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TRIBAL DRUMMERS

Clio, the Muse of history, arrived late in Canada, remained an ingenue for most of this century, and only recently began to blossom into a mature and exciting woman. A report on the state of the art

by Donald Swainson

CANADIANS KNOW remarkably little about their past. The horror stories are all too familiar a child comes home from school and explains how our ancestors, the pilgrim fathers, established Thanksgiving: Prime Minister Sir John Sparrow David Thompson is discussed in a lecture and a listener asks if he was prime minister of Canada; the Union of the Canadas is confused with Confederation; a sample of high-school students includes not a single person who can identify any pre-Second World War cultural leader. All of this is true and at one level it is depressing. Ignorance is rampant and seemingly intractable.

At another level it is less frightening, and perhaps not particularly surprising. Canada is a land dominated by élites. Confederation was, *par excellence*, the work of élites. A movement of public support was not considered necessary for the creation of what George-Etienne Cartier described as "a political nationality independent of the national origin and religion of individuals." Since 1867, Canada and its provinces have been led and managed by élite groups. One could even argue that the country would have failed had it suffered much real public involvement. It was, after all, British regulars who saved us from the Americans in the War of 1812; the inhabitants of Ontario might well have abandoned ship. An independent Ontario in the 1830s, led by William Lyon Mackenzie, would have been easy pickings for the predator to the south. Had Confederation been put to a true popular test it might well have failed. Untrammelled democracy would almost certainly have taken Canada into economic union with the United States during the 1880s. How long would we have survived that association?

Our historians have tended both to reflect and represent these dominant élites. Anglophone historians of Canada tend to be from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds. They are for the most part nationalists, with a relatively homogenous ideological position. Differences of view abound, but agreement is not difficult to find on such questions as national independence, democracy, liberal institutions, the need for a separate culture, economic independence, sovereignty in international affairs, workable federalism, or the importance of national political parties. The main areas of historical inquiry — the growth of Canadian autonomy, economic development, French-English conflict, Canadian-American relations — reflect these overriding concerns. Traditionally, these themes have received vast amounts of attention from historians. Recently a new set of concerns has been added to the list and has provoked substantial amounts of new research and controversy.

The output of Canadian historians has been impressive. This was especially notable for the first couple of generations of professional

historians, who worked amid conditions that were less than ideal.

The profession in English Canada is not very old. The 19th century produced some gifted amateurs. Pre-eminent was John Charles Dent, who wrote large amounts of often well-researched narrative history. He was a Canadian patriot, who explained our march towards unity and independence. The early 20th century witnessed a lot of activity, and some of it resulted in fine history. One of the best historians of this period (and like Dent he lacked professional training) was William Dawson Le Sueur, who wrote a superb life of William Lyon Mackenzie in 1907-08. But the profession really dates from the early years of the 20th century.

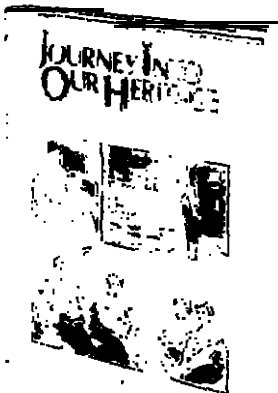
Two events heralded the arrival of the discipline in Canada. First, G. M. Wrong was appointed in 1894 as head of the department of history in the University of Toronto. He held that crucial post until 1927, and during those years established Canadian history as a major area of study at Toronto. Second, the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada* was established in 1897. This major journal, which became the *Canadian Historical Review* in 1920, gave Canadian historians an outlet for their writings and a journal that set standards and influenced scholarly trends.

There were not many Canadian historians during the early years of this century. Most universities had one, usually a man who had been educated in England. He taught a fairly heavy load of undergraduate courses, and attempted to carry on his poorly funded research under severe handicaps. His teaching was by no means confined to Canadian history and he had few, if any, graduate students. This basic pattern persisted until the rapid expansion of the university system that began with the 1960s. Amazingly, however, it produced both good historians and excellent history.

The men who dominated this era of scholarship continue to exert a heavy influence on historical writing. George Wrong, Adam Shortt, Arthur Lower, Harold Innis, Frank Underhill, and Donald Creighton went in a variety of directions and focused on a large number of themes. The quality of their writing differed and, of course, their individual interests changed over time. They and closely associated colleagues published a body of historical literature that shaped the profession and both created and crystallized perceptions of Canada.

The vast canon of this group produces an indelible mark on the reader. Canada, it is clear, is a legitimate entity that is not an artificial state. We possess (or at least possessed) economic logic and a political culture of integrity. Our sovereignty can be real, but must be safeguarded from external threats that are more likely to emanate from the United States than from any other quarter. The American threat is not, of course, unanimously conceded. Historians such as Frank Underhill found continentalist solutions increasingly acceptable.

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Within this Canadian state, cultural pluralism is the norm, although ethnic ruptures are endemic and constitute an ever-present theme. Our economy is based on realities as old as the fur trade and, while practical, is heavily dependent on the production of traditional staples. Consequently the economy is highly vulnerable. Political conflict is based on regional and other interest cleavages, rather than on ideological divisions. When working at its best, the political system is leader-dominated and brokerage-minded in its functioning. Religion is of prime importance and is more likely to intrude on the political process than is any other ideological force. The various regions are inter-dependent, but Ontario is clearly the linchpin of confederation. Workers, ethnic minorities, and class conflict are present on occasion, but rarely dominate interpretations of our past.

Some of these historians, and especially Harold Innis, presented us with prose that was turgid to the point of being impenetrable. Others however accepted the national historian's responsibility of telling the story of the tribe to the tribe. Underhill, Lower, and Creighton, whatever their crotchets, work beautifully. Some of their prose is inspired, and will remain a treat for future generations of literate Canadians.

The 1960s inaugurated a veritable revolution within the profession. The motive force was not intellectual; it was growth. Explosive expansion of universities was a prime characteristic of that decade. Instead of a single Canadian historian on staff, universities found groups of such scholars. As late as 1964, Queen's University had one professor who taught nothing but Canadian history; two others divided their time between Canada and Britain. Within a few years that university found that it had six permanent historians of Canada, and they were routinely assisted by visitors. This experience was repeated throughout the country. In the space of a decade, the profession's manpower increased by a staggering dimension. Courses proliferated and an ever-intensifying specialization was encouraged.

It would be simplistic to suggest that new themes were pursued solely because of the manpower factor, although it helped enormously. Younger historians were influenced by developments abroad, and many studied in Europe and the United States. Canadian graduate programs developed with enormous speed, and hordes of M.A. and Ph.D. students sought often innovative thesis topics. Internal developments, such as the Quiet Revolution, were profoundly important, as were shifts in ideological and nationalistic styles. The result for Ramsay Cook was a "golden age of Canadian historical writing." Golden indeed have been the past 15 or so years of historical scholarship.

Continuities with the earlier era persist, both in theme and personnel. Donald Creighton continued to grace us with elegant and stimulating pieces until shortly before his death late last year. The concerns of provocative historians such as Innis, Lower, and Underhill remain close to the surface. But the sheer volume of recent publications forces any observer to search for patterns and to categorize our historical publications. We now can observe thematic trends that seem to be firmly entrenched.

Some of the most traditional areas continue to receive intensive cultivation. Political history and biography remain popular. Canadian historians have often been accused, incorrectly in my view, of devoting too much attention to politics. Yet enormous gaps in our political history persist. We do not even have high-quality histories of the Liberal and Conservative parties. We have received, however, a vast amount of writing concerning the politics of the 1890s, Mackenzie King and his party, the development of the welfare state, party financing, and political culture. Much biography is political, although commendable efforts have been produced on a variety of business and cultural figures. Politics retains its importance and its interest. Many Canadians, for example, would like to be able to comprehend the incredible history of the federal Conservative party in this century.

The history of business and economic development retains its traditionally important place, although format and interpretations have changed. Much less emphasis now is placed on staples production and related themes. Numerous studies have been written that analyze business and economic development from the left, or

look at problems through micro-analysis. Gustavus Myers's old polemic, *History of Canadian Wealth*, has been reprinted and has finally come into wide use. Tom Naylor's somewhat perverse jeremiad, *The History of Canadian Business 1867-1914*, is highly regarded by many critics of the system. More substantial works of scholarship are H. V. Nelles's *The Politics of Development*, Michael Bliss's *A Canadian Millionaire*, and Douglas McCalla's *The Upper Canadian Trade, 1834-1872*. These excellent studies, which are illustrative of a large body of writing, take us into the centre of key enterprises and show us how they work.

Urban history, too, is coming into its own. Historians such as Alan Artibise, Gilbert Stelter, J. M. S. Careless, Max Foran, Peter Goheen, Fred Armstrong, and Paul Rutherford have established this genre as a fixed portion of the discipline. At a related but more popular level is a tremendous boom in local history. This material tends to be less theoretical than the work of urban historians. At its worst, it is a jumble of ill-digested and unco-ordinated fact, interspersed with badly reproduced photographs. At its best it is excellent narrative history that is widely read, even if only locally. Literally hundreds of local projects have been completed in recent years or are now in progress. This area probably draws more popular interest and participation than any other aspect of historical study and is closely allied to the whole heritage movement. Thousands of Canadians have developed a genuine interest in learning something about their origins. This development is encouraging and is evidence of a deeper commitment to an understanding of Canada than is the continuing success of professional popularizers, who often produce works that, while slick, embody little but the conventional wisdom of yesterday.

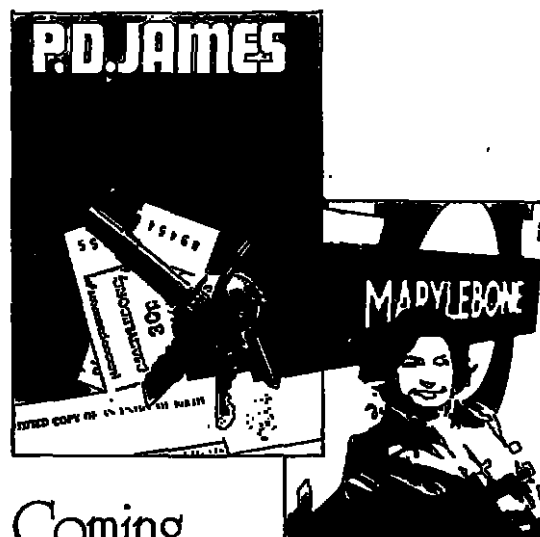
Two modes of scholarship have exerted an enormous influence on recent historical thinking. These are regional history and the so called "new history." As is true with much thematic categorization, overlapping takes place.

Regional history is hardly new. Some of our greatest scholars have been students of regions. W. L. Morton, for example, made his reputation as a Prairie historian. What could be more quintessentially Western than his statement of 35 years ago: "For Confederation was brought about to increase the wealth of Central Canada, and until that original purpose is altered, and the concentration of wealth and population by national policy in Central Canada ceases, Confederation most remain an instrument of injustice." And what could more faithfully echo those remarks than Premier Peter Lougheed's recent claim: "It's simple. If Ontario owned the oil you can be assured that we in Alberta would be buying it at the world price." Regional culture has always been a fact of life in Canada, and so has regional history. The Prairies and Quebec are especially rich in their own historical literature. What is new is the discovery of regionalism by Ontario-based historians, who are falling all over each other to proclaim the doctrine of "limited identities."

The "new history" is a different matter. It is subdivided into several themes. Michael Katz's *The People of Hamilton, Canada West* has been proclaimed as a landmark representative of the genre. This is a work of quantitative history that is dependent on computer technology. Other proponents of the "new history" write labour, feminine, and working-class history from a perspective that is self-consciously left wing. All of these writers, who are really social historians, are concerned with the common people. They are opposed to the elitist history of old and intend to rewrite Canadian history "from the bottom up." Ironically, the "new historians" are perhaps as elitist as any in our tradition. Their dedication might be to the man in the beer parlour, but their methodologies and choice of subjects tend to force them back to professional scholars. Who but heavily funded researchers can do the sort of research that Katz set out to do? Who but professionals and students in social history courses read Katz's table- and graph-strewn chapters? Is there any but a professional readership for detailed analyses of a seemingly endless series of strikes and lower-class movements? Working-class history is enormously interesting to professional scholars. but that is where the interest stops.

Regional obsession and the "new history" differ in many respects, but they come together at one critical point. They

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represent fundamental disillusionment with the old verities of the classical period of Canadian historical scholarship. They constitute fundamental attacks on older interpretations of Canada that stressed unity, sovereignty, and economic viability. A reading of the classical historians left one with a feeling that Canada was, at least potentially, an integrated unit. A reading of recent historians—and not just regionalists and “new historians”—leaves one with an atomistic view of the country.

Are we then left without historians of the nation? Has the history of disintegration taken control? Perhaps not, even if only because a pendulum cannot forever swing in a single direction. An interesting potential antidote is contained in the writings of our cultural/intellectual historians. Maria Tippett's life of Emily Carr makes clear to the perceptive reader the limits of regionalism. Emily Carr

as an artist was, in crucial ways, made and sustained by foreigners and Central Canadians. The history of her art is a case study in cultural inter-dependence. More important is the work of Carl Berger, William de Villiers-Westfall, and Brian McKillop. Their studies of the Victorian mind seem to reveal, however tentatively, the emergence of an intellectual community. That community was perhaps confined to Anglophones of the upper strata, but its existence seems demonstrable. Perhaps these historians will be able to re-do the work of Innis and Creighton and demonstrate the existence of a Canadian commonality, however élitist. Is it perhaps the final irony of Canadian history that in this land of regional conflict, brokerage parties, American incursions, and leadership politics, we might find our final self-definition in the life of the mind? □

LITERARY ECHOES

How the historical insights of Donald Creighton et al. helped to fuel the creative dreams of Canada's authors

by George Woodcock

THIS ARTICLE would have begun a great deal differently if the death of Donald Creighton had not intervened between the time I received the editor's invitation to write it and the day I sat down to the actual task. For the news brought to the surface an idea that had always been present in my mind: Creighton was really a novelist *manqué*. It is true that Creighton's single novel, *Takeover*, published the year before his death, was little more than a lightweight polemic, the work of a man who had trained himself to a discipline other than fiction and could not take up the novelist's task at so late a date. But Creighton's imagination was in some ways that of a novelist, seeing history as grand impressionist sweeps of events played out on vast terrains in a way that reminds one often of the more didactic passages of Tolstoy, particularly in *War and Peace*. Creighton felt the need for a myth to make the disparate facts of the past cohere, and created one about the “empire of the St. Lawrence”: he felt the need for a hero around whom the acts of disconnected individuals might cohere, and created one out of unlikely material in Sir John A. Macdonald.

Historians — and particularly academic historians — always tended to distrust Creighton, so that perhaps those nearest to him in his own field have been non-professional historians such as Pierre Berton and myself. But he has stirred the imagination of poets and novelists, and his view of Canadian history, in all its nostalgic conservatism, has coloured their views of Canada and provided raw material for the

myths they have shaped into fictional and sometimes poetic form. In this way Creighton has stood in a very similar relation to Canadian writers as Sir James Frazer stood in the age of T.S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence — the academic scholar rejected by his own kind but accepted by those who, in a different way from him, also saw their history imaginatively and whose creative dreams were often fuelled by his insights.

Perhaps the two largest debts that Canadian novelists and poets owe to Creighton are for his encouragement of an elegiac view of the past, which so many of them have developed in their own ways, and for his inclination, which so many of them share, to turn toward the myths that have meaning for the present.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Canadian writing in recent years — poetry as well as fiction and belles lettres — has been its growing consciousness of a history inextricably linked with our peculiar geography. As Michael Ondaatje put it in the introduction to his recent *Long Poem Anthology*: “We turn around and have to come to terms with the vastness of our place or our vast unspoken history.” Where I disagree with Ondaatje is in his description of our history as “unspoken.” There has been a multitudinous chorus of voices. I don't mean only the flood of local and national history that jammed the shelves of book stores through the 1960s and well into the 1970s. I mean the fact that in the English-speaking world there is no local tradition of writing in which history has been more

important than in Canada since 1941, when Hugh MacLennan published *Barometer Rising* and Sinclair Ross wrote *As For Me and My House*.

There is of course a sense in which *Barometer Rising* was a historical novel in the stricter manner. It was written about a specific event (the Halifax explosion of 1917) that was securely in the past, whereas *As For Me and My House* didn't concentrate on a historic event and concerned a kind of pharisaical prairie community that survived long after Ross wrote the novel. Yet by the 1970s, as Heather Robertson made clear in *Grass Roots* (1973), the society of the Canadian West, which had begun to flourish only with the advent of the railways in the 1880s, was already in advanced decay. We who read *As For Me and My House* today are looking back through history with the lens of the novelist's imagination to help us, as surely as in 1941 we looked back on First World War Halifax through the lens of MacLennan's novel.

This may give some hint why history amuses so much interest in Canada, and why so many of our writers incorporate it in various ways into their books. It is partly because “we have only recently emerged from the timeless world of the pioneer, who could not afford to be concerned with history because the present offered him such great and immediate challenges. But having emerged from that pioneer state of mind, we are suddenly aware that, among us, history has operated differently from history in the old cultures of Europe and Asia. It has been

far more rapid — whole processes that in other places took centuries or millennia have crowded into a short space of time. In just over two centuries since James Cook landed at Nootka Sound the Pacific coast has passed from the Stone to the Nuclear Age, and in the North the process has been even more rapid. The unique prairie settler culture, as our fathers knew it, has come and gone in less than a century, and the Upper Canadian agrarian culture — as Man Cohen does not tire of showing in his novels — has not lasted much longer. Whole areas like the Klondike and the Cariboo blossomed into life through sudden movements of population sparked by the hope of wealth, and withered in a few years like a desert after the rains. All over the West then are remnants of ghost towns where people lived passionately and sometimes violently for a year or two and then departed, leaving the buildings to decay and the bush to creep back again. But in other places — like Vancouver — a cluster of waterside shacks could become a regional metropolis in a fragment of a lifetime. This telescoping of history is one of the reasons why we have — as writers and readers — become so recently interested in our past. We realize the paradox of our situation: that in terms of duration we are a young country, but in terms of experience we show some of the characteristics of a premature old age, in which whole ways of life have risen and passed away with astonishing rapidity compared with the slow rhythms of the Old World.

All this has had its effect on Canadian novelists and poets, and on the way they treat the past. Many of them are sharply conscious of history, but rarely in the conventional sense of locking back from some arbitrary vantage point over a long sweep of the past. Rather, as in Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel* or Matt Cohen's *The Disinherited*, the Past is here, in the present, filtered through memory, yet in its own subjective way authentic.

This, of course, brings one to the whole question of historical authenticity, whether in fiction or elsewhere. To give a wholly accurate picture of the past is impossible; the "whole truth" beloved of jurists does not exist in the human mind. Even historians interpret the past according to viewpoints conditioned by their experience, and those we consider great historians — from Gibbon and Tcyntee down to Creighton — are writers who shape the past into imaginative and imaginable structures. The character of such structures changes from period to period according to the shifting cultural ambience (as well as the recovery of solid evidence), so that our 1980s vision of ancient Greece is a good deal different from that of Victorian historians. In Canada, so rapidly have perceptions changed with our changing history that the accepted point of view on an event as recent as the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 has shifted almost full circle in less than 20 years.

The conventional historical novelist is as much trapped in this pattern as the professional historian. The attempt to reconstruct a past age as an authentic setting — as William Kirby did in one of the better Canadian historical novels, *The Golden Dog* — makes the novelist dependent on the historiography of his age. Hence, the main dividend of reading a historical novelist of the past, such as Bulwer Lytton, may be gained from examining the Victorian view of the Roman Empire that he expresses in *The Last Days of Pompeii*, rather than from believing we are being shown how people actually lived and felt and thought in the teal *Pompeii* as the ash showered down.

Conventional historical novels were common in Canada during the 19th century, when most of our fiction followed formulaic patterns and the imagination was not greatly encouraged. Nowadays they are rare, and the few that are written, such as Rudy Wiebe's *The Scorched Wood People*, tend to arouse controversy about their special kind of authenticity. There is no doubt that Wiebe departed — quite deliberately — from what the records tell us about the two Metis risings, and totally reconstructed Gabriel Dumont's character in a way that, as Dumont's biographer, I found unacceptable. Yet I have to admit that, in any work dealing with historic personages, the novelist does face a problem quite apart

The Temptations of Big Bear. One may cease to expect from them the kind of chronicle of the past that historians are supposed to present. What we do find in them — and this is undoubtedly their justification — are, as I said recently in *The Canadian Historical Review*, "disguised reflections of our own aspirations and our own questionings of life which at appropriate times bring certain historical periods back into the centre of our minds and give them symbolic meaning. Our own sense of losing a meaningful past, which is strong among many people today, responds to the dramatic presentation of the loss of a whole way of life that is a dominant theme in Wiebe's recent novels."

One of the reflections of our "sense of losing a meaningful past" is the attempt to re-establish continuity. Thus, at a time when formal discontinuity is often being technically exploited by poets and novelists, we find in our most interesting writers a preoccupation with continuity. This is projected in the very title of Margaret Atwood's *Survival* and is echoed in her book of poetry, *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*. It is also one of the dominant themes of Al Purdy's poetry, both in his shorter pieces and in his historical verse cycle, *In Search of Owen Roblin*.

Thus, many Canadian novels are in a sense historical, aimed at recapturing the



from that of establishing the authenticity of his setting. He has to deal with real-life situations that may be dramatically uninteresting until they have been tailored to fit, and in the process history becomes an imaginative projection of the novelist — or poet — rather than a slice of past actuality.

Of course there is another way of locking at a book like *The Scorched Wood People*, or Wiebe's other novel on the same period,

past, even if they are not conventionally so in the way that W.G. Hardy recreates historical personages in his recent novels about Julius Caesar and his times. In such a modified historical approach there are really two ways of going about the task of recapture. One I would call the Balzacian approach, which is to try to rebuild painstakingly in the mind's eye the details of changing material life over a period. The

other is the Proustian approach, using the constructive and adaptive power of memory to control the nuances of feeling and impression in such a way that the past becomes part of our present minds.

It seems to me that in Canada we have notable practitioners of both approaches. Hugh Hood, I suggest, is the great Balmcian, and this despite the fact that he has so persistently let it be known that in his sequence of novels, *The New Age*, he is emulating Proust. The real Proustians, I believe, are writers such as Margaret Laurence, who in her *Manawaka* novels has so elaborately interwoven the memories of a group of people that a whole way of living has been reborn in our minds, and Matt Cohen, who from *The Disinherited* onward has been building, cut of fictional

memories, the whole scope of an imagined community somewhere north of Kingston whose present life opens out into a lost past.

It is an everlasting choice for novelists who write in a social context: Balzac or Proust; the documentary view of the past tied down by factual detail; or the reminiscent view of the past, linked to us by the memories that we, as creatures of the present, inevitably condition. I am for Roust, and, by implication (and of course by temperament) for Margaret Laurence and Matt Cohen. History, being traditionally subject to The Muses (with Clio as its patron) is by definition an art and not a science. And in the arts the reality of the imagination, and not the actuality of fact, is supreme. □

A new light on the old Bigot

by Wayne Grady

Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume IV, 1771-1800 general editor Frances G. Halpenny, edited by Mary P. Bentley, Jane E. Graham et al., U of T Press, 913 pages, \$35.00 cloth (ISBN 0 co203351 2).

BECAUSE THE EDITORS have chosen to assemble the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* according to death dates, the events covered by each individual volume tend to be about 25 years out of synchronization: people who died before 1800, in other words, usually ceased "flourishing" around 1775. Thus Volume IV—the sixth to come out since Volume I in 1966—covers the death dates 1771 to 1800, but actually concerns the period of Canadian history that includes the expulsion of the Acadians in 1755; the fall of Louisbourg, the French stronghold on Ile Royale (Cape Breton Island), in 1758; the defeat of Quebec a year later, the Treaty of Paris and the Royal Proclamation of 1763; and extends slightly beyond the Quebec Act of 1774 to much briefly on the American invasion of Canada in 1776.

Each volume, then, is both a dictionary and a book of living history. And because it can combine theme and character, both of which are contained and developed within a plot, each volume partakes of some of the qualities of a novel. The present volume deals with the transfer of economic and military power in Canada from the French regime to the British Empire, and so it also enjoys a somewhat coincidental contem-

porary relevance that makes its novel-like characteristics all the more rewarding.

Because of this contemporary relevance, perhaps, one senses an earnest search for balance in the DCB (it is, after all, a joint project of the University of Toronto and Laval University in Quebec). History itself may be a stem judge, but historians must weigh each statement carefully before allowing history to make its crushing comment. Volume IV is prefaced by two introductory essays: one on the French regime by an English historian, and one on the British takeover by a French historian. Both are excellent surveys of the terrain. "The Acadians" by Naomi Griffiths provides an overview of the French presence in the Maritimes from 1632 until their precipitate departure in 1755. Pierre Tousignant's essay, "The integration of the province of Quebec into the British empire" is a discursive, informative, and absolutely impartial examination of the various proposals for the painless substitution of George III for Louis XV in the imagination of the average French Canadian habitant.

The 504 biographies are equally balanced, both internally and in relation to each other. There are, for example, entries for 57 French army officers and 68 English army officers: almost, one may say, a John Butler for every Pierre-Jean-Baptiste-François-Xavier Legardeur de Repentigny. There is a biography of a man whom both sides liked: Michel Blais, who in 1741 was a mere "habitant on the seigneurie of Berthier," but who by 1763 was a co-seigneur

and a captain in the French militia. Ten years after the Conquest Blais resurfaces as "first bailiff of the parish of St. Pierre," and by 1776 he was again a captain of the militia—the English militia. And there is a biography of a man whom no one—not even God—seemed to like: Jacques Girard, a parish priest near Truro, N.S., who, between 1742 and his death in 1774, was arrested twice by the English, denounced twice by the French, captured by the Micmacs, and shipwrecked twice, once in a British ship and once in a French.

Perhaps the clearest example of rehabilitation is in the biography of François Bigot, the infamous intendant during the final years of the French regime. Readers of William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* will remember Bigot as the arch-villain, so corrupt and debauched that Amélie would have little *frissons* of horror at the men mention of his name. Bigot's Canadian career spanned both the Acadian and Conquest periods. He was financial commissary in Louisbourg until the fortress's first capture in 1745; while there he began a lucrative privateering business, and when the British troops took over he sold them the stores. Upon his return to Paris in 1761 he was arrested, all his property was confiscated, and after two years in the Bastille he was banished from France forever. The DCB duly records these events, of course, but fairly reminds us that the Bourbon court was riddled with corruption as faction vied with faction for royal favour. And, tempering Montcalm's and Vaudreuil's low opinion of Bigot, is the observation that "the calm and capable General L&is maintained close and friendly relations" with the man Kirby called "the scoundrel of the Frippon."

I rather liked the old Bigot. Presenting all the facts is of course the business of the DCB, and Biit seen in the context of pre-Revolutionary France is perhaps a more modern novelistic approach than Kirby's eminently Victorian censure. But somehow Bigot as a victim of the system is less interesting than Bigot as the Devil incarnate. □

Howe now sainted cow

C. D. Howe: A Biography, by Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourn, McClelland & Stewart, 397 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 77104537 9).

By VINCENT di NORCIA

INTERESTING BIOGRAPHIES of engineers are rare. But this engineer was also the "general manager" of the Canadian economy

during much of the 1940s and 1950s and, many have felt, the "arch-villain" of Canadian Liberalism. Controversy swirled around C. D. Howe. Yet the authors maintain he was non-partisan, pragmatic, efficient, and a man of integrity: "The theory under which he wielded his power — socialism, free enterprise, corporate liberalism, or whatever — was of little concern" compared with letting rational self-interest govern affairs. I think that verdict is ingenuous, for this biography provides a wealth of evidence to show that Howe's career and beliefs had an interesting consistency, amounting almost to an ideology.

First, Howe was not only a good manager but also a managerialist. He worked to replace ideological and partisan conflict with good business management. Management was his politics. He was also a good engineer. His training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology taught him how to cut costs. More important, it taught him that scientific and technological advance was the basis of social progress and that overall economic efficiency and growth came through large-scale centralized enterprises. This led him to the entirely practical view that Canadian prosperity depended on big projects such as the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Trans-Canada Pipeline. It also led him to distrust general political principles

and respect only hard facts.

How's managerial and technological biases, the authors show, produced some apparent paradoxes. He helped to build a powerful state planning and enterprise system during and immediately after the war. But then he was content to let the market do its work. He refused to accept the logic of his own planning theory and practice in post-war economic reconstruction.

Similarly, he created or controlled a plethora of Crown corporations — the CNR, the Harbours Board, TCA, Polymer, and, indirectly, the CBC. He even "made a case for the independent Crown corporation [as] a publicly owned enterprise" but independent of the civil service and free of political meddling: "It was to be managed as efficiently, absolutely, and aggressively as if he himself were the private entrepreneur at the head of it."

Howe had no doubts about the "desirability" of economic integration with the United States. In 1947 he supported the policy of continental free trade — as did Lester Pearson. Yet this is the man who had doped a national economy, sided Canadian firms, and made sure the pipeline was an all-Canadian project running counter to the north-south lines of continental energy supply.

On the other hand, he had no patience with Walter Gordon's ideas. Before the

1957 election, Howe had decided to cancel the Avro Arrow project on the ground that it was too costly, despite the defence department's insistence that the Arrow was essential to Canada's technological progress.

Where Howe's consistency begins to show up is on the obverse side of his principles. Like other devotees of technological rationality, he was blind to social problems; Mackenzie King, not Howe, was the architect of Canada's welfare programs. Second, although Howe was Ontario leader and bagman for the Liberals, he was impatient with the machinery of democracy — with political opposition, with parliamentary procedure, and with the principle of accountability. Third, as he wrote Lord Beaverbrook, he believed "our best work will be needed to keep the government out of the hands of the socialists."

Statism was the one common strain in Howe's philosophy. He believed in a strong government operating in the national interest and put that belief into practice, often to the chagrin of partisan colleagues and old, narrow, commercial interests. All in all he was a fairly typical modern Liberal. Although Bothwell and Kilbourn tend at times to be uncritical to the point of hagiography, their biography has the virtue of completeness and will supply much ammunition for Howe's critics. □

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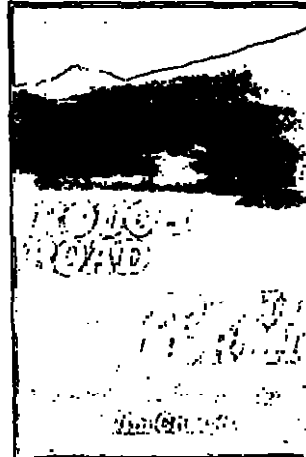
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Too good to be True Blue

John Bracken: A Political Biography, by John Kendle. University of Toronto Press, illustrated, 318 pages, \$17.50 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 5439 01).

By JOHN HERD THOMPSON

IN CHOOSING Joe Clark of Alberta to lead it, the Conservative Party was instinctively returning to a favourite source of party chieftains. Since the First World War five Westerners have directed the Conservatives' fortunes, and all but one eventually became prime minister. Unfortunately for the Tories, Arthur Meighen, R.B. Bennett, and John Diefenbaker proved incapable of holding on to the job for very long — a gloomy portent for the present leader.

Only one Westerner failed to give the Liberals at least one licking, and it is for this failure that John Bracken is best remembered, if and when he comes to mind at all. Bracken led the Conservatives — or nominally presided over their drift — from 1942 to 1947, when he was mercifully replaced by George Drew. His only lasting impression on the party was his insistence on the new and paradoxical name "Progressive" Conservative — an appellation that remains a source of amusement to lexicographers and the Ottawa correspondents of foreign newspapers.

As University of Manitoba historian John Kendle points out in John Bracken: A Political Biography, this judgement based only on Bracken's years as national Conservative leader is most unfair. Until he entered federal politics, Bracken never lost an election. Premier of Manitoba for two decades, he was the only provincial premier to survive the 1930s, and be left office in 1942 holding the Commonwealth record for political longevity.

Bracken's political career began when he was plucked from the principalship of Manitoba Agricultural College to lead the United Farmers of Manitoba, surprise winners in the provincial election of 1922. His choice, and his subsequent career demonstrated that the so-called "Progressive" revolt of Western farmers was progressive with a very small "p." Bracken's first major achievement was to balance the provincial budget by sacking civil servants and cutting grants to higher education.

Throughout his premiership he remained dedicated to the principles of free-enterprise capitalism, hostile to trade unions, and a determined foe of socialism and communism. A dreadful speaker who could anesthetize an audience, Bracken could also communicate perfectly with a rural Manitoba electorate that shared his puritan values. He gave Manitoba the sort of

"honest, businesslike, and unspectacular" government that suited the province's income and aspirations.

Bracken's brightest moment on the national stage came during the late 1930s when he emerged as a principal advocate of a national response to the crisis of the Depression. Bracken transcended Western regionalism, defending the idea of a strong central government against the narrow provincialism of Mitchell Hepburn of Ontario and Maurice Duplessis of Quebec, but he was never able to use this reputation to build a national political base. Those same characteristics that made him a success in Manitoba left him hopelessly out of his depth in the more complex world of federal politics.

Kendle's John Bracken is unusual among Canadian political biographies in that it is neither overly sympathetic nor critical of its subject. Kendle avoids the rhetorical excesses with which Donald Creighton inflated Si John A. Macdonald, and he doesn't throw the poison darts Peter C. Newman used to let the air out of John Diefenbaker. Readers are spared a denunciation of Bracken's opponents as villains and knaves, and Bracken's federal fiasco isn't blamed on obstructionism by the Tory Old Guard who opposed his progressivism. Instead, we are treated to a scholarly and fair account of an important provincial but secondary national figure.

Kendle's work is particularly commendable, for he worked under two handicaps. The first was a lack of material, for the 100 or so boxes of official Bracken papers in the Manitoba Archives are mostly routine, and all of Bracken's personal papers were turned to mush by the Red River floodwaters in 1950. This explains the "political" that Kendle adds to his title.

Bracken himself is his biographer's second obstacle. Asked on a national radio broadcast about the rumour that he was colourless, Bracken replied "that isn't just a rumour, that is the truth." He had no mistresses, drank rarely, kept no slush funds, and made no secret deals. His most human failing was a tendency to irregularity. Even John Diefenbaker, whose bloody-minded memoirs leave no rival unslandered, describes Bracken as "a man of good character whose word was his bond." In an era that produced Hepburn, Duplessis, and "Bible Bill" Alberhart, John Bracken stands apart as decent, honourable, straightforward, and — unfortunately for Kendle and his readers — dull. □



Also present at the creation

The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-1957, Volume I. by John W. Holmes, University of Toronto Press. 349 pages, \$25.00 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 5451 7).

By DDNCAN MEIKLE

THOSE WHO represent Canada's interests abroad must have a keen sense of reality. They need to know the limits within which Canada can operate, when she must take a firm stand, and when she should yield a little in the interests of peace and co-operation. Our representatives must also have more than the normal share of idealism — the kind that keeps a person going even though he is surrounded by depressing and never-ending evidence of injustice, starvation, petty intrigues, and war.

During the 1940s a small group of these men had two additional responsibilities. They had to redefine Canadian policies for a vastly different world, and they had to help establish organizations such as the United Nations to deal with international problems. Even though relatively young — all were born within a few years of 1900 — men such as Norman Robertson, Arnold Heeney, Hume Wrong, Lester Pearson, Gerry Riddell, Escott Reid, and George Glazebrook had an enormous impact on decisions made by political leaders of the time. Their training led them into public service, and their perspective made them act in the interests of both Canadians and mankind.

In this less-than-perfect world of ours, they did as much as anyone could have, and perhaps more, if one considers the demands on their health. John Holmes sums up their work:

Wrong, Pearson, Glazebrook, R. G. Riddell, and many of the other planners were historians by training and instinct. So was I, and that is probably why I found their approach so congenial at the time and in retrospect. A danger of the historical perspective is that it encourages complacent optimism, the fallacy of inevitable progress. On the other hand a degree of optimism is essential for policy-makers, especially those involved in the creation of a world. They do have to believe that something can be done even if the odds are against it. They, like historians, have to identify, undistracted by utopian fantasies, just how much has been accomplished and the directions in which we are moving. After the first session of the United Nations General Assembly, Louis St Laurent observed, "We have advanced from barbarism to a sort of international feudalism." He was a lawyer, but one of the historians. Gerry Riddell, wrote it for him. It was a shrewd estimate of the state that had been reached, with an awareness that in the

light of history the feudal system, with all its bloody faults, did mark a considerable step forward in the control of anarchy.

Holmes was part of this group, but the reader will learn very little about the contribution he made. After looking at the self-deprecatory comments in the preface, some might conclude that he had nothing to boast about, but they would be dead wrong. In just 10 years Holmes rose from a junior foreign-service officer to assistant under-secretary (the second highest rung of the civil-service ladder in External Affairs), but he has chosen to play down his personal success.

This volume deals with the period up to about 1948; it covers the background of the Second World War, the impact of the new weaponry, the changes within the Commonwealth, and the establishment of the U.N. Holmes shows how Canada's post-war position developed out of circumstances over which we had little control (the war, and our size, resources, and reputation) and out of decisions made by political leaders (what to emphasize, the degree of commitment). Most of the book consists of brief factual comments on such topics as conferences, international agencies, and specific problems interspersed with descriptions of the impact of personality and internal disagreement, and insights into the thinking behind various decisions.

This should be a useful book. Students who want a brief and dependable overview of international relations will find the mini-essays and index helpful. Those who wish to supplement the work already done on King, St. Laurent, Pearson, and C.D. Howe might find the occasional nugget. And the general reader will find a thorough and not uncritical examination of Canadian policies and practices in the post-war world. Volume II, which will complete the story, should be available before the end of the year. I hope a paperback version will be issued so that Holmes's work will be available to the widest possible audience. □

For him, CN was believing

The Great Scot: A Biography of Donald Gordon. by Joseph Schull, McGill-Queen's University Press, illustrated, 291 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7735 0349 8).

By ASHLEY THOMSON

IT WAS Supermen who used to say "Greet Scot," and although he wasn't referring to Donald Gordon, it seems to be Schull's view that he could have been.

Gordon first came to public attention in 1938 when, as deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, he got to autograph the nation's paper currency. Between 1941 and 1947,

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the Bank loaned him to the Wartime Prices & Trade Board, which he chaired with conspicuously more success than Jean-Luc Pepin had some three decades later when he held a similar position with the Anti-Inflation Board.

In 1950, Gordon left the Bank to take on the chairmanship and presidency of the debt-ridden Canadian National Railways. This move surprised many, since Gordon himself confessed that he knew so little about railways that he couldn't even fix his son's train. Over the next 16 years, one of Gordon's major contributions to the CNR was, understandably, its financial reorganization, but he also proved a quick study on railway matters. It was under his leadership, for example, that CN dieselized.

Retiring from CN in 1966, Gordon assumed the presidency of Brinco, and was at the helm when that company secured the financing necessary to erect the massive Churchill Falls hydroelectric power project. That done, in 1969, at age 67, Gordon died.

Clearly, Schull's title is a bit misleading, for while Gordon was born in Scotland, he made his name in Canada. Such deception may, however, be pardoned, for a more literal tide might well have scared off readers who have the impression that Canadians are dull — even great ones. If Gordon ever were dull, it will be news to anyone who picks up this biography, since every one of its pages reflects the gusto, enthusiasm, and general good humour with which Gordon himself approached life. (This is not to suggest that life with Gordon was always fun. See, for example, Schull's descriptions of Gordon's deteriorating relationship with his unhappy first wife Maisie, and his two sons by her.)

In order to bring Gordon to life Schull interviewed more than 60 people in addition to examining Gordon's own papers. What has emerged is not only a fascinating book, but also one that is clearly and critically written, though it is not without minor flaws. For example, the Bank of Canada was set up as a regulator of monetary, not — as Schull contends — fiscal policy. Slightly more serious is his tendency to introduce new characters without any elaboration in one place, and then mention them without much further elaboration somewhere else, forcing annoying trips to the index. One would expect Schull, an experienced writer of fiction as well as of non-fiction, to know better. □



Where Will the sacred prophet ran

Laurier: His Life and World, by Richard Clippingdale, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, illustrated, 224 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 07 082302 2).

By MARCY KAHAN

RICHARD CLIPPINGDALE begins his study of *Laurier: His Life and World* with precise definitions of his purpose and of his intended audience. His intention is to examine "the most significant aspects of the interaction of Laurier the Prime Minister with his country and his times, from 1896 to 1911." He is writing for "the interested general reader rather than the academic specialist." Clippingdale superficially achieves his objective. The resulting survey is conscientious, if uninspired, an awkward blend of political biography and social history.

In 1904, Laurier stated that "as the nineteenth century was that of the United States, so, I think the twentieth century shall be filled by Canada." Such buoyant optimism was characteristic of the period. As Clippingdale illustrates, Canada at the turn of the century was united by "the business of making and spending money." It was a time of imperial pride, industrial expansion, railway enlargement, and settlement of the West by European immigrants. Hyperbolic prophecies of greatness were commonplace. Thus, Montreal was hailed as "a city which is at once the London, the Liverpool, the Manchester, the Birmingham, the Leeds, the Oxford and the Cambridge of North America." Even Sydney, N.S., was dubiously pronounced "the manufacturing centre of the great & minion, if not the whole North America." According to Clippingdale, Wilfred Laurier was eminently suitable to lead Canada during these years of exuberant development.

The book's principal weakness lies in its depiction of Laurier himself. Clippingdale begins with a tantalizing observation: "Sir Wilfred is awfully hard to resist once you get to know him at all." This assertion may be true, but in this particular study Laurier proves extremely resistable. His legendary charm and magnetism are never convincingly illustrated, merely reported in a series of testimonials from admiring journalists and fellow-politicians. Laurier comes across as little more than a political cipher, delivering unmemorable speeches, effecting slick compromises, continually and intrepidly campaigning. There is thus a hollowness at the book's centre.

Clippingdale has instead chosen to concentrate on the major political and

economic issues of the time: the proposal for unrestricted reciprocity of trade with the U.S.: the Manitoba Schools Question, 1890; Canadian participation in the Boer War, 1902; Canadian support for the British Navy, 1909; the Conscription issue during the First World War. The narrative is, at times, unhappily reminiscent of the prose of high-school history texts, which bombard their captive readers with useful facts for examinations but are woefully deficient in terms of broader perspectives, stimulating analogies, and insightful evaluations.

In dealing with each crisis, Laurier demonstrated a shrewd talent for compromise and conciliation. Upon assuming power in 1896, he settled the controversy over the Manitoba Public Schools Act — which had terminated provincial support for Catholic schools — by arranging for after-hours denominational religious instruction. Similarly, in 1902, he satisfied the demands of Ontario's imperial loyalty, without unduly antagonizing the Quebec opposition, by his policy of "modified participation" in the Boer War. But aside from his genuine fear of "the vortex of European militarism," Laurier does not seem to have held any strong convictions or ideals about anything. As Clippingdale makes clear, the Laurier government was more proficient in generating growth than in dealing with its social consequences. Laurier was remarkably complacent about his priorities: "Reforms are for Oppositions. It is the business of Governments to stay in office." In excusing their *laissez faire* attitude toward social reform, Clippingdale argues that Laurier and the Liberals "reflected the aspirations and needs of a society of quick growth and self-confidence." This is simply another way of saying that a country gets the government it deserves.

Laurier: His Life and World is by no means an unqualified failure. Its pedestrian text is redeemed by the inclusion of a superb collection of photographs, cartoons, reproductions of contemporary paintings, and pages from Eaton's catalogue, which convey the nuances of social history. The "interested general reader" comes away with a clearer idea of the events and attitudes in Canada at the turn of the century. But Laurier himself — the wily man of "sunny ways" — proves too elusive a subject to be adequately captured between the covers of this comprehensive, splendidly illustrated coffee-table book. □



Pre-op probes on a sick constitution

Confederation, edited by R. B. Byers and Robert W. Redford, Canadian Institute for International Affairs, 355 pages, \$8.50 paper (ISBN 0 919084 33 8).

Keeping Canada Together, by Norman Penner *et al.*, Consolidated Amethyst Communications, 149 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 920474 07 1).

The Boundaries of the Canadian Confederation, by Norman L. Nicholson, Carleton Library Series (Macmillan), 252 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 7705 1742 0).

By DANIEL FRANCIS

IT SEEMS unarguable that Canada's constitution is in need of co operation. The question is whether cosmetic surgery is sufficient or whether something more radical (amputation, perhaps?) will be required. While the patient languishes, there is no shortage of experts crowding around the sickbed prescribing foies. For anyone seeking yet another opinion, here are three more books relating to the constitutional issue.

More and more the debate over the "new" federalism has become a tog of war between those who would shore up the authority of the central government cod those who would allow the provincial governments more power in national, even international, affairs. Yet both these proposed solutions are dubious panaceas. Do we really know in what way more, or less, centralization will affect our most serious problems—the energy crisis, high inflation rates, regional inequities, cod so on? What, if anything, does the constitution have to do with the quality of everyday life?

It is the irony of *Canada Challenged* that its authors attempt to clarify these issues by complicating them. The book is a collection of essays, mainly by academics, published under the auspices of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Each contributor was asked to comment on the probable impact of more, or less, centralization on hi specialty, be it energy, transportation, monetary policy, or whatever. The conclusions are too varied to summarize but that in itself is perhaps the most important conclusion. For example.. Professors Martha cod Frederick Fletcher argue that in the field of communications the provinces should be granted more authority, while Ian McDougall contends that what is desperately needed to improve the economic situation is more, not less, central authority. The point is that different responses are appropriate to different pblcms. The new

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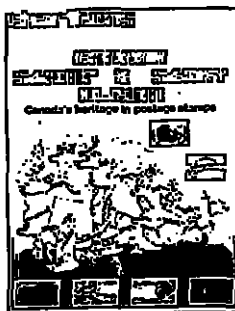
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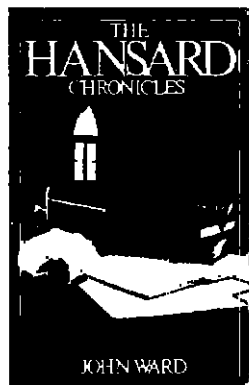
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Books in Canada, March, 1990

federalism may well include a central government et once stronger and weaker.

McDougall's essay deserves honourable mention for emphasizing the overriding importance of economic issues in the unity debate. Who really believes that a reorganized Supreme Court or an elective upper house are solutions to any relevant problems? Yet that too often is the abstract level at which debate takes place. Even the preoccupation with Quebec obscures fundamental cracks in the federal structure. McDougall suggests that "Quebec may represent the most important regional challenge only in a symbolic sense. . . . At not many of the problems of unity relate to material causes that cannot be improved. Let alone resolved, by constitutional change."

Keeping Canada Together is the handiwork of a project called Living and Learning in Retirement, which is dedicated to the proposition that there is life after retirement. In the fall of 1977 this group sponsored a series of lectures in Toronto on the unity issue. A number of academics contributed and the results appear in this book. The purpose of the lectures appears to have been to give some historical background to the present situation. The book includes essays on the Ontario schools question, the quiet revolution, the genesis of separatism and Western discontent. Readers looking for new perspectives or information will not find either here but someone looking for an introduction to the issues might find the book useful.

Should Quebec, or any other province, ever leave confederation it is possible that boundaries would become a point of contention. Certainly the late Donald Creighton touched a raw nerve when he suggested a few years ago that an independent Quebec would have no claim to the northern part of the province. The possibility of such disputes makes timely the reappearance of *The Boundaries of the Canadian Confederation*. First published in 1954, this book is an exhaustive survey of how our boundaries came to be where they are. Too densely packed with information to make exciting reading, the book is nevertheless a valuable reference work. □



Flash, fuss, and fizzle

A Pyramid of Time, by Abraham Boyarsky, *The Porcupine's Quill*, 76 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88984 009 1) and \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88984 007 5).

A Family Album, by William Bauer, Oberon Press, 150 pages, \$15.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 299 7) and \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 300 4).

The Visitors Have AU Returned, by Marilyn Bowering, Press Porcépic, 86 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88878 163 6).

By GEOFF HANCOCK

A COLLECTION of stories should be like a waiting package of firecrackers. Once that first page is opened, the fuse should be lit in the reader's mind and each story should explode loudly. This trio of first fictions is noisy enough, though dampness makes a few of the pages sputter or even fizzle out.

After a long apprenticeship, mathematics professor Abraham Boyarsky of Montreal has brought out *A Pyramid of Time*. This strongly written collection forms a loose story cycle of Jewish life in Montreal. From the opening prologue, with the narrator terrified of taking a shower at the local Y, to the epilogue, which finds him trembling with fear as he stands in the kitchen near the oven with his three-month-old daughter. Boyarsky rarely lets up his anger and rarely loses sight of his character's defence mechanisms.

The six stories (wrapped up with epigrammatic inserts that touch all the bases of Jewish survival, liberty, love, marriage, family devotion, and faith) show characters learning to tight back. During "A Birthday Party" the father of the young narrator makes him promise to be a bomber pilot when he grows up so he can flatten Germany. The same narrator in "A Hockey Game" discovers an afternoon game of hockey is anti-Semitism in miniature. A punch-up and its revenge turns the young boy into an adult.

Presumably it's the same narrator who turns up in Jerusalem some years later. In 1967, to attend university. His landlady tries to set him up with "The Sister," possibly the ugliest creature in contemporary fiction, and with no lack of speed, the narrator takes off. The ending, however, is vague and inconclusive. The low point of the collection is "A Serbian Dance." A divorced man meets his f-wife, recalls their past life, gets his hopes raised that she might come back to him, and finally ends trudging into a rainswept street.

Boyarsky gets back in stride with the next two stories, "The Resident" and "The Sabbath." In the former, a man fundraising for families whose bread-winners

were killed in the Yom Kippur War has his faith tested when a rich man offers him money on the condition that he bow down to two statues of Venus. In the latter, a rabbi in frail health after a heart attack has to deal with anti-Semitism and murder when a patient dies in a hospital for the aged. Boyarsky writes with a clean, clear style and keeps control of material that could so easily slip into self-righteous indignation.

William Bauer, from Fredericton, N.B., has also served a long apprenticeship. But the stories in *A Family Album* suffer from a nagging professorial tone. Bauer uses tools of contemporary fiction such as sub-headings and the documentary device of newspaper clippings and letters. The tools, however, are put to poor use. The sub-heading in fiction is most effective when it is used (as it is in Robert Cowser's *Prickings and Descants* or some of Donald Barthelme's stories in *City Life or Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts*) as a comment on a small action, complete in itself, instead of breaking one large dramatic action into a number of parts.

The five stories, and one chapter from a work-in-progress (which does not belong in this collection at all) suggest Bauer is still looking for a comfortable style.

A young man's romance is frustrated by the addition of his date's retarded uncle in "This Story Ends In A Pine Grove." A skip tracer indulges in a great fantasy of revenge in "The Hounds of Barkerville" when he

returns home to repossess the car of a boyhood enemy. The stodgiest story is "How Babies Are Made," a chapter from a book of boyhood lust and summer sex. The narrative tone is woolly and it remains so in "Fern," which celebrates a legendary family dog who becomes almost saint-like until the narrator decides to look at the legend closely. "The Clairvoyant" is interesting because the characters speak for themselves in a story of mind-reading in a service station. "What Is Interred With Their Bones" is the longest story and possibly the best; but the exposition, the serpentine sentences, and the stuffy academic tone knock the life out of the narrator's inquiry into the deaths of two old women, Anna and Annie, in an old-age home.

The possibility of a series of inexpensive quality paperbacks presenting the newest in innovative, experimental fiction appeals to my sense of progressivism. When I think of the 29 titles available from the Fiction Collective of New York, and the 16 titles in the University of Illinois Short Fiction Series, and recall the past glories of the House of Anansi's Spiderline Series of a decade ago (matched today by Coach House Press's avant-garde delicacies), I think it's about time.

Marilyn Bowering's book, *The Visitors Have All Returned*, is the first in the new Boundary Line book series to be published by Dave Godfrey's Press Porcépic. Presumably future volumes will indeed do

something in the advanced modern manner.

Bowering (from Victoria and no relation to Vancouver poet George Bowering) starts the series off with a poetic novel. Unfortunately, the book ends up as a sort of Canadian compromise, with neither the force, pace, command of fiction, nor the imagistic strength of the author's three books of poetry. Bowering can write lines as fresh as summa lightning, but fiction demands a clear dramatic action as well.

The sketchy story line of *The Visitors Have All Returned* is told in 19 brief vignettes, some less than a page in length. A young woman, uncertain of her role as wife, mother, and mistress, becomes isolated and withdrawn. Each dreamy vignette pulls her farther away from her soldier lover, her intellectual logger husband, and her daughter, whom she thinks of as "a bog person." The woman picks herbs by moonlight, and is painfully aware of the secret life of objects, several of which appear in photographs interspersed throughout the text. She cries over dead birds, worries about demons, dreams about childhood, and disagrees with her husband about everything. But she neither says anything nor acts. The isolation of these characters is poignantly felt, but the dramatic conflict between them is frail, if not actually wispy. Bowering is a gentle writer, with a delicate style. But fiction demands extremes of character and situation. Hazy drama, like damp firecrackers, just is not enough. 0

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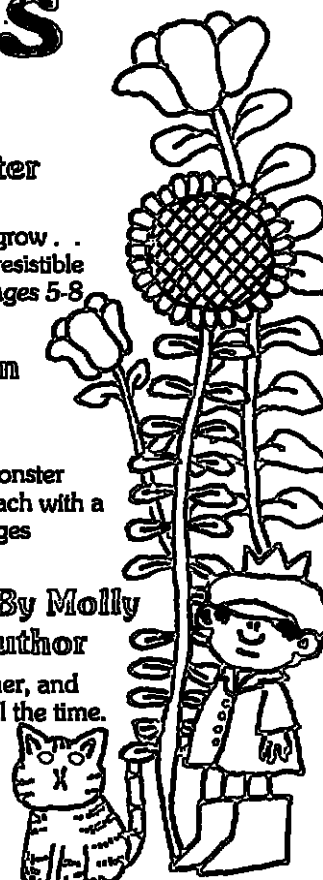
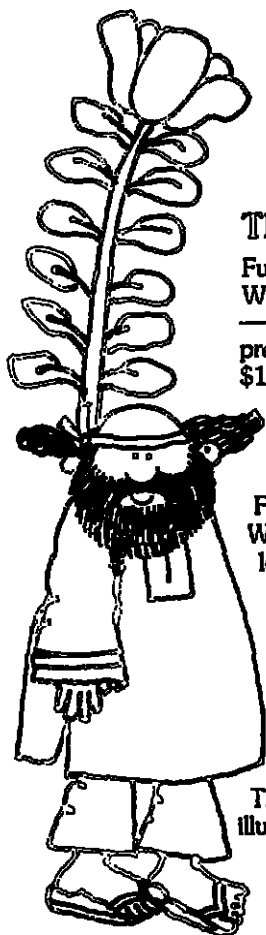
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Grit and bare it

A Right Honourable Lady. by Judy La Marsh, McClelland & Stewart, 251 pages, \$13.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 4624 3).

By DOUGLAS MARSHALL

THIS SEQUEL TO Judy La Marsh's 1978 roman-à-clef, *A Very Political Lady* (M & S), could have been called "The SOB's Revenge." The SOB in question is Jean Jacques Charles, the enigmatic prime minister of a minority Liberal government who possesses private wealth, a penchant for skiing, and a familiar mannerism: "Characteristically, Jean Jacques Charles shrug-pd." I case that *clef* doesn't click loudly enough for readers, a description follows a few sentences later: "Charles' pock-marked skin stretched eve" tighter over his high cheekbones. The almost oriental cast of his face was intensified, as pain touched the hooded eyes." There's no doubt about it: Ms. La Marsh has modelled her fictional antagonist on Clement Attlee.

As the sequel opens, Charles has just been deposed as party leader by our anagrammatic heroine, Kathleen Marshall (a one-ell version of the surname that no true Marshall can countenance), the tall, hazel-eyed former cabinet minister from Niagara whom Charles once tired. Charles is bitter and his loyalty to the new leader is conditional at best. Should Marshall seek an accommodation with him or dump him and risk alienating Quebec? And since she herself lacks a seat in Parliament, should she call an immediate general election or fight a by-election and carry on with the existing minority government? Meanwhile a time bomb is ticking away in the bureaucratic background — a murky nuclear-reactor deal with Cuba that has the U.S. president (a Southerner, naturally, with a toothy grin) hopping around like a cat on a hot uranium pile.

The risk of playing might-have-been with recent history is that it can come across as self-indulgent wishful thinking. Ms. La Marsh has mined her own experience to create a parallel universe better to her liking. That's a perfectly fair device as long as the author abides by the rules of fiction. One of those rules insists that the device can't be used simply to gain a degree of privilege for *ad hominem* attacks not normally available outside of Parliament itself.

Although certain persons in high places may disagree, Ms. La Marsh manages to stay just within bounds. She invents a Liberal cabinet minister from the West whose greed and stupidity strain credulity. Her ailing Tory leader is presented in a sympathetic light; however his replacement is portrayed as an ambitious young

hatchetman guilty of the mortal political sin of detesting Chits. The NDP is represented by a boorish red-haired trade unionist who can't keep a civil tongue in his head. Whatever else the novel lacks, it's not point of view.

In fact this is a better-written book than its predecessor. The pacing is tighter, the main characters have greater depth, and the clichés are less conspicuous (although the "fragrant smell of coffee" seems omnipresent). There are two or three well-realized scenes, including an excruciatingly awkward confrontation between Marshall and Mrs. Plunkett, the British prime minister; the Right Honourable Ladies find they have nothing in common but their gender.

The novel is lifted above the level of a routine potboiler by Ms. La Marsh's handling of her basic themes. Her description of the special pressures, domestic and otherwise, facing women in power has an authentic ring. More convincing still, and not a little frightening, is the analysis of how an entrenched bureaucracy can intrigue against its political masters and pervert the decision-making process of Parliament. Ms. La Marsh knows her way around C. P. Snowland.

It would be unfair to Ms. La Marsh to reveal the ending of *A Right Honourable Lady*. But it would be equally unfair to readers to pretend that it is in any way satisfactory. The central mystery that has kept us turning the pages is never resolved. This might be acceptable were a third Marshall novel in the works. Tragically, Ms. La Marsh has terminal cancer and we can expect no more might-have-beens. We are left with a literary curiosity, three parts art, two parts therapy, and one part guts. □

Out in left field

Voices of Discord: Canadian Short Stories from the 1930s, edited by Donna Phillips, New Hogtown Press, 224 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 919940 129).

By JIM CHRISTY

EVERYONE, so it goes, has their opposite number. If suddenly transported to the 'antipodes of his meandering dialectic, Lubor J. Zink, that correspondent from the *gulag* of the mind, could have written the 30-page introduction to this book, a collection of stories, mainly lousy, but with a couple of mediocre exceptions and one very good one. The actual culprit is Kenneth J. Hughes and his jargon reads like a try-out essay for the Alive Press reification team.

I lost track of the number of times he uses "bourgeois." It is actually great fun (and the saving grace of the little book which, all for "aught, is well-designed and well-

produced) to read the stories, then go back to the introduction and look at them through Hughes's interpretive eyes. Alice Butala's "A Day in the Town" I took to be a rather dreary portrayal of poverty on a small farm: "ma" end woman, old before their time, stuck in an endless Depression cycle; the storekeeper end his wife, who won't give them anything else on credit, just rather heartless end artlessly drawn. But no, the merchants "represent an historical phase of capitalism in its transition from an emphasis on primary accumulation and production in the mercantile and industrial phase to the consumption phase of monopoly capitalism in the recent past." No wonder Trotsky went on the lam.

The stories have been selected by Donna Phillips from *New Frontier*, *Masses*, *The Canadian Forum* and *The Queen's Quarterly* where they originally appeared in the 1930s. The claim on the back cover that they "present a picture of life that is richer and more complex than the dustbowl-work-camp outline of the Depression that is often all we see" is a load of capitalist adman mystification. Most of the stories are too amateurish to present any believable picture of life. The workers are all proud, noble, end regally screwed; the farmers are ready for the dung heap; the bosses' fat, greedy, and obnoxious. All of them are mouth-pieces. If these stories were supposed to do anything to broaden the consciousness of the proletariat, or anyone else, and rally them to solidarity, then their authors underestimated the enemy.

The stories worth noting are few. Luella Bruce Creighton's "Hydro" is a straightforward description of the plight of a family hoping the husband can get his two days of relief work finished in time for the hydro bill to be paid so that the wife doesn't have to have her baby in the dark. It is handled sensitively; we are not bludgeoned with a recitation of the evils of a society that causes people to be in such a circumstance.

In Sinclair Ross's "Circus in Town" a young girl's excitement and expectation are rebuffed and stifled by the sour realities of her parents' bleak life on the farm. It is just a story 'bout people being hurt, each in their own way. Hughes claims: "While the story works supremely well as art it falls short on the side of truth because of its petit bourgeois world view."

Bertram Brooker's contribution, "Mrs. Hungerford's Milk," is of interest because of the discrepancy it reveals between his writing and his painting. Brooker may have discovered cubism 20 years after the fact but he was right on time with social realism.

The only story that succeeds as a radical piece of literature is "East Nine" by Dyson Carter. A worker is hurt doing a job the boss shouldn't have pressured him to undertake. He is sent to the hospital, where eventually he dies, but not before he talks in his sleep about his ex-wife, and the other patients on the ward, also made useless by industry, comment about his condition, his fete, end where the responsibility lies. The characters

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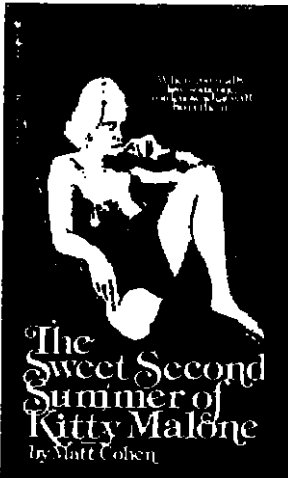
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are real, the world they never made but are stuck in is real and, by God, there is even humour and irony in this finely written story. Hughes no doubt missed the humour; otherwise the editor probably wouldn't have gotten it pest him.

But perhaps *Voices of Discord* is really a bit satiric, anarchist put-on. The last story is by Simon Marcson. Marx's son? Groucho's? I wish but fear not, for Hughes is also a member of the editorial collective of *Canadian Dimension* which is not exactly a repository of laughs. But then there will be plenty of time for humour after the revolution. □

The master at College and Jung

The Enthusiasms of Robertson Davies,
edited by Judith Skelton Grant, McClelland
& Stewart, 320 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN
077102565 3).

By HOWARDH. ELLIS JR.

The devil seems to me to be not the commonplace Symbol Of 'evil but the symbol of unconsciousness, of unknowing, of acting without knowledge of what you're intending to do. It's from that I think the great evils spring. The devil is the unexamined side of life; it's unexamined but it's certainly not powerless.

— from "A Talk with Tom Harpur," by
Robertson Davies

IN A RECENT lecture, Robertson Davies used the Russian word *shamansvo* to describe the function of a writer of fiction in relationship to his fellow travellers. In Russia, *shamansvo* is the teller of epic tales, he who brings the unconscious to consciousness by way of stories, who conducts seances to contact the spirit world that surrounds the communities as well as dreaming dreams of import for the entire tribe. For the *shamansvo*, Davies says, language is sacred, incantatory, conveying profound power.

Western writers of great stature also believe in the sacredness of this "act of language" and may well be the practitioners of *shamansvo* in our culture, our "tribal shamans" from whom the deepest messages come for our guidance. Books are the permanent record of these messages and need to be consulted again and again at each stage of our personal growth. In *The Enthusiasms of Robertson Davies*, Judith Skelton Grant has gathered together a sort of "shamansvo guide," as well as an "entertainment" of his order.

Dr. Davies, Master of V of T's Massey College, is best known for his highly mystical work, the so-called *Deptford trilogy*. The trilogy opened doors to my inner

self and also moved me to look more deeply into the thought and psychology of C. G. Jung. Although he has never been an analyst or analysand, Dr. Davies has an elegant command of both Freudian and Jungian thought and can develop themes and contrasts in the two approaches with the aplomb of an eminent member of the psychiatric community (while modestly protesting that he is delivering himself of only a layman's comments).

Mrs. Grant has assembled for us a group of newspaper pieces from the *Peterborough Examiner*, of which Dr. Davies was editor and publisher from 1948 to 1968. She has also drawn from magazines and periodicals of the same era. The book is firmly divided into three sections: memorial pieces on the deaths of well- and not-so-well-known personages and reviews of biographies; reviews of new works and marvelous retrospectives of books we should have read or should now re-read; and loosely related essays of opinion and personal reminiscences. The fine thing about this collection is that each of us would have different opinions about which piece was "the best" in each section.

Dr. Davies is a straight-talking man of wit and perspicacity, a species fast approaching extinction. In spite of his fearless (some might say opinionated) exposure of his feelings on various subjects, Davies remains an utterly vulnerable human being. I agree with Mrs. Grant's statement in her highly useful introduction: "When he celebrates significant moments in his life, he reveals the private man, his activities and feelings." She goes on to say that, for her, this does not create a feeling of intimacy. Reading this collection gave me a sense of deeper contact with Robertson Davies. That desire had been first awakened by the trilogy and was re-awakened by his lectures on the writing of fiction and the literary critic's craft. *Enthusiasms* let me see more corners of his vast, intelligent, thought-out, and thoroughly enjoyed experience of whatever caught his interest. Not all the choices were successful as literary work but all were illuminating.

One function the collection serves is to remind those of us who think we are educated how deeply the roots have shuck as Davies shines his light around in a suddenly familiar literary past. It also shows us how much we simply never knew. From "Corsets and Crinolines" to his review of Osbert Sitwell's *Autobiography*, Davies finds facts to attract our attention and shares enough of his personal reactions to tempt us to have another go with even the most obscure or difficult-to-read author.

sprinkled throughout these essays are gem-like statements of high relevance to any reader. Speaking of Vladimir Nabokov in a review of *Lolita* (which Davies found a literary tour de force and not at all prurient) he says; "Nabokov writes with style, end style — es distinguished from verbal and syntactical foppery, which is sometimes mistaken for it — gives a dimension to a

book which can be disquieting... Several examples both recent and past of "syntactical foppery" leaped to my mind. He says further of Nabokov's works that "they do not please critics who cannot forget *Madame Bovary*" and observes that "democracy.. has put all men in claim of bourgeois uniformity; we are free to be exactly like everybody else." And further, again speaking of Nabokov: "Like the late Bernard Shaw, he writes as if every reader were as intelligent as himself..."

This is a consciousness-raising book. Mrs. Grant has done the reading public a fine service. We are privy in an immediate way to the process of an eclectic thinker's way of helping himself to see the world and all its eccentric residents with an accepting, humorous eye and a firm judgemental stance. Tom Harpur asks Robertson Davies to give his definition of the good life: "It's the fully realized human life, the fulfilling of one's potential. The person who lives that way can't help but be enormously valuable to an awful lot of people. And he's not going to do harm, because he knows himself." And that's not "syntactical foppery," either. □

An ordinary bloke named Frankenstein

Disturbing the Universe, by Freeman Dyson. Fitzhenry & Whiteside (Harper & Row), 283 pager. \$ 16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 06 01 1108 9).

By WAYNE SUMNER

TRY AS THEY MAY, scientists will never outrun the myth created for them by Mary Shelley and nurtured by so many science-fiction novels and movies. Locked away in their remote laboratories, they pursue projects we understand only dimly but fear naïvely. Of their genius we have no doubt but it is precisely that genius that causes our disquiet: scientists may be brilliant and heroic but also narrow, obsessive, and not quite trustworthy.

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation seems to think that the myth will unravel if only we can get to meet some real-life scientists. Dr. Frankenstein in cold daylight will be seen to be the ordinary sensible bloke he really is. The foundation has therefore encouraged distinguished modern scientists to write accessible, 'nontechnical books like this one, not so much about their scientific specialties as about themselves.

Freeman Dyson's lined and quizzical face peers out at us from the dust-jacket of *Disturbing the Universe*. He looks like an ordinary bloke, the sort who owns a large dog and tends a garden. His scientific line is theoretical physics, the least penetrable



discipline (with the possible exception of mathematics) for the average layperson. In this book he spends very little time trying to explain to us what his line of work is all about (though there is an engaging chapter on how exciting new theories can be discovered on the Greyhound bus to Chicago). Instead, he focuses on what physics can do, which is what matters to us anyway.

Dyson, English by birth, has pursued a career in the United States that is about to lap over into its fifth decade. He has been involved, centrally or marginally, in some significant projects: nuclear reactors, space travel, nuclear disarmament, recombinant DNA, the control of biological weaponry, and the development of artificial intelligence. Every one of these projects matters to us in a large way: how it went had a profound effect on the kinds of lives we lead. Every one of the projects involved a large number of people. In meeting Dyson we do not get to know a man who single-handedly changed our lives; but maybe we get to know a representative sample of the men who did.

If so, the result is disquieting in a way new intended by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. When he stands back from his technical specialty to reflect on the ethical and social issues his projects have generated, then he is indeed just an ordinary bloke. At one time he approved of the saturation bombing of cities in the Second World War, the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the development of rockets fuelled by nuclear explosions, and at one time he publicly opposed the nuclear test-ban treaty. In each case he later changed his mind. Each change was probably an improvement; the problem is that his later arguments on one side of the issue look no better than his earlier arguments on the other.

In the arena of conscience or political advocacy, Freeman Dyson is no less, but also no more, skilled than the average layperson. He has his blind spots and his quixotic projects (which include colonizing the galaxy) and he is quite capable of making a pretty phrase stand in for sober thought. The difference between him and us is that he has affected our lives more profoundly than we have affected his. We began by fearing that scientists were either more or less than human. Now I, for one, am worried because they look so much like the rest of us. □

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Smaug and gall in Middle Earth

A Tolkien Bestiary, by David Day. Ballantine Books, illustrated, 287 pages, \$25.00 cloth (ISBN 0 345 28283 3).

By GARY DRAPER

THERE is nothing like unsatisfied expectation for spoiling things. A bagel, no matter how good, won't taste tight to someone who's expecting a doughnut. That's how it was with me and *A Tolkien Bestiary*.

I expected nothing less (or more) than the tide promised: a collection of pictures, with accompanying texts, of all or most of the birds and beasts in J. R. R. Tolkien's imaginary realm of Middle Earth. And I admit that when, in the preface, author David Day confessed to a lifelong study of world mythology, my expectation swelled just a little. I began to anticipate.. for example, not just Smaug but the divers sorts of Dragons who are his uncles and cousins.

Now more can be just as unsettling as less. There are more than birds and beasts here. There is a map of Middle Earth, there are chronological and genealogical charts,

entries for beasts, biis, men, and plants (including separate entries — not just cross-references — for variants of names), black-and-white pictures of many of them, and, in four sections interspersed among the entries, 36 colour pictures that, with their accompanying texts, constitute a sort of comic-book summary of the history of Middle Earth. The book, it seems, wants to be more than jest a bestiary. Day calls it "a useful reference work to Tolkien's world."

But while it is men than a bestiary it is less than a useful reference work. For one thing, the map is wrong. What's more, Day knows it's wrong, and says so. It's "an original interpretation" for purposes of "general orientation." If you want accurate maps, Day says, you can find them in Tolkien's works. To my mind, a reference work that's inaccurate has something of a handicap, while one that's proudly inaccurate has, well, gall.

The entries themselves are adequate. We have to take on faith Day's knowledge of world mythology, for he doesn't draw on it to suggest sources or analogues to Tolkien's work. But so what? Isn't it useful jest to have someone collate and précis Tolkien's work, so that readers can remind themselves, in a pinch, what a Balrog is, and where the Uruk-hai live? Of course it is. But this has already been done, far more comprehensively (and far less expensively) in J. B. A. Tyler's *The Tolkien Companion*

and Robert Foster's *Complete Guide to Middle Earth*.

some of the longer entries are accompanied by several pictures, while many of the shorter ones are not illustrated at all. And sometimes the reader must refer to the list of illustrations to discover which me&bus (or individual, or episode) is being portrayed. A number of pictures (the work of 11 different artists) undeniably cast their own spells. Sue Porter's Lothlorien, Pauline Martin's Mirkwood, and Linda Garland's Tirion all catch some of the magic of those places. And the best of Ian Miller's finely detailed drawings have the immediacy of nightmare.

Yet I find, as I suspect most Tolkien readers do, that no pictures ever quite equal my own imagining of Tolkien's people and places. Not the endless calendars by the Hildebrandts nor Tolkien's own sketches. Tolkien said: "In human art Fantasy is a thing best left to words, to true literature." Is it possible, then, for any Tolkien bestiary to succeed, to fulfil expectations? I'm not sure. This one doesn't. □



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SHAW FESTIVAL

Clio in the classroom

Once upon a time history texts were just fat fact sheets. Now they have evolved into fat lesson plans, with a touch of fiction to annoy the purists

by Lorne R. Hill

Our Cultural Heritage, by Sonia A. Riddoch, Clarke Irwin, 409 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7728 1213 X).

Canada: Immigrants and Settlers, by Ian Hundey, Macmillan, 327 pages, \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1691 2).

Spotlight Canada, by J. Bradley Cruxton and W. Douglas Wilson, Oxford University Press, 399 pages, \$12.00 cloth (ISBN 0 19 540347 9).

Origins: Canada's Multicultural Heritage, by Julia Saint and Joan Bell, Academic Press, 200 pages, \$5.50 paper (ISBN 0 7747 1119 1).

What was the name of the king whose daughter's marriage made possible the unification of Denmark and Norway in 1830? A question like that can destroy your whole head!

—Peanuts

THIRTY YEARS AGO history texts were choked with as many facts as could be cheaply crammed between the covers of a 300-page book. All the facts had to be memorized because we live in a democracy and facts, like citizens, are all of equal importance. There were never any mistakes in these airless texts because God wrote them; or if He didn't, He most certainly knew the authors. Students did not ask questions that went beyond the book for fear of embarrassing the teacher, who might have been one of those Second World War graduates, "sergeant-major, who drilled the class by reading the text aloud while the students underlined in pencil and then wrote the passages into their notebooks and next day copied their notes onto the blackboard. This was called maching and the subject was called "history" and both were frauds.

Sputnik changed all that. The space race demanded citizens who could think, who had studied the underlying nature of the discipline, and who could ask the right questions. Texts began to change. They came equipped with study guides filled with the right questions for teachers to ask, and some guides even included primary sources so the adventurous teacher could involve his

class in the stuff of history. Soon questions were included directly in the text at the end of each Chapter so the students didn't have to wait for the teacher to copy three questions from the study guide onto the blackboard. By the mid 1960s, some questions were set aside for discussion and others for review. Students were encouraged to express their "pinions. And even" though a leading history educator won an award for a study that labelled some of the teaching of Canadian history as "pathological," the repressive methods and materials of the last 15 years seemed about to be abandoned.

By 1970 the skills movement was in full swing and history teachers were quarreling about the structure of the discipline. The student must not only know history but also the skills by which he could write history. American sponsors spent millions of dollars developing materials for this approach. Texts now included skills exercises and were structured according to problems, questions, themes, issues, and values, depending on which enclave of highly vocal addicts held the field. The traditionalists fell silent and sulky.

About five years ago some history texts began to look like collections of thick lesson plans, as chapter after chapter did the teaching for the teacher. And, as more strategies were included, the space devoted to narration dwindled. A few books even included fictional accounts, much to the dismay of trustees and purists who were unable to understand how one could learn to do history by not doing it.

The spectrum of the last 30 years exists today in the new history texts for the secondary schools. The basic issue is still skill development. Should it be handled by the teacher or by the text? At one end of the spectrum is *Our Cultural Heritage*, an historical approach to multiculturalism. This is a descriptive narrative with a few excerpts from documents and a liberal sprinkling of visuals. Questions are separated from the narrative and placed in an

appendix and, although they do require certain thinking skills, there is not a great variety here. The text stresses the cultural contributions of the Native Peoples, the French, the British, and the more recent immigrants from Europe and Asia, but leaves the impression that our cultural heritage from ancient and medieval times is quite small.

Canada: Immigrants & Settlers has large print, a conversational style, and short sections to accommodate its intermediate audience. Its central theme is the historian as Sherlock Holmes; "Good historians are like good detectives: they are never satisfied with what appears to be the truth." As he uses different types of sources throughout the text, the student is admonished to judge constantly what constitutes solid evidence. In Chapter Three, for example, the author begins with what historians believe to be a fact and then, with the student reading "long, challenges that belief through an inquiry lecture in which he answers his own questions. But, for whatever reasons, the book does not apply a method of inquiry, chapter after chapter, in any systematic way.

Spotlight Canada contains 40 chapters dealing with Canada in the 20th century. After each portion of narrative (broken with the usual visuals, charts, and documents) there is a section on questions and activities. These sections would appear to be on some rough continuum of skill development since they begin with teaching the student how to make notes and end with present summaries and future predictions. The text is also keyed throughout with 14 symbols indicating major themes so the student can trace each theme forward and backward in reviews or essays. The assortment of skills is quite wide and the text is cleverly designed, but the learning of skills does not proceed in a methodical manner.

If the skills are to be taught, the materials and approach must reflect that objective — that is, the student must think his way through carefully controlled, tightly or-

ganized exercises that are all logically and sequentially related. If a text is a question or a problem, then every chapter and exercise must help to further the inquiry. A skill is only useful if it produces new meaning. *Origins: Canada's Multicultural Heritage* comes closest to following a research model and for that reason falls at the other end of the spectrum of new texts.

Origins takes an historical approach to multiculturalism and is organized around major questions that serve as unit end chapter headings, although there is some inconsistency. The brief narrative sections are followed by a host of activities requiring the use of a great array of source materials. In fact, the text sometimes gives the appearance of a collection of activity cards. But the message of this intelligently constructed book is that if skills are to be taught, even to basic- and general-level students, they must be integrated into the text. And the text itself should be an inquiry from beginning to end, inviting the student to think historically at every stage.

Caution is advised when assessing the spectrum. There is no solid evidence that skills can be taught or, if taught, make any difference. Most teachers have ignored the skills-development movement and have continued with their own hidden curriculum. Of memory and control. The standard techniques of teaching are still the text, the exposition, and the recitation of textbook answers in teacher-controlled situations. No teaching method has been proven superior;

the inquiry approach may not work for all students, and history as taught may be too difficult for youngsters. But unlike the 1950s, the teacher today has a far wider choice of materials and must decide whether the text, the study guide, or the teacher will be the major source of intellectual stimulation in the classroom, or in which combination. The one bright spot in these somewhat gloomy research findings is that children really do like to think. What turns them off? Many things. But no matter how it is delivered, it is the quality of the question that turns them on. And when the teacher stops thinking so do the students.

Briefly noted:

CANADIAN HISTORY

R. B. Bennett, by Robert Saunders, Fitzhenry & Whiteside. 64 pages, \$3.00. Intermediate-Senior. It is ironic that this corporate magnate became prime minister just as the Great Depression hit. Saunders details Bennett's dismal record and gives him much of the blame for the Conservatives' crushing defeat in the 1935 election.

George Brown, by I. M. s. Careless, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 64 pages, \$3.00. Intermediate-Senior. This tall, red-haired Scot founded the *Toronto Globe*, led the Reform movement in Upper Canada, helped to establish the basic principles of Canadian Liberalism, and was a leading architect of Confederation. Brown's foremost biographer has captured the many dimensions of his character and highlighted his legacy of liberal nationalism.

E. Cora Hind, by Carlotta Hacker, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 64 pages, \$3.00. Intermediate-Senior. Hind earned an international reputation as agricultural editor of the *Manitoba Free Press* in the days before Women's Liberation. As dean of Canadian newspaperwomen, she determined to clean up Winnipeg ("The vice capital of the West") and to push with Nellie McClung for women's suffrage. Her entire life can be seen as a statement of a woman's ability to excel in a man's world.

Grant McConachie, by Alison Gardner, Fitzhenry & Whiteside. 64 pages, \$3.00. Intermediate-Senior. In 15 years McConachie rose from being a bush pilot in Alberta during the Depression with more than his share of smash-ups, broken bones and bankruptcy to become the president of CP AC, pioneering trans-polar flights and the use of jet aircraft.

Sam Steele, by Stan Garrod, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 64 pages, \$3.00. Intermediate-Senior. The career of Sam Steele parallels two major themes in Canadian history, the opening of the West and the development of the Canadian armed forces. His story takes the student from Confederation to the First World War and from the Klondike to South Africa.

Ernest Thompson Seton, by Magdalene Redekop, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 64 pages, \$3.00. Intermediate-Senior. A remarkable story of the Canadian named Black Wolf who along with Baden-Powell and Beard founded the Boy Scout movement. Artist, author, and naturalist, Seton tried to persuade the world to live in harmony with the environment. Students can compare him with Grey Owl, argue whether he was a realist or a romantic, and assess his impact on the quality of Canadian life.

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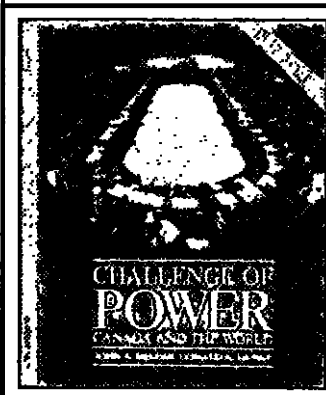
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The Mounties and Law Enforcement, by D. Bruce Sealey, in *We Built Canada Series, The Boo*: Society of Canada, 84 pages, \$2.75. Secondary. Although the series is advertised as presenting the careers of important men and women, this volume is a chronological history of the Mounties. The first phase deals with peace-keeping in the Canadian West from Confederation to the Winnipeg General Strike. The name change in 1920 to the RCMP signals their new status as the federal police force with more urban responsibilities, and the second phase deals with their efforts in counteracting smuggling, spies, drugs, and strikes. Good visuals and activities.

Two Nations . . . Problems and Prospects: Understanding Canada's Constitutional Crisis, by Richard G. Craig and Randy J. Noonan, New Star Books, 180 pages, \$6.95 paper and \$14.95 cloth, plus teacher's guide at \$4.00. Senior. An introduction to the problem of national unity, this package on Quebec's relationship to Canada is divided into historical background, legal aspects, and political conflict. It concludes with a simulated royal commission on Quebec's future. Teacher's manual contains 20 lesson plans, instructions for the conference, articles for enrichment, and a short bibliography. Field tested and performed in the Council Chambers of Vancouver City Hall in 1978.

CANADIAN STUDIES

Frontiers and Pioneers, by Terry Leeder, Dundurn Press, (a 10-volume series), 64 pages each, \$2.95 each. teacher's manual available in the fall. Junior. These stories of historical fiction are suitable for history, literature, and social-studies programs but can also be used in more senior ESL courses. The author, a former history teacher and editor, has selected tales from Canada's last 300 years in settings from British Columbia to the Maritimes. All are based in historical fact and sensitively written.

Canadians All 3: Portraits of Our People, by Charles Kahn and Maureen Kahn. Methuen, 122 pages, \$4.95. Intermediate. The aim of this series is to help students know their nation better by reading short accounts about interesting Canadians. Volume III includes among its 20 profiles those of Bruno Gerussi, Gordie Howe, Flora Macdonald, and David Suzuki.

Culture in Canada, by Jack Bavington, Batty Lithwick, Wayne Sproule, and Nora Thompson, Maclean-Hunter Learning Materials, 154 pages. \$4.50. Secondary. Revised and updated. 1979.

Canadian Issues and Alternatives, by Robert J. Clark, Robert Remnant, John Patton, and Gary Goulson. Macmillan, 258 pages, \$8.95. Secondary. 1979. Substantially revised, especially Unit 4 in which foreign affairs has replaced urbanization.

The Canadian Family Tree: Canada's Peoples, by the Multiculturalism Directorate, Corpus Information Services. 272 pages, 319.95 hard. 1979. Reference. Revised and updated to include 78 ethno-cultural groups.

Fuzzling Canada, by Barbara Thal Hodes, Dundurn Press, 80 pages, \$5.95. Intermediate. What is the original Italian name of a famous Canadian hockey player? The original German name of the first Canadian to win the Nobel Prize in Chemistry? Crosswords, games, maps, quizzes, scrambled words, and riddles deal with major aspects of Canada's past and present. A good way to increase motivation in Canadian history, geography, and literature classes. Includes answers.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Burn Out, Dope Deal, Runaway, Hot Cars, by Paul Kropp, in *Series Canada*, Collier Macmillan Canada. 94 pages each. \$2.95 each. Intermediate. These high-interest, low-vocabulary novels for the reluctant adolescent reader focus on problems affecting young people. They have a consistent standard of reading difficulty based on controlled vocabulary, syllable count, and sentence length. The readability level increases from 3 to 4.5 through the series. Classroom tested. Teacher's manual includes plot summaries, vocabulary lists, background articles and suggestions for teaching. A second series is in the press.

Stories Plus, edited by John Metcalf, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 242 pages. "This new book offers a selection of work by Canadian writers who are less well known than they should be."

Tigers of the Snow, edited by James A. MacNeil and Glen A. Sorestad. Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1973. 212 pages. \$3.95. Senior.

GOVERNMENT AND LAW

Your Canadian Law, by Arthur B. Wilkinson, Dominie Press, 112 pages, \$5.95. Senior. In this sixth revision are rules and regulations, advice, examples, and definitions. Includes a chapter on Quebec law. Best fits into Law courses with a business rather than a social-studies slant.

War and War Prevention, by Joseph Moore and Roberta Moore, General, 140 pages, \$4.95. Senior. Revised and updated Canadian Edition.

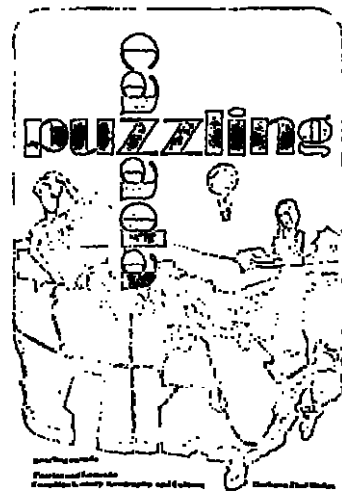
Gaining Power: Democracy and Elections in Canada; Exercising Power: Government in Canada; and Challenge of Power: Canada and the World, by John A. Miller and Donald I. Hurst, Academic Press, 134 pages, 33.75 and 54.50. Secondary. The Power series has been successful in political science and civics classes across the nation. The first two volumes have been revised just as the third and final volume, *Challenge of Power*, was released. Joe Clark and the 1979 election have been added to the first volumes, replacing the gorgeous section of redesigning Robert Stanfield. *Challenge of Power* follows the series format and is organized into three units — Canada in North America, Canada Beyond North America, and Canada at the United Nations. Each unit contains text, documents, visuals, clippings, issues, and activities. Ten case studies are included.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Communicating in Your World, by R.I. McMaster, Academic Press, 224 pages, \$5.50. Intermediate. Following on the heels of his successful *Developing Your Communication Skills*, McMaster's new text reflects his vast repertoire of teaching skills. "It is an attempt to present an integrated, balanced program of reading, writing, speaking, and listening" for students of varied interests and abilities. The first three units deal with communicating one's feelings, the nature of the message, and language problems. The fourth unit is a handbook of common writing problems. In addition to its attractive format and wide sample of activities, the book's main strength is that it directly confronts the concerns of adolescents.

The Canadian Writer's Handbook, by William

The fun of history



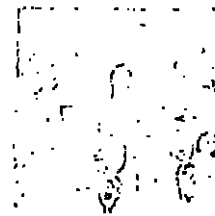
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E. Messenger and Jan de Bruyn, Prentice-Hall, 520 pages.
English Skills: A Functional Approach, by Joanne I. Reid and Marlene Lindstrom-Rogers, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 322 pages, \$7.95. Secondary-College.
Developing Language Skills 2, by Cecil E. Potts and Jack G. Nichols. McGraw-Hill Ryerson. 296 pages. Revised by Stanley and Loretta Skinner. Intermediate.
Active Voice, edited by W. H. New and W. E. Messenger, Prentice-Hall, 420 pages. Contains articles on writing for different purposes.
Plain English, by F. G. Howlett, The Yale Book Company, 38 pages. Intermediate.

HISTORY

Modern Perspectives, by John Trueman, et al. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979. Second Edition, XX pages. The final four chapters have been revised to include the major events of the last decade. □

Two cheers for the Mob

Their Town: The Mafia, the Media, and the Party Machine, edited by Bill Freeman and Marsha Hewitt. James Lorimer & Co., 192 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88862 266 XI) and \$10.95 paper (ISBN 0 88862267 8).

Making Connections: The Behind-the-Scenes Story, by Wade Rowland. age. 226 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0771594429-).

By GERARD McNEIL

THE SUBTITLE OF *Their Town*, a study of political power in Hamilton. Ont., lists the Mafia, the media, and the party machine. Of the three, the Mafia emerges as the most wholesome. It fulfils social needs thwarted by federal laws on gambling, prostitution, and drugs.

As Danny Gasbarrini said of the Porcupine Mines Social Club, a gambling joint he and Mafia type Johnny Papalia ran near the Hamilton police station: "For two years the police never bothered us although they knew it was going on. But we never paid anyone off. It was just that we ran an honest game and had some of the best people in town coming to it." Rocco Perri mounted a similar defence when asked about a couple of bootlegging deaths during prohibition in the 1920s: "I can assure you that I have nothing to do with these deaths. . . . I only give my men fast care, and I sell only the best liquor, so I don't see why anyone should complain, because no one wants Prohibition."

Now, how about the media? The Hamilton *Spectator* was a first-class newspaper in the 1960s. But when John Muir became 24 Books In Canada. March, 1980

publisher things began to change. He wanted "compassionate" news, and the "news" news reporters and editors were soon gone. Muir lifted the *Doodlesbury* comic strip at one point because its Watergate panels were too hard on good old president Nixon. And when New Democrats charged during the 1974 election campaign that John Munro, Liberal patronage dispenser in Hamilton, was deliberately preventing an investigation of Hamilton Harbour hanky-panky, *The Spectator* sat on the story. In fact, what *The Spectator* didn't print was often a lot newswier than what it did print — as is true of so many dailies.

The harbour controversy centred on the Hamilton Harbour Commission, which had three members, two appointed by Munro and one by the city. Kenneth Elliott, the city appointee, was imprisoned in 1975 for six years for fraud, bribery, forgery, and similar crimes.

Munro's appointees were replaced but the Liberal government in Ottawa wouldn't accede to Hamilton demands for a public inquiry into how the commission handled dredging, construction, and other contracts; how it sold and leased harbourfront land; and what it did with the money. The Liberals responded with legislation that would have sealed the commission completely from public accountability and would have denied Hamilton any control of its waterfront. As the editors note:

The Hamilton Harbour scandal was a large-scale affair, leading to the discoveries of corruption in the entire dredging industry and raising suspicions about Hamilton Harbour in general. Yet out of the Hamilton case only five men were convicted.

The dredging scandal unveiled millions of dollars worth of bid-rigging on federal contracts from coast to coast. A dozen or so top men, including some prominent Liberal businessmen, were convicted and fined heavily. But the involvement of federal and provincial politicians was never really gone in.

One would expect after reading this book that Hamiltonians would long ago have tarred-and-feathered the political rabble that polluted the city, gave away its wealth, and otherwise acted like a gang of barbarians plundering an alien country. But most Hamiltonians don't even vote in municipal elections, and labour bickering prevents election at the federal and provincial levels of men or women who might act in the public interest.

Their Town is about Hamilton but a similar book could be written about any city in the country, and should be.

Making Connections is the "behind-the-scenes" story of how the CBGTV specials on organized crime were made. The specials reinforce the conviction, peculiar to Toronto, that only Italians and Chinese commit crime in Canada. The series really didn't prove anything, although author Wade Rowland said it might have if the makers had been able to use wiretaps, audio surveillance, mail intercepts "or most of the other tools that are the

backbone of professional investigations undertaken by government agents. Connections went into this project with one hand tied behind its back." Well, it is against the law for even "government agents" to intercept mail. If the price of eradicating crime is to have government agents and TV crews poking into private lives, crime is probably preferable.

Rowland says the makers of *Connections* knew of 15 politicians with "mob connections" but couldn't, because of libel laws, mention their names. Mostly, *Connections* was about how the Mafia cat ice-cream cones unashamedly, have children just like normal Canadians, and meet with their buddies.

The authors of *Their Town* and *Making Connections* both warn that Mafia types are getting into legitimate business — that is, polluting the air and water, ripping off the taxpayer, and so on, just like legitimate businessmen. Which prompts a word to the outlaws: Stay honest, men; you're about all we have left. •

O Gosh! O Montreal!

The **Véhicule Poets**, Maker Press, 93 pages, \$4.00 paper (ISBN 0 920 744 00 1).

The **Perfect Accident**, by Ken Norris, Véhicule Press, 72 pages, \$3.00 paper (ISBN 0 919890 14 8).

Mattress Testing, by John McAuley, Cross Country Press, unpaginated, \$3.00 paper (ISBN 0 916696 14 8).

Hazardous Renaissance, by John McAuley, Cross Country Press, unpaginated, \$3.00 paper (ISBN 0 9166965).

Grace, by Michael Harris, New Delta, 78 pages, \$3.00 paper (ISBN 001962 49 5).

before Romantic Words, by Artie Gold, Véhicule Press, 73 pages, \$4.00 paper (ISBN 0 91989021 0).

By AUGUST KLEINZAHLER

MONTREAL IS A TOWN made for poets, and we have the French to thank for it. The women know how to dress; the food is seasoned as it should be, and the pre-Drapeau architecture is singular and lovely. There are so many fine streets, and the Main is queen of them all. Add to this happy mix The Word Bookstore, where foot-weary poets can take refuge from the street and dally over shelf after shelf of second-hand books, chiefly literary.

Ho-, in spite of Louis Dudek's kindly assertions, Montreal is not a hotbed of contemporary Canadian poetry. What may once have been is no longer, and this recent spate of books tells the tale.

Véhicule Press (Cross Country and

Maker are edited by the same group) and New Delta are the most active and well-funded small presses for poetry in English Montreal. The editors of *Véhicule* - Ken Norris, André Farkas, and Artie Gold — have done very nicely for themselves. Norris has published six of his own books in four years; Farkas and Gold have given us two books each. Add to this impressive output two anthologies of Montreal English poetry, with the works of these three editor/poets in abundant evidence.

Dudek has written that Norris is the moving farce in Montreal English poetry today and who can doubt it? Walt Whitman published his own books (though not with Canada Council funding) and sold them door-to-door. But Whitman's self-promotion has worn well. Besides, he was JO years ahead of his time: a visionary. Here's an example of Norris's visionary poetry:

*How do I tell you?
The post office has lost
That beautiful love poem I wrote you
For Valentine's Day.
I will have to write another.
It will never be quite as beautiful.*

What is particularly irritating about the work of Norris and Farkas (apart from gross self-advertisement and lame content) is the repeated dedicating of poems to one another, as though literary historians will sigh to think: Rimbaud and Verlaine, Melville and Hawthorne, Pound and H.D., Norris and Farkas. Here's a poem by Farkas entitled "That," dedicated to Norris:

*That
locking myself out of the car
is the perfect metaphor
for my dry spell
is self evident
& that it happened in Toronto
& me from Quebec
m&s it a political thing.*

No. I don't think so.

As for the new anthology, *The Véhicule Poets*, published by Maker Press, is a considerable embarrassment. I'm told, to the people who run *Véhicule* press. Let me quote from Artie Gold's introduction:

A name like The Véhicule Poets suggests to me a principle operating on one hand enumerate, on the other, exhaust. Told such a collection was desirable I nodded; all collections seem desirable especially those of poetry.

The people at *Véhicule* Press tell me they will be publishing much less poetry in the future.

Two books by John McAuley, *Mattress Testing* and *Hazardous Renaissance*, are published by Norris and Cross Country Press. McAuley is the founder and "editor" of the Maker Press. Sounds cosy, doesn't it? I quote from *Mattress Testing*:

dear doctor good

*i read in the paper last week
that sex can give you a headache
it isn't true, is it?*

—Striptease

dear striptease

*it is very likely true
benign sexual cephalgia has
several rare names which
leading authorities stumble
across from time to time*

Hazardous Renaissance is a collection of concrete poems. Or at least what McAuley interprets as "concrete poetry." Since the work is mainly visual and unquotable, let me suggest that the visual impact is every bit as vacuous as McAuley's more conventional poems.

Grace, by Michael Harris, is a New Delta book, and just as the packaging and format of the book is slicker and more professional than the standard *Véhicule-Maker-Cross Country* product, so the poetry inside is carefully and self-consciously made. Harris writes in what might be called the American academic style, and four of the poems in this collection have appeared in *The Atlantic*. The style of which I speak has many facets, but a few of its chief characteristics are careful, sedate diction, lots of assonance, consonance, and pan-rhymes. The virtue of the style, for those who admire it, is a tasteful, elegant poetry with little that is extraneous, and no effect that is unsought.

Artie Gold's third major collection, *before Romantic Words*, is just the opposite in style. If Harris is tame and conventional to the point of cliché, then Gold is profuse, unabashedly self-indulgent, and sometimes prising:

*I am not a bargain but I like snappy service
what were you doing when you were not
paying attention to our love?*

*Strange to compare the laundromat
lit at night, with my heart*

In Gold's new book there are enough annoyances to wreck three books by almost anyone else. He is everywhere cute, morose, threatening to die, complaining about a lover's inattentiveness or how and why, or why not, he is typing the poem he is typing, and isn't it a miracle that the process of typing a poem is a process. One gets the impression that 'Gold feels any kind of paring or revision is anal, "spare," unlike the wet himself who apes many of the idiosyncratic techniques of New York poets circa 1958.

However, Gold is no android and then is rarely an entire poem that does not include at least one prize, and often his nervous, urbane style and zany neuroses merge into something unique and quick:

*Winter, I need your physical embrace,
Why? I am such a spit on old
doorknobs. // when the dark isn't dark, but
snowy*

*a bell rings
in the switchboard of both retinas.*

Needless to say, there is no rush of young an&phone poets to Montreal. In the meantime, be content with the occasional salvo from Verdun and Point St. Charles, and improve your French. □

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Moving mountains

Cordillera, by Norbert Ruebsaat, Pulp Press, 71 pages, \$3.50 paper (ISBN 0 88978 072 2).

By ALBERT MORTIZ

ONE OF THE MOST satisfying features of Norbert Ruebsaat's *Cordillera* is its openness to the reader, its sense of poetry as a bond of communication between artist and audience. Equally satisfying is the depth of Ruebsaat's communication, his insights into himself, his own country, and our common human experience.

Ruebsaat's poetry is intensely regional, rooted in the mountainous British Columbia territory of the author's upbringing. The tide poem is a lengthy meditation on the western mountains, and many of the shorter poems in the book feature the characters that peopled Ruebsaat's childhood: his grandfather, hunters, the Indians of the region.

What makes this regionalism so special is that Ruebsaat does not close the stranger out. Regionalism here is not confined to an insistence on the unfathomable uniqueness of the poet's own experience or the experience of his own place; nor is it limited to a pallid pitch for Canadian content, which reveals the country about as much as a map or guide book does, with names of towns and recondite allusions to local history.

Ruebsaat writes about his country to share it; his sense of his own unique identity does not shut him off from all men, but rather forms the matter of his communication: "this valley/ which did not want me,/ never needed me,/ was immune to my glass-like skin/ this valley/ deep as the moon./ a place you could plunge/ a knife into."

Perhaps the root of the poet's ability here to break through the egocentricity of so much contemporary searching for identity is his perception that the world he inhabits extends in time as well as space, to encompass the history of the places he sees. In "Who Are These Mountains," Ruebsaat identifies the companions of his life in these terms of history: "these mountains are memory/ they hum like memory bums/ they have entered that long sleep which the earth enters/ at the place where time and distance cross."

Here we sense a bond among all men in language. Ruebsaat calls up the rhythms of myth and legend to narrate the common well of memories the race shares. Basic to this sharing is the song: "it is a strong song/ a power song/ when there is nothing/ an old song/ older than the world/ there is a way to sing it."

To say that Ruebsaat trusts language to link him to his Fellows and to the past is not

to say that this is a poetry of facile confidence in man's powers. This "power song" is a song sung "when there is nothing," "when the mouth of death opened." The barriers to understanding and to meaningful communication are formidable.

In "Telling the Story," for example, Ruebsaat portrays the distance, perhaps insurmountable, between one generation and another. The desire to recapture the past, in all its colours, may lead, finally, to the humble realization that the distance is too great to cross: "it was long ago/ before my time/ I cannot tell this story/ it was my grandfather."

The confrontation Ruebsaat emphasizes, between man and nature, may lead too, to this sense of a conversation in which the other refuses to speak: "the echo, returning from the valley/ does not recognize my voice,/ the rind will not release/ the presence of a breathing thing,/ sheet rock is faceless fact."

Ruebsaat's phrasing remains close to the rhythms of speech, whether its format is, as in "Cordillera" a series of images, or in many of the shorter poems, and especially in the section entitled "Riddles," a series of declarative statements. He evokes the essential situation of man before nature both through imagistic re-creations of moments and objects — "deep green pools/ like a knife thrust in/ & the green leaks out" — and through mythic pronouncements: "I am the moon-scythe coming/ I am the cut in the belly of waters/ I am the instinct, the muscle returning/ I am the blood-ted dream of the ocean."

If there is any point at which the voice falters, it appears to come when Ruebsaat moves from the image to this declarative, prophetic voice. At times, the pronouncements verge on very ordinary sorts of sentences, and seem to betray a certain flatness both in thought and speech. This is true, for instance, in "Words for Making a Harpoon," or "She Was in the Beginning."

When Ruebsaat has command of this style, however, it is commanding: "I am a kind of gravity/ but more like famine/ moving along/ look at me spread like hunger over a field/ consider the dry stalks/ the barren fingers/ the palms of Famine."

The essence of this poetry, alive to the world and to the power of words, is captured in "When There Is No Sound": "and suddenly nothing is so real as these hands/ wanting always to much things/ or these eyes/ which disappear immediately into the rivers/ like a breed of nocturnal salamander." Ruebsaat's poetry lives, not only through its verbal richness, but also through the searching hands and eyes that gather the insights the poems embody. 3



Crime and punishment, from Celtic Britain to the old West and the Second World War

IF IT'S TRUE that crime doesn't pay, it's also more than likely that crime novels are the safest investment a publisher can make. God may be dead, politics a fraud, and love a succession of non-manipulative short-term encounters - known in olden times as "one-night stands" - but the figure of the criminal remains a potent symbol of the eternal conflict between what we think is tight and what we know we want. As traditional values erode and social bonds loosen, this conflict increasingly takes place upon the battlefield of our individual personalities, where we walk the mean streets of temptation armed only with a rough knowledge of the rules and whatever convictions have survived the onslaught of an age prone to equate destruction with liberation.

Roger Caron's *Go-Boy!* (Nelson, \$2.95) is a riveting account of a many-time loser's initiation into criminal society, as shocking in its revelations about the realities of life in prison as it is steadfast in its refusal to place the blame upon something as abstract as "social conditions." Much of the Force of the book comes from Caron's awareness of the ambiguities of his situation; although he has been terribly harmed by a system emphasizing punishment rather than rehabilitation — has been beaten, shock-treated, and subjected to severe sensory deprivation—he also has innate tendencies to violence and a contempt for the straight life that any organized society would find difficult to tolerate. His tragedy is not a simple one of innocence perverted by brutality, but rather a complex interweaving of strong personal needs and rigid societal retributions that forces us to confront our own beliefs about the relationship between crime and punishment. *Go-Boy!* is a powerful, engrossing narrative that takes us into the heart of an experience where only the strong survive, and one emerges from it with a new comprehension of what it means to be imprisoned within inner walls of compulsion as well as outer walls of constraint.

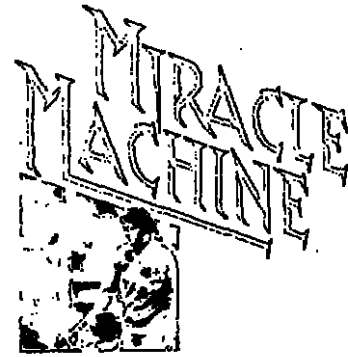
Hugh Dempsey's *Charcoal's World* (Signet, \$2.25) recounts a true story of murder, flight, and capture set in the Canadian West of the 1890s. The clash between Indian and white standards of justice is presented in a vividly factual manner. It is extremely well researched, and as a consequence we receive strong impressions of both the period milieu and the motivations of individual characters. Although the cover blurb promises a Hollywood-style "Epic Lest Stand," the

book is in fact a fascinating piece of historical biography, as dramatic as reality and a good deal stranger than fiction. It's a fine example of how entertainment and information can be melded together into a quintessentially good read.

A fictional treatment of crime and punishment has been essayed by Philippe van Rijndt in *The Trial of Adolf Hitler* (Seal, \$2.50), but the results are disappointing. Van Rijndt has proved that he is a first-class thriller writer, but this tale of Hitler's survival and final international judgement has too much stilted rhetoric being mouthed by too many cardboard characters. Hitler's trial isn't very credible, especially in light of the Nuremberg proceedings, and an attempt to mask the foregone conclusion by having one of the judges raise legalistic objections to the conviction fails to provide any dramatic interest. All in all, an uncharacteristically tedious effort from an author who has done and will do much better.

Other recent softcover releases provide little to shout about, although there is one occasion for some appreciative lip-smacking. Mme. Jehane Benoit's *Complete Heritage of Canadian Cooking* (Seal, \$2.50) is a collection of tasty recipes heartily recommended by both my wife, speaking as a cook, and myself, speaking as a culinary bottomless pit, although my wife adds that it is inconveniently laid out for no discernible good reason. It is in any event much more delectable than Leo Heaps's *The Grey Goose of Arnhem* (PaperJacks, \$2.50), an anecdotal meander through "Operation Market Garden" that manages to make mediocre war reminiscences out of some potentially exciting situations. Either the book or film of *A Bridge Too Far* are preferable to this unenlightening account of a campaign whose inept planning and brave but futile execution requires a more critical eye than Heaps provides.

Military conflict does enliven Pauline Gedge's *The Eagle and the Raven* (Signet, \$2.95), an entertaining historical novel of Celts vs. Romans in Old Britain whose flaming passions, colourful pageants, and so forth are more skilfully presented than in her previous *Child of the Morning*. There's still no danger of believing that any of its characters might actually have existed, but those willing to make the requisite suspension of disbelief will be rewarded by a thoroughly enjoyable read. *The Evil Men Do* (Seal, \$2.75), finally, is the latest ultra-violent thriller from R. Lance Hill better written than its predecessors but



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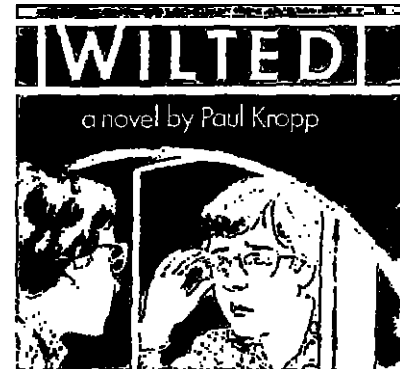
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equally depressing in terms of its generalized hostility to civilized life. A book that concocts an "Assassin's Creed" begins with, "Because some people need killing . . ." and gets mom paranoid from them. really makes you wonder about what sort of Neanderthal geeks would be produced by a steady diet of such literary swill. I must

confess to some apprehension along the lines of "If we are what we eat, do we in some sense become what we read?" Those unconcerned about such things will be satisfied to learn that the book represents an updated version of Thomas Hobbes's vision of the life of man: it is nasty, brutish, and Fairly long. □

the browser

by Michael Smith

Coast-to-coast with repressed women, telephone operators, and other hang-ups

IAN MACKASKIE's laconic, sensitive narration of *The Long Beaches: A Voyage in Search of the North Pacific Fur Seal* (Sono Nis, illustrated, 136 pages, \$6.95 paper) suggests a man who has as much respect for his surroundings as for the discomforts — dangerous airplane flights, stormy seas, *mal de mer* — that threaten his expedition. Though essentially a chronicle of his assignment to collect 500 seal carcasses for biological research, his book encompasses much more than science. MacAskie is an interested and informative observer of both the natural and human history of the West Coast, from Vancouver Island to Alaska, and of the kind of people, Indian and European, who through the centuries have come to live along its unforgiving shores.

In his role as a scientist, MacAskie is rather restrained in his remarks on man's killing of animals — a necessity of research that he neither loudly condemns nor glorifies. He makes no connection between the harvesting of Pacific Fur seals and that of the harp seal pups off the coast of Newfoundland, but it's interesting that the Fur seal has been hunted for hundreds of years — since 1911 under supervision by the United States, Canada, Japan, and Russia — apparently without any public outcry. This may be because the Fur seal pups are born black, and are not as cute as their fuzzy white eastern relations with the huge spaniel eyes.

On the opposite coast, Ronald Caplan has spent seven years gathering folklore for *Cape Breton's Magazine*, of which he is editor and publisher. Hi Down North: *The Book of Cape Breton's Magazine* (Doubleday, illustrated, 241 pages, \$19.95 cloth and \$12.95 paper) is an affectionate collection of Folk arts and skills from sheep shearing to rag-rug hooking to how a blacksmith fashions a pair of skates, told often in the words of the artisans themselves. It includes tales in Acadian French and Gaelic, with accompanying translations, and a terrifying first-person account by John R. and Bessie MacLeod of demonic nocturnal visitations to their old house.

Translations or some judicious editing might have clarified some of the transcripts of local reminiscences, which occasionally tend to be fragmentary and obscure, and Caplan's fidelity to detail — as in a description of trap fishing — can be confusing.

Devotees of contemporary history should enjoy Duncan Macpherson's *Editorial Cartoons 1979* (Macmillan, unpaginated, \$4.95 paper). Among the 132 cartoons are drawings from Macpherson's hip through China (where bank clerks scoffed at his sketching pencil and proudly showed off their new Bii pens) and waspish portrayals of last year's federal election, which still seemed apt as this year's drew to a close. Current events are also the subject of *The Front Page Challenge Quiz Book* by Charles Weir (Nelson, 210 pages, 56.95 paper), which replays questions and answers from *Front Page Challenge* in the form of a party game that may be played solitaire, too. I found the book preferable to the television show, because it excludes the obnoxious collective personality displayed by the regular panel, Gordon Sinclair, Betty Kennedy, and Pierre Berton.

Each of the 10 short stories in Christine Lenoir-Arcand's *Shadows* (Vesta, 113 pages, \$4.50 paper) "as inspired "by some corner, at some time, in the city of Montreal." It must be quite a neighbourhood. The stories deal mostly with unpleasant childhoods, sexual misadventures, domination, and Female revenge, and such characters as: a woman whose husband locks her in a dog cage; a drag queen; a teenaged prostitute who is bought by her mother's rich young lover, and a young woman, involved in witchcraft, whose current covivant is bent on sadomasochistic homosexual encounters. As astonishing as her subjects may seem, Lenoir-Arcand's writing usually manages to fail them. Sexual bondage is similarly at the mot of one of the three Sherlock Holmes stories in *The Villars-Manningham Papers*, edited by Jay Shakley (Catalyst, illustrated, 48 pages, \$4.95 paper). This fact alone — though appropriate to the prurient em in which they

are set -makes their authorship, purportedly by Dr. John Watson, appear doubtful.

Repression of women end the need for Women's Liberation are principal themes in *A Flight of Average Persons* (New Star Books, 227 pages, \$14.95 cloth and \$5.95 paper), self-styled "writings" by Helen Potrebekko, of which 12 are short stories. (The rest are variously articles, poetry, end a short play.) Potrebekko's experience evidently ranges from taxi-driving to working as a laboratory technician in a hospital, and she is especially critical of a medical establishment that keeps nurses and other traditionally female employees ill-paid and subservient while rewarding (male) doctors with extravagant incomes end a reputation for near-infallibility. Though these are stories with a mission, Potrebekko's dramatizations lift them above propaganda. While neither is labelled as fiction, "How I Became a Canadian" (about her father's swivel as a Ukrainian immigrant during the Depression) end "And Always the Same Story" (about a heart-broken, drun-

ken woman) are remarkable for their humanity.

One of Potrebekko's arguments is not for wage parity for women. "or for more women executives, but rather for better treatment of women in traditionally female occupations, such as typing, nursing, waitressing, and the like. To these might be added the plight of telephone operators. Joan Newman Kuyek's *The Phone Book: Working at the Bell* (Between the Lines, illustrated, 96 pages, \$5.95 paper) cites many of the complaints also raised by striking Bell employees- regimentation so strict that operators must hold up a card to signal their need to go to the toilet, and a repressive bureaucracy that uses Bell's elaborate technology (such as computer surveillance) to enforce efficient behaviour. On the other hand, Kuyek's proposals for reform — a decentralized communications system, with decisions made co-operatively et the community level — are so utopian that she quotes Thomas More to support them. □

first impressions

by Douglas Hill

Two heavy trips into dope and violence and a light stab at adolescent humour

Prisoner of Desire, by britt hagarty (Talonbooks, 290 pages, \$7.95 paper), contains a few rewards. The accumulated detail makes the story feel genuine, the characters are unusually well-developed and distinct, and there are some affecting scenes in the last third of the book. But too much of it is tedious. To swallow page after page of dope, smack, beer, end otherwise unhappy lives in Victoria, B.C., a reader needs to taste some evidence of imagination, vision, style. It's not there.

There's a difference between raw experience, no matter how shocking or moving or intensely felt, end fiction. Unfortunately, hagarty doesn't write well enough to effect the transformation. His style has almost nothing going for it: it's all clichés, tired phrasing, stale images, end dim insights. His favourite authors, we learn, are Kerouac and Pmiit, but the strongest influence on his prose seems to have been displry-advertising copy — condominiums, maybe.

The writing is depressing, bet I have to admit the world the novel realizes manages to be depressing, too. There are wasted, petty, egocentric lives here, not unlike the ones Mailer ought in *The Executioner's Song*, and a reader can't help pondering them. Viewed this way, as a social document, *Prisoner of Desire* carries, inevitably, a certain moral force.

* * *

IF SIX-YEAR-OLDS shouting "pee-pee" and "poo-poo" et each other is your idea of satire, you'll enjoy Paul Quarrington's *The Service* (Coach House, 182 pages, \$5.50 paper). Otherwise, slay away. The novel is cutely designed, end its cover promises bawdy delights, but whet it delivers is mostly callow, self-indulgent silliness.

That's too bad. Quarrington has some pleasantly quirky conceits, writes lucidly in spots, and can organize a narrative without visible strain. But his book would have gained from a harsh editorial hand — his own, et least — somewhere along the way. There's simply too much adolescent dialogue, pretentious end dilatory exposition, and literary paraphernalia — epigraphs, allusions, end the like.

I began *The Service* with my customary first-novel high spirits. This story of one of life's losers, filled with sex, jokes, pratfalls, and sideshow characters, will be amusing, I thought. But Quarrington, like Mel Brooks in his talk-show appearances, is too susceptible to his own sense of humour, and succeeds mainly in getting in the way of his own laughs. I never even smiled.

* * *

Doctor Tin, by Tom Walmsley (Pulp Press, 90 pages, \$2.95 paper), was the unanimous first choice in the Pulp Press 2nd International 3-Day Novel-Writing Contest. It's surprisingly good. Writers who torture their muses under the Extended Care Option

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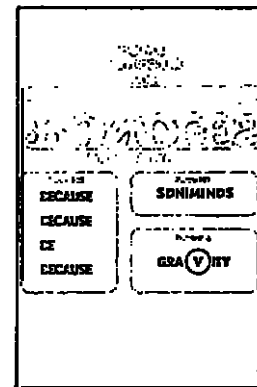


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offered by the Canada Council ought to be inspired, if they're not disillusioned. by Walmsley's example.

The book is about crime, dregs, sado-masochism, rock, and reincarnation, and doesn't exactly make sense. It feels like wandering backwards at eight through an unfinished building whose ultimate function is uncertain. Details are strong, conceptions are promising, it's exciting just to be there, but how does it all connect? Petting the blame for *Doctor Tin's* flaws on speed of

composition is hardly dazzling criticism, but it's unavoidable.

The novel doesn't have to mean anything, of course. Yet it can't quite stand alone on the writing, which is strong in places, flat or clumsy in others, or on mere energy and pace, which are uneven. Walmsley has been publishing poetry and plays and with this venture into prose, the end-papers note, "he has now said everything he has to say about sex and violence." I hope not. □

interview

, by Ian Walker

When history's fitful light shines dully, says Joseph Schull, the writer is to blame

ASKED TO NAME the most prolific writers in Canada, most readers would immediately think of Pierre Berton and George Woodcock. Few would mention Joseph Schull, yet he undoubtedly belongs in that company. Over the years he has turned out an enormous body of work — poems, short stories, stage and TV plays, and several film scripts. His chief field, however, has been history, particularly historical biography.. Although not an academic historian, he is highly respected in academic circles for his scholarly study of Wilfrid Laurier (1965) and his two-volume biography of Edward Bloke (1975-76). His latest book, *The Great Scot: A Biography of Donald Gordon*, is reviewed on page 11. Schull was born in South Dakota 70 years ago, grew up in Moose Jaw, Sask., attended the University of Saskatchewan and Queen's University, and served as an intelligence officer with the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War. He lives in Rosemere, just outside Montreal, where Ian Walker talked to him about the art of writing history:

Books in Canada: What do you perceive as the role of the historian, or historical writer, in society?

Schull: The historical writer's primary duty, I feel, is to uncover whatever aspect of the past he's dealing with and to convey as much information on the subject as he can. Secondly, he should try to relate the past to the present. And a historical writer is pretty much the same everywhere, whether in Canada, the United States, or Britain. He has the same obligations — to research as thoroughly as possible and to get the facts straight.

BiC: Do you consider yourself an objective writer, or do you find yourself attempting to persuade or proselytize?

Schull: I try to be objective. But I know, like all writers, I have my biases and opinions, and they may come out here and there. In general, though, I always attempt to see the facts as honestly as possible and to

present them in that light, without bias.

BiC: What's your response to people who say Canadian history is dull?

Schull: If it's dull, it's only dull because it's been dully written. Canadian history is just as lively as the history of any other young country. It's true that our development has been more or less free of war, but if that's what it takes to make it lively, then let's have it dull. There was a period — around the late 19th century to the early 20th century — when there was a sort of colonial attitude, a sense of Victorian propriety, in presenting our public figures, and this kind of treatment might be considered dull. The historical writers of that period were writing more for a British public than for anyone else. Yet although there was a tendency to whitewash, one can still find reliable and objective material there.

BiC: How did you become interested in the writing of Canadian history?

Schull: I did a lot of writing for the CBC, which led me into the area of dramatic writing. Gradually I edged over into docu-



Joseph Schull

mentary and historical documentary. I enjoyed the subject matter, so it was a logical transition to get involved in writing historical biographies.

BiC: You've written about naval warfare, Wilfrid Laurier, a history of Ontario, and a history of the Sun Life, among other things. What's the common factor behind your choice of subjects?

Schull: I don't know that there really is one thing tends to lead to another. My interest in naval warfare stems from the fact that I was an intelligence officer in the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War. In the case of Laurier, it had its roots in a historical documentary I was doing for the CBC. I was asked to do the Sun Life history because I had written several other business histories. And the Ontario book was done at the request of the Ontario government, for their Ontario Historic Studies series. They're putting together quite a few books of this type.

BiC: Do you think that Canadian history has been mistreated by academic writers?

Schull: Well, I suppose you can make the point that this book is dull or that one tends to repeat the established facts. But on the whole I think that Canadian historiography has greatly improved over the past 25 years. It's of a much better quality.

BiC: What's the most meaningful personal lesson you've learned from your study of history?

Schull: I think that Santayana's dictum — that those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it — is a very important one. If you don't learn about history, when the mistakes have been made, you have to go through the whole mess again, blind. History ought to throw a bit of forward light on the future. It's a very fitful light, for things never repeat themselves in quite the same way.

BiC: What are the commonest problems you run into when writing a biography?

Schull: The major problem is source material, where to get it. The commonest obstacles are the gaps that occur, where a man seems to fade out of the picture for a while. Maybe his papers have been lost or destroyed for a period of four or five years. But the Canadian and provincial archives are very helpful, with very high standards. And there are always family papers. These often provide good source material.

BiC: As a successful writer, what's your assessment of the state of Canadian writing markets?

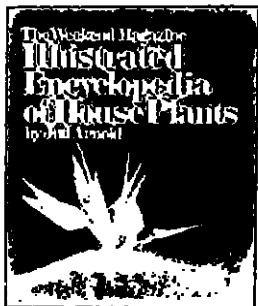
Schull: When I was growing up in Saskatchewan the very idea of expecting to earn your living as a writer — except by working for newspapers — was considered ridiculous. Now it's a perfectly feasible undertaking, given all the multiplications of media and the greatly enlarged reading public. The television that was supposed to kill reading seems to have expanded it. A Canadian writer in his own country has a market that perhaps he can live on and also. I would guess, a fairly sophisticated audience. Today, I don't think you have to write on the basis of Canadian appeal -1

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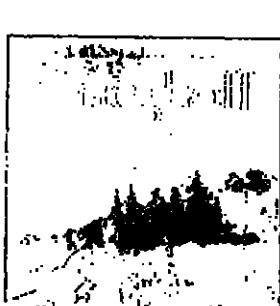
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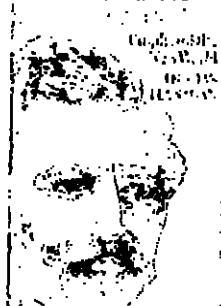
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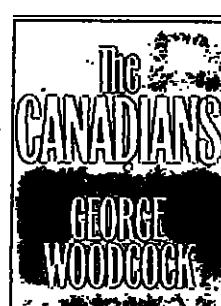
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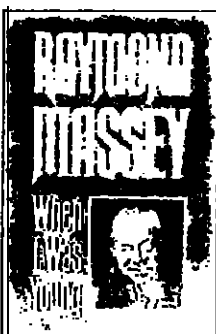
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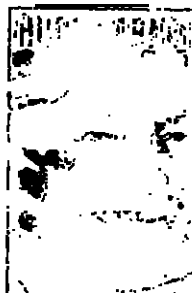
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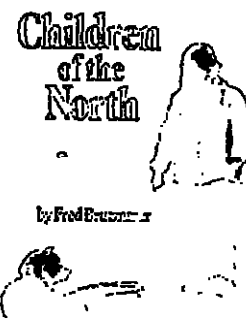
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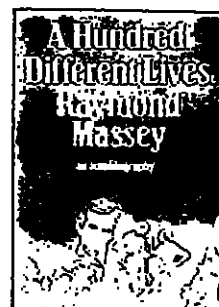
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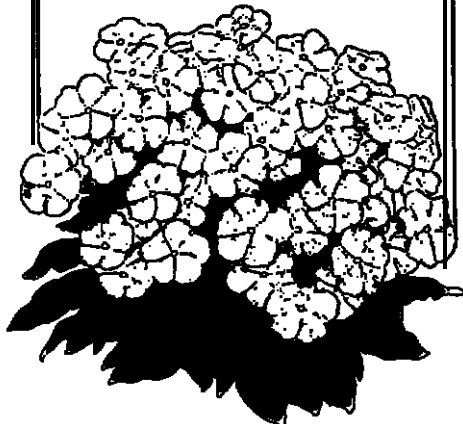
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frankly think that readers have had enough of nationalistic sentiment — but you can write on the simple basis of people. Your work can have a universal quality. In history, you tend to be writing particularly Canadian material for a mainly Canadian audience. But when you get into fiction, there's no necessity or compulsion — or excuse — to be parochial. You can write for all the world and still be writing in Canada, as a Canadian. □

Notes and comments

NEARLY ALL THE signs these days point to parlous times ahead for serious Canadian fiction. By "serious" we mean well-crafted literary or experimental fiction, writing that appeals primarily to the mind rather than the sensations. In an essay in our December issue, Vancouver novelist Keith Maillard detected and deplored a shift toward pure commercialism — he called it "American Smartass" style-in Canadian publishing:

Many of us have begun to feel that we're being treated like Soviet dissidents — in a ball way, of course, a Canadian way. We're not about to be shipped off to a gulag in the Keewatin Barrens to meditate on our sin of writing against the trend of current fashion; our punishment is simply that we won't be published.

Since then, as publishing spines crack under financial pressures, the outlook for serious fiction has become even bleaker.

Take the case of McClelland & Stewart, which like it or not is the bell-wether of the industry. The big black economic chopper has been falling on both bodies and books at M & S. Fiat Jack McClelland lopped off a large hunk of the future by firing 13 employees and announcing that he'll publish 20 per cent fewer books this year than last. Then he began hacking away at the past. To save warehousing costs, he mass-remaindered 179 low-selling titles on his backlist. Among the 69 writers affected were such CanLit luminaries as Margaret Atwood, Pierre Berton, Robertson Davies, Margaret Laurence, Farley Mowat, and Mordecai Richler.

Although the remaindered titles would have gone out of print eventually (none sold more than 1,000 copies a year), McClelland's move cuts short the life span they would have enjoyed under previous M & S policy. Most are now assured of a speedy extinction. Some might call that mercy killing. The Writers' Union of Canada, whose members gave birth to the doomed books, naturally calls it murder. The Union and the League of Canadian Poets have responded by buying 10 copies of each title — at a total cost of \$1,600 — and presenting the collection to the University College Library at the U of T. Thus the books retain a sort of half life.

Meanwhile Ottawa has also been doing

its bit to throttle serious fiction. The new subsidy program for publishers, approved before the previous government fell, rewards commercialism by tying grants to sales. The closer publishers come to emulating Harlequin, the more money they will get. Bye, bye, inspired loneliness; hello escapist romance.

In Jack McClelland's defence, it should be noted that he has no intention of turning M & S into another Harlequin enterprise. By and large the firm lives up to its slogan as our national publisher. McClelland can argue with considerable justice that his first duty is to survive, no matter what the literary costs. Despite the cutbacks, M & S will still publish 70 to 80 titles this year. And despite the mass-remaindering, which incidentally is fairly normal practice in New York and London, the M & S backlist is still substantial.

Yet both McClelland and Ottawa would do well to heed the law of diminishing returns, which operates as ruthlessly in art as it does in economics. Serious fiction is the accumulated capital of any true literature. It provides the creative funding for the commercial mass-market fiction that yields such big short-term dividends. If the capital is allowed to dwindle away through crass neglect, if some of the dividend money isn't reinvested in serious fiction, the whole shooting match — lock, schlock, and barrel — will soon be bankrupt. We'll be left with a literature that, lacking any voice of its own, depends for its inspiration on the erotic fantasies of little old ladies in Cheltenham and the nightmares of California cranks.

* * *

HAPPILY, THERE is also evidence that serious fiction is along way from giving up the ghost. Last year Canada produced a bumper crop of first novels, in terms of both quality and quantity. More than 30 titles qualified for the fourth annual Books in Canada Award for First Novels, which offers a prize of \$1,000 for what the judges consider was the best first novel published in English in Canada during calendar 1979. Here are the seven titles on the short list:

A Man Without Passion, by Florence Evans (Clarke Irwin); *Crossings*, by Betty Lambert (Pulp Press); *Everything in the Window*, by Shirley Faessler (M & S); *Lunar Attractions*, by Clark Blaise (Doubleday); *Mrs. Job*, by Victoria Branden (Clarke Irwin); *Peckertracks*, by Stan Dragland (Coach House); and *Random Descent*, by Katherine Govier (Macmillan).

This year's panel of judges is chaired by Douglas Hill, who teaches English at the U of T's Erindale College and writes a regular column on first novels in these pages. The other panel members are: Toronto critic Sandra Martin; Sheila Fischman, translator and literary columnist for the *Montreal Gazette*; David Stimpson of the U of T book store; and novelist Robert Kroetsch, who teaches English at the University of Calgary. Their verdict, complete with comments, will be announced in our next issue. □

Letters to the Editor

INNS AND OUTS

Sir:

I was surprised and perturbed to read Jeff Miller's interpretation of my poem, "Christmas, 1974," in his review of my recent collection *The Earth is One Body* (February). Mary and Joseph were Jews, and their so? Jesus was raised as a Jew; their being offered a stable to sleep in by the beleaguered inn-keeper was probably an act of compassion rather than persecution. At that time, the Romans were the occupying military force, and the census-registration was called by them. It is one of the ironies of history that the state of Israel is today in a similar, though obviously not equivalent, situation with regard to the Palestinians. This irony formed the framework for the poem, but was not itself the point of the poem. The point was simply this: that when God enters history He does so in full empathy with, and on behalf of, those who are oppressed, whether they be Jews or Palestinians.

Miller did get the point of the Calcutta poem: to a mollycoddled middle-class Western Canadian, the experience of Calcutta was too overwhelmingly depressing to arouse compassion, which, on second thought, is in itself depressing to consider.

Finally, the reviewer's comment on the apricot betrays a serious misunderstanding both about the fine details of female external genitalia, and about the true nature of apricots. Just because an apricot wears a beard does not mean that she wishes to be taken in earnest.

David Waltner-Toews
Barrie, Ont.

DON'T SNEEZE AT OUR CODE

Sir:

I enjoyed Gerard McNeill's article on Ian Adams's *S. Portrait of a Spy* (January). I don't think, however, that it is a good idea for McNeill to repeat false information and there is a blatant example at the end of his article when he quotes from *End Game in Paris*.

I don't wish to debate the issue as to whether Canada has a constitution or few civil liberties. This is a very complicated and ambiguous question; it is far too simplistic to compare Canadian law and society with U.S. institutions, particularly when Canadians pick up most of their information from television programs from the United States.

I would like to correct a more specific point. The Indian Criminal Code was drafted by Lord Macaulay and his draft had no effect on Canadian law. The Canadian Criminal Code was loosely based on the English Draft Code which was mostly the work of James Fitzjames Stephen who did indeed work in India and drafted the Indian Evidence Code, which was an enlightened and excellent piece of legislation. Stephen did not draft a criminal code for India but he did draft the English Draft Code, which was unjustly treated in the English House of Commons and never became law. Stephen was recognized as one of the greatest scholars of the criminal law.

Two Canadians, Robert Sedgewick and George Burbidge, who worked for the Department of Justice in Ottawa, admired Stephen's English Draft Code and decided to use it as a basis

for the Canadian Criminal Code. Burbidge even wrote a textbook based on Stephen's work. The Canadian Department of Justice very widely consulted with the judges, lawyers, and citizens of Canada before the Canadian Criminal Code was passed in 1892.

Three jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand also adopted versions of Stephen's English Draft Code.

So it is clearly wrong to say that our Criminal Code was "too oppressive" or a mere cast-off in the colonial wastepaper basket.

Graham Parker
Professor of Law
Osgoode Hall Law School
York University
Toronto

CanWit No. 51

WE WELCOME WITH Imperial pints of cheer the arrival of British-style neighbourhood pubs on these frowning shores and pray that this civilized *ambiance* for communal drinking will quickly extend beyond the urban cores to our seedy-taverned towns and villages. However, we are less happy with the habit of giving Old Country names to every New World watering hole. Surely this sovereign and frequently intemperate country has enough history, tradition, and humour on draught to provide distinctive pub names of our own. How about The Brown Paper Bag for a pub decorated in the nostalgic style of the 1950s? Toronto hockey fans could repair to The Leafs of Glass. Defence Department employees could be crying poor in The Farewell to Arms, which is just down the road from that well-known political hostelry known as The Bull and Budget. And so on. We'll pay \$25 for the best set of Canadian pub names we receive by March 31. Address: CanWit No. 51, Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4.

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 49

TORONTO THE GOOD, we suggested, is fast turning into Toronto the Conceited. Accordingly, we asked readers to compose sonnets that would prick The Queen City in her fatuous behind and bring her back down to Hogtown reality. The winner is Ian C. Johnston of Nanaimo, B.C., who receives \$25 for this iambic deflation:

There leafs decline; fresh blue Jays fade unsought,

*Where once the Argonauts one fateful day
With proud Ulysses (Curts) ran and caught
The elusive glories of my Lord of Grey.*

*Now well-fried burghers, sleek with relish, spy
found Yonge delights, new oral pleasures
weigh:*

*Eat or be Eaton's; bawdy rubs roll by:
If all else fails, a whirling Mirvish play.
Their gods' erection with revolving knob
Looms o'er the Boy Street bondsman on his
sneeze.*

*The air waves bleat across the land and throb
The pallid image of the CBC.*

*Horseman, ride by, descend not past Thornhill:
For all its vanity, it's Hogtown still.*

Honourable mentions:

*On you good people — from the town of Hog
The mantle of pre-eminence sits well:
Insensitivity as thick as fog
Keeps you from those who'd see you first in
hell.*

*Too long upon the nation like a leech,
Forever sucking wealth from others' toil,
You bloated; but for sympathy you screech
Now that Alberta's got you by the oil.
In sports, though, you have often been the
least:*

*A kind assessment notes the Blue Jays smell,
The Argo fans — not foes — once more were
steeced,
And Leafs regained their Punch, but promptly
fell.*

*And yet with Hogtown rests our nation's fate:
We stand at last united — by your hate.*

— Danny Shea, Hamilton, Ont.

* * *

*Now is the winter of our discotheque
Made gloomiest surfeit by this muddy York,
And all the clouds have lowered down to wreck
The air of this cheap Hogtown (named for
pork).*

*In every eye a glazed look there be,
For in the madding crowds of filthy squalor
Nor grace nor goodness in their souls I see;
They are bereft — as this vile ville — of
valour.*

*Small wonder, since their superficial lives
Be spent in such depraved spot as this:
They swarm her streets, as bees infest their
hives,*

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But have not honey as consoling bliss.
O, lest the world should task me to recite
E'en one virtue, I only can conskrite.

—David W. Barber, Kingston, Ont.

Toronto, belching viscous putrid smoke
Of charcoal black and dirty grey.
That could cause you to quickly gasp and
choke.

Is one of the worst spots at which to stay.
It's filled with endless traffic in a jam;
The drivers, who are haggard and quite worn,
Just slouch and never seem to give a damn
Except for blasting loudly on their horn.
And then on Yonge Street in the snow and cold,
Amid religious nuts and all the crowd,
Hard drugs to those with cash are often sold.
Who cares one bit if it is not allowed?
Toronto, with its many fiends and smells,
Is far worse than a hundred thousand hells.

—Sharon Danard, Elmira, Ont.

When we behold your super highways rear
Where perfume of distilleries competes
With diesel fumes to foul the atmosphere
O'er stagnant traffic of your crowded streets;
Your Eaton Centre like a crystal palace,
Its glass dome reaching halfway to the sky
While at its base the winos without malice
In listless cursing, damn their bottles dry:
Your CN Tower, wonder of the world,
With latest thing in elevator cars
In which we upward with a rush are hurled
To gaze in wonder at the railroad yards;

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We must conclude you are in every way
A nicer place to visit than to stay.

—Dorothy Simpson, Port Robinson, Ont.

Earth hath not anything to show less fair!
That Hogtown, with such goodly people in't,
Should be abused to favour men who print
With copy, that the Phillistines may stare!
Thus Samson was deprived of his hair,
And must we now each secret weakness hint?
How are the mighty fallen? Save by dint
Of ant-like men who fear the bright sun's
glare?
No! No! Preserve for us the childhood dream,
Nor let our youthful fancies, sickening, fade,
Of Eatons and the Santa Claus Parade,
And all that's fine and high in men's esteem.
O Hogtown! by thy preternatural gleam
The world doth yet in splendour seem arrayed!
—Kevin McCabe, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

The editors recommend

THE FOLLOWING Canadian books were reviewed in the previous issue of *Books in Canada*. Our recommendations don't necessarily reflect the reviews:

FICTION

The Con Man, by Ken Mitchell, Talonbooks. The life story of a half-breed Saskatchewan yokel who is his own chief victim, told in a style that caroms from comedy to fantasy.

NON-FICTION

The Canadians, by George Woodcock, Fitzhenry & Whiteside. The centre doesn't hold for Woodcock but otherwise this is a fascinating overview of the Canadian people and their society, with a commendable emphasis on culture.

POETRY

Ancestral Dances, by Glen Storestad, Thistle-down Press. A collection that is almost archetypal of the best of Prairie poetry — realistic, direct, colloquial, and above all unpretentious.

The Sad Phoenician, by Robert Kroetsch, Coach House. The fourth and fifth sequences of "Field Notes," Kroetsch's long poem in progress, continue to explore "the imagined real place."



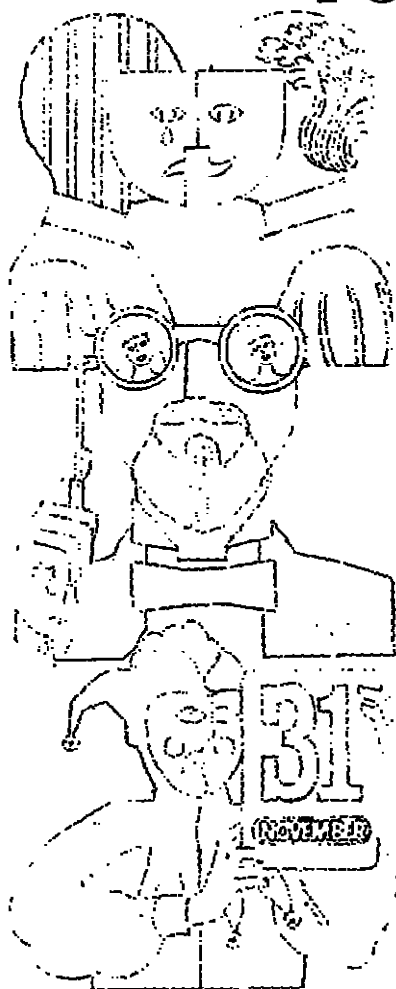
Books received

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

- An Account to Settle, by The Bank Book Collective, illustrated by Pat Davitt, Press Gang Publishers.
- Angel & the Bear, by Brian Charlton, Brick/Naim.
- The Annotated Bibliography of Canada's Major Authors, Volume 1, edited by Robert Lecker and Jack David, ECW Press.
- Beowulf and Celtic Tradition, by Martin Puhvel, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- A Bridge to Paradise, by Constance Winkler Soulikis and Herzi Kasnetsky, The Purple Wednesday Society.
- Burke's Politics, by Frederick A. Dreyer, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- The Cage in the Open Air, by Ed Jewiaski, Black Moss Press.
- Capitalism & Progress, by Bob Goudswaard, translated and edited by Josina Van Nuis Zylstra, Wedge Publishing.
- Children's Books for Learning, by Naomi Wall, The Cross-Cultural Communication Centre.
- Chronicle of a Pioneer Prairie Family, by L. H. Neatby, Western Producer Prairie Books.
- Contemporary Quebec Criticism, edited and translated by Larry Shoultice, U of T Press.
- Days of Rage, by Herman Buller, October Publications.
- Does Canada Need a New Electoral System?, by William P. Irvine, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University.
- Early Naturalists and Natural History Societies of London, Ontario, by W. W. Judd, Phelps Publishing.
- Exit Barry McGee, by Claire Mackay, Scholastic-TAB.
- Experience Into Thought, by Kathleen Coburn, U of T Press.
- Film Canadiana 1978-79, edited by Allison Reid, Canadian Film Institute.
- French in Disguise, by Alain Pechon and Frederick Howlett, The Yale Book Co.
- The Future of the National Library of Canada, National Library of Canada.
- Go Jump in the Pool, by Gordon Korman, Scholastic-TAB.
- Hawaii for You and the Family, by Charles Mitchell and Colleen Shifflette, Hancock House.
- Histoires de nos jours, edited by Morgan Kenney and Dieter Euler, D. C. Heath.
- Hot Box, by Jack Cahill, PaperJacks.
- Immigrant, by Stephen Gill, Vesta Publications.
- In Defence of Canada, Volume IV: Growing Up Allied, by James Enys, U of T Press.
- It Scared Me But I Like It, by Russell Hazzard, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
- King Winter, by D. K. Findlay, Slogos.
- Labour of Love, by Paul Marshall et al., Wedge Publishing.
- The Last Canoe, by John Craig, PMA.
- The Loyalist City, by Stephen Gill, Vesta Publications.
- Making Your Money Grow, by Richard Worzel, Financial Post/Macmillan.
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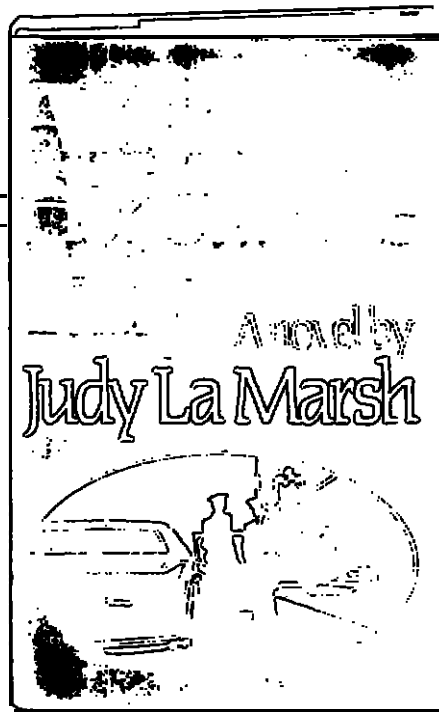
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