And, in a way, this is a gift: it goes along with lack of power. . . ."

We are never far from the persistent reality of physical badger in Munro's development of character. Women's bodies changed and marked by childbirth, fat, grimy skin, the smells of hair and breath and sweat, these are as much a definition of the characters as their thoughts, their beliefs, and their interactions. This is particularly powerful in relation to her explorations of how women come to terms with themselves as physical beings, their sexuality and their relations to men. It flows directly, I believe, from the statement quoted earlier about the "clarity of vision" afforded to women by their position in society. In this case, it relates more specifically to their particular history, which allows women to confront directly both their vulnerability and their ability to remain in touch with many layers of experience (the self as daughter, potential mother). On the other side, men, in becoming part of a patriarchal culture, learn to deny their vulnerability; they are forced to deny those weaker, younger selves that were once dominated by the woman as mother. This recognition of the difference between women's ability to maintain their various selves, and men's need to deny or control them, operates in a powerful way in Munro's development of several themes.



As Del Jordan in *Lives of Girls and Women* explores her developing sexuality, she is able to hold its many aspects together because, at the same time, she is always aware of her body. She worries about being fat; she loves books "where the heroine's generous proportions were tenderly, erotically described." She thinks of herself romantically, ceremoniously: "I liked looking at the reproduction of Cezanne's 'Bathers' in the art supplement of the encyclopedia, then a, myself naked in the glass. But the insides of my thighs quivered; cottage cheese in a transparent sack." And although she enjoys literary descriptions of sex, she comments: "Books always compared it to something else, never told about it by itself."

It is this solid understanding, I think, that makes Del's response to her mother's grave speech about the lives of girls and women, her rejection of its assumption that women are somehow damageable and in need of protection, more than adolescent bravado. Or perhaps, her response forces us to recognize that adolescent bravado has a solid base in reality. For she seems to understand not only the limitations, but also the powers of her body and this understanding is the key to her view of the relationship with Garnet French:

Nothing that could be said by us would bring us together; words were our enemies. What we knew about each other was only going to be confused by them. This was the knowledge that is spoken of as "only sex" or "physical attraction." I was surprised, when I thought about it — am surprised still — at the lip, even disparaging tone that is taken, as if this was something that could be found easily, every day.

Again, something is acknowledged here, something that many women, in our attempts to build "enlightened" relationships with men, tend to minimize or even deny. But because Del does not deny it, because she acknowledges its power as well as its limits, she is able to resist when Garnet attempts to move the relationship to another level, as he does in the final baptizing scene:

I felt amazement, not that I was fighting with Garnet but that

anybody could have made such a mistake, to think he had real power over me. I was too amazed to be angry, I forgot to be frightened, it seemed to me impossible that he should not understand that all the powers I granted him were in play, that he himself was — in play, that I meant to keep him sewed up in his golden lover's skin forever, even if five minutes before I had talked about marrying him. This was as clear as day to me, and I opened my mouth to say whatever would make it clear to him; and I saw that he knew it all already.

Game, has seen the true nature of their relationship and its limitations, but his initial reaction has been to deny it, to move beyond it by controlling Del either through marriage, or, as she realizes in the water, by possibly drowning her. In doing so, he denies as well that self which existed within the relationship as a golden, playful lover. Del does neither. She

allows the relationship as part of her experience and her place in it as part of herself. Her realization that it, is we, is no, a denial of its importance nor of Garnet's.

Men and women inhabit different worlds: they grant and withhold power; they struggle and cause each other pain. In exploring male-female relationships, Munro does not deny that women suffer, that women are vulnerable. But her women have as well a sense of strength and power that has to do directly with the fact that they do not deny any part of their experience or reject any part of themselves. □

*This excerpt is adapted from an essay by Bronwen Wallace in The Human Element, a collection of critical pieces on Canadian writing, film, and theatre, edited by David Helwig. It will be published by Oberon Press in late September.*

## The University of Western Ontario

### PRESIDENT'S MEDAL AWARDS

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# Look outward, Engel, now

An old admirer of Marian Engel melts with ruth on finding a warm talent for universality confined to barracks in the Wasp garrison

by Val Clely



The Classy Sea. by Marian Engel, McClelland & Stewart. 160 pages, \$10 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 3084 3).

LET ME CONFESS that I am a "Engelophile of long standing. I may well have coined the phrase. "Not Engel, but Angel." I met Maria" Engel in London in the early 1960s, long before she ever trod the fields of CanLit. I thought *No Clouds of Glory* (and no matter what it has been rechristened since) was a Fair and promising first shot. *The Honeyman Festival* more than confirmed that promise. And *Monodromos* robustly promised much, much more. But *Bear*. I just couldn't. Every writer is entitled to exploit at least one brainwave, and Engel cannot be begrudged whatever popularity and pmtit her coup may have brought her. But *Bear* was an anomaly, a Conceit in novel's clothing; had Engel not reined in her notoriously sardonic sense of irreverence, it might have emerged as a brilliant satire.

Successes such as *Bear* impose the problem of encores. The *Glassy Sea* turns out, alas, to be another Conceit. But a Conceit so self-indulgently prim as to raise the suspicion that it is an act of contrition for the sensual excess of *Bear*. It is a tale,

for all the convolutions of its telling, of small compass. And how much of the fullness of Engel can you balance on the point of a needle? The narrative and epistolary heroine of the book relates, at various retrospective removes, her passage from a tight-budgeted upbringing in small-town Ontario, enlivened occasionally by hymn-singing in the local United Church; through a bookish higher education at a Baptist university; and on to a vocational involvement with a community of genteel and geriatric Anglican nuns in London, Ontario. The sedate community, which appears to have little spiritual or practical point, disintegrates; she is farmed off as an au pair to an affluent Anglican Family in Toronto, where eventually she is shuffled into the mortal coil of marriage to a Waspish lawyer who, to put it bluntly, is a creep. The demands of maternity and of keeping up appearances drive her to drink and scandalous behaviour. After a divorce, she is exiled to a cottage in the Maritimes where, with the aid of solitude, nature, and a shadowy Anglican emissary, regeneration sets in. In the end she returns to the nunnery's old mansion in London, there to serve as sister superior to a projected women's shelter.

More than enough nostalgic syrup has been tapped from the roots of Ontario

society already. However cleanly Marian Engel may write, however efficiently she may resurrect the topical trivia of the 1940s and 1950s, however accurately she may reflect the residual Victorianism of Ontario Protestants, the exercise must remain superfluous and futile if it is informed by sentiment only and not by astringent objectivity. This is pious restoration, a provincial pastiche of George Eliot; the stifled literature of the Wasp garrison, where nothing is forgotten and little is learned.

*Ne cherchez plus mon coeur, les bêtes l'ont mangé.* IF it had not been consumed, my heart would be broken by having to criticize so rudely a Canadian writer whom I consider the imaginative superior of Laurence and Atwood. I suspect that this novel, like *Bear*, will be hailed in certain quarters as a masterpiece, a reaction that will reflect more accurately the limitations of some Canadian critics than the true potential of this Canadian novelist. The prospect of another CanLit coup for Marian Engel deepens my depression; now she may never escape the vicious circle of regionalism and reach out for the warm universality to which her talent and zest entitle her. Only in Canada, you say? Pity. □

## Publishing in a dirty decade

Fun Tomorrow, by John Gray, Macmillan, 300 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 7770517102).

By MALCOLM LESTER

I RECALL HEARING John Gray speak in public only once. It was some years ago, when he was introducing Sir Harold Macmillan (then head of Macmillan of England and Gray's boss) as the after-dinner speaker at an annual publishers' dinner. The memory of this, to me, rather sententious introduction of the former British prime minister caused me to begin *Fun Tomorrow* with a bit of apprehension. My fear was unjustified. Gray's autobiography is both a delightful reminiscence and a fascinating account of Canadian publishing in the 1930s.

The first section of the book deals with Gray's childhood and education, but the focus is not on university—Gray flunked out of the University of Toronto, being more concerned with fraternity life and hockey than studying—but on Lakefield, the private boys' school near Peterborough, Ont. Gray had been educated there as a young boy, and

it was there that he returned to teach after leaving college, while still in his early 20s.

The last section concerns Gray's experiences in the Second World War. He was in the reserves and saw active duty as a counter-intelligence officer in France and Holland. While the stories in both these sections are interesting and entertaining, the meat of the book (and, for me, the most important part) is the middle, which deals with Gray's years at Macmillan before 1939 and with publishing in Canada during the Depression.

Then, as now, the bulk of Canadian business was in educational publishing. Gray joined Macmillan in 1930 as an educational traveller, which meant that he travelled the breadth of the country drumming the titles on Macmillan's list to school officials and, more importantly, trying to obtain the inside track to provincial textbook adoptions.

One such adoption caused a major controversy. The four Western provinces had invited publishers to tender for a set of readers to be used throughout the elementary schools of all four provinces. Because of the cost of the tender, Macmillan and Ryerson Press joined in a co-publishing venture. The first of their Canada Books series won out for grade 7 in Alberta and an initial order of 10,000 books was shipped. Then the roof fell in. Another joint publishing venture, Gage and Nelson, which had lost out in the Alberta decision, maintained that many examples in the Mac-

millan/Ryerson text had been plagiarized from American texts that Gage distributed in Canada. Gage and Nelson threatened a lawsuit. Gray, in a nest bit of diplomacy, managed to affect a compromise that satisfied both his competitors and the Alberta government.

The story is relevant today on several counts. For one thing, it shows that joint publishing ventures are not a relatively new phenomenon; for another, it highlights the current issue of accountability in publishing: How far should a publisher go in checking the material supplied by the reputed "experts," its authors? And the issue raises an interesting notion of the proprietorship of copyright material. Macmillan and Ryerson, to gain a competitive advantage, denied their competitors access to the work of any author who they directly published or who they represented under agency arrangements in Canada. Under Gray's compromise solution to the plagiarism problem, though, Macmillan agreed to relax its hold on these copyrights.

Educational salesmen in those days travelled across Canada by train, and thus John Gray had a unique panoramic view of the dehumanizing effects of the Depression. His writing here is social history at its best and is particularly incisive in his description of the abortive 1935 march by the unemployed to Ottawa. Beginning in Vancouver, and growing bigger and more powerful as it rolled eastward, the march was seen as a threat to the stability of the East, until it was

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(Pub. date: September '78. 192 pp., 109 b/w, 1 col., map and diagram, index, bilingual. \$19.95.)

Suzor-Côté: Winter Landscapes, by Jean-René Ostiguy.

(No. 12 in the NGC Masterpiece series. Pub. date: October '78. 36 pp., 13 ill., 2 col., bilingual. \$2.50.)

Available from your local bookstore or

National Museums of Canada,  
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brutally smashed by the RCMP in Regina. Gray writes: "The country which appeared to want this to happen [the smashing of the much] now behaved like a killer who didn't know the gun was loaded."

Though we get entertaining anecdotes of some of Macmillan's best-known authors of the 1930s, such as Grey Owl and Mazo de la Roche. Gray is silent about the business side of publishing. We learn virtually nothing about Macmillan's sales turnover, the percentage of trade versus educational sales

(Have things changed much in 40 years?), and particularly the relationship of Macmillan of Canada to its head office. Gray refers to a "director in charge of Canadian company affairs in London." What was the role of this director? Did all editorial decisions have to be referred to him? How autonomous was the Canadian operation? And how did John Gray feel about being a branch-plant publisher? But this is a minor cavil in the light of a thoroughly enjoyable life story. □

### JOHN MORGAN GRAY

John Gray died in mid-August after a long fight with cancer and without completing the second volume of his memoirs. Canada has lost a distinguished publisher, a gentleman, and an important book.

## AM becomes Electra

In John Reeves' satirical detective story, the real victim is the pathetic CBC itself

by Wayne Grady

**Murder by Microphone**, by John Reeves, Doubleday, 192 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 14217 x).

LIKE ALL GOOD detective novels, this fourth book by John Reeves (not the photographer), is more than simply a detective novel. It is an often penetrating analysis of our society by a writer who happens to regard crime and punishment as the underlying metaphors for the human condition. Reeves has almost achieved that rare blend of a compelling thriller with an effective satire that is also satisfying from a literary point of view, and with a few more revisions and a good editor he might have pulled it off.

First the thriller. Henry Midden, the general manager of CBC-Radio, is found dead in his office on Tuesday morning. Inspector Coggin and Sergeant Sump isolate five suspects, each of whom is interviewed, investigated, and found to have had both motive and opportunity. It is the opposite of the sealed-room conundrum, but equally familiar territory to readers of early Innes or late Christie. Coggin and Sump sift slowly and methodically through spade-ful after spade-ful of evidence of the CBC's incompetence and internecine hatchet-work until the solution comes to Coggin, not implausibly, in a dream.

By this time, however, solving the actual murder has become a secondary concern. A transparent framework for what Reeves clearly perceives to be his main purpose: mounting a withering, often scandalous, always delicious attack on the CBC itself. The five suspects, all top executives in line for Midden's job, are: a disillusioned clerk whose daughter has been made pregnant by

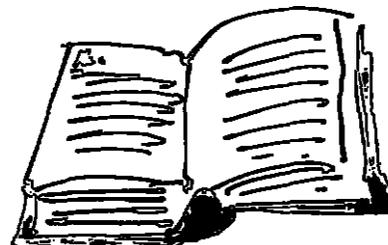
Midden; an impotent PR man whose wife is on permanent loan to Midden; a director of AM who receives kickbacks from the freelancers he hires; a lesbian who had been raped by Midden and who then blackmailed him into making her director of FM; and a reformed alcoholic who is being blackmailed by an am&prostitute. Midden is hated by everyone in the CBC, and his killer has done Canadian broadcasting a tremendous favour, having committed not so much a blood-spilling as a blood-letting. (One begins to suspect a mass conspiracy à la *Orient Express* until one realizes that such a synopsis would require a degree of co-operative efficiency unknown in the CBC, Reeves contends, since the mid-1950s).

On yet a third level the novel is about words, as most good novels are. One of Coggin's early cogitations links the thriller with the satire: "Eventually the crippling of the language must be attended by a crippling of mind and morale. . . lie was convinced of the connection: crime flourished as language decayed." This interesting hypothesis explains the particularly sharp barbs Reeves heaves at the CBC: as Canada's foremost medium of national culture, the CBC has a special obligation to ensure the survival (or invention) of a national identity based on, in the case of radio at least, the proper use of language; to preserve, in its own way, the kind of oral tradition that the authors of the Homeric poems were preserving in theirs. Reeves' book is shot through with references to the CBC's moral and even practical corruption, to its sacrificing of quality for ratings, its relegation of anything thought to resemble culture to urban FM, leaving as AM's

constituency "the broad mass of middle-class Canadians who have a background in unpracticed news bulletins, generous helpings of high-profile professional sports, and gossip," and of the process whereby all "serious drama and music were being torpedoed by managerial philistinism."

Unfortunately the book itself is torpedoed by haste and polemic. The several layers remain several; they seem to exist together as separate provinces, occasionally joined by bridges but always on different sides of the stream. Each chapter, for example, is prefaced by a parody, often brilliant, of a CBC programming schedule, but never does the parody have any direct bearing on the main action, other than a simple chronological coincidence. Ibsen's dictum — never hang a pair of pistols on the wall in Act I unless you intend to shoot someone with them in Act III — seems to have been ignored in favour of a more Aristotelian interpretation of unity.

But whatever its literary shortcomings, the book has obviously been written by a man with a mission. Beneath the potboiler, behind the satire, Reeves is making a



serious charge. He will no doubt wait a long time before excerpts from this novel are read on *Anthology*. □

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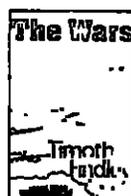
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## Laurels by Hardy

**The Scarlet Mantle**, by W.G. Hardy, Macmillan. 462 pages, \$12.50 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1567 3).

By J.A.S. EVANS

THERE WAS a time when a fair percentage of our high-school students learned Latin and worked their way through large sections of Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*. They learned about gerundives, purpose clauses, Ver-ingetorix, and that all Gaul is divided into three parts, and I suspect that they were better for it. But they did not learn about Julius Caesar's mistresses, the private life of the Roman soldier, or the back-room deals that prevailed political life in the last years of the Roman republic. The Romans, as they emerged in Latin classes, tended to be virtuous creatures, though more given to public weeping than they would have been had they been enrolled as Boy Smuts at an early age. Now, however, we have *The Scarlet Mantle* to correct our adolescent impressions.

What's the plot? Well, that's a problem. The raw material for this sort of thing is not entirely tractable. There are only so many liberties that a conscientious author can take with history, and George Hardy, who was a classics professor, has a conscience. But other writers have shown the way. Robert Graves merely rewrote Tacitus' *Annals* for I. Claudius, adding some sex and a ghoulish Liia, and for Count Belisarius he hardly bothered to rewrite Procopius' *Histories*. Hardy's raw material is Caesar's own *War Commentaries*; what he adds to the mix is a touch or two from Cicero's private correspondence, some inside knowledge from *The Roman Revolution* by Ronald Syme, who knew why the republic collapsed better than the Romans themselves, and, of course, sex. Caesar tells us nothing about the capabilities of his penis. Hardy does, and I should hesitate to contradict him on that point.

So Caesar conquers Gaul, raids Britain, and puts down desperate Gallic rebellion. It is a bloody business. One wishes that there was an Anti in the Gallii forests to rout the Roman legions just once. But history must go on along its ruthless path. Back in Rome, political factions manoeuvre, and a vain, aging Pompey emerges as the Senate's generalissimo, chose to crush Caesar. The rival armies fight it out in the Balkans. Pompey might have won, had he been more devil-may-care, but he had a streak of failure in his character, and he went down to defeat in spite of his great competence. He fled to Egypt and was slaughtered by the advisers of Cleopatra's young brother Ptolemy, the king of Egypt.

As for Caesar, he pursued Pompey to Egypt, and as the book ends, he is in Cleopatra's bed.

Well, there is more to history than that, and more to fiction, too. This novel is at best a minor masterpiece. But it swings its wry over a wide landscape, and chronicles one of the most lively decades of the Western world's part, when the Roman republic collapsed into civil war, and in the process turns up a clutch of characters who have become famous figures in literature. Here they are: Cleopatra; beefy Mark Antony; Caesar's mistress Servilia, who was also the mother of Marcus Brutus, who was to be Caesar's assassin. Here is Cato, who used to be treated as a republican hero a century ago, and now is made simply into a Senator Joe McCarthy. And there is also Hardy's addition: a common soldier named Fadius, who fights in the ranks, and like the Viet Nam veterans, asks himself some questions about what the war is for. It is nice to make his acquaintance. □

## Shaped by environment and self-abuse

**Red Dust**, by W. D. Valgardson, Oberon Press, 126 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 259 8) and \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 260 1).

**Girl in Gingham**, by Job Metcalf, Oberon Press, 154 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 266 2) and \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 267 0).

By MICHAEL SMITH

W. D. VALGARDSON'S short stories — of which this is the third fine collection — locate their soul in and around the Icelandic-Canadian fishing settlement of Gimli, Man., where Valgardson grew up. Characters with such names as Helgi, Axel, and Valdi populate an Interlake district that shares its mythic fertility with Alice Munro's Wingham, Clark Blaise's Florida, Alistair MacLeod's Cape Breton, and Margaret Laurence's Manawaka. Even when Valgardson writes about the American south — changing the names to Orville, Zeke, and Lester — the values of the Interlake still prevail.

Orville, in the title story "Red Dust," is an impoverished scratch farmer, similar to the northern farmers and fishermen. Like them, he's brutalized by a climate that parches crops one year and freezes them the next. He's guided by elemental needs — saving face in front of his neighbours, for instance, or having freedom to hunt when he wants to — to a degree that erases any moral shadings. Like Solmi, the fisherman in "December Bargaining," he's single-mindedly one-dimensional; if you take

away his equipment, he becomes nothing. When Orville can't raise the money by other means, he trades his 14-year-old niece for good hunting bitch.

Most of the other characters in these seven stories live in a Grimmish fairy-tale realm that's emphasized by their old-world names, their wives and superstitions. An anonymous pedlar in "A Place of One's Own" is covered with tattoos, and fiddles with almost enchanting style. In "Skald" a young woman's pet is infected after exposure to an old woman whose presence seems more mysterious than simply her own dog's distemper. A father in "Celebration" is so fuddled by drink and a blizzard that in his rush to get his wife to the hospital he forgets he's left his children in an unheated shack. There's little wonder that a young Indian refuses to grieve for his dead brother in "Beyond Normal Requirements" — commenting instead that, "For him, it's over." After the same youth studies *Hamlet*, he tells his white teacher it means "nothing" to him. Introspection is evidently reserved for outriders, who can't understand how environment dictates the fetes of its inmates.

By contrast, the heroes of John Metcalf's two caustic novellas both are victims not only of life, but also of their chronic need to evaluate it. At least that's presumably the message behind the melodramatic ending of the title story; to interpret it any other way would make it too self-saving and cynical. "Girl in Gingham" is really a

tightly crafted series of set pieces, successfully built on a premise as thin as television comedy. Peter Thornton, unhappily divorced, lets his married friends goad him into joining a computer dating service. He's matched with four hopeless "computer compatibles" — including a middle-aged matron who cooks salmon in her dishwasher — but the fifth, incredibly, turns out to be perfect. When they finally meet in a kitschy seafood restaurant, their evening ends in disaster.

The other novella, "Private Parts: A Memoir," begins with one of the narrator's earliest sexual memories — the sight of an idiot's huge, Hereford-rie genitals — and proceeds through his adolescence in post-war England. He spends lots of time in "ferocious self-abuse" — known as "wanking" among his schoolboy chums — alternating with bouts of self-loathing, prompted by his hysterically repressive Methodist mother. Metcalf's pace is almost flawless until Pat Two (the last third of the text) in which the adult narrator, after a gap in the story of more than 20 years, ruminates on his penile shortcomings. Metcalf meant, I think, to show how the mother has stunted her son's urgent spirit, but at this he succeeds too well. Nothing bores like the ordinary; after three readings, I'm convinced a tough editor would have cut it.

In "Private Parts" Metcalf also shows an annoying tendency to build to a climax, then leave the reader, well, dangling. When, for example, the teenaged narrator drunkenly

vomits into his friend's father's hi-fi — which they'd specifically been forbidden to use — the story skips on to a new section without ever telling us what happened next. Valgardson sometimes ends his stories on a hanging note too, but their motion is so relentless that we know exactly what will happen, and are usually horrified at the thought. □

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## More's the pity in Plum Bluff

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**Tangle Your Web and Dosey-Do**, by Helen Levi, Queenston House. 148 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919866 36 0).

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By DAVID MACFARLANE

HELEN LEVI's first novel, *A Small Informal Dance*, was a gentle, wonderfully understated account of life in a small town in Manitoba. Charming is perhaps the word that best describes it. If, as one critic said, the book is too comfortable, it would seem that Levi never intended it to be anything else. With a story that only emerges here and there amidst the cluster of carefully drawn characters, the aura of uneventful comfort is that of an intimist painting. If the prose lacks the brilliance and tacit sadness of Alice Munro, Levi's quiet humour and

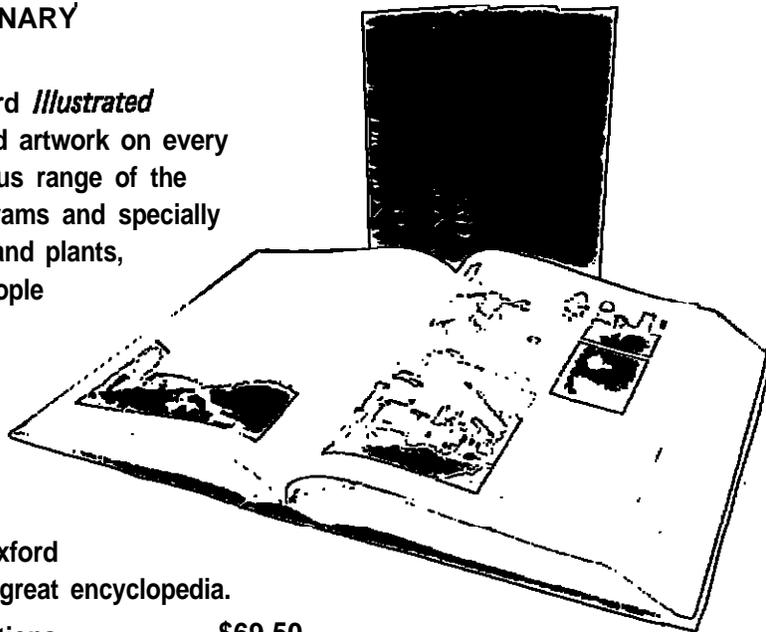
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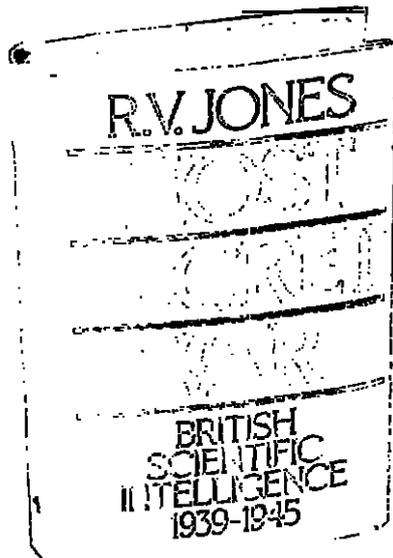
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consistent sense of what is and what is not real make comparison to Munro at least possible. Composed in a curiously minor key. A Small *Informal Dance* is slight and remarkable. Unfortunately, just how remarkable it is has now been made apparent with the publication of *Tangle Your Web and Dosey-Do*, the second part of the Plum Bluff Kilogy. Although it is much the same sort of book, the second fails on precisely the ground that the first succeeded.

A Small *Informal Dance* seems uncontrived enough to defy pigeon-holing. It has, all the same, been described as a comedy of manners. With as much accuracy it could be said that *Tangle Your Web and Dosey-Do* is a situation comedy. In the former, the narrative resonates beneath the thoughts and daily ironies of Mrs. Andrews' notably ordinary life. Her struggles, for instance, to open a stubborn drawer are crucial as anything else in the book. In *Tangle Your Web*..., however, the story is brought more to the fore and Helen Levi's strengths are badly upstaged. The strange importance of a stuck drawer is missing. The humour seems forced. The characters, as if well aware of a setup, never relax enough to become quite real.

And yet the story, for all the weight it seems intent on carrying, remains something of a subplot looking for a novel. A young widow, Dorothy Stuart, spends a stormy night alone in a cottage near Plum Bluff. An unknown man appears at the door. The radio has been broadcasting reports of a sex killer on the loose and Dorothy, naturally enough, suspects the worst. To scare away the stranger she invents a story about an outrageously violent husband, a professional wrestler, who is, she says, asleep in the adjoining room. The visitor eventually leaves but later turns out to be net the murderer but Plum Bluff's new banker and most eligible bachelor. At various ensuing social functions Dorothy attempts to save face by maintaining her story. Her life is further complicated by the eternal presence of two disagreeable neighbours whose house has burnt down and who have become her star boarders.

By so definite a series of events it would appear that, unlike the first book, things are intended to happen in *Tangle Your Web*... The discomfiting aspect of this shift is that the plot wins its prominence by default and not through any intrinsic strength. Possibly Levi realized that exploring the comic potential of the story more graphically would reveal a structure that is, after all, not far removed from the stuff that *Doris Day* movies are made of. Perhaps Levi pulls her comic punches simply because she does not like being noisy. Whatever the reasons, *Tangle Your Web and Dosey-Do* lacks the energy of detail and observation that so sustained *A Small Informal Dance*. And the plot, left sadly to its own devices, is not enough to commend attention.

Levi does manage to regain her stride or, more accurately, her stroll in the final third of the book. Dorothy, who from the outset

seemed only a pale reflection of Mrs. Andrews, begins to take on a personality of her own. The prose becomes more relaxed and graceful, creating its own peculiar interest. The ambience of Plum Bluff is allowed to seep pleasantly into the story. All in all, the novel ends more satisfactorily than it does anything else. Given the charm of Helen Levi at her best, it can only be hoped that this augurs well for the final installment of her Kilogy. □

## Land eels and illogical ghazals

Loosely Tied Hands. by Joe Rosenblatt, Black Moss Press, 56 pages. \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88753 042 7).

Stilt Jack, by John Thompson, House of Anansi, 48 pages. \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88784 055 8).

By KEN NORRIS

JOE ROSENBLATT'S poetry has always been enjoyable and interesting to read and his latest collection is no exception. To say that Rosenblatt's poetry is fun is not to dismiss it for lack of seriousness but rather to point out that it stays away from the Canadian traditions of dry classicism and effusive self-indulgence. Rosenblatt's poems are as alive and full of life as the subjects he concerns himself with; now, after the bees, the eggs, the spiders, the venus flytraps, the electric rose, the toads, the alligators in the coffee, and the virgins and vampires Rosenblatt has arrived at his celebration of the snake, or "land eel" as he calls it. In *Loosely Tied Hands* the snake appears in many of its guises and associations, phallically singing of its "solar woman from Leamington" in "Punk Snake Poem," tempting Eve to liberation in "Before He Lost The War," becoming footwear in "Snake Shoes," and representing the reptile that exists beneath all human life in "The Celebration." The poems



"Philosophical Investigations" and "There Are Snakes Beyond Our Myth" counterpoint D.H. Lawrence's well-known poem "Snake," considering as they do the human revulsion regarding reptiles and the experience of the snake as king of the underworld:

*there are snakes who carry a luxurious  
poison  
slithering over a hill to a trough  
to empty a milky poison  
from their hot mouths  
whispering: beguiled . . . beguiled . . .*

This collection of "snake" poems contains engaging forays into yet another branch of the natural world and Rosenblatt's consciousness of it.

*Silt Jack*, John Thompson's second collection of poetry, was completed shortly before his death in 1976. It is a troubling and sometimes magnificently executed sequence of poems. In *Silt Jack* Thompson has adapted the ancient Persian poetic form of the ghazal. As he explains in the book's introduction: "The ghazal proceeds by couplets which have no necessary logical, progressive, narrative, thematic, (or whatever) connection." What links the couplets together is tone, nuance, so that the lyrical unity we've grown accustomed to in the English tradition is rendered irrelevant. What results is not a leaping surrealism in which the couplets are strung together to provide strange imagistic juxtapositions; rather, the bringing together of disparate materials subject to a common tone or emotionality leads to the creation of feelings that threaten to break open the perceivable, objective world. What is revealed is "an alien design, illogical and without sense — a chart of the disorderly against false reason and the tacking together of poor narratives."

The poems in this book embody brave, pioneering writing. Thompson's "chart of the disorderly" ranges far from the genteel tradition. The illogicality he senses and seeks to imbue his poems with is quite frightening. But these poems, when they succeed, grow out of the true sacred ground of poetry. However, the book is marred by certain posturings. At times Thompson quite consciously talks about his drinking too much, his apprehension of impending madness, the ever-present threat of suicide, the incapacity of language to capture what is essential and the failure of trying to love. When Thompson simply talks about these things he begins to evoke the emotions attendant to his aesthetic and human concerns and the poems become moving and powerful. These are poems of darkness and despair, of groping toward a redemptive light that doesn't seem to exist, yet they affirm human existence even as the worst depths of life are being experienced:

*Now you have burned your books: you'll go  
with nothing but your blind, stupefied  
heart.*

*Silt Jack* is an important, affecting book of poems, the crucial last testament of a poet who deserves increasing recognition for what he has achieved. □

## Once upon an instance

Protective Footwear, by George Bowering, McClelland & Stewart, 175 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 07710 1595 X).

By DAVID MCKIM

IN THE FIRST story in *Protective Footwear* a famous poet attends a high school reunion after the passage of 20 years. His anticipated triumph doesn't happen. The poet explains:

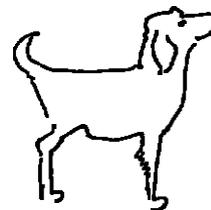
Well, this is my story. It is always most interesting when nothing happens. Of course it is. You want a masked man hacking away with a whippy sword, that's always the most boring thing of all, another plot.

Let this be warning to readers who require clear story lines. Bowering's stories are concerned with the problems of understanding the things that aren't clear, the times when nothing—that is, nothing obvious—is happening.

Instead of plots, Bowering gives us what one of his narrators calls "instances resulting from changes or causing them." It's

presumed here that there is some sort of causal relation in people's lives, but all that is certain is that everybody is going through changes. And so Bowering focuses on getting the particular instances, moments, end scenes, clear.

His approach presents difficulties. In three stories, narrator George Delsing, a Vancouver poet, talks about his friend, Ebbe Coutts. Delsing says, "I have to admit that it's hard to tell a story about him. He comes on me in a strange mind picture, in which a background of scenes, apartments, parks, beaches, are



moving back and forth. . . ." In the three stories, that is all we get of Ebbe — mind pictures, glimpses of Ebbe the prophet, Ebbe the poet, Ebbe the revolutionary. One story, all about looking for Ebbe, offers nothing but a drawing of him by an artist friend of Delsing's — which would do, except that Delsing isn't satisfied with details: he wants to get at the "finality" of Ebbe. Ebbe is whole: "you don't see him scratch his nose like other people or rob his eyes. he is a sure structure and he doesn't

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need to reassure himself. and I guess it's For that reason I wanted to touch him... ." Clearly it's impossible to tell the story of a whole person when only fragments are known. The attempt is given up: all Delsing can do is declare hi love For his friend.

Bowering can joke about the problems of figuring things out. He exploits the absurdity of lives made up of discrete moments in a group of stories about an Anglo-Portuguese student. We are presented with completely unrelated information about Eduardo Williams. and then we are told that he has confessed to six bizarre murders. The end of this "curiosity," es Bowering calls these stories, consists of an interview from death row in which Eduardo explains — preposterously — what the murders mean.

The chaos of the curiosities is amusing, but many of the "instances" Bowering presents have a desperate feeling about them. especially when they deal with husbands and wives. In the bitter "Wings" and "The Creator Has a Master Plan," two marriages dissolve in perfect silence. The people who know each other best are forced to an acceptance of never understanding. never being understood. There are moments of happiness in this collection—a family picnics on a cold beech in "Re Union." a father and daughter go for a Sunday walk in the fine title story — but they don't depend on understanding so much as on respect For separateness and a gratitude For time shared. □

## In the beginning was the word

And Sleep in the Woods: The Story of One Man's Spiritual Quest, by Thomas York, Doubleday, 222 pages, 58.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 13236 0).

By SEAN VIRGO

IN THE 10 YEARS between Thomas York's flight from the draft in 1962 and his return to steady work in Arkansas, he wintered in a New Brunswick railway shack, camped under tarpaulin near Kingston, Ont., built a cabin outside Barrie, Ont., meditated. fore-swore sexuality, learned Hebrew, had a vision of Jesus. formed a bible-study community near Whilby, Ont., and became a United Church Minister.

He also wrote an extraordinary first novel, *We the Wilderness*, a Faulknerian account of the despair he had seen in the West Coast village of Belle Belle. Unfortunately he doesn't talk about that here; his development as a writer is not within the scope of *And Sleep in the Woods*.

Unfortunately, because York the writer is a far more exiling. original. and sympathetic subject, then York the ascetic visionary — a fairly repulsive fanatic whose obvious sincerity moves me not a whit.

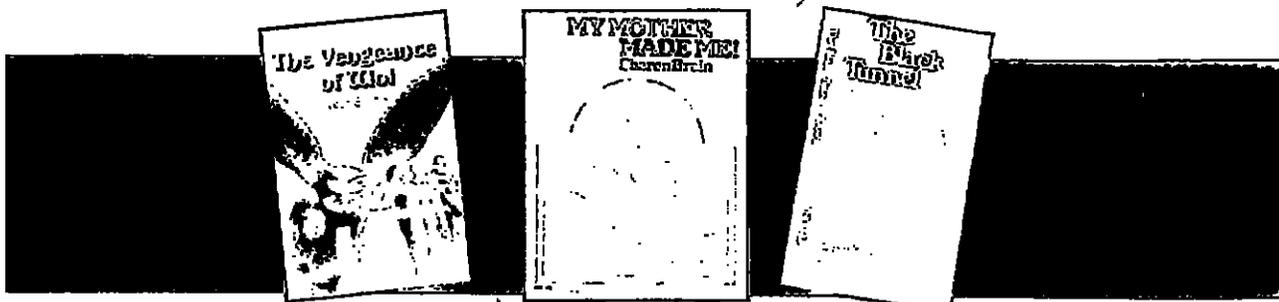
While he fulfilled his tagged, celibate, John the Baptist number, his wife trampled through the mud and snow from their squalid abodes to study, teach, and keep him — only to be dragged away from her job every time he felt the call to move on. That he acknowledges all this makes it no less parasitical. That throughout the book he addresses Lynn, his wife, directly as a narrative device, may speak to their understanding of each other but it doesn't to mine.

Worse still, the nearer, my God, he gets to Thee the further he gets from good writing (why should the devil have all the good tunes?). I admit freely to a revulsion at having quasi-biblical legs hurled at me, the reader, in block capitals: "BUT THESE WERE MERCIFUL MEN..." If this disqualifies me as a reader of "spiritual quests" then enough said.

York is a startlingly fine writer when he's not involved in rhetoric, righteousness, and paranoia. I doubt if anyone writing in Canada today can cover space and time with such adroitness, picking out vibrant and wayward characters in a few sentences, responding to landscape, evoking the ambience of a community, involving the reader totally.

But the bad guys in this book (most of them rival ministers) aren't vibrant. Neither are his Hebrew prophets. nor the tree-burrowing Jesus who appeared to him, after suitable invocation, one morning in the woods. That this last experience partakes of the ineffable is hardly an excuse for its

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woodenness. The mystical state, whether through Teresa's erotic sword-thrusts, Blake's luncheons with the prophets, or Emily Dickinson's pert matter-of-factness. A communicable, as literature and within the Christian tradition.

Maybe York would see the aesthetics and craft of writing as vanities in the face of the Lord. Maybe they are. But he continues to function as a writer as well as a minister and — which is the sad thing about *And Sleep in the Woods* — infuriating though the man and the book are, at least two thirds of it is compulsive reading. □

## Throwing up father

**Especially Babe**, by R. Ross Annett, Tree Frog Press. 192 Pages, 59.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88967 080 3).

By GRAHAM FORST

IN APRIL, 1938, the *Saturday Evening Post* published the first of what was to become a long and popular series of stories written by a school principal in Consort, Sask., about a motherless child growing up (or not growing up — like Little Orphan Annie. "Babe" never ages throughout her long literary life) in the Prairies during the Depression. In fact, before R. Ross Annett had finished mining the vein he had struck with "It's Gotta Rain Sometime," he would write more than 70 of these stories for the *Post* during the last 25 years of its life as a regular weekly.

In 1942, the first 13 "Babe" stories were collected by Appleton-Century in a small, wartime regulated edition of which the present volume is a reprint. The stories are based on a commercially saleable formula, one that would be exploited endlessly a generation later in domestic dramas on television — the medium that killed the *Post*. The family is motherless, and into the vacuum falls the usual motley of stereotypes: the herd-nosed, well-meaning, but domestically sappy dad; the shrewish live-in "widdlerlady," who is also an economic genius and "tooteress"; the still-innocent children, who are never precocious but can be counted on to say the darndest things to bring a story to a soap conclusion; a garrulous old master home-brewer called, inevitably, Uncle Pete; and assorted ill-disposed representatives of the executive branch and private sector whose humiliation and defeat provide Annett with most of his plot material.

Of course, these stories are products of their time and medium. Sandwiched between the *Kelvinators* and *Congoleum*, the *Studebakers* and *Squibb Dental Creme*, the strident articles denouncing the federal government and the lame-brained isolationist editorials, their untruth was

probably less conspicuous than it appears in this collected form. □

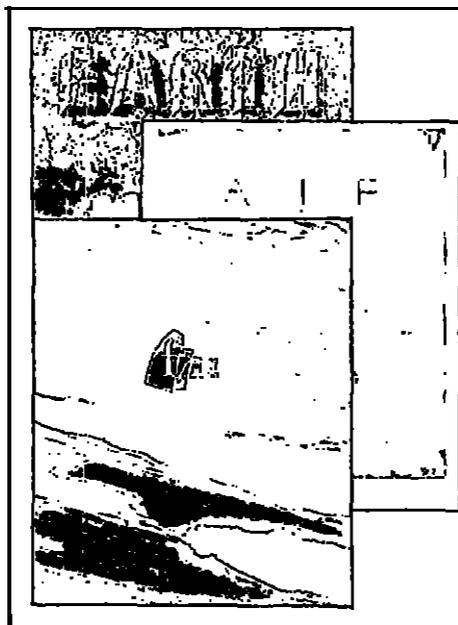
## Amorous Al on his ambling pad

At **Marsport Drugstore**, by Al Purdy, drawings by Hugh LeRoy, Paget Press, 62 pages, \$6 paper (ISBN 0 920348 009), \$75 special edition (ISBN 0 920348 02 5).

By DAVID BROOK

FROM A CERTAIN disinclination on first encountering Al Purdy's poetry, I have been slowly woo over. Al *Marsport Drugstore* helps clinch the conversion, not because it is better than other of his recent books, but because it offers one the chance to read Purdy in a particularly enlightening manner. So much of his poetry is in the voice behind it, the slow rhythm and bulky concord of a large animal ambling down a bush track, and this book, a sequence of love poems, allows us to hear that voice tangling widely over a single theme: *Marsport's* greatest virtues are of pitch and tone.

As elsewhere in Purdy, there are poems that are barely rescued from the facile or self-indolgent by a few phrases of clear song. Sometimes, however, the song takes over. The volume is more than justified by the measure and lyrical poise of "Poor," or the almost surreal mythic narrative that opens "Methodology" and is for me the newest, most exciting note that the collection strikes.



*Marsport* is more economical and more consistently lyrical than one might expect from Purdy. It is also a discipline and balanced book, exploring love's perspectives with equanimity, admitting love's absurdities and myopia with its apotheoses. It is likewise a good-humoured piece, more celebration than lament. Though we read in "Papa Mate" that "The proper authority for lovers is pain," Purdy does not traffic in agony. In *Marsport* we are given just so much of pain as will lend the verse an unobtrusive authority.

The book has its flaws: some of the poems are tonally erratic, and there are some old conceits that Purdy need not have reiterated. But generally, as we can see in the variety of uses to which even the line-breaks are put, a technical versatility is able to reflect the ranges of voice and of perspective to make the book a well-balanced and yet diversified construction. And readable, eminently readable. • I

## Double, double toil and trouble

**Alter Ego**, by Patrick Watson. Lester & Orpen, 320 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919630 05 7).

By PHIL SURGUY

PATRICK WATSON'S *Alter Ego* is the story of a man who is forced to deal with an exact, living reproduction of himself.

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second on the other side of **their** lab. **There** seems to be no **reason** why. **it shouldn't** work with human beings. **too.** Yet when **Haig** tries to transmit Rob. **something** goes wrong and the experiment ends with a Rob stepping out of each chamber.

It's a good, amusingly preposterous story premise. **What does** a guy do when **faced** with a being who shares hi memory, thoughts. **instincts,** and wife? **Unfortunately,** the answer here is he does almost nothing except yak about ir.

**Watson** seems never to **have** made up hi mind whether he **was** trying to **write** serious science **fiction,** a blockbuster for the mess market, or even (as certain doll, combersome passages suggest) a real novel. As a result, the book never finds irs true direction, or achieves the slick narrative essential to a story of this sort.

However, the book's most disastrous flaw is that **none** of the main characters is at all interesting. Rob in particular is numbingly tedious. and having two of him nattering on and on about the meaning of his shallow life imposes a strain that no novel could survive.

**Watson's** only interesting characters are minor ones, a young evangelist and hi sister, who are, tossed into the sawdust hopper of a plot toward the end. Their liver and aspirations are established with such simple clarity end genuine sympathy that one wishes the author. instead of wasting our time with the rest of it. had given the whole book to them. □

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## All men are blubbers in the melting-pot

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Ahmi, by Marion Rippon. Sono Nis Press, 178 pages, 55.95 paper (ISBN 0 919462 52 9).

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By TARA CULLIS

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WELL, NOBODY CLAIMED it was going to be easy. It looks es if writing about the multicultural mosaic has es many pitfalls as living it, especially if the author chooses to write, nor about one of the component cultures-say English Canadian, or French Canadian, or Eskimo, or India — bul about all four of these at once.

Actually, Marion Rippon makes a good stab et it in her novel *Ahmi*, set in tiny Sims Settlement in northern Quebec. The title is drawn fimm en Inuit word meaning, "It can't be known in advance what lies beneath the snow or beyond the horizon." An apt choice. In this context of four not-so-tolerant cultures. each with differing points of view, motivations and even ways of thinking. innocent actions can (and do) result in a growing tangle of misunderstanding and hatred that spirals out of everyone's

control into disaster. All the topical issues are here (and with them the danger of triteness): the French-English conflict, which leads to the death of Eskimo Davidee; Acadian-Québécois rivalry; welfare and drunkenness; Indian activism; the Eskimo (by the way, don't we say "Inuit" now?) whose "greatest lesson was that he discovered a deep affection for his own environment and his own way of life"; and the troubled adolescent who turns against her people: "I'm not like you. I'm better than all of you and I'll show you." Rippon's experience writing detective novels proves valuable in spinning these diverse threads into an intricate plot. and tying them together to form a suitably symbolic and knotty close.

Unfortunately, Rippon does not leave it at that. She means to educate us. and here the novel falters. Conversation becomes clumsy when forced to carry unnecessary cultural information and narrative opinion. And insights arising naturally fimm the action become suddenly banal when stated directly. But worse, the recognizable narrative point of view (anti-bigotry) destroys essential irony. and the novel commits the very sins it criticizes. It's difficult, for example, to continue reading a novel that says:

She thought of the table and of Pete, and the instinctive wisdom of a people.

"Out of the mouths of babes," she whispered, and then she added, "and of the Eskimo."

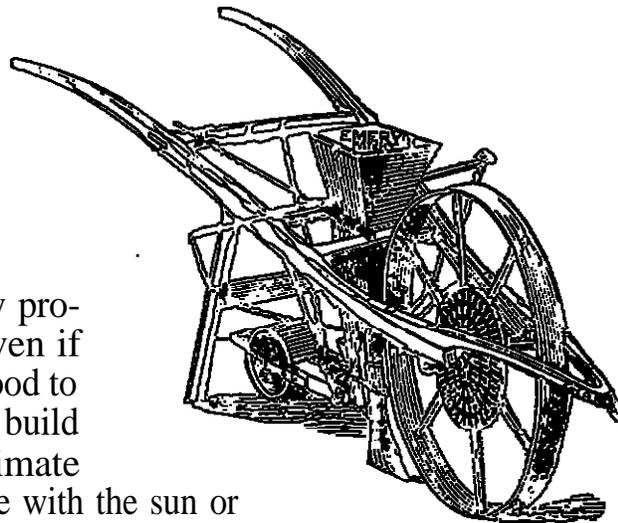
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End of chapter! If there's irony in this insulting paternalism, it's undetectable. Similarly, the novel's anion suggests that Eskimo personalities range from the retarded to the complex, as any group's does: yet the narrator persists in calling them "simple." Left undefined, the word reinforces patronizing stereotypes and indicates limitations of the observer, not the observed. In short, unless such a theme has been thought carefully through to a new profundity, it's best to avoid intruding the narrator's point of view; characters and events should appear to speak for themselves. □

## City scrapes and Lancasters

0 Toronto, by William Kurelek. General Publishing, illustrated, 43 pages, 58.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7736 1040 5).

Carl Schaefer, by Margaret Gray, Margaret Rand, and Lois Steen. Canadian Artists Series, Gage, illustrated, 65 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9340 6).

By CHRISTOPHER HUME

WILLIAM KURELEK was undoubtedly one of the most curious individuals yet to have appeared on the Canadian art scene. At the time of his death in 1977 he was among the best-known but most mysterious painters in the country. Above all he was a study in contrasts. On the one hand much of his work celebrates the joy and beauty of everyday life but on the other he produced numerous paintings of an apocalyptic and overtly didactic nature.

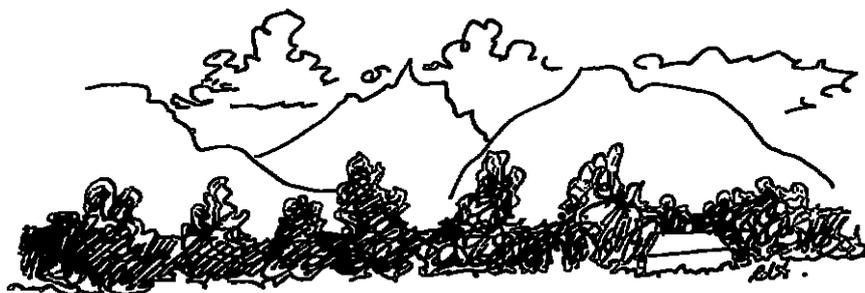
This book, 0 Toronto, consists of a series of works all related to that city. Examples of both aspects of Kurelek's artistic personality are included. In "Balsam Avenue After Heavy Snowfall" Kurelek depicts with obvious delight the more pleasant results of such an event. As the painter himself puts it (each plate comes with Kurelek's notes), "the big-city distance between neighbours breaks down completely when nature presents a novel challenge. Neighbours help each other, greet each other, stop to exchange excitement." His "Hot Day in Kensington" is a happy and affectionate look at the market and the various ethnic groups it embraces.

But then there's "Our My Lai, the Massacre of Highland Creek." I cannot think of any other painting (Canadian or otherwise) that makes its point in a manner so bloody and so disgustingly literal. Of course, this was precisely his intention. The subject is abortion, something Kurelek — a convert to Catholicism — found totally unacceptable. This work is an allegory of "the slaughter of innocent and helpless people." In it we see the Highland Creek as it flows behind the Scarborough Centennial Hospital: the water is frozen, the ground snow-covered and the terrain littered with large plastic garbage bins filled with dead fetuses. Blood drips off the canvas. Says Kurelek: "I guess it's really the strongest, and probably, to some who don't agree with me on the subject of abortion, the most offensive picture."

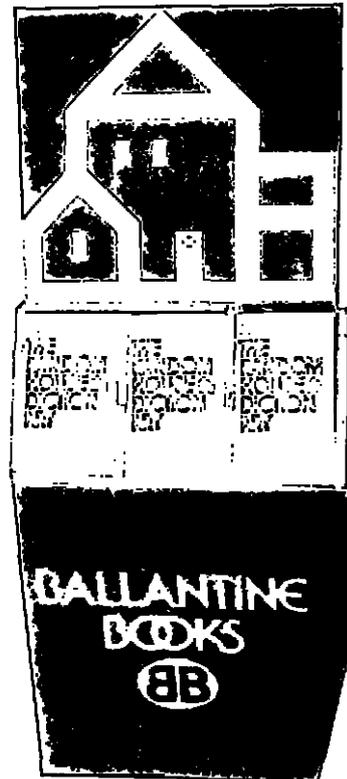
"Harvest of Our Mere Humanism Years" shows Kurelek a his most Bosch-like. This work is too allegorical to be strictly surreal. And while the meaning may be simple enough, Kurelek's symbolism is not. The comments he provides, however, are extremely revealing. Therein lies the value of this book. It shouldn't be overlooked by anyone with an interest in Kurelek and his work.

In some ways Carl Schaefer is like the paintings its subject produces — that is, sincere, nice to look at, but a little less than inspired. One always gets the feeling that Schaefer is holding back, never really letting go. And so it is with this short study. The reader is given all the usual facts and figures. Schaefer's credentials, by the way, are impeccable. Born in Hanover, Ont., in 1903, he went to the Ontario College of Art and studied under J.E.H. MacDonald and Arthur Lismer. During the Second World War Schaefer served as an official war artist. Some of his most powerful works were done at that time. In particular, Schaefer shows a sensitivity to the Avro Lancaster, a magnificent and awesome airplane. His "Marshalling Lancasters Against Stuttgart" is an especially dramatic effort in which rows of these "crouching monsters" are being sewed by their ant-like human attendants.

Schaefer's main love, however, has always been the landscape. Many of the best examples are included in this book. The reproductions are of excellent quality so the paintings are shown to good advantage. Because Schaefer's pictures speak for themselves, this is particularly important. □



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## Songs of inner sense

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Come With Us: Children Speak for Themselves, written and illustrated by children. co-ordinated by Judy McClard and Naomi Wall. The Women's Educational Press, 120 pages. 95.95 paper (ISBN 0 86961045 2).

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By SUSAN IANNUCCI

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DENNIS LEE TAUGHT me, when I was a child of almost 30. that nursery rhymes could be about Casa Loma as well as London Bridge. and Winnipeg as well as Gloucester. A similar experience lies in store for kids from inner-city neighbourhoods. With them in mind. The Women's Educational Press has come up with a book in which neither Dick nor Jane exhorts anyone to see Spot run. On both counts, our world is a richer place than it used to be.

For years public school teachers have complained that books about kids whose dad drives to work while mom stays home to bake cookies make no appeal to inner-city children. whether immigrants or native-born Canadians. because picket-fenced suburbia is remote from their experience. What these teachers have wanted to supplement the school readers is a book about Humberto and Fatima and Carlos and Danuta, whose father and mother work. and who live in an old house in the city. *Come With Us*. written by kids for kids. is that book.

Between its washable soft covers. *Come With Us* contains poems, short narratives. and 33 brightly coloured illustrations, all produced by children and collected in inner-city schools and community centres across Canada. The type is large and easy to read and the format attractive. The compositions vary in length from about 15 to 350 words. Not all are in English: then are six short pieces in other languages. with translations at the back of the book. Although the work has been edited, it has not been forced into a perfectly grammatical and idiomatic sameness. The kids speak in their own voices. and about their own experience.

The book is divided into five sections. "Why We Came & Where We Came From" reveals that these children understand clearly the economic necessity that drove their parents from their homelands. "My parents came to Canada because their job didn't pay too much and we didn't have too much money." summarizes the experience of most. Money or the lack. of it continues to dominate their lives. In the section called "work" they describe not just their parents' jobs but also their own. One enterprising young "salesman" works six days a week in a Kensington Market store. and delivers newspapers on Sunday.

Understandably enough, the main issue in "Streets and Schools" is language. Until they learn English. many immigrant chil-

dren feel "like a mouse being surrounded by cats." Once they have mastered the language. life at school proceeds smoothly but things get complicated at home: "My mom asks me a question in Macedonian and I answer in English. My mom and grandmother talk in Macedonian. That means that if I get interested in what they're saying I have to talk and listen in Macedonian." This youngster has had the happy experience of learning to function in a new culture without losing touch with the old. He concludes with justified pride: "I'm pretty good at speaking Macedonian for a kid that talks English the whole day."

The short, tip-of-the-iceberg section entitled "Racism" deals with a much trickier subject. No matter how good his English, the black or Asian child remains visibly different from his peers of Canadian or even European stock. A white child can assert confidently. "Black guys are the same as us except we're white and they're black." But it's not that easy if you actually belong to a visible minority. as another child reports: "It always get to my mind, things people call me. what they think of me. and why I don't go back to Jamaica."

For most the experience of immigration is a positive one. A section called "We See Ourselves" ends the book with a cheerful little poem. written in Italian. which celebrates some kids' ability to adapt to a new environment. It reads in part: "I like to sing in Toronto. I like to sing with passionate music." With the aid of The Women's Educational Press. more than one immigrant child has done just that. □

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## A whodunit without the why

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A Master Killing, by Ronald Hambleton. Green Bushell, (J.M. Dent), illustrated, 200 pages, cloth \$8.95 (ISBN 0 9690786 17).

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By SHARON MARCUS

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TRUE CANADIAN CRIME. the dust-jacket lubriciously promises. and indeed *A Master Killing* delivers two murders, both historically accurate and Canadian. But the pun in the title is ironic: the killings were a gross and messy affair committed by the obvious culprits. the savants, with an almost innocent disregard for their too-evident guilt. In the summer of 1843 a gentleman and his housekeeper in Richmond Hill just north of Toronto were mindlessly snuffed out by a boy of 20 and a girl of 16, who then bolted from the scene in their master's horse and wagon.

The echo of what might in another time have been described as class war, the lust. the greed. and the frenzy immediately surrounding these events were all reflected and even amplified in Toronto. where the trail of the killers was picked up and pursued by an energetic but ambiguous citizen

and a drunken, totally corrupt police official. The lightly sketched picture of Toronto's mayor and aldermen. its constabulary and citizenry. themselves all apparently guilty of varying degrees of crookedness and vicious behaviour. make an amiable background for this hideous episode.

Mr. Hambleton has selected the materials for a thriller with a clear eye for a good story — the tracking of the killers, their somewhat hilarious apprehension, and the unfolding of the crime (including the revelation of the second murder) are laid out with a meticulous perception of destiny's artfulness. But the first half of the book lacks the quick-march rhythm needed to hold our attention and to disguise the shadowy characterization. the absence of social or psychological description and analysis. The scenario seems to invite such commentary to round it out, to bring the details into more meaningful focus. enriching the background against which the action is played.

In an ordinary thriller where the main concern is the impetus of a fast-moving plot, these things are not important. But there are generic differences in this tale of historic brutality that stimulate a wider spectrum of curiosity. And once there is an awareness that a larger range of human activity is being invoked, different conventions with different requirements automatically lock in. Perhaps the radio dramatization based on these events. which Mr. Hambleton prepared before he wrote this book, committed him to a form based extensively on dialogue. and that form does not easily expand into a more speculative or philosophical narrative.

Half-way through the story. the court of inquiry held to examine the prisoners Grace Marks and James McDermott begins. (They both appeared in court without legal counsel and wearing articles of clothing stolen from their murdered victims.) The rest of the book is devoted mainly to this courtroom drama. and here the value of good dialogue, effectively handled, becomes apparent. The pace accelerates noticeably as the details of a crime committed in an apparent moral vacuum are disclosed. The prisoners speak at length, sometimes lying. sometimes telling the truth, betraying each other, betraying themselves in their remorseless ignorance and innocence. revealing a primally deprived condition that cannot tell good from bad. right from wrong. They have the unwitting savagery of beasts of prey.

There are slight indications in their extraordinary testimony of the conditions that bred such creatures: the wandering, unemployed immigrant: the unloved, abused child-servant. But we are left with a lingering sense of incompleteness and the need to perceive this crime in relation to a more detailed and subtle look at the society in which it occurred. The conventions of the thriller are not quite adequate to contain this gothic story; the documentary elements need to be resolved and satisfied too. □

## Eve's troughs and triumphs

**Everywoman's Almanac 1978**, by the EveryDay Collective, The Women's Press, 203 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88961 040 1).

**Herstory 1975: A Canadian Women's Calendar**, by The Saskatoon Women's Calendar Collective. Gny's Publishing, 124 pages, \$4.95 paper.

**Women In Canadian Life: Literature**, by M.G. McClung, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 96 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88902 378 61).

**Women in Canadian Life: Law**, by Linda Silver Dranoff, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 112 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88902 337 81).

By JOCELYN LAURENCE

BUYING A CALENDAR these days is enough to bring on an identity crisis. Should you support Tolkein or The Sierra Club? Will you ally yourself with Art, art, organics, indigenous peoples and nationalism, folk-siness, or plain practicality?

For those wishing to see themselves (or be seen) as feminists, two calendars are available that can be whipped out at mo-

ments of self-doubt to help reinforce the all-important chosen image. Mere novices at the feminist game would do best to buy *Everywoman's Almanac 1978*. Each month is devoted to a particular theme (day care, women in sports, women as farmers) with plenty of appropriately inciting quotes and facts.

Women who are already well armed with such data might like to choose *Herstory 1978: A Canadian Women's Calendar*. This, too, carries brief essays on Feminist themes, as well as poems and profiles of noteworthy Canadian women. This calendar marks the days of importance in the feminist struggle, so truly dedicated women can celebrate occasions such as the 60th anniversary of Nova Scotian women gaining the vote.

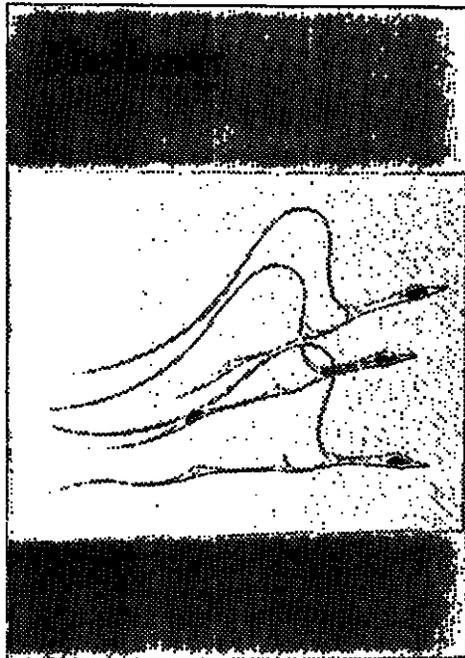
The greatest problem with these calendars is one common to many Feminist products. The content, often with a valid base located in the circumstances of women's lives, is obscured by a proselytizing tone and self-righteous air. Such statements as, "The only way to make housework bearable is for everyone in the house to do it together!" ignore the many realities of people's lives in favour of an over-simplified piece of non-advice.

There is an odour of self-congratulation that can creep into writing by women for women, a sense that women have been wronged so much they can now do little wrong themselves. This is particularly prevalent in *Women in Canadian Life*:

*Literature*, part of a series put out for senior high-school and college students. Ms. McClung seems to believe in a policy of non-critical analysis that becomes doubly distressing as her own personal assumptions become obvious. Not only does she deal with all the authors' work as being universally valuable, important, or otherwise praiseworthy, but she also writes from a feminist perspective that is irrelevant in the extreme. To say of Dorothy Livesay's *The Unquiet Bed*, "These lyrics are not particularly reflective of the feminist movement as a social force, as they seem intensely personal" displays a vast set of subjective values that can't possibly do justice either to Livesay or to Feminism.

The general level of commentary in this book is equally juvenile. Ms. McClung tells the unfortunate reader: "Ethel Wilson writes a good old-fashioned novel with a happy ending." As if that isn't enough, she later comments on *The Swamp Angel*: "While in no way figures that would now be called 'liberated women,' both Maggie and Mrs. Severance are strong characters who function well on their own." No doubt Ethel Wilson would have mixed feelings about her protagonists almost making a certain kind of feminist grade.

Thankfully, Linda Silver Dranoff's book on law does not misrepresent Feminism so grossly. The format is the same — a main text interspersed with relevant photographs and quotes, and with points for research and discussion at the end of each chapter. While



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a Feminist perspective is still present, it is less infuriating and more informative. Ms. Dranoff covers the legal aspects of single and married women, women's relation to property and the economy, and women's legal role in separation and divorce..

It is surprising that more women do not concentrate on law as a basis for Feminist argument and analysis. for in dealing with laws one is dealing with both social thermometers and facts. More facts end less random emoting might be of more use to everyone. □

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## A man as big as the country

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**Northern Vagabond:** The Life and Career of J. B. Tyrrell, by Alex Inglis. McClelland & Stewart, illustrated, 245 pages. X14.95 cloth (ISBN 077104357 0).

By R. PATRICK SAUL

TO HIS RECENT acquaintances, the figure of Joseph Burr Tyrrell riding the last of his several careers into the middle of the 20th century must have been impressive enough. As a Bay Street mining executive, he was a skilled tactician of the boardroom, with an uncanny sense of where the rich ores might be uncovered. He was a man of wealth, power, and physical presence, fully in step with Canada's age of industrial growth.

Inglis introduces Joe Tyrrell in June of 1893 when, at the age of 34, as an established member of the Geological Survey of Canada, he is on the threshold of his most daring and romantic expedition. Staking his life on the belief that the uncharted and unexplored Dubawnt river system flowed into Hudson Bay, Tyrrell paddled north into country never before seen by white men. He lied the river drained into the Arctic, he most certainly would have died, trapped by the short northern summer. As it was, it was mid-September by the time he emerged into Hudson Bay, with the long trip south against head winds, storms, and the setting shore ice still before him. Tyrrell was more than merely an adventurer and his maps and meticulous scientific observations on this journey served to introduce to Canadians the Barren Lands that form so large a part of our country.

In 1899, Tyrrell struck out on his own for the Klondike. Better equipped than most to survive the hard and brawling life of the Yukon, he used his knowledge as a geologist and his experience as a wilderness traveller to establish himself as a mining consultant. For seven years, he lied as one of the principal citizens of Dawson, on the edge of civilization, before returning East to set up business on Bay Street. Ironically, it was in Ontario, at the age of 65, that Tyrrell finally struck it rich, driving a shaft 2,000 feet down to find gold at the edge of Kirkland Lake.

That Tyrrell's life spanned the period of transition between the end of Canada's age of exploration and the beginning of the present period of modern industrial growth was an accident. He was nevertheless a man of his time, succeeding in both eras and epitomizing their qualities.

Inglis has good material to work with and sets it against a backdrop of vivid scenes — From the isolated lakes and rivers of the Barren Lands to the desperate carnival of the Klondike Gold Rush and the ruthless business world of mining investments. If Inglis errs at all, it is in overselling his subject. Too often, he is moved to perceive the hand of destiny in Tyrrell's life. For Inglis, Tyrrell is "colossus-like" and "super-human," the stuff of legends and myths. At the book's end, we leave the author agonizing over the question of whether Tyrrell was a "great" man. This betrays a lack of confidence, either in his subject or in his reader. Tyrrell's life is as exciting as a novel by Rider Haggard, and the reader, even a Canadian reader, will be fascinated and impressed by it, without having to be told that this is the real thing, a genuinely "great Canadian." □

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## Quebec and the land of Oc

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**Nationalism and the Quebec Question,** by Nicole Arnaud and Jacques Dofny, translated from the French by Penelope Williams, Black Rose Books, 134 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919618 46 4) and \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 91961845 6).

Quebec Independence: The Background to a National Crisis, edited by Achii Krull and Murray Skukyn, Canadian Issues series, Clarke Irwin, \$7.95 kit (ISBN 0 7720 11923).

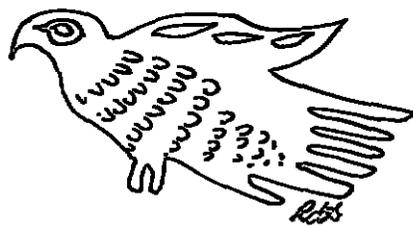
By CLARENCE G. REDEKOP

THE CURRENT CRISIS of Confederation has generated a great deal of writing on the subject which, as might be expected, has ranged over a wide spectrum of quality and usefulness. At the lower end of this spectrum is the book by Professors Arnaud and Dofny, of the Universities of Laval and McGill, while several were chosen from that

Montreal respectively, who undertake to discuss the "theoretical mine-field" posed for Marxists by the problem of recurrent nationalism and "the national question." This book, the record of a highly disjointed end rambling dialogue between the two academics, is characterized by sweeping categorical statements and a dearth of political and sociological analysis. The volume is arbitrarily divided into nine chapters of wandering dialogue to which are appended three chapters that attempt without success to impose on it a measure of coherence.

This dialogue tries to compare the struggle of the Québécois and the Occitanophones for national self-determination and the implications of this fact for the socialist class struggle. Occitan, which, as the authors note, is "at present a region of France" (although with indefinite geographical boundaries), is inhabited by some 13 million people, many of whom still speak the language of Oc, or rather one of its five distinct dialects. The authors are agreed that the Québécois and the Occitanophones have been victimized by colonialism, the former by the Anglo-Canadian, and American varieties, the latter by the lessmundane Parisian "phallocratic colonialism." While the authors perceive the problems of Quebec and Occitan to be similar, their remedies differ sharply. Federalism without being defined or analyzed, is proclaimed as the hope of the Occitans, but also as the problem of the Québécois. However, in establishing federalism in France, the Occitans are counseled to avoid the "dead-end bourgeois regionalism" of the "commercial, financial and banking" interests and build instead "an alliance between Euro-Socialism and Euro-Communism" that will decentralize power through a program of nationalization of the multinational corporations. In Quebec, which (historians take note) "always maintained a certain provincial autonomy until the moment of Confederation," federalism has to be destroyed, not implemented, since (naturally) it is the instrument of colonial subjugation. Should independence come to Quebec, a socialist government would soon take power, displacing the bourgeois PQ, since, as the authors believe, in the pattern of historical development (as demonstrated in, of course, Algeria) nationalist sentiment moves "from the right to the left." It is obvious, therefore, that any attempt to shore up national unity is really an ill-disguised attempt to shore up capitalism in Canada!

The Quebec Independence kit is the second published in the Canadian Issues Series, which appears to be a direct successor to the series of Jackdaws published as high-school teaching aids during the past decade. It is composed almost entirely of reproduced newspaper articles on problems relating to the issue of Quebec independence. The choice of articles selected leaves many questions unanswered: of some 47 articles reproduced, for example, only one was selected from the Toronto Globe and



well-known paper of record, the Toronto Sun. Furthermore, most of the articles are simple news reports that contain very little political analysis. Although the kit may be of some value as a teaching aid in high schools, it is probable that with a minimum amount of effort a better selection of articles could be compiled by a teacher at considerably less cost than the \$7.95 price tag. □

## Gay hints for dire straights

Ceiling Sex, by John Allan Lee. Musson Book Co., 318 pages, \$8.95 paper (ISBN 0 7736 1037 5).

By IAN YOUNG

REMEMBER during the mid-1960s the appearance of a psi of paperback books called *The Beginner's Guide to Cruising* and *The Advanced Guide to Cruising*. These informative tomes had nothing to do with sailing lore but were aimed, by their pseudonymous Toronto author, at the invisible millions of North American homosexuals interested in meeting each other for sex (and whatever might go with it). Such books could not be sold openly in those days, but were to be found on back shelves in dubious magazine stores or peeping out between the trusses and "robber goods" of certain suppliers of men's arcana.

It's a measure of how much, and how little, things have changed that much of the same time-honoured information (around since Roman times at least) is now offered to the general public — under the august rubric of "sociology" — by a full professor and a respected commercial publisher.

John Ala" Lee's book is supposedly directed to heterosexual readers (and for all but the most closeted or isolated gays, much of his information will be no news). "Millions of North Americans go to bed each night sexually hungry," cries the blurb in a tasteless parody of a UNICEF ad. Thus, Lee says, "what our society needs is an adequate and reliable supply of risk-free, casual sex." And in a culture in which everything from identity to art becomes a commodity, why not sex too? All that is needed is "an effective system of sexual distribution" (that word *effective* should keep the government out of it).

Lee contends that gays have created such a system, adapting the "ecosystem" of the cities to their own comfort and enjoyment, and suggests the rest of the population would do well to learn from them. Having provided a *raison d'être* for the excursions to follow, Lee then takes the reader on a fairly extensive rubber-necking tour of gay gathering-places. He is careful to emphasize that "the pbmkm of getting sex is the preoccupation of this book, not the preoccupation of the gay men discussed" — an

important fact for readers to keep in mind, especially those whose puritanical reflexes may already be twitching even as they read these chaste words.

*Getting Sex* shows how the streets, parks, discos, bars, and bath-houses of "Metropolis" (a transparently disguised Tom&) have been adapted by gays seeking the society of other gays and doing so with remarkable invisibility to the parallel heterosexual society.

Lee is an excellent tour guide, focusing on the particular interest at hand (in this case, people getting sex) without totally ignoring the rest of the goings-on (and there are plenty). He is occasionally humorous and always tolerant; his chapter on S&M (sadism and masochism) is a rare source of wisdom on a topic that has usually been automatically misunderstood. And he is convincing. Certainly one of the worst aspects of the heterosexual tyranny has been to isolate people and to make self-knowledge and contact difficult. Yet gays have managed to thrive, to make use of the interstices of society and to create a subculture which, because it is officially non-existent, is in many ways freer and more responsive to need than the orthodox system that gave rise to it.

Of course not all the problems have been overcome: socially induced guilt is still pervasive and Lee does not ask how much this contributes to the anonymity of much of the sex gays "get." Sometimes even speaking is taboo!

And there is a streak of callousness, too, that Lee seems not to mind. His over-extension of a "hunter-prey, fish-fishermen" metaphor when describing sex-seeking in bars and discos is rather unappetizing. He talks of "throwing people back" if they are not acceptable (like so much bad fish) and seems to feel the only reason to display good manners is to "improve your reputation": thus, always pretend to remember someone you went to bed with a week ago.

So, like all human endeavours, the gay underworld mixes good and bad, the best and the worst. A sex-negative and anti-homosexual society sees a cynical benefit in allowing these impersonal sexual outlets for homosexuals, keeping them in ghettos, frightened, fragmented — sometimes incapable of more complex relationships.

The gay liberation movement is well aware of this: thus its struggle to build a real community of people (gay and straight) whose sexuality is integrated and open, not just "something you do (anonymously) in the dark." Prof. Lee apparently doesn't see this, suggesting that gay liberationists who dislike the "meat racks" are unattractive and envious. A curious blind spot on his part.

What an innuendo that the anonymous, often loveless, modes of encounter we have forced on sexual nonconformists are now, in the decay of our more orthodox arrangements, being recommended back to us for studious emulation! And in so ugly a cover! *The Beginner's Guide* was much more attractive. □

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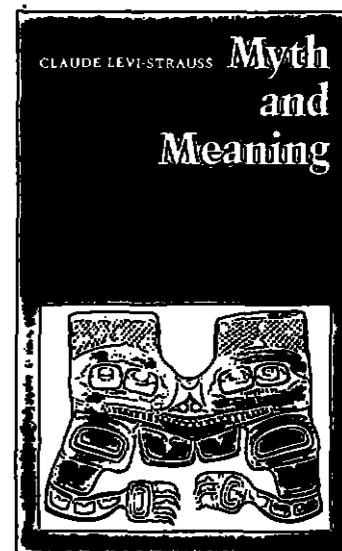
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# Syllabus for survival

But survival at what cost? The new Canada Studies program sets out to save the country by throwing away a large portion of our past

by Lorne Hill

Teaching **Canada for the '80s**, by A.B. Hodgetts and Paul Gallagher. Curriculum Series/35, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), 135 pages, 55.95 paper (ISBN 0 7744 0617 2).

To me, history is like a mixed drink. If it doesn't suit you like it is, just keep adding things until you get it like you want.  
—Broom Hilda

HOW DO YOU create a national tradition when the country does not have one? Well, you say it *does have one* but is just not aware of it. You point out how abysmally ignorant we are of our past; set up a foundation to search for common experiences; write a book advocating a national syllabus; and then get the schools to teach it.

Sponsored by the Canada Studies Foundation and written by its two former directors, this proposal for a national syllabus in Canada Studies is the first of its kind. The seed was planted by Hodgetts in *What Culture? What Heritage?*, the National History Project in 1968, nurtured in the CSF by workshops, projects, publications, and meetings with teachers at every level in every province; and now, after a decade in gestation, the syllabus is plopped at the country's doorstep — an educational program for national survival.

Canada may not survive. Its many problems are listed for the reader. It is assumed that the "tremendous" power of education should be mobilized in the national interest. The authors clearly believe it is the function of education directly to serve the state. In particular, Canada Studies should take as its task precisely that — to assist in the maintenance of the state in some form. Although Canada Studies has been more widely taught recently, "Canadian schools are not yet sufficiently Canadian." In many provinces elementary students never study Canada as a whole and Canada Studies is of secondary importance. This is intolerable.

Canadians need to be better informed about their country and to participate actively in its affairs. This national syllabus will build a basic consensus of informed public opinion and promote "participative citizenship." This consensus will unite us,

not in uniformity, but in diversity. Each Canadian must develop a national perspective that accepts and celebrates our pluralism while encouraging the resolution of our differences.

The authors propose that schools in every province across Canada offer this program. It extends from the primary grades to the senior secondary level and students will take Canada Studies every year. They will learn the same basic understanding of Canada whether they live in Vancouver, Montreal or St. John's, Tecumseh or Tuktoyaktuk. No longer will schools be allowed to teach divisiveness. Instead, "a real sense of personal identification with Canada as a whole" is the aim, supported by positive attitudes towards Canadians of every stripe. The priority is Pan-Canadianism."

"Building a sense of 'I am Canadian and these people in other parts of Canada are part of me' is a legitimate role of the elementary school." Here students will study community participation, public versus private affairs, public controversy as a normal and constructive reality, community life in Canada and the world, Canada as a political community, Canada in the world, citizenship, compromise, consensus, and representative government. Then at the upper elementary or junior secondary level there will be a synthesizing year that pulls together the understandings achieved previously and lays the foundation for more advanced senior studies. This course is called "The Canadian Environment" and has five components. Canada is a vast, northern, divided country, with many quarreling ethnic groups, possessing renewable and non-renewable resources, an urban industrialized setting, and exposed to external influences. Students will realize that some level of consensus is necessary to balance the frictions among Canadians. At more senior levels students will study our political and economic systems and wrap up their Canadian Studies with an analysis of major national issues.

For each of the topics suggested the educator is told what young Canadians should understand about their country. There are no shockingly new insights here.

Certainly, "The Canadian Environment" should be read by all who need a quick comprehensive overview of Canada. But it would be an enormous undertaking for teachers to squeeze it into a year or two. The long chapters on politics and economics list questions and objectives that end with historical and future investigations. The public-issues chapter is too short to be a "climax" and preceding work but outlines six areas of concern and is aimed at conflict resolution. Yet, this whole syllabus has a distinctly American flavour.

What Is Canada Studies? It is narrowly defined as social studies. "The Canadian Environment" course is three fifths geography, followed by politics, economics, and social issues. CanLit, art, and music should only be, taught as they serve participative citizenship. Canadian history can only be found in a supporting role as social history in elementary school and as background and further study at the secondary level. But Canadian history courses per se are not part of this package. Canada Studies is a contemporary study. Many sacred cows must be sacrificed to save the nation — Canadian history, literature, art, and music, the student's personal needs, multiculturalism, disciplinary and thematic approaches to teaching, world-wide problems — all of them important, but judged not essential for Canada's survival.

It is not indicated where Canada Studies fits in the rest of the school curriculum. Presumably the student will be allowed to study science, math, languages, and so on. But will she or he ever be offered, for example, the history of Western civilization? Will she be trapped forever in Canada's last 100 years, cut off from the experiences of the human past in which can be found the models of social organization of some benefit to us? Or, when studying Canada, why will she not be offered any systematic historical treatment of the French-English conflict, Canada's constitutional development, foreign investment in Canada, British colonial policy or the French Regime? And one can look in vain for detailed treatment of the Conquest, the War of 1812, the Rebellions of 1837, and

the early development of political parties. Are these events too local? Have they nothing to say to us? Or do they say the wrong things? How does one save a country by throwing away such a large portion of its past?

Why can't Canadian history be the vehicle at the secondary level? It was recommended as a central subject by Hodgetts himself in 1968. Now it slips into the backwater where, along with CanLit, it yields its insights only occasionally when sucked along by the main stream. The major problem is that history deals with the Past, and we must deal with the Present. And secondly, history tells it as it was, and it was divided. There is no historical past that Canadians can agree to call their own from British Columbia to Newfoundland. We need a history text written by historians from all parts of Canada.

This attempted creation of a national tradition and its substitution for local and more universal ones will raise many further objections. Can this syllabus override provincial and local rights, especially in Quebec? How many years of continuing chaos in the curriculum branches of education ministries will it produce? Should education serve the state or humanity? The book unsuccessfully tries to serve both: "World problems ... in the final analysis must be regarded as more important than our purely Canadian concerns"; but "our

immediate tasks lie within the borders of our own country."

Is the educator a statesman? Can civic education ever save a country? Research is not promising. The amount a student learns in social studies has little or no relationship to his political attitudes. An increased knowledge of civics does not lead to increased political participation. Citizenship education was not successful in a recent survey of 10 countries. Replacing history with social studies has not helped citizenship. Teaching nationalism does not make better democrats. Even though the authors cite Canadian research that points to similar conclusions, their answer is: more, earlier.

European educators have been trying for the last 10 years to reduce the nationalist orientation of each country's curriculum and replace it with a Pan-European outlook. So too are Hodgetts and Gallagher trying to reduce our regionalism and supply us with a Pan-Canadian perspective. Their proposal may be a little too ambitious, too "social studies," too contemporary, too urgent, too "Canadian," too artificial. In many circles there will be much gnashing of teeth. But what do we do if it fails?

Here is a checklist of other textbooks received:

CANADA STUDIES

The Canadians: A Continuing Series, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 64 pages each. \$3, Secondary level.

Gabriel *Dumont*, by George Woodcock; Charles *Mair*, by Bruce McDougall. Two lively and opposing perspectives on the opening of the Canadian West. A comparison should stimulate classroom discussion about Canadian nationalism.

Wilfrid *Laurier*, by Martin Spigelman; Robert *Borden*, by Kathleen Saunders. Students can better appreciate the difficulty of governing modern Canada by examining the careers of these two prime ministers. Together they are quite useful for discussing the politics of consensus in Canada.

Adam *Beck*, by James Sturgis. Adam Beck, "the hydro knight," supplied power for Ontario's industrial take-off in a fine example of businessmen's socialism with public benefits. Amply illustrates how business influenced politics circa 1900.

We *Built Canada* Series, edited by Keith Wilson. The Book Society of Canada, Burns & MacEachern, 84 pages. \$3.25, Secondary level.

Vilhjalmur *Stefansson and the Arctic*, by Alexander Gregor. This attractive book highlights Stefansson's achievements against a background of earlier northern explorers. Good questions, useful visuals, and additional readings are included.

R. B. *Russell and the Labour Movement*, by Kenneth W. Osborne. Osborne believes that the working class has an ethos of its own and should be included in any multicultural program. In fact, too few teachers understand the cultural gap in working-class schools. His book examines the Canadian labour movement through the eyes of R. B. Russell, a labour leader who was jailed in the Winnipeg General

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**Growth of a Nation Series**, edited by D. R. Birch, Fitzner & Whiteside, 48 pages, \$2.35, Junior-Intermediate level.

*In the Pioneer Home*, by Rosemary Neering and Stan Garrod. If you wish to turn your room into a pioneer home read this book. After a short introduction and chapter on household goods, there follow 28 pages on how to weave; make soap, butter, sugar; develop medicines; cook and preserve. Liberally sprinkled with visuals and activities so students learn by doing. The final chapter deals with games and toys. A word list is included.

**Readings in Canadian Geography**, edited by Robert M. Irving, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, third edition, \$8.50. Updated and revised.

**The Problem Exists in the Classroom Because It Exists in the World**, Co-operative Schools Group On Development Education, Development, Education Centre, Toronto, 1978, 75 pages. \$3.95, Intermediate-Senior level. Teacher's guide for multicultural, Third World, and values courses. Contains articles, courses, teaching strategies, sample study materials, bibliographic and audio-visual references.

**Canadian Local Histories To 1950: A Bibliography: Ontario and the Canadian North**, by William F. E. Morley. U of T Press. \$25. Previous volumes deal, with the Atlantic Provinces and Quebec. This third and final one contains more than 1,000 titles ranging through immigration, settlement patterns, industrialism, urbanization and genealogies. Especially valuable to researchers, collectors and editors are the detailed descriptions and locations of each entry.

**Canada's Third Option**, edited by S. D. Berkowitz and Robert K. Logan. Macmillan, \$8.95. Many distinguished Canadians — senators, francophones and anglophones, cabinet ministers, politicians, academics and scientists — address the issues dividing Canadians and propose new ways to achieve consensus.

**CANADIAN LITERATURE**

**Antitoeanallmagery: Research Projects in Canadian Literature**, by Peter Birdsall *et al.*, Canlit, 16 pages, \$2.50. More than 100 suggestions for research projects at secondary and university levels. Some are very ambitious such as inquiries into school leaving @ems, the economics of Canadian pulp and paper industries, and stereotyping in textbooks. Readers will have to decide whether discovering why there is not enough Canadian literature of suitable quality belongs in CanLit or

journalism classes. Do these produce superb writers?

**MI 'N' Match 11: Reprise**, by Gail Donald *et al.*, Canlit, 58 pages, \$4. Includes the following articles: The Underbelly of Literature; Commercial; Loads of Language; On Stage; Off the Teachin' Path; and Reading Light and Easy.

**Oh Con (you see) adal Can. Lil. for Junior High School**, by Simon Lizee, *et al.*, Canlit, 68 pages, \$3.50. Contains annotated suggestions for teaching Canadian poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction. Classroom tested. From Saskatchewan.

**The Country of the Young: Units in Canadian Literature for Elementary and Secondary School**, by Don Gutteridge, University of Western Ontario, 64 pages. \$3.95. Number two in the Faculty of Education's series, this pedagogical guide presents three approaches to the teaching of CanLit for academic and general-level classes — the generic, thematic and language arts. A versatile and practical aid to structuring and teaching units in Canadian literature.

**Fire**, edited by Peter Carver, Peter Martin Associates, 116 pages \$4.95. This collection of Canadian writing focuses on war, revolution, crime, passion, and fire itself. Poems, songs, pictures, stories and articles from every region and many social levels are attractively presented in this further volume in the Elements Series.

**Faces of Myth**, by Robe., Livesey, Longman, 216 pages. \$4.50, Intermediate level. World myths from Creation to Cataclysms, Sphinx to Superman are given a Canadian slant and interspersed with visuals, activities, questions and cartoons.

**The Canadian Reader 11: High School Canadian Literature Students**, by Delores Broten *et al.*, Canlit, 37 pages. A report on a survey of English-speaking Canadian literature students from 14 teachers across Canada, but concentrated in Ontario. Flawed by inadequate methodology, it nevertheless presents the same predictable student reactions that have become commonplace.

**A Concise Bibliography of English-Canadian Literature**, by Michael Gnarowski, revised edition. McClelland & Stewart, 148 pages. A convenient up-dated (1975) listing of the works of and commentaries on major English. Canadian authors since the 18th century. Especially valuable for critiques and essays.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**The Good Language Learner**, by N. Naiman, M. Frohlich *et al.*, OISE, 112 pages. \$4.75.

An exploratory systematic inquiry into how good language students, whether adults or children, do in fact learn a language. It contains suggestions for a more comprehensive research plan. Of interest to language teachers and researchers.

**Language: Speech and Writing**, by P. G. Penner and Ruth E. McConnell, Macmillan, 293 pages, \$8.95, Secondary level. A "back to basics" grammar text that is not a rigid drill but rather a "attempt to teach language skills in a motivating way. After examining writing systems from hieroglyphics to data processing, the book focuses on all the goodies — sentence and paragraph structure, listening, reading, punctuation, and spelling. Know anyone who does,; need to read this book?"

**MASS MEDIA**

**Reading, Writing and Radio**, by W. G. Schell and M. E. Woollings, Longman, 208 pages, \$3.95, grades 10-12. Can be used as a Springboard to English composition, a term study in mass media courses, and as a core text for a communications unit on radio broadcasting.

**CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND LAW Gaining Power: Democracy and Elections in Canada** (\$3.50) and **Exercising Power: Government in Canada** (\$3.95), by J. A. Miller and D. A. Hurst, Longman, 135 pages, Intermediate level. Used in the schools for more than a year now, these win texts are largely replacing the tired civics material from the middle 1960s. While not neglecting theory, they try to give more of the flavour of how the system really works. Teachers will find the short readings, photographs, cartoons, charts, questions, case studies, parliamentary debates and simulation games quite useful.

**You and Your Government**, by Darrel R. Skidmore, Wiley Publishers, 96 pages, Intermediate level. Skidmore has written a basil. descriptive, well-organized but more traditional text enlivened by quotations, excerpts, case studies, charts and questions. In the Canada: Origins and Options Series.

**Forensic Science and Criminology**, by J. G. Hood, G. W. Kocsis, *et al.*, Macmillan, 39 pages, \$3.10, Secondary level. A., imposing title for a Hardy Boys detective ki., but this little book on fingerprinting, forgeries, soil and chemical analysis is great fun for secondary students who are taken step by step through the scientific investigation of a break-and-entry case. Just borrow the necessary equipment from the science department in your school.

**The Canadian Senate: A Lobby from Within**, by Colin Campbell, Macmillan, 200 pages, \$5.95 paper. More reasons why the Senate should be abolished and replaced by an upper house representing the provinces as was originally intended. Based in part on interviews with senators. In the Canadian Controversies Series.

**The Business of Government: An Introduction to Canadian Public Administration**, by T. J. Stevens, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 288 pages, \$8.95. College level. An introduction to management and administration for those planning a career in the public sector.

**VALUES EDUCATION**

**Moral/Values Education in Canada: A Bibliography and Directory 1970-1977**, by Don Cochrane, OISE, 13 pages, \$2.50. This fine survey of Canadian writings in moral education was presented at the CSSE conference in 1977 and lists about 200 authors. To foster communication in this rapidly developing field the

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**Confronting the Stereotypes: Handbook OR Bias at the Primary Level.** by Women for Non-Sexist Education, The Manitoba Human Rights Commission. 1 IS pages. This handbook for detecting bias in primary school teaching materials prosecutes a few publishers with the purpose of helping students understand themselves, "without the limitations imposed on them by their sex, race, religion, ethnic, or economic circumstances." This teacher guide is NOT opposed to all bias however, just those that are contrary to the Western liberal democratic tradition. Censorship is never popular and this book makes it difficult to tell an acceptable truth.

**Domestic Violence: Issues and Dynamics,** edited by Vincent D'Oyley, OISE, 268 pages. \$4. A collection of papers read at an OISE seminar in March, 1977, highlighting the roles of police, courts, clinics and schools in handling domestic violence.

### CHEMISTRY

**The Nature of Matter,** by D. Courneya and Hugh McDonald. D. C. Heath, 442 pages, \$11.06. Written by two Ontario teachers, this senior-level text contains seven chapters dealing with the scientific method, matter and gases, the atomic model, descriptive chemistry and stoichiometry, the periodic table, organic chemistry and how chemistry can be applied. Two additional chapters stress laboratory skills and independent study projects. Each chapter has experiments, examples, illustrations, warnings, and questions and concludes with a summary and word list.

**Elements of Experimental Chemistry,** by R. Lahav, L. Papillon and P. Valiquette. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 334 pages, \$16.63. Piloted in Quebec secondary schools and translated into English, this text tries to fill both teacher and student needs by its flexibility and spiral teaching system. Each chapter follows an inquiry, experiment, postlab discussion and exercises format. It can be used for both macro and microscopic approaches. "No subject has been neglected because of its difficulty." As well as 32 pages of appendices and activities, it contains colourful diagrams, pictures and charts.

### SCIENCE

**Inquiries Into Biology Series,** by M. Lang, E. Palfrey, and E. Nieuwenhove, Macmillan. *The Functioning Animal*, 79 pages, \$4.25; *Selection for Survival*, 74 pages, \$3.23.

**Life Science Series.** John Wiley and Sons. *Animals Without Backbones*, by Thomas J. Hensley, 96 pages, \$4.50.

### MISCELLANY

**Solving Educational Problems: The Theory and Reality of Innovation in Developing Countries,** by R. G. Havelock and A. M. Huberman, OISE, 308 pages, \$10.50. A superb study that documents the difficulties — no trial periods for innovations, local successes but little change nationally, serious problems in decision-making and personnel — and suggests solutions. It tends to cast a pessimistic shadow on the euphoric 1960s.

**Working With Kids,** by R. Wilks and A. Millyard, Annick Press (Burns and McEwen), 110 pages, \$9.93. Designed to create confidence in kids aged six to 16, these techniques, games, activities, stories, and discussion are for "all persons working with

groups of children." Easily adapted for use in schools or neighbourhoods.

**Psychology: The Human Science.** by R. I. Trotter and J. V. McConnell, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, more than 600 pages, \$11.95. This American college text can be a valuable teaching tool, since each chapter includes brief behavioural objectives, an overview that introduces the major concept, a summary, readings and a study guide.

**Etudes Francaises: Volume XIV, No. 1-2; le fil du récit,** by J. Demers, J. Goldin, and M. Leonard, Les Presses de L'Universite de Montreal. A series of articles on the theme of modes of narration ranging through what the author says, how it is said, and what is not said. Includes sections on Gide, Flaubert, and Sorel.

**Introducing Art History: A Guide for Teachers,** by Michael J. McCarthy. Curriculum series/33, OISE, 118 pages, \$10.95. Much modern art continues to be culturally vacuous. Students leave secondary school without a knowledge of their nation's art. Only 20 per cent of Ontario's schools offer art history. Many art teachers don't have the necessary background to teach studio art instead. So Michael McCarthy has written this guide to assist art teachers to plan courses and apply appropriate methods. Four chapters explain what and how to teach in a chronological art history program spread over four years. There is a chapter on alternative approaches and four more on classroom practices. Appendices outline an interdisciplinary model and explain how to use Canadian content. There is even a list of sources for visual aids and readings. This book deserves to stimulate discussion. ❖

## Regrinding the gods of Mill

**Liberty and the Holy City: The Idea of Freedom in English History,** by Michael Macklem, Oberon Press, 210 pages, \$17.50 cloth (ISBN 0 887502 52 0).

By NEVILLE THOMPSON

ENGLAND HAS A long and honourable tradition of liberty, both in theory and practice, and the idea of writing a history of the development of the concept was certainly a good one. Unfortunately it is by no means clear for whom this particular book was intended. It is neither sufficiently original nor analytical to be a scholarly book. If, as seems more likely, it was designed for a general audience, it does not, apart from a couple of promising paragraphs at the beginning, spell out clearly enough or at sufficient length the significance of the historical debate for contemporary politics. This is regrettable because buried in this account is a reflection on liberty that is important for all citizens. A real introduction, and even a table of contents, might have helped to bring out more forcefully the main themes of the book.

Whatever the author's intention, this book emerges basically as a rather conven-

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tional summary of the leading political thinkers from John of Salisbury in the 12th century to T. H. Green at the end of the 19th century. It is moreover a curiously old-fashioned sort of intellectual history, a species of literary Whiggism, in which freedom slowly broadens down from text to text. It is certainly true that there is an intellectual continuum between generations and that outstanding thinkers cannot be seen simply as "products of their time," but the development of ideas, especially social and political ideas, cannot be understood in isolation or simply in relation to each other. The best intellectual history of the past generation has attempted to bring to bear psychological, political, social, and economic factors on the formulation of ideas. Sometimes this has been overdone but no account that does not at least pay serious attention to them can now be considered satisfactory. This would have been a more impressive book if greater attention had been paid to the influence on the evolution of the idea of liberty of such events as the Reformation, the English civil

war, the French and industrial revolutions, legal judgements, and political factors. Something too should have been said about those who often strongly opposed this conception of the relation between the individual, society, and government.

It is unfortunate that the historical survey ends in the late 19th century, even though, as the author points out, in the reaction from the extreme individualism of the early 19th century and concern for the state as the framework within which liberty is achieved, the debate had come full circle. It would have been interesting to have had some discussion of how socialism evolved as the heir of this restrained individualism and how the idea of the state as the creation and servant of individuals has been taken over by conservatives. Despite his muted presentation, Macklem is defending the noble late 19th-century ideal of a more relationship between government and the individual that is being lost in the polarization (in polemic at least, if not in practice) between anarchistic individualism and state direction. □

it's evident that he is attempting to recapture the original feeling and inspiration of the poem. His reading, like the trees in his "I think you are a whole city" is "unpruned and full of winding honesties," and there is a lender, almost singing note in his voice as he reads "Bear on the Delhi Road" — describing a bear being taught to dance, and "lurch, lurch, in the tranced dancing of men."

Layton has a darker voice, and a darker presence altogether. He speaks of the poet as a solitary and a misfit who "lives in two realms, the realm of the imagination, and the realm of fact, or reality, and is not happy, truly happy, completely happy, in either realm." As a reader he is a performer rather than (like Bimey) a communicator of his feelings and ideas, a trumpeter of his own passionate joys and loves and hates, and in this reading at least, rather a subdued one, as if he were remembering and regretting more powerful reading, rather than trying to find again the original sense of the poems. They are sadder poems than Bimey's, and there is a note of resigned bitterness in his voice that gives his reading of such pessimistic visions as "The Improved Binoculars" a line, gloomy power. He rages against humanity's selfishness, heartlessness, and greed, and in "To the girls of my graduating class" he finds even his own passion "fierce and ridiculous."

The other two tape-recorded writers under review here are novelists Margaret Laurence and Hugh MacLennan. These are half-hour interviews, not readings, and the interviewer, Earle Toppings, asks good searching questions, eliciting some interesting responses. Laurence talks, with the earnestness and warmth that are the trademarks of her novels, about the events that have shaped her life and influenced her writing: primarily the deaths of her parents and her grandmother when she was still a child, and her upbringing in a small Prairie town. MacLennan, too, talks about his early life, and how, though he grew up in Halifax, he had never even crossed the provincial border into New Brunswick until he was an adult, a graduate student. He had lived in England and travelled over half of the United States and Europe, but had never seen Canada. He barely knew he was a Canadian, until his writing showed him that he was, that in fact he had to be to survive as a writer, because, as he says, "all drama depends on the familiar, on recognition." He could not write as an American or as an Englishman. He had to explore his own country. Laurence speaks of this same necessity; her first fiction was set in Africa, where she and her family were living, but eventually she realized that if she went on with it she would be writing "as a tourist" and that she had to "return, spiritually and mentally, to my own background."

These are both interesting and thorough interviews, touching on most of the important questions. My only complaint is that they are a little out of date. Laurence speaks of her intention to come back and live in

## the spoken word

by Doris Cowan

### Atwood's fine flatness, Birney's 'poem' variations, and other unique sound effects

The Poetry and Voice of Margaret Atwood. *Caedmon TC1537* (in association with the Poetry Center of the 92nd St. YAI-YWHA, New York City). \$9.49.

Canadian Poets on Tape: Earle Bimey and Irving Layton, produced by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Van Nostrand Reinhold, 59.95.

Canadian Writers on Tape: Margaret Laurence and Hugh MacLennan, produced by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Van Nostrand Reinhold. \$9.95.

Alligator Pie and Other Poems, by Dennis Lee, read by the author. *Caedmon TC1530*. 59.49.

Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fung (abridged), by Mordecai Richler, read by Christopher Plummer. *Caedmon TC1525*. 59.49.

Stephen Leacock: Gertrude the Governess and Others, read by Christopher Plummer. *Caedmon TC1559*. \$9.49.

MARGARET ATWOOD reads her own poems in a meticulously flat and empty voice, and at tint it seems to the listener to be some perverse and self-defeating strategy of shyness: you wonder what she is biding, and why. She seems to be trying to make the spoken word sound as much like the printed one as she can. But gradually, as the ear becomes accustomed to her delivery, you realize that this blank calmness is a wise and deliberate choice. It is not by any means a style that would suit all poems, but it suits hers perfectly. Their meanings are many-

levelled and their impact is indirect: a more acted presentation would render them ridiculous by complicating their effect. Atwood is a poet who wears an inexpressive mask. The charge of emotion her poems carry is arrived at obliquely, behind the scenes. In the selections from *Power Politics*, for example, in such lines as "If I love you, is that a fact, or a weapon?" or "It is no longer possible to be both human and alive," her soft, clear voice gathers a remarkable concentration and tension into its tone without departing from its careful linearity by so much as a breath. It's an impressive reading.

Earle Birney and Irving Layton are both fine poets, and because they are in some ways opposites it's interesting to contrast them. Maybe that's why the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has put them together on the two sides of a tape, each giving a half-hour reading and discussion of his work. Both had apparently been asked to talk about what poetry is and what makes a poet, since they both begin with attempts at definition. Birney, whose light voice sounds younger than his years, endeared himself to me at once by his inconsistent pronunciation of the word "poem." Sometimes he says "pa-em," other times "pome," and occasionally slips back to an even older and possibly uniquely Canadian pronunciation: "poim."

He is an enthusiastic and rather artless but nevertheless effective reader of his own work. There is a fresh vitality in his voice;

Canada, which she did several years ago. And it is clear, too, that she had not published *The Diviners*, her most famous novel, at the time of the interview.

The last three items on my list are all entertainments. Caedmon has issued recordings of Dermis Lee reading his poems for children, and of Christopher Plummer reading a slightly abridged version of *Jacob Two-Two and the Hooded Fang* by Mordecai Ricbler, and "Gertrude the Governess" by Stephen Leacock. The Lee record is obviously the work of a man who knows what he is doing. His delivery is just right for his brilliant, nonsensical, unbuttoned, unzipped, and unbuttoned poems. A chorus of children listens, laughs, and joins in. They love the body talk (ears, fingers, knees, tots, bums, turns, and belly buttons); the food talk (jellies, hamburgles, and garbage delight); the tongue-twisters (Lee reels them off flawlessly); and the monsters, bad guys, million-dollar banks, and a detective named Dogbone who arrests himself.

In *Jacob Two-Two and the Hooded Fang* the fantasy is under control, comparatively, but it's still a good story, and it is read with great finesse and many appropriate English accents and voices by Christopher Plummer. But Plummer's Stephen Leacock, grumpy and mean, seems to me to be one of the actor's best creations. He hits just the right note of delicate self-congratulatory malice as he laces into innocent parties in all directions, sneering, incredulous, outraged, and hugely entertained. □

There is a literary corner of this foreign field that is forever pseudo

Rosemary Goal, by Tom Marshall, Oberon Press, 149 pages. \$15 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 255 5) and 86.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 256 3).

The Goldfish That Exploded, by Mary Beth Knechtel, Pulp Press, unpaginated, \$2.95 paper.

Song end Silence, by Darlene Madott, Borealis Press, 167 pages. 86.95 paper (ISBN 0 919594 76 x).

IN ENGLAND there is a magazine called Private Eye that delights in pricking pretensions and sending up institutions and traditions. Nobody is too sacred for its scurrilous swipes. It was *Private Eye* that nicknamed Edward Heath "Grocer." Harold Wilson "Wislon," and dubbed the Queen and Prince Philip "Brenda" and "Keith." For some years they ran a comic strip about the adventures of a repulsive Australian named Barry Mackenzie, an oafish boor addicted to Sheilas and tubes of Fosters. He immortalized himself (on my brain at least) in the issue he announced that he was "drier than a dead dingo's donger."

Along with such regular Features as general appeals for Funds against any number of libel and obscenity actions, columns named "Grovel" and "True

Stories." perceptive and scathing critiques of the establishment by Claud Cockburn and Auberon Waugh, and bulletins from that intrepid reporter Lunchtime O'Booze, *Private Eye* has a "Pseudo Corner." In this Feature readers are asked to contribute blatant examples of tortured and tortuous prose from the print media; the *Eye* pays £5 for anything it prints. Many is the time I have contemplated the vast Fortunes - or at least rent money - to be made from the untapped Canadian market. Indeed, there is a columnist in one of our national magazines whose prose.

I don't know what prompted Kingston poet Tom Marshall to write *Rosemary Goal*, but I suspect years of teaching Canadian literature at Queen's University contributed both inspiration and source material. The novel is about Harold Brunt, an academic in a small college town who has written a first novel (*Journey on the Underground*) and is attempting a second. Instead of writing the second novel, Brunt occupies himself with analyzing *Journey*, searching for meaning in his own obscure trash. Meanwhile, his wife Rosemary Goal, an artist with a history of bad breakdowns, bolts from the marital nest first for a fling with a reformed homosexual and then for a

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bout with the chairman's ex-wife. a late-blooming lesbian. Rosemary is **not** your typical **faculty** wife.

The book has **three parts: excerpts from *Journey on the Underground*; passages from Brunt's journal; and the narrative of *Rosemary Gad. Journey* is hideously contrived and wonderfully pretentious. For example: "This too was long ago and far from her now. it was before Anton. before that headlong fall (or was it really a difficult ascent?), or perhaps that first happiness was a trick of her memory, or, more likely, the excessive exuberance of recovery From illness." *The journal* serves both as a critique of *Journey* and a diary of Brunt's torment in writing the second novel. It is too consciously a bridge and a background device to work as a diary; it lacks authenticity. The narrative of *Rosemary Goal* is gossipy and entertaining and is what eventually will become Harold Brunt's second novel. Brunt says at one point that he is trying to write a novel within a novel and that is what Marshall has done, tricking the tender into accepting one kind of novel when she is actually reading another. It's a con game -clever, but nonetheless a dupe. And that ultimately is what's wrong with *Rosemary Goal*. It is a beg of tricks.**

*The Goldfish That Exploded* is a gem of a parody. It is quite vile and often grotesque, but it is always superbly controlled and occasionally very funny. The protagonist is Jon Chopulo, a West Coast academic and part-time sadist who abuses and then ignores his pregnant wife while he embarks on

an odyssey of sensual and aesthetic pleasures. He gets his in the end — or the beginning, if you prefer. since the plot turns round on itself.

And now, having considered two parodies, we come to the real thing. a novel so turgid in its narrative and so pretentious in its prose that the pages assume the weight of elephants. Song and Silence by Darlene Madott is about three generations of women. all of them concert pianists, and all of them one-time students of a legendary figure named Rinsky. Mrs. Rinsky was the lover and protégé of his youth. Solange of his middle age, and now Solange's young friend Danielle is Rinsky's student. Danielle is preparing for a major concert while recuperating from a soured love affair with an anonymous young man. Each of the women has loved completely a man who didn't love her, although Danielle has proven immune to Rinsky's charms.

The book probes the mysteries of life and love, sadness and hurt through a process that

is surely more painful to read about than it ever was to experience. The kind of sentence Tom Marshall writes For Fun. Darlene Madott writes For real. Here's a selection; take your pick:

There waits a hidden terror in trees with their awful resemblance of each other.

\* \* \*

Life is still life whatever its sufferings...!!

\* \* \*

To the individual who has to face his own private death, What is the tree, what is the soil to his suffering? AS it flutters to the ground, what leaf fears for the tree?

\* \* \*

They died in each other to serve unborn life.

I could go on, but I won't: I'm saving the best examples for *Private Eye*. Who knows, at £5 a go, Darlene Madott's prose may be the magic solution For Canada's slumping dollar. □

## on the racks

by Paul Stuewe

### All thrillers have similar blueprints' but some never leave the drawing-board

SINCE PaperJacks has embarked on an ambitious program of original paperback releases, I'll devote much of this month's column to them. Paperback originals tend to cluster within the precincts of specific kinds of genre writing (mysteries, thrillers, gothics), and thus it's pointless to discuss them as if they were original works of literature. But within the limitations of conventional situations and character types, many writers have invented fictions as satisfying as any in the language, although the perils of slavish adherence to form often overwhelm the possibilities of freshly minted content.

A case in point is Paul Fulford's *Who's Got the Bastard Pope?* (\$2.50), which presents a grossly overloaded smörgasbord of standard thriller ingredients: a dotty professor, a shady lady, a Maltese Falcon-type treasure, exotic South-East Asian settings, inexhaustible hordes of hoodlums, and large doses of violence and kinky sex are there for window-dressing rather than purpose, and as a consequence of trying to fit all these in it's overlong and much too slow-paced for comfort. Fulford partially redeems matters with some pleasantly snappy dialogue, but basically this is the sort of book where about half-way through you realize that you don't care who does what to whom and flip ahead to make sure that the hero survives and the shady lady dies a nasty death — which is exactly what happens.

Trite as it is, *Pope* seems mildly plausible when compared to *Vie Mayhew's* *The Bomb Makers* (\$2.50). The level of unreal-

ity encountered here is quite indescribable, but can be suggested by citing the example of a gang of apprentice revolutionaries who murder an American diplomat in expectation of being instantly taken onto the payroll of the U.S.S.R.'s secret service. These same masters of intrigue go on to put together a nuclear bomb and hold the world to ransom and . . . . But you don't tally want to know the rest, believe me. Yet you might conceivably want to know that *Mayhew* lays on the gore with a trowel, and that after I finished *The Bomb Makers* I fell like going out and sinking my teeth in someone's neck.

William C. Heine's *The Last Canadian* (\$1.50) is a paperback reprint rather than an original, but it does show what a skilled writer can do with even the most far-fetched plot. There are several unlikely aspects to this tale of the decimation of North and South America by plague, but things happen so quickly and forcefully that there's no time for idle pondering, as the need to know what happens next overpowers any nagging intellectual reservations. One-dimensional characterization and some unlikely greet-power shenanigans keep the book out of the first rank, but it is a darned good read that kept me on tenterhooks until the final page.

Jim Lotz's *Death in Dawson* (\$1.95) returns us to the original PaperJack's releases with a novel about gold thieves in the contemporary Yukon, and here an effectively sketched society of miners, Mounties, and mystery men is far more enjoyable than the events of a rather lumbering plot. And I must confess that my disbelief was

## George Grant



**George Grant in Process: Essays and Conversations**  
(Edited by Larry Schmidt)

An important overview of the work of Canada's most respected and influential philosopher, with 14 essays by noted Canadian scholars and an extensive commentary by Grant himself, in which he answers his critics and suggests new points of departure in our thinking on such crucial issues as Quebec, technology, modern thought, religion, and the future of Canada.



**Anansi**

definitely not suspended by a villain who address& the good guys es follows: "You're looking et a new phenomenon in Nonh America — the returned Vietnam veteran. Tough, ruthless, accustomed to killing, skilled in all the manly arts." Here and in numerous other instances. Lotz tries to do too much work with his dialogue, and I suspect that non-fiction books on the North are more his vein of mother lode. Still, *Death in Dawson* makes UP in atmosphere what it lacks in professional polish, and the result is a few hours of painless diversion.

I had *Maye* Preston Hill's *Noble Madness* (\$2.50) typed as a horses-and-hot-flashes yam fimm the heavybreathing jacket copy, but was pleasantly surprised to find that the author has fashioned a convincing realistic novel from tie elements of conventional romantic fiction. Interesting characters, credible sex, end the delights of the world of horse-racing are depicted in a prose style far superior to that of the typical paperback original, and this is the only book of the litter that clearly deserves hardcover publication. The only genre involved hne is that of good writing, and I'll be looking forward to more of the same from *Maye* Preston Hill.

*Paula Bournier's Kate McGuire* (\$1.95) is also heralded by some suggestive jacket copy, but there the resemblance to *Noble Madness* ends. *Kate McGuire* is an infuriatingly perfect Irish-Canadian Miss caught up in Catholic versus Orangemen struggles in early 20th-century Toronto, and if you try it you'll soon be hollering "Faith,

end begorrah" right along with her oh-so-painfully Hiberian relatives. 'Phis is a novel that revels in ethnic stereotyping while piously condemning its more violent manifestations, and it's suitable for neither wee folk nor grownups.

Our lest paperback original is David Conover's non-fictional *Sitting on a Salt Spring* (\$1.95), which amusingly reverses the familiar "back to the land" pattern in its account of en isolated island-dwelling family's mom toe town on the West Coast. Murphy's Law ("Whatever can go wrong, will") is in constant operation, and among the book's many highlights is en absolutely hilarious description of a riotous communitydance. The vast numbers of disasters and coincidences occurring here led me to suspect a certain amount of exaggeration on the author's part; but that's es much a part of this particular genre es ruthless Russian spies are of the thriller, and Conover's book is so unflinchingly diverting that I'll pardon him a few excesses in return for such solid entertainment.

There's not much room to discuss reprints this month, but I would like to especially recommend Carol Shields's *Small Ceremonies* (Totem, \$1.95), a novel es complex, engaging and unpretentious es the everyday lives it chronicles so masterfully. There's no violence and not much sex, just a richly imagined and realized account of family life that brought tears and laughter to the eyes of at least one crusty old individualist. A book that requires only one response: Thank You!

Also in paperback:

#### FICTION

*Children of the Black Sabbath*, by Anne Hébert (PaperJacks, \$2.25). A disturbed young French-Canadian woman experiences fantasies religious, sexual and otherwise. Absolutely titilliant and absolutely terrifying.

*The Fire-Dwellers*, by Margaret Laurence (Bantam-Seal, \$1.95). A superficially ordinary woman subjects her life to extraordinary pressures, as told by an equally extraordinary writer.

*The Lark in the Clear Air*, by Dennis T. Patrick Sears (Bantam-Seal, \$1.95) Coming of age in rural Ontario during the 1930s.

*On the Circuit*, by Joseph F. Suessmuth (Totem, \$2.25). Hot cars, fart women, and me, drivers on the Grand Prix racing trail.

*The Stone Angel*, by Margaret La-e (Bantam-Seal, \$1.95). The celebrated novel of a resilient survivor and her remembrances of things past but not forgotten.

#### NON-FICTION

*The Greet Canadian Joke Book*, by Robert Shelley (PaperJacks, \$1.95). "A million laughs guaranteed," many fewer than that provided.

*The 100 Effect*, by Fred Soyka with Allan Edmonds (Bantam-Seal, \$1.95). Electric particles in the air and their effects upon mood.

Percy Rowe's *Travel Guide to Canada* (PaperJacks, \$1.95). Hits the highspots from Newfoundland to the Yukon.

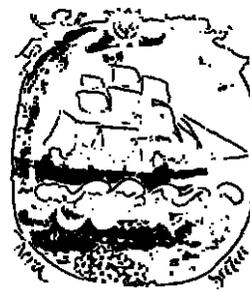
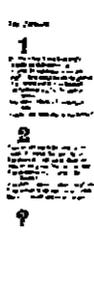
*There's a Raccoon in My Parks*, by Lyn Hancock (Bantam-Seal, \$2.25). Marry a zoologist and live happy-ever-animally.

*Wild Goose Jack*, by Jack Miner (PaperJacks, \$1.95). The autobiography of one of Canada's most famous conservationists. □

## UNCLE BUMPER SAYS Guess what's coming in September!

What has 365 days, 12 months, droll and delightful poems by Dennis Lee, fantastic full-colour illustrations by Frank Newfeld, about a million solemn historical facts (not always strictly true!), and a billion crazy and wonderful facts (not always entirely untrue!), snippets about every province and territory in Canada, plus a whole troupe of absurd and entertaining alligators, and that wily old Canadian character — famous from coast to coast (and beyond!) — UNCLE BUMPER!!!!!!?

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# Usage, abusage, and the full story behind the basic techniques of P.E.T.

ANYONE WHO hopes to find a guide to English usage that's wholly satisfactory is naive. After all, I've heard such experts as NBC's Edwin Newman confuse the words "deprecatory" and "defecatory"; and even good old Fowler has his idiosyncrasies. Looked at in that light, Rob Colter's modest little boo!: Grammar to Co: An Informal Guide to Correct Usage (Anansi, 160 pages, s-1.95) isn't bad. But es perhaps befits someone who teaches something called "communications skills." Colter is a bit too liberal for my liking. For example, he argues that "there no longer seems to be any point in objecting to the misuse in speech of 'hopefully'." But I'm not without idiosyncrasies of my own. I cringe every time I read or hear someone use the word "quote" as a noun (or adjective) es in. "I heard a really good quote today." I shall insist until I die that the noun is "quotation" and the verb is "quote." And yet my own prose isn't without crudities. For years I've used the expression "and/or" as in the sentence "Jennifer and/or I will go with you." Not long ago, however, a friend showed me part of a decision handed down by an American Supreme Court Justice in 1935 that denounced "and/or" es "that befuddling nameless thing, that Janus-faced verbal monstrosity neither word nor phrase, the child of a brain of someone too lazy or too dell to know what he means: Hmm.

\* \* \*

TO JUDGE BY The Greenpeace Book (Orca Sound Publishing, Box 652, Vancouver, 70 pages, 56.95) one bar to conclude that mcmben of Greenpeace are some of the most self-congratulatory and shallow people around. I regret to say that, because I sympathize with some of their aims. But this collection of crummy drawings, photographs, poems, and small "m" mind, large-type prose et IO cents a page has become the strongest contender for my award for Biggest Rip-Off in Canadian Publishing in 1978. One of the key Greenpeucers, Robert Hunter, whose good first novel, *Erebus*, appeared a decade ago, and whose excellent survey of social and political trends of the 1960s, *The Uses of Anarchy*, appeared a couple of yews later, now has been reduced to such twaddle as: "It's not that there's an apocalypse coming; we're a prod one-third into it right now. ... It's a Jericho situation: the castles are coming down Pretty fast."

I; \* \*

"You asked us" is the title of a column by Anne Collins and Rue Hemelrijk that has appeared in *The Canadian* magazine each week since 1967. Now it's the title of a book that brings together 350 of "the best" of those columns (Fitzhenry and Whiteside,

232 pages, \$5.95). I can't imagine who would buy such a book but I'm bothered nonetheless that about one half the items in it are lifted without credit straight out of the extremely handy American reference book, *Morris* (no relation) *Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins*. (William and Mary Morris, Harper & Row)

\* \* \*

ALTHOUGH IT WAS published several months ago I haven't seen any reviews of J. M. Cameron's *On the Idea of A University* (U of T Press, 92 pages, \$3.95). Perhaps that's because we've wearied of talking about what's gone wrong with our universities. But Cameron's analysis of the problem is so incisive, his prose so cleat and Passionate, and his recommendations so sensible, that reading this book is enough to renew one's belief in the possibility of genuine reform. Students come to university, writes Cameron, hoping to find there "and through the great men they believe to be its gods, moments of epiphany, deeper knowledge, mote complex emotion, the unriddling of riddles, maps to many countries of the mind, spells to drive away dragons. I believe that even under the worst

## interview

by John Cruikshank

# How Roger Caron began writing with jelly beans in far-from-splendid isolation

MOST CREATIVE writers would envy the solitude and freedom from distraction afforded Roger Caron during the 15 years it took him to write his memoir *Go-Boy!*, which was reviewed in our June-July issue. However, then was a slight catch. The



solitude was imposed on Caron. He has spent 23 of his 39 years in prison and his book, published with a little help from Pim Berton, is an account of what half a lifetime behind bus is really like. John Cruikshank interviewed Caron in Ontario's Collins Bay Institution, where the writer is completing a 16-year sentence for bank robbery and jail-break and is quietly at work on one second book:

**Books in Canada:** Roger when did you first decide you wanted to get your experiences down on paper?

Roger Caron: I started writing *Go-Boy!* in solitary confinement in 1963. I was at my wit's end — 19 months in solitary. I was going crazy. There was this voice inside me that wanted to be heard so badly. And there was nobody listening.

**BIC:** It was some kind of release for you to write?

Caron: Oh yes, instead of getting therapy on the psychiatrist's couch I found it wiling *Go-Boy!*

**BiC:** *But what led you to write? You describe yourself as a very physical, very direct man in your memoir. You always seemed more apt to deal with emotional problems physically, violently.*

**Caron:** *There's a story not in the book. At Christmas, 1963, the Salvation Army came down to the hole with bags of goodies. They distributed jelly beans and hard candies to the guys. I had a bag of jelly beans of all colours.*

*I wanted to yell out at the guards and tell them what they were, but if I did that I'd be punished for insubordination. They locked down into my cell and banged on the walls anytime they saw me resting. So I used to sit there on the floor and spell out words with my jelly beans so they'd see them. I used to get a violent reaction.*

*It's funny, that was my first discovery of the power of the word. It dawned on me how good it felt to get it out without getting hit over the head with a night stick.*

**BiC:** *But the book didn't reach finished form for another 15 years. Have you been rewriting during this entire period?*

**Caron:** *Instead of being rewritten, it's been a matter of progress. For the first 12 years I was just learning to write-by writing and rewriting. I have only a grade 7 education and that was just sort of on loan. When I first started writing my book there were no paragraphs, no chapters. At one time I had 1,600 typewritten pages just divided into Parts I, II, and III. It was like a long period*

*of gestation. First there was no form, slowly chapters and paragraphs materialized and periods and commas started to fall into place. It was incredibly important for me when I discovered the difference between "woman" and "women", between "there" and "their" and "they're."*

**BiC:** *How did you conceive of what you were doing? Did you know what you were looking for and where you wanted to go with the memoir?*

**Caron:** *I didn't know what I was writing. I was a walking bank of emotion. It was either going to come out of me at the end of my fist or the end of my pen. That emotion was ruining my life, so I went from scribbler to scribbler. I can see myself in the dead of winter with the heating system off under blankets and with about six pairs of long underwear there on the floor with only my arm projected from underneath the pile writing madly, compulsively, furiously. I was writing with so much tension that I was breaking pencils and damaging the ends of my fingers.*

**BiC:** *It sounds like a very painful experience.*

**Caron:** *I'm very fortunate because I can paint pictures with words but I don't think I can write from the neck up. I write visually and as I write I'm looking at what I'm writing, I'm constantly reliving. It's almost like a TV camera on my shoulders. I'm always looking back at my past; that's why*

*it hurts so much. I have a bunch of instant replays in me and I don't always like to switch them off because of all the emotion that pours out with them.*

**BiC:** *Why did you keep going?*

**Caron:** *Because the manuscript became a source of strength, of hope, of life for me; renewal almost. I was like a drowning man and my manuscript kept me buoyant. I worked from seven in the morning till lights out at eleven. I was always in a segregated unit in the hole. Fortunately my manuscript kept me going. The darker things got the deeper I drew into my manuscript. Until I nearly lost it at K.P.*

**BiC:** *Was that during the big Kingston Penitentiary riot?*

**Caron:** *Yes. I was in K.P. when the riot happened. Four days and two bodies later when the riot was terminated we were told we were going to Millhaven and that we could take our personal effects with us. Most of us hadn't slept for four days and we were tired and jumpy. I had almost 1,600 typewritten pages. I wrapped it up in about 20 feet of plastic and covered it up in masking tape and I marked it "Manuscript Only." I abandoned all my other personal effects.*

*We were lined up and being brought out one by one. When my number was called I walked over to the guards with my manuscript on top of my head and my hand up. I found myself with bayonets and night sticks*



## TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN WORLD DEVELOPMENT



### TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN WORLD DEVELOPMENT: A RE-EXAMINATION

Prepared at the request of the Commission on Transnational Corporations, this report is an integrated study of the political, legal, economic and social effects of the operations and practices of transnational corporations. It was felt that the interrelationships of these effects made this necessary, as a sequel to the report published by the United Nations in 1973 entitled *Multinational Corporations in World Development*. In view of the importance of transnational corporations in world development, it is hoped that this report will make a useful contribution to the general debate and provide a factual background which may form a basis for a better understanding of the subject and for appropriate policies.

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digging into my sides. They made me throw my manuscript into a big pile. They'd tricked us-but I couldn't protest against bayonets.

Two weeks later at Millhaven a school teacher came to my cell with the manuscript, very battered but still intact. He'd been searching through the prison dump looking for school supplies when he found it. Gratefully and reverently I latched onto it, already with a pencil in my hand.

**BiC:** How do your fellow inmates feel about the book? Have they read it?

**Caron:** I've been writing it for 80 long and they've been reading it hot off the typewriter. It's not only my voice, it's their voices too. That's the dream-to be heard—and I guess they think I'll do it for them. They can identify with the book. I was delivering their message to the outside world. □

## CanWit No. 35

WHERE BUT IN England would you find John Wyndham's Midwich or Hardy's Melchester? Where but on the Canadian Prairies would you find M. T. Kelky's Elk Brain Or Laurence's Manawaka? Readers are invited to suggest fictional place names for particular regions of Canada that are unmistakably of that region. Duncan Meikle of Maberly, Ont., receives \$25 for this idea and \$25 will go to the winner. Address: CanWit No. 35, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is Sept. 30.

### RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 33

READERS WERE asked to provide a hypothetical entry from Pierre Trudeau's diary for any day during the past 10 years. The winner is John Harris of Prince George, B.C., who receives \$25 for this succinct *aide-mémoire*:

Oct., 1970

I tawt I taw a *coup d'état*. I did, I did, I did taw a *coup d'état*!

#### Honourable mentions:

June 21, 1978

Started off the day in swimming pod. Chatted with a bilingual lifeguard. Told me his lessons were paying off. He'll soon be able to swim.

Phoned D.P.W. again to complain—restraint, yeah—but no water in the pool? Hell, they don't get the bruised arms and legs.

Heard Margaret was going to opening of Regine's in Montreal. Decided to see who she was with this time. Went disguised as lovely Frenchwoman. She didn't come (not here anyway), but I got picked up by Warren Allmand. Fair dancer, but my God, what a bore. All his affairs are consumer's.

—Peter Gorrie, Ottawa

May, 1978

An excellent idea, after all, for Margaret and I to disguise ourselves as each other.

There was one moment when I thought the silly little [xxxxx] had blown it, making that remark about my having the body of a 25-year-old. But no one appears to have suspected anything, not even Charles Lynch or that trusting idiot Lalonde. So here I am in New York, taking photographs like crazy of Bianca and company, while she's up there in Ottawa, screwing everything up. Yet one thing bothers me. Are Clark and McTeer pulling the same trick?

—Barry Baldwin, Calgary

\* \* \*

May 11, 1978

—John Price, Downsview, Ont.

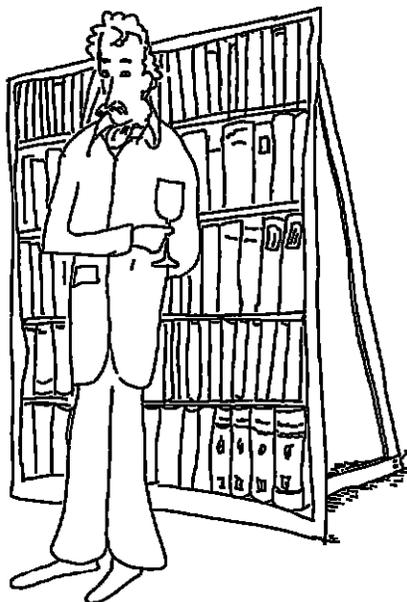
\* \* \*

May 17, 1978

Lalonde for lunch: again foul Argyle socks ... cocktails with premiers, had 7 smoked salmon canapés .. René much balder ... wearing awful Argyle socks too. House sat late, slipped away for Mary Tyler Moore ... Hate late sessions since Turner left; always had Harlequins in briefcase, although boring about my returning them ... Have gained two pounds; must get racket restrung ... Bennett wearing Argyle socks at dinner, rented smoking, of course ... Sent Barney out for 3 pr. Argyle socks ... To bed late, read Major Douglas until three ... Still unable to sleep in lotus position....

—P. Röderstein, Toronto

## men and their libraries: 4 by Foo



## Letters to the Editor

### FALSE IMPRESSIONS

Sir:

A friend in Montreal has sent me the June-July issue of *Books in Canada*. I had no idea that you intended to run an article about me, or even that such an article had been written. The bulk of it seems to have been drawn from a long interview that I gave last autumn under the impression that it was for a special issue of *Canadian Fiction Magazine*, and from odds and ends gleaned from conversations I had thought private and correspondence I had thought personal. Nevertheless, the intention of the piece is so obviously generous that it is with great reluctance that I feel obliged to point out that it contains a number of factual errors. Had the proofs been shown to me, I could have corrected them. Most of the mistakes are merely careless and of no great importance: I don't think it matters to readers who have never met me whether I am Anglican or Presbyterian; while the age attributed to me will arrive *en toute vitesse* unless I die in the meantime. However, I hope you will permit me to correct one or two impressions. First, I do not think of myself as having been abused, neglected, slighted or ill-treated by Canada or Canadians. I have not been "overlooked" but have simply never sought publicity. This is a personal matter. I do not feel that Canada owes me anything. On the other hand, I do not owe Canada anything either, except for the old-fashioned attitude of publicly decent respect one owes to one's country. I have not lived on grants, handouts, or public funds, and I entirely disapprove of readers' being drawn to a writer's work through artificial acquaintance with the writer's private life. So that your cover title is quite inappropriate. Next, I am not a friend of Roland Barthes, Samuel Beckett, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir; and, if I were, the last thing I would do would be to produce their names in an effort to inflate my own. It was not the Dreyfus family who made me a present of the front page of *L'Aurore* with Zola's *J'Accuse*. The Dreyfuses have been unstinting with help and encouragement, but they have no reason to make me a valuable present; nor for obvious reasons, could I have accepted one. *J'Accuse* was given me by the descendants of Auguste Scheurer-Kestner, the Alsatian senator who brought French Protestant influence to bear in favour of Alfred Dreyfus. The Senator died in 1899 and was not a friend of mine.

Mavis Gallant  
Paris

*Books in Canada* is as chagrined as Mavis Gallant by what appears to be a series of misunderstandings between our contributor and his subject. Geoff Hancock replies as follows: I am, of course, distressed to find that my hasty math has prematurely aged Mavis Gallant. Normally I would not mention a writer's age except in unusual circumstances. In this case, for some odd reason, many people I talked to considered Mrs. Gallant a contemporary of Ethel Wilson, possibly in her 90s. Such are the misconceptions that time and distance have created around Mrs. Gallant.

Neglect, abuse, and ill treatment take many forms for a writer. In Mrs. Gallant's case, with

the exception of two collections of stories, her works are unavailable in Canada. The back issues of *The New Yorker* with her stories of the last decade cost \$42; *Green Water, Green Sky*, *The Other Paris*, *A Fairly Good Time*, and *The Paganic Junction* cannot be found in any major bookshop in Vancouver, Toronto, or Montreal (except for specialty shops featuring limited editions, and so on). From my vantage point in British Columbia, she is practically unknown, a form of neglect in itself for a writer of such stature. I am referring here to her skills as a *fiction* writer, which is distinct from a *Canadian* writer. The question of what she owes Canada and what Canada owes her, if anything, is a matter for literary critics. (But since the 1976 edition of *A Literary History of Canada, Volume 111*, has two pages devoted to her, perhaps the matter is settled?) For me, simpleminded as I am in these matters, she is a good writer who deserves to be read and whose books should be made more available. If I can be responsible for drawing attention to her work, and perhaps in some way encourage some enterprising publisher to bring out a six-volume collected works, then I shall be satisfied.

Nowhere in my article do I suggest Mm. Gallant lives on grants, or public funds, nor did I inquire into her source of income.

The Beckett, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Barthes acquaintance came about in the course of several conversations with Mm. Gallant over a six-week period. She mentioned that she had me, Beckett and once, while at a theatre, be pretended not to recognize her but sat sheepishly next to his wife in a row behind her nervously popping candies into his mouth. Mm. Gallant mentioned, my notes indicate, that because she knew Sartre and de Beauvoir, the *New York Times* was always pestering her to do articles on them. (Such an article appeared in September, 1977.) I do not know for certain if she knew Barthes, but I mentioned one day that I had been down the Paris street where D'Artagnan of *The Three Musketeers* was supposed to have lived. Mrs. Gallant immediately responded that she knew where that was, that Barthes lived on that street for a while, and she then launched into a fine hyperbolic description of Barthes and his way of life. She certainly seemed to have the inside information on the man, and I assumed they knew each other. She does not, need to inflate her name or her reputation.

Knowing that Mm. Gallant does not, like invasions of her privacy, I devoted more than three quarters of my article to her fiction. Still, fiction comes from somebody, and though the New Criticism would argue that only the work itself and its self-contained structures are what matter, I did find that knowing Mm. Gallant helped me to appreciate her fiction, to appreciate the humour and ironies within it. This aspect of her personality is what I hoped to get across not, only in my article, but also in the special issue of *Canadian Fiction Magazine*.

The story of *J'Accuse* was a misunderstanding on my part.

#### BROWSER OUT OF BOUNDS

Sir:  
I object to The Browser's review of Arthur Johnson's *Margaret Trudeau* (April). While I am no fan of Trudeau's either, I couldn't help but feel the reviewer trespassed the boundaries of literary criticism by ignoring the book and commenting on the subject of the book herself. I refer specifically to the concluding remarks: "... a woman who structures situation after situation so she can't help being hurt by the

results. There's something pathetically out-of-synch about her."

Please, Browser, if you are going to comment on a book, do so, but save your "insights" as to the true character of Margaret Trudeau for the pages of *People's* magazine. Or the *National Enquirer*.

s. Molec  
Saskatoon

#### CRI DE COEUR ENCORE

Sir:

I see that we are still stuck with the kind of literature that means nothing and says nothing. Perhaps if we wrote in modern Icelandic no one would criticize us. We would not, have to be responsible for anything. That would be good for such a rustic country.

J. Christian Henrickson  
Vancouver

#### FALLIBILITY PRAISED..

Sir:

Allow me to offer belated support for your "Editor's Note" (May) answering the letter of criticism about the selection and remarks by judges of your First Novel comes..

The candour show, by *Books in Canada* in printing the judge's opinions was refreshing — opinions diametrically opposed about the quality of the award-winning volume. How many overseen of contests, judge's panels, or adjudicators-at-large, in or outside Toronto, so openly confess their fallibility?

Gerald Noonan  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
Waterloo, Ont.

#### ... BEARDSLEY CHIDED

Sir

Correspondent Doug Beardsley (May) did not read the First Novel Award piece very carefully. Had he done so he would have noticed that although I live in Toronto I picked *The Invention of the World* as the Am novel I considered most worthy of the award. Unfortunately I was outvoted.

David C. Stimpson  
Toronto

## The editors recommend

#### FICTION

**Chain Reaction**, by Gordon Pape and Tony Aspler. Penguin. Well-plotted thriller triggered by Quebec's unilateral declaration of independence.

**Don Quixote in Nighttown**, by Victor-Lévy Beaulieu, translated by Sheila Fischman, Press Porcépic. A Quebec *Ulysses*.

**Hold Fast**, by Kevin Major. Clarke Irwin. Moving story of a youth's struggle to return to his outport community.

#### NON-FICTION

**The Making of a Secret Agent: The Pickersgill Letters, 1934-1943**, edited by George H.

Ford, McClelland & Stewart. Fascinating record of intellectual life in the 1930s.

**Another Time**, by Eli Mandel, Press Porcépic.

An examination of Canadian literature within the context of modern literature.

**Essays on the Constitution: Aspects of Canadian Law and Politics**, by Frank R. Scott, U of T Press. Articles on constitutional law, civil liberties, and federalism by one of Canada's intellectual leaders.

**Warehouses for Death: The Nursing Home Industry**, by Daniel Jay Baum, Burns & MacEachern. Effective account of the humiliating and degrading system of elderly care.

**The Life and Death of Anna Mae Aquash**, by Johanna Brand, James Lorimer & Co. Disquieting exposé concerning the death and subsequent investigation of an Indian activist.

**Shadd: The Life and Times of Mary Shadd Cary**, by Jim Bearden and Linda Jean Butler, NC Press. Straightforward biography of an unconquerable Negro woman.

#### POETRY

**The Blue Sky**, by David Donnell, Black Moss Press. Donnell's latest collection of witty, intelligent poems.

## Books received

1978 Canadian Film Digest Yearbook, compiled by Canadian Film Digest.  
East and West, Selected Poems of George Faldy, edited by John Robert Colombo, Hornsblow.  
Stilt Jack, by John Thompson, Anansi.  
Trails to Timberline, by Einar Blin, Northern Times Press.  
The Canuck Book, by Ian Walker and Keith Bellows, General.  
Joe Davidson, by Joe Davidson and John Deverell, Lorimer.  
Northeast for Louisburg, by William Douglas Fraser, Amethyst Publications.  
Little Cayuse, by Eugenie L. Myles, Nelson.  
Travel Guide to Canada, by Percy Rowe, PaperJacks.  
Sitting on a Salt Spring, by David Conover, PaperJacks.  
Wild Goose Jack, by Jack Miner, PaperJacks.  
Raisins and Almonds, by Fredelle Brusler Maynard, PaperJacks.  
The Next-to-Last Train Ride, by Charles Dennis, PaperJacks.  
South America, Lands of the Southern Cross, by Gary Birchall, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.  
In the Pioneer Home, by Rosemary Neering and Stan Garrod, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.  
The Milestone Pocket Guide and Planner: London, by Max Milestone, New Horizons.  
The Milestone Pocket Guide and Planner: Paris, by Max Milestone, New Horizons.  
Robertson Davies, by Judith Skelton Grant, M & S.  
Morley Callaghan, by Patricia Morley, M & S.  
The Country of the Young, by Don Guttridge, UWO Press.  
Selected Stories of Ernest Thompson Seton, edited by Patricia Morley, U of O Press.  
The Canadian-United States Tariff and Canadian Industry, by James R. Williams, U of T Press.  
The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia, by Bernard Suiss, U of T Press.  
The Journal of William Storgis, edited by S. W. Jackman, Sono Nis.  
Canadian Social Policy, edited by Shankar A. Ylloja, WLU Press.

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Critical Choice: Nuclear Power in Canada, the Issues behind the headlines, by Charles Law and Ron Glea, Corpus.  
Rehearsal for Dancers, by Craig Powell, Turnstone.  
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No Way Back, by Bill Blecks, Scholastic-Tab.  
Susie-Q, by Eric Wilson, Scholastic-Tab.  
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Understanding Marxism: A Canadian Introduction, by Frank Cunningham, Progress Books.  
The Great War and Canadian Society, edited by Daphne Read, introduced by Russell Hane, New Hogtown.  
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Jumbo, the Biggest Elephant in all the World, by Florence McLaughlin Burns, Scholastic-Tab.  
Cabbagepatch, by Hugh Garner, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.  
A Political Art: Essays and Images in Honour of George Woodcock, edited by William H. New, UBC Press.  
Wings Across Time, by David H. Collins, Griffin House.  
Profits in the Real Estate Industry, by Basil A. Kalymon, The Fraser Institute.  
Democracy and Discontent, by Walter D. Young, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.  
The Other Nineteenth Century, edited by Louise d'Angencourt and Douglas Duick, the National Museum of Canada.  
Canadian Arctic Prehistory, by Robert McGhee, Van Nostrand Reinhold.  
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The Historic Heart of London, by John H. Lutman, Corporation of the City of London.  
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Canada Handbook 1978, Publishing Section, Information Division, Statistics Canada.  
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