

with three children. He lives in style, mingling with cinema stars in Mayfair's most fashionable restaurants. . . . He is so successful in his chosen field that he earns rather more annually than the prime minister of this country."

Jacob has a wife and father who do not understand him very well; he has a mythical hero based on his long-gone cousin, Joey, the St. Urbain Street horseman of the title, who in the view of other members of the family is more scoundrel than hero. In all of Richler's books the themes are the same: the difficulties of communication between almost all groupings, person and person, man and woman, race and race, culture and culture, generation and generation; the difficulties of finding values in a swiftly changing world; and the varied results of varied ambitions.

Richler writes of the big, bad Western world, of London and Hollywood as well as Montréal, but his protagonists are almost always clearly, and perhaps definitively, Canadian.



ROBERTSON DAVIES is less a moralist than Richler (or at any rate less an absolutist), and his guide to the Canadian identity is richly obscure but not alarming. It may well be the best guide there is — Mr. Davies is not merely a good novelist, he is a great one. He is also an inspiration to the aging, having realized his greatness when he was well into his middle years. He has been producing novels for a long time, and his early ones — such as *A Mixture of Frailties* and *Leaven of Malice* — were merely good. Then he delivered *Fifth Business* and *The Manticore*, both stunning.

Both involve the same socio-economic-political world — the upper class world of Ontario, particularly of Toronto — and the same people — Boy Staunton, Boy's oldest friend Duncan Ramsey, his middle-aged son David Edward, and two of the great enigmatic figures of recent literature, Magnus Eisengrim and Fraulein Doktor Liselotte Naegeli. The books are sequential but with a notable shift of emphasis; Mr. Davies has the ability to see the world and its people from strikingly different, sometimes almost contradictory, points of view. If one is looking for Canada in a book one may well start with *Fifth Business*, move on to *The Manticore*, and then, and only then, read the earlier Davies works for additional odds and ends of information.

The Manticore was published in the United States in 1972 by the Viking Press, \$7.95, and deserves to be read by many more men and women below the border. It can be read with



Jack Shadbolt, *Articulated Fetish*, 1972, ink, latex, crayon and acrylic on watercolour board, 60" x 40", Courtesy Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver.

satisfaction on at least three distinct levels: as a superior whodunit (*Who Killed Boy Staunton?*), as a novel of time and place and as a metaphysical consideration of the meaning of success in the twentieth century. Mr. Davies is fascinated by cause and effect, random cause and unanticipated effect, by the flow of good (or evil) into evil (or good), by the emotional poverty which can afflict the rich, by the emotional poverty which can afflict the poor.

The Manticore begins in Zurich with Dr. Johanna von Haller, a Jungian psychiatrist, asking David Edward Staunton, a middle-aged, alcoholic, successful trial lawyer (and a virgin once-removed), why he is there. He replies that he decided he needed her kind of help when he found himself standing up during a stage magician's performance at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto, shouting, "Who killed Boy Staunton?". Boy had been pulled dead from the lake, sitting in his expensive automobile, hands frozen by death to his steering wheel, with a pink granite rock the size of an egg in his mouth.

Staunton, the son, and Dr. von Haller painfully unravel the rich, complex, misunderstood past: the son's past, the father's past, Canada's past — the interplay of people, conceit, crimes, prejudices, ambitions, illusions and occasional