

analogy beyond what it was worth. If patrons who primarily attended the galas were akin to tourists who brought their own instant coffee to Brazil, the cinephiles who went to subtitled movies without a working knowledge of the necessary languages were dilettantes. This was all very true but, since Andrew was indeed aware of his own dilettantism, why did he so relentlessly persist in it? Because Andrew would never change; and neither would his cinephile cronies and their ilk. And people who never change don't make good script material. Urban comedies of manners are one thing, but James needed a plot. So he decided that the Festival of Festivals was not such a great milieu for his script after all.

As Andrew became simultaneously more exhausted and more tired the festival shifted from being an eclectic itinerary to being a straight-forward marathon. He had already decided that this year's three major themes were: 1) "forbidden" films—films made under "difficult" or downright intolerable conditions; 2) films made in countries in which American economic domination created a tension between Hollywood and more idiosyncratic, "personal" cinematic language; and 3)—Andrew's favourite theme—movies concerned with the borderlines between private concerns and public spaces. Now Andrew had stopped taking notes in the ever-lengthening queues and begun to concentrate on enjoying as many good movies as he had the stamina left to enjoy.

Sure there were too many movies for the amount of available cinemas. Sure this was creating a situation in which many passholders with every right to see their first choice were lucky to even see their second choice. The Festival of Festivals is not a curated exhibition; it is an attempt by the City of Toronto to compete with all the other urban centres of the world. And competition requires accumulation, not reduction. Besides Andrew felt that since he was sampling an enormous number of movies without having to pay for anything but popcorn and caffeine, concentrating on obvious irritations about the festival was downright nitpicky and ungrateful to boot. When James glanced at Andrew's list of personal highlights he was angry at himself for missing the boat. Well, maybe next year...

Just for the record, here are some of Andrew's personal highlights, not necessarily in any order: *Virgin Machine* (FDR, Monika Treut); *Hamlet Goes Business* (Fin. Aki Kaurismaki); *Distant Voices/Still Lives* (GB, Terence Davies); *Forbidden to Forbid* (FDR, Lothar Lambert); *Latent Image* (Chile, Pablo Perelman); *Hard Times* (Port, Joao Botelho); *Talking to Strangers* (USA, Rob Tregenza); *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* (Cuba/It./Sp., Fernando Birri); and *Lightning Over Braddock* (USA, Tony Buba).

Andrew Paterson is a Toronto writer and video and performance artist. His "detective" novel The Disposables (1986) is available from Art Metrolople. His video tapes may be viewed through V-tape in Toronto.



Linocut by Malcolm Reid

Chronique d'Amérique Writers!

Malcolm Reid

Who's Who in the Writers' Union of Canada, a directory of members published by the Writers' Union of Canada (24 Ryerson Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2P3), 1988. \$20.95.

The Writers' Union's new directory is out, and after being dazzled, like all its subscribers, by my own portrait of myself in it, by its pocket-mirror quality, I want to savour it. To sense Canadian writing through it. Canadian writing and Canadian personality.

It's not exactly a work, so not really suitable for praise or reproach. What it is is a window, a glimpse. It has been well and simply put together by a committee, Joan Clark and Valerie Frith leading things.

It's a wonderful textbook of Canadian literature and makes concrete for me my vague list of Canadian books I want to read. Concrete and compact for the first time, because of its neat absences: all that is *old* is absent. And the writers not described here—for a moment anyway—seem uninteresting, lacking the bare solidarity to join the union.

All except 120 who are listed at the end as members, but not directoried for some reason:

these include many of the stars.

All except them and Leonard Cohen. (Who will herein stand for the haughty who didn't care to join, but who in spite of me, come imperially to my mind.)

Then there are those who are in. Each is represented by a page, no more, no less, these pages written by themselves.

What do I feel about them, leafing?

(I say "I" where in a normal book review I would say, "What do we feel about them?" Can't say "we" here. For the very essence of the book is to convey to each writer: you're in this with all these others, sister; but you're *you*, they're *they*.)

I'm struck by how much writing is a woman's trade in Canada.

I'm struck by how many former Americans are part of Canadian writing. My long-held sense that the Vietnam era refugees have contributed to the tone of Canadian life is suddenly, clobberingly, confirmed. Cyril Welch, Audrey Thomas, Jane Rule, Irene J. Robinson, Betty Nickerson...I'm flipping at random. Californian by birth, born in Binghamton, New York, born in New Jersey, born and educated in California, born during a Kansas tornado, grew up in Oregon... These people came at different ages and in

different years, not years. Some seem to some fairly well-of note, avow, that the anyway their membership union avows it.

They all came from same Dominion, and more modulated countries, sometimes, perhaps, modulated at all, and which to blaze forth.

In an argument that said: "Free trade with the United States will be different countries, that isn't going to be see a considerable part of the U.S.A. breaking will come of this?"

There is a corollary.

There are groups striking, that are striking. So few Italian names. Chinese ones (have university corridor late Portuguese ones, or

Pakistanis. (The French are institutionally absent, having the Union des Écrivains Québécois as their focus, except for, page 3, the shining sun of Marie-Claire Blais.)

There are also many British immigrants. But this is so consistent with my sense of English-Canadian cultural life—Barry Morse on the air of my childhood—that I don't especially remark upon it. I've always thought of England as forming more cultural people than its institutions could use; but not until now had I thought of the U.S.A. that way. There *are* immigrant currents: Eastern Europeans, for example, seem intent on carving a territory out in Canadian letters.

Canada, here, comes on as a persistently Anglo-Saxon and Celtic place, as in the old days. Walk our street, though. Do you still feel that? The strangers are inside the gates; *mais le verbe est à nous!*

And there is the contrast with the Quebec situation. (The Union des Écrivains publishes a directory, with nothing but the names and addresses in it.) This contrast, for me, is both strong and expected. Canadian writers are scattered through towns and cities everywhere; even their *publishing houses* are. They are overwhelmingly little-knowns, and large and interesting bodies of work that I had never even *heard about* poured out of the directory at me one after the other. With big stars simply sprinkled here and there. Whereas Quebec writing is largely Montreal writing, and the biggest group in the Union des Écrivains is what you might call medium-knowns. Their writing exists in their people. Unlike the English Canadians', which doesn't, as a body, have that kind of resonance.

It is the Montreal literary scene itself which is the shaking, focusing, filtering mechanism for Quebec writing that this 483-page red book is striving so bravely to be for English Canada. (There is, to mention the first blunt fact that comes to mind, no American TV in French. Whereas mass culture, for so many English Canadian, just proceeds as if there were no Canada.)

Then there's the most important thing.

There is a note, so often struck...

It is a note of self-mockery. It is of trivialization done to convey that the writer knows it's no good at all to be trivial. It is there in the filling-in of the biography space with a *parody* of a writer's biography, because you do not know what *would* be the way to talk briefly about yourself and your work.

Why do so many Canadian writers do this? Do I do it myself? Are there some who don't do it at all, who get the tone right?

One point: I like modesty. I think it is indeed a virtue. And I've read a lot of self-approving words by writers in this century, boastful words about their selves, their gang, their work, a lot of arrogance. I'm glad that's not here. But why the carnival of self-deprecation?

Ed Gould: "After three years as a Swivel Servant..."

Terry Gould: Illustrates his page with a photo of himself as a child actor.

Claire Mowat: "It wasn't considered subver-

sive then to share the workload with the guy you married."

Farley Mowat: "Most of what is fit to print about my life has already been printed..."

Why?

There seems to be some way in which being a writer in Canada needs some joking apologizing-for. There seems to be no tradition, taken seriously, of Canadian writing being there, solid, needing only a flow of new additions, new directions. And young writers to bring these.

And yet it *is* there, is it not? To me it needs above all *one* new dimension. That is the dimension given by the writer as radical seer. Imaginer of weird pictures of the past because he is an imaginer of a liberated future. Some small lands have this. For example...

Had the strongest black voice speaking out from these pages, Marlene-Nourbese Philip, a Torontonian from Tobago, moved, instead of north to Canada, south to Columbia or Brazil, can we imagine her saying: "I am the first accredited Caucasianist (specialist in Caucasian life, affairs and culture)?"

I can't, and here I am, both the audience and the target for this joke, the white caller-forth of more black culture in Canada.

I'll have to read *Thorns*, Marlene. I'll have to keep looking till I find a joke I do like. As a Canauthorist (specialist in Canadian writers, their humour, their seriousness), I like jokes. But I want more of them aimed outward at life-destroyers, and fewer aimed in, at the self. I could go for, say, a 75-to-25 ratio.

"I am a New World writer," you say. *That* I want more on.

And there's another guy who really got through to me: Jean-Guy Carrier. That brooding face, that brooding life-text: "I am most proud to have remained a socialist and a writer."

So I'll also have to read *My Father's House*.

Here's an opinion I dare to hurl out, a wishful thought:

Not most, but about 25 percent of the people in this book, I think, are like Carrier. Socialists as well as writers, and proud of it. But the time of the radical seer isn't here. They fear the quaintness and the dissonance Carrier's kind of sober statement would give them, in the mainstream of Canadian life where they seek their audience. Or, really, their image. "Feminist" goes down better, but not to the point that the men will use it; there is in these one-paragraph autobiographies, a failure to find the seer's words. Their self-teasing joke is their way of handling that. I didn't say "socialist" either; my word was "rebel".

We're a gang searching for our words, we're gingerly, we're fearful-playful. I feel us in this book, pressing our way to existence.

We're not so different from the writers in France, the writers in Poland, the writers in Africa. I hear, in this book, a quiet murmur on the left. I'm going to stay tuned.

I'm going to keep up my subscription to the pocket mirror.

Malcolm Reid's column is a regular feature in Border/Lines.

different years, not all Vietnamishly-flavoured years. Some seem to have come rather poor, and some fairly well-off. Many of them mention, note, avow, that they are Canadians now. But anyway their membership in this nationalistic union avows it.

They all came from the same Republic to the same Dominion, and the choosing of a smaller, more modulated country than one's own is there: sometimes, perhaps, because the person was not modulated at all, and wanted this new context in which to blaze forth.

In an argument the other day at our house, I said: "Free trade might not be such a bad idea if the United States were divided into four or five different countries, as in the novel *Ecotopia*. But that isn't going to happen." No. But here we do see a considerable part of the intellectual talent of the U.S.A. breaking off and moving north. What will come of this?

There is a corollary.

There are groups in Canada, big in Canada, striking, that are striking by their absence here. So few Italian names, so few black faces, or Chinese ones (have you strolled a Canadian university corridor lately?), so few Greek names, or Portuguese ones, or Hispanic. So few Indians and



"What does Report on Business say?"

PRESIDENT REAGAN IS COMING TO DETROIT,
12 NOON, SEPT. 24 AT COBO HALL

**BRING THE
PRESIDENT
YOUR PISS!**
DRUGS ARE AMERICA'S #1 PROBLEM!
(HE SAID SO ON TV!)

FORGET ABOUT: SOUTH AFRICA
NUCLEAR WAR
THE ENVIRONMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT
THE ENDLESS CYCLE OF WORK & CONSUMPTION
INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA
THE MISERY OF DAILY LIFE

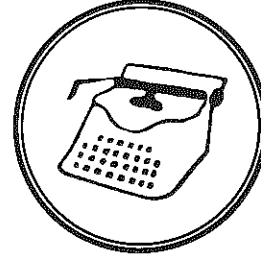
THESE ARE NOTHING! IT'S DRUGS!

Let's show our President we support his war on drugs! Bring him a sample of your urine to present to him at Cobo Hall to show you are drug free! Join with the hundreds of model citizens there who will demonstrate advanced compliance by offering up their urine for testing before they are asked. As a special gesture, several of us who want a Drug-Free America have collected a mass 5-gallon urine sample from a large number of citizens to be given to President Reagan personally! One drug user among the many could ruin the sample for the rest of us represented. Can we pass the test? You bet we can!

Eat the Rich Gang, Workers Revenge Party, Citizens for Clean Urine,
Box 02548, Detroit, MI 48202

LETTERS

We welcome letters. We also welcome found images and artifacts such as the ones on this page. If you would like to propose an article, please send for our "Guidelines for Contributors." The address is: **Border/Lines**, 183 Bathurst Street, #301, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2R7



Dear Borderlines,

As a Socialist, I am all for collectives and therefore am renewing my subscription to your magazine.

Sorry that I have neglected this, but I have received so much "junk" mail in the last god-knows-how-long, begging for donations to good causes, that I did not open your reminder till today. Wish I could be a benefactor to all good causes but I cannot afford it right now. Have to be selective.

I like your emphasis on culture from a Socialist point of view—as well as the humour, rather lacking in more earnest Socialist publications, such as that *Socialist International* I took for just one year. The N.D.P. must have given them my name—an lifelong member and supporter at election times.

We have such a lousy government in B.C. that we need all the outside news we can get!

All the best!

Marian Hale (Mrs)
North Vancouver, B.C.

Border/lines

Please enroll me onto your subscription list. The last issue I managed to pick up (in Vancouver—in the rest of B.C., Jim Pattison's monopoly has made it illegal to sell offbeat or leftist magazines) had the wrestlers on the cover, so please start my subscription with the next issue.

Thanks,

Steve Robertson
Vanderhoof, B. C.

Lest We Forget
signatories, but by the
Alliance shared office
proponent of free trade

George Bain
Former political columnist
Mail and the Toronto *Star*

Alex Colville
In 1983, Colville told the
lects sports cars, keeps
and sells his paintings for
\$100,000.00.

Andy Donato
Cartoonist at the Toronto *Star*

Arnold Edinborough
President and CEO of the
and the Arts in Canada.
proprietor of *Saturday Night*

David and Linda Friedman
Son and daughter of Barbra
larly for the Toronto *Sunday*
Idler. Linda has recently
Canadian universities.

Robert Fulford
Writer and columnist, *Saturday*
Night. Married to Gerald
at the University of Toronto

Mira Godard
Proprietor of Mira Godard
which shows Mary and
Alex Colville. Her gallery
artists at 49th Parallel, a
space sponsored by Ext

Edward Greenspan
Toronto criminal lawyer

Fela Grunwald
Proprietor of Grunwald

George Jonas
Hungarian-Canadian writer
Barbara Amiel, who is
Sun, where Jonas writes

W.P. Kinsella
Resigned from the Writers
their opposition to free

Nick Auf Der Maur
A columnist for the *Montreal*
member of Montreal city

Lest We Forget This ad was placed in the *Globe and Mail* on 19 November 1988, two days before the last federal election. It was paid for not by its signatories, but by the Canadian Alliance for Trade and Job Opportunities, whose founding directors were Peter Lougheed and Donald MacDonald. The Alliance shared offices with the Business Council on National Issues, a lobby group of the 150 largest corporations in Canada. The BCNI was the initial proponent of free trade within the Mulroney government.

George Bain

Former political columnist at both the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*.

Alex Colville

In 1983, Colville told the *Financial Post* he collects sports cars, keeps a gun in his bedroom, and sells his paintings for an average of \$100,000.00.

Andy Donato

Cartoonist at the *Toronto Sun*.

Arnold Edinborough

President and CEO of the Council for Business and the Arts in Canada. Former editor and proprietor of *Saturday Night*.

David and Linda Frum

Son and daughter of Barbara. David writes regularly for the *Toronto Sun*, *Saturday Night* and *The Idler*. Linda has recently written a party guide to Canadian universities.

Robert Fulford

Writer and columnist, and ex-editor of *Saturday Night*. Married to Geraldine Sherman and teaches at the University of Toronto.

Mira Godard

Proprietor of Mira Godard Gallery in Toronto, which shows Mary and Christopher Pratt and Alex Colville. Her gallery also showcases its artists at 49th Parallel, a New York exhibition space sponsored by External Affairs.

Edward Greenspan

Toronto criminal lawyer, writer and broadcaster.

Fela Grunwald

Proprietor of Grunwald Gallery, Toronto.

George Jonas

Hungarian-Canadian writer and ex-husband of Barbara Amiel, who is ex-editor of the *Toronto Sun*, where Jonas writes a column.

W.P. Kinsella

Resigned from the Writers Union of Canada over their opposition to free trade.

Nick Auf Der Maur

A columnist for the *Montreal Daily News*, and member of Montreal city council.

ARTISTS & WRITERS
FOR FREE TRADE

We Are Not Fragile

We, the undersigned artists and writers, want the people of Canada to know we are in favour of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement.

There is no threat to our national identity anywhere in the Agreement. Nor is there a threat to any form of Canadian cultural expression.

As artists and writers, we reject the suggestion that our ability to create depends upon the denial of economic opportunities to our fellow citizens.

What we make is to be seen and read by the whole world. The spirit of protectionism is the enemy of art and of thought.

JERRY ADAMSON, designer	CHARLES JAFFE, painter
JIM ALLEN, photographer	GEORGE JONAS, writer
GEORGE BAIN, journalist	W. P. KINSELLA, writer
EVE BAXTER, art consultant	IRVING LAYTON, poet
MICHAEL BLISS, historian	DR. SAUL LEVINE, author
ROBERT BURNS, designer	RICHARD LUBBOCK, writer
BARRY CALLAGHAN, writer	DEBORAH MACIDSON, filmmaker
MORLEY CALLAGHAN, writer	NICK AUF DER MAUR, journalist
NEIL CAMERON, historian	ERIC McLUHAN, writer
ALEX COLVILLE, painter	JOHN METCALF, writer
WAYNE CONSTANTINEAU, mine	JOHN MUGGERIDGE, writer
BARRY COOPER, philosopher	DAVID OLIVE, journalist
ANDREW COYNE, journalist	CERARD OWEN, journalist
DANIELLE CRITTENDEN, writer	I. M. OWEN, editor
KEN DANBY, painter	CHRISTOPHER PRATT, painter
ANDY DONATO, cartoonist	MARY PRATT, painter
IAN DRUMMOND, author	LOUIS QUILICO, opera singer
ARNOLD EDINBOROUGH, critic	HARRY RASKY, filmmaker
ANASTASIA ERLAND, writer	DANIEL RICHLER, writer & broadcaster
JOHN FERGUSON, architect	MORDECAI RICHLER, writer
THOMAS FLANAGAN, writer	ANNE ROCHE, writer
PETER FOSTER, writer	WILLIAM ROWE, writer & broadcaster
DAVID FRUM, journalist	JAN RUBES, performing artist
LINDA FRUM, author	SUSAN RUBES, performing artist
ROBERT FULFORD, journalist	JARED SABLE, art dealer
MIRA GODARD, art dealer	GERALDINE SHERMAN, journalist
EDWARD GREENSPAN, author	JOSEF SKVORECKY, writer
FELA GRUNWALD, art dealer	ALEXANDER SZEMBERG, broadcaster
ELLIOTT HALPERN, screenwriter	MORLEY TORGOV, author
DENISE IRELAND, painter	HAROLD TOWN, painter
	KITSON VINCENT, producer
	DAVID WARREN, journalist
	PAUL YOUNG, painter

This advertisement is the responsibility of the signatories. It was produced with the assistance of the Canadian Alliance for Trade & Job Opportunities, & The Idler Magazine.

Eric McLuhan

Son of Marshall. A principal at McLuhan and Davies Communications, he teaches at York University, and is active in the anti-choice movement.

John Metcalf

Arch-critic of the Canada Council.

Gerald Owen

Managing editor at *The Idler*.

Daniel Richler

Son of Mordecai. Has worked as a Toronto veejay, an arts reporter on *The Journal* and writer for *Saturday Night*.

Mordecai Richler

Canadian editor of the Book-of-the-Month Club.

Jared Sable

Proprietor of Sable-Castelli Gallery in Toronto, which is associated with the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York City.

Geraldine Sherman

Former producer of *Ideas* and various arts programmes at CBC.

Josef Skvorecky

Czech-Canadian writer and publisher, teaches at the University of Toronto.

Alexander Szemberg

Ex-husband of Fela Grunwald and producer of *Realities* on TV Ontario, which is hosted by Robert Fulford and Richard Gwyn.